

**Feeling American:
Caribbean Petitions for a New World Literary *Ethos***

BY

TIMOTHY HENNINGSSEN
B.S., University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1999
M.A., University of Illinois at Chicago, 2005

DISSERTATION
Submitted as partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in English
in the Graduate College of the
University of Illinois at Chicago, 2012

Chicago, Illinois

Defense Committee:

Natasha Barnes, Advisor and Chair
Ralph Cintrón
Nancy Cirillo
Sharon Holland, Duke University
Christian Messenger

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter 1: “Feeling American”

| | |
|--|----|
| Anglophone Caribbean Petitions for a New World Literary <i>Ethos</i> | 1 |
| Chapter 1 Cited Literature | 31 |

Chapter 2: “Discovering America”

| | |
|--|----|
| The World War II Era in the Anglophone Caribbean | 35 |
| Chapter 2 Cited Literature | 76 |

Chapter 3: “From the Cinema to the Library”

| | |
|---|-----|
| The Assertion of American Literature in Caribbean Writing | 82 |
| Part I: C. L. R. James | 94 |
| Part II: V. S. Naipaul..... | 107 |
| Part III: Sylvia Wynter | 119 |
| Part IV: George Lamming | 128 |
| Chapter 3 Cited Literature | 153 |

Chapter 4: “The Canon Builders”

| | |
|--|-----|
| Myth, Symbol, and the Institutionalization of ‘New World’ Literature | 161 |
| Part I: Marketing the Canon | 167 |
| Part II: Myth & Symbol’s Invisible Scaffolding | 173 |
| Part III: Continued Capital Gains | 177 |
| Part IV: Caribbean Gravitations | 186 |
| Part V: Constructing a Caribbean Canon | 201 |
| Part VI: Canonical Reconciliations..... | 207 |
| Chapter 4 Cited Literature | 213 |

Chapter 5: “Building Our Own Pequod”

| | |
|---|-----|
| The <i>Ethos</i> of Idiom in American and Anglophone Caribbean Literature | 221 |
| Chapter 5 Cited Literature | 264 |

| | |
|------------|-----|
| Vita | 271 |
|------------|-----|

SUMMARY

This dissertation investigates the impact of American literature and culture upon the Anglophone Caribbean during and following the Second World War. Traditional inquiries involving this era usually render the Caribbean in either colonial or post-colonial contexts; this dissertation looks to understand alternative variables, especially the widespread affiliations with U.S. culture made by emergent Caribbean writers who were exposed to American soldiers serving overseas.

During the War, the American military presence on islands like Jamaica and Trinidad necessarily brought with it concomitant aspects of American culture; Caribbean locals were thereby introduced to American cinema, magazines, fashion, food, and lingo. Caribbean writers would subsequently take this cultural amalgamation to a more highbrow level by engaging with the likes of American writers, particularly the 19th century threesome of Mark Twain, Walt Whitman, and Herman Melville. Furthermore, as U.S. academic institutions promoted American literature as an identifiable national genre following the Allied victory, Caribbean writers like George Lamming, C. L. R. James, V. S. Naipaul, and Sylvia Wynter would witness this literary ascendancy and speculate how their own regional genre might be assembled. Not coincidentally, the American and Caribbean genres of literature both identify and employ vernacular writing, which, especially during the embryonic stages of the attendant literary criticism for both regions, allows each genre to be seen as new and distinct, rendered in a unique idiom.

Ultimately, this dissertation exposes the underexplored literary relationship between the U.S. and Caribbean, and argues for a shared rhetorical and literary *ethos* which emerges under the pretexts of nationalism during the so-called “American Moment.”

CHAPTER 1

FEELING AMERICAN

Anglophone Caribbean Petitions for a New World Literary Ethos

the pressing need of Our America is to show itself as it is, one in spirit and intent (93).

José Martí's "Nuestra América"

I feel American...is just that I aint born there (123).

Earl Lovelace's "Joebell & America"

In 1891, in a short-lived but widely-read Hispanic New York magazine, a Cuban-born activist and writer would go on record suggesting that an Old World spectre was haunting the Americas, and the time was ripe for an exorcism: "It is the time of mobilization, of marching together" (85), its New World proponent would assert, "The youth of America are rolling up their sleeves, digging their hands in the dough, and making it rise with the sweat of their brows. They realize that there is too much imitation" (91-92). With an unyielding insistence on communal and intellectual independence from European influence, along with a rousing rhetoric intended to incite cultural cultivation, "Nuestra América" thereby qualifies as the Western Hemisphere's manifesto. Wrapped in his recognizably ostentatious language, and latent with

metaphorical musings (and therefore somewhat challenging to translate¹), José Martí's essay has proven to have manifold implications for the century that would follow. In an effort to define and distinguish the relatively young societies that constituted the Americas, Martí would insist that European imitation must be completely done away with: "creation holds the key to salvation," he would write, "'Create' is the password of this generation. The wine is made from plantain, but even if it turns sour, it is *our* own wine!" (92, my emphasis). The onus Martí places on creation as the distinct means by which to assert "Our" selves in the New World is intended to act as a stimulus for a new dawn, and his challenge would open up for the twentieth century a battleground which would field widespread claims for cultural autonomy in the face of waning European colonialism.

Under such contexts, "Nuestra América" has long been considered by some as "the most important document published in America" between its debut at the end of the nineteenth century, and Castro's Second Declaration of Havana in 1962 (Retamar 30). Oft recognized as the epitome of Martí's massive oeuvre, the essay has remained incredibly significant since, for it continues to be republished, translated, contested, dissected, and appropriated the world over. Given the essay's long-time literary prominence, it is of little surprise that Martí's New World prophecy has been born yet again under the rubrics of contemporary transnational scholarship, undergoing what Laura Lomas calls a "veritable renaissance" (23, 33). The last decade and a half has been host to widespread conferences and publications across the globe dedicated to a re-contextualization of Martí's late-nineteenth century piece; taken collectively, this attention has

¹ Esther Allen, who specializes in the history and theory of literary translation, noted this dilemma in her preparation of Martí's works for Penguin Classics in 2002. In the text's afterword, she would write that "Martí was a translator himself and commented very perceptively on the art of translation...The profuse, intricate, luxuriant, and ornate sentences in which his journalistic essays enveloped even the most dully prosaic subject matter are—and perhaps were explicitly intended to be, as his exile in the United States wore on and on—a kind of anti-English, an implicit rejection of the utilitarian notions of language that he would, nevertheless, sometimes claim to espouse. To pare this baroque style down into simple forms and staccato, declarative phrases would be to deny an essential feature of Martí's work. Yet a translation serves no purpose if it is not legible" (416).

positioned him as “an emblem of [the] New American studies” (Belnap and Fernández). While Martí’s writing consistently challenges the national boundaries and objectives which tended to guide – and restrict – older formulations of American studies, it would take a full century before he would inherit this ‘new’ moniker. Marked by Shelley Fisher Fishkin’s acknowledgement in 2004 of the so-called “transnational turn,” Americanists have since tended to do away with the sovereign hold that national boundaries have had upon literary studies. While this has certainly liberated the field from old constrictions, allowing for countless new pathways in cultural and comparative study, it might be said that the current state of the new American studies is one of widespread variance and thus relative confusion. In some sense, Martí can claim responsibility for that. The newly reoriented field is bent on including new perspectives and transnational figures like Martí, who surely interrogated the meaning of the moniker “America” (“América”) and, consequently, its national limitations and proprietorship throughout the hemisphere. It is thanks in part to that plural possessive pronoun which is so central to his piece – “Our” – that the door has been thrown open in regards to who and what constitutes “America” and an “American” studies.

On the one hand, there are many who suggest that Martí is clearly inferring *Latin America* when using the titular term “Our.” Roberto Fernández Retamar, Philip Foner, and José David Saldívar, among many others, argue that “Our” is often synonymous (or antonymous, depending on one’s perspective) with “other.” Saldívar, for example, notes that there is, of course, that obvious America, the monolithic power of the United States; and then there are the remaining ‘little Americas’ who must bond together to form a “pan-American consciousness” in the face of U.S. imperialism (xi). According to Saldívar, Martí’s little essay operates as a “call

for Latin American cultural autonomy, nationalism, and self-determination” (8). In sum, it is a rally cry for all nations in the Western Hemisphere *but* the United States.

Paul Giles, on the other hand, suggests that Martí’s America is more nuanced and ambiguous, calling it “deliberately kaleidoscopic,” a “chameleonic construction that remains largely inimical to rationalist analysis” (“Parallel Worlds” 187). Giles relies on the ever-shifting nature of Martí’s piece, claiming that it oscillates between a hemispheric warning in the face of “European-Americanism” and a recuperation of the implicit and universal values of the U.S.’s foundational consciousness. Giles sees this wavering not as Martí’s conflation of two competing versions of America, rather, argues that Martí deliberately reconfigures the rhetorical notion of “America” as one of both language and form, “so as continually to challenge received understandings of the United States and render its boundaries liable to traversal” (190).

Whatever side of this unsettled debate readers of Martí may align themselves with, one aspect of his essay cannot be contested: it reveals that the notion of “America” carries an ideological and rhetorical currency that is widespread throughout the regions that make up the Western Hemisphere, and *many* stake claim to that moniker as belonging to “Our” culture. This notion, and its relevance to the literature of the Anglophone Caribbean, is the premise of the following dissertation. During the burgeoning years of the Anglophone Caribbean novel, the group of writers which critics now like to call the “Windrush Generation”² initiated an intense

² This term refers to the MV Empire Windrush ocean liner, which brought West Indian immigrants to the United Kingdom following World War II. Many of the Caribbean region’s would-be writers took passage on that ship – with manuscripts in hand – in the hopes of securing publishing deals (which had yet to become a viable option in the Caribbean). Timothy Weiss cites those writers who arrived in England between 1950-1959, which include Samuel Selvon (1950), George Lamming (1950), V. S. Naipaul (1950), Roy Heath (1951), Andrew Salkey (1952), Roger Mais (1952), Michael Anthony (1954), and Wilson Harris (1959). While not all Caribbean writers from that era traveled to England, the term “Windrush Generation,” as Weiss describes, has since become a moniker which points to that mid-century gaggle of writers who would constitute the region’s so-called boom years. Weiss writes, “In the Anglophone world a West Indian literary renaissance came about in the 1950s *because of the immigration of writers-to-be to Britain*” (163, my emphasis). For more on this movement and the term’s relevance to it, see Weiss article in *The Cambridge Companion to the Twentieth-Century English Novel* (2009), along with Caryl Phillips’

and concerted dialogue with these contested notions of “America.” Additionally, they also contemplated manifold aspects of U.S. culture that have yet to be fully recognized within the realm of literary criticism. It is through such engagements that many of these writers would eventually come to adopt (to quote one of them) certain “pro-American” alignments, most notably with the literature of Walt Whitman, Herman Melville, and Mark Twain. While this relation eventually proves to be a fleeting one, the publications of those nineteenth century U.S.-born figures would lend certain literary characteristics to the group of Caribbean writers who would emerge following the Second World War in the midst of stirring national independence movements. The influence – *and* presence – of Whitman, Melville, and Twain is inescapable in the rhetoric, the motives, and the philosophical sentiments of writers like George Lamming, C. L. R. James, V. S. Naipaul, and Sylvia Wynter. As these writers established Caribbean literary significance with texts like *In the Castle of My Skin*, *Beyond a Boundary*, *A House for Mr Biswas*, and *The Hills of Hebron*, their alignment with these three American writers is played out in these now-canonical Caribbean texts. Moreover, the circulation of American writings like *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, *Leaves of Grass* and *Moby-Dick* amongst Caribbean readers from British colonies is not only an enigma, but signifies a new recourse for contemporary understandings of the boom years of Anglophone Caribbean literature. Under the auspices of Martí’s “pressing need” for spiritual unity throughout the Americas, along with an examination of the literature produced by members of the “Windrush Generation,” the seemingly absurd claim which prefaces this introduction – “I feel American, is just that I ain’t born there” – is not

“The Pioneers: Fifty Years of Caribbean Migration to Britain” (2001), and Matthew Mead’s rebuttal article, “Empire Windrush: Cultural Memory and Archival Disturbance” (2007), which questions the tendency to “imagine the disparate arrivals of sometimes only a few dozen migrants as a coherent moment of profound cultural change” (114).

only warranted but also lends new potential to transnational understandings of the literature, culture, and rhetoric of the Western Hemisphere.

It is suggested by some critics (most notably by Giles), that Martí invokes what would seem like two competing and contradictory versions of the U.S.: one, a potentially malicious national superpower, the other, the standardbearer of freedom and democracy. The invocation of two incompatible Americas sounds uncannily similar to that of George Lamming's, who would write in *The Pleasures of Exile* that the Caribbean is both fortunate and fearful in sharing oceanic borders with the United States. Wary of the so-called "America of the Mason Dixon line [and of its] colonising policies in the guise of freedom and self-defence," Lamming suggests that "It's a different America that the West Indies can explore. It's the America that started in a womb of promise...as an alternative to the old and privileged Prospero, too old and too privileged to pay attention to the needs of his own native Calibans" (152). Readers of Caribbean literature are all too familiar with those two Shakespearean figures. As Rob Nixon points out, *The Tempest* was frantically "seized upon" by a group of colonial writers looking for an exit strategy in the push for decolonization; they saw in Shakespeare's work both an oppressive tradition as well as opportunities for creative self-fashioning (558). The "exhortation to master Shakespeare was instrumental in showing up non-European 'inferiority'," Nixon notes, but through sustained appropriation, the play also served as "one component of the grander counterhegemonic" endeavors of the period (560, 558). Nowhere are these representations more salient than in the Prospero and Caliban dynamic. While the character of Caliban has been resurrected from his 'monstrous' beginnings as a hallmark for the people of the Caribbean – a man who would be "taken up with pride" (Retamar 23) – Prospero's reputation throughout the region would grow to

be vastly different. That Shakespearean protagonist would come to be the bearer of Old World emblems: its habits, its traditions, and especially, its oppressive tendencies. He would be vilified as a pseudo-slave driver representative of the harsh colonial powers; an “old cancer” whose “vocation is to hassle” (Césaire 64-65). But in the midst of feverish independence movements, his persona would be deemed unfit in the new societies: “The world from which our reciprocal ways of seeing have sprung was once Prospero’s world,” writes Lamming. “It is no longer his” (*Pleasures* 203). Throughout the Caribbean, the widely employed tactic of renouncing “Prospero’s world” and the traits he came to stand for has since been dubbed the “deprivileging of Prospero.”³

But while Shakespeare’s play offers Caribbean writers opportunities for cultural contemplations in the face of decolonization, Prospero’s ascendancy would forever linger. Lamming would write that the legacy imbued by Prospero’s language forever forces those writers (“Calibans”) to worship in Prospero’s “temple of endeavour” (*Pleasures* 15). This inevitable and lasting influence of European language and culture upon subjects in the Caribbean is now understood as both infamous and burdensome. It is perhaps most fittingly epitomized, as many have previously suggested, by Caliban’s damnation of Prospero’s ‘teachings’ in the original Shakespearean play:

You taught me language, and my profit on’t
Is, I know how to curse. The red plague rid you
For learning me your language! (26-27).

This so-called “curse” has allowed Paget Henry to write that *The Tempest* still remains among “the most enduring accounts of the refiguring of Caribbean identities” due to longstanding

³ Chantal Zabus coins this phrase in her illuminating analytical compendium of *Tempest* appropriations in *Tempests After Shakespeare* (2002). The phrase is employed alongside the “rise of Caliban,” where rewrites of the play typically suggest that “Prospero’s myth of supremacy has to be exploded for Caliban to gain some degree of independence” (9, 92). Zabus writes that the Prospero figure “got pathologized...and then ultimately bludgeoned” by writers from colonized countries who felt he came to represent “colonial sets of ideas.”

“colonial and postcolonial enmeshments in Prospero’s projects of absolute control” (4, 278). Despite the ongoing “deprivileging” of these projects, for too long now the critical reception of the early Anglophone Caribbean literature that would come to make up what C. L. R. James cites as the “West Indian renaissance” (*Beyond a Boundary* 146, 159) has remained wed to the colonial stigmas found in *The Tempest*. Granted, there is nary a writer from the Caribbean who hasn’t inevitably confronted the subject of Caliban’s shackles, or of Prospero’s hegemony, or even of Miranda’s “stifled” speech (Wynter “Afterword” 363).⁴ Shakespeare’s last play is, quite frankly, a staple within the genre of early Caribbean writing. However, while the play has long represented a site out of which writers could “articulate colonial relations” and “launch anticolonial responses” (Goldberg 3), its prevalence in the region’s literature has almost seemed to put a harness on critics who might be tempted to look elsewhere for other literary motifs. For decades, ulterior influences and aspects of Caribbean writing would be neglected, partially due to those metaphoric themes in *The Tempest*, which privilege a certain kind of colonial binary. Initial reviews of the new genre of Caribbean poetry and fiction that burst onto the literary scene in the 1950s would suggest a near-obsession with this colonizer/colonized theme. Sylvia Wynter recognized the neglect paid to other influences and aspects of Caribbean writing by noting the “over-emphasis on the European facet” (“We Must Learn” 312), and Lamming would adamantly add that it never occurred to European critics that West Indian writing might be deeply engaged with other cultures far removed from this colonial bond (*Pleasures* 29).

⁴ There is a massive swath of literature which considers the play’s Caribbean contexts. While Zabuz generally focuses on worldwide encounters with *The Tempest*, texts like Jonathan Goldberg’s *Tempest in the Caribbean* (2004) offers a concise summary and a concerted analysis of the literary interaction which would result from Caribbean readings of Shakespeare’s play. Writers like George Lamming (in *The Pleasures of Exile and Water with Berries*), Aimé Césaire (in *Une Tempête*), and Sylvia Wynter (in “Beyond Miranda’s Meanings: Un/silencing the ‘Demonic Ground’ of Caliban’s ‘Woman’”) offer extended analyses and appropriations of the play. Other writers, like C. L. R. James (in the preface to *Beyond a Boundary*), and Kamau Brathwaite (in multiple poems called “Caliban”) offer more concise interactions. For further reading on this general literary tendency, I would suggest beginning with Golderberg’s text and also *The Tempest’ and Its Travels* (2000), edited by Peter Hulme and William H. Sherman.

While the sustained attention given to *Tempest* motifs acts almost like a form of literary therapy – a remedial need to reconcile the remaining residue of the longstanding colonial relation – Caribbean writers have simultaneously sought out other literary inspirations. But it wouldn't be until the late 1960s and early 1970s – two full decades after the emergence of an identifiable body of Anglophone Caribbean literature – in which scholars would begin to trace the alternate influences of which Lamming and his fellow writers were both calling for and actively seeking out. Edward Kamau Brathwaite, one of the early proponents of this project, would argue that these other literary influences and themes were bound to “remain obscure” unless critics would unearth and explore them (“African Presence” 73). Brathwaite's challenge was rendered nearly four decades ago; and while many of the so-called “blind spots” of Caribbean literary studies have since been sketched out by critics, the “American” presence throughout the genre has indeed remained untended and obscure.⁵ This dissertation is thus an attempt to flush out some of these obscurities, and it parallels what C. L. R. James would desire in that transcendental preface which begins *Beyond a Boundary*: in asserting that European reliance could not forever remain, it would be a necessity, James quips, for the Caribbean individual to “pioneer” into new and unknown regions beyond the Old World of Shakespeare.

This insistence has a long history throughout the Western Hemisphere. In “Nuestra América,” for example, Martí doesn't specifically cite *The Tempest* nor its usurped king, but he does allude to the same Old World emblems that Prospero would come to represent, and insists that those be trumped in favor of more parochial ones: “The European university must bow to

⁵ Alison Donnell's latest text, *Twentieth-Century Caribbean Literature: Critical Moments in Anglophone Literary History* (2006), as described by Shalini Puri, “amounts to nothing less than a radical challenge to the canon of Caribbean literature and its repressions. It is the only comprehensive sketch of all the major blind spots of Caribbean literary history and criticism, identifying and correcting not only the exclusions of nationalist canons, but also of post-nationalist and feminist ones” (ii). I point this passage out not to quibble with it, but rather to accentuate the long-time arrested development of the field's ability to look beyond its earliest interpretations.

the American university,” Martí suggests. “Our Greece must take priority over the Greece which is not ours” (88). While provincial creation would be necessary to shed Prospero’s metaphorical dominance, it could be also be tempered by a redirection of one’s intellectual and psychological orbit. During the embryonic stages of this “deprivileging” phase throughout the Caribbean, George Lamming would contemplate exemplary models of creative writing and cultural inspiration *not* located in the metropole. For example, *The Pleasures of Exile* initiates an uplifting of the West Indian peasant; Lamming looks “in and down at what had been traditionally ignored” (39) in an attempt to restore a Caribbean identity obscured by misunderstanding and neglect. Lamming would also visit Ghana and Nigeria, where he would attempt to synthesize his childhood’s “fragments of rumour and fantasy” (161) with his literal and metaphysical heritage as a black West Indian. And inevitably, in the years following the Second World War, Lamming’s project would also lead him to the United States of America, a country which benefited from a new global standing following its role in the Allied victory. Upon discovering that nation’s mid-nineteenth century literature, Lamming would find in it substantial similarities with the Anglophone Caribbean texts that he and his fellow generation of newly emergent writers were busy crafting. It would be a notable curiosity to Lamming that the majority of these writers – those like Samuel Selvon, Andrew Salkey, Vic Reid, Jan Carew, Edgar Mittelholzer, Neville Dawes, and Roger Mais⁶ – would come to develop a prose that seemingly went against the grain of their colonial education. Rather, their artistic focus upon the West Indian common man and peasant – and their ‘unrefined’ vernacular – would cause Lamming to suggest parallels with certain American writers; they “move nearer to Mark Twain,” Lamming asserts (38).

⁶ Lamming cites these seven authors in *The Pleasures of Exile* (p. 38), and while the focus of my project is upon the more-widely read Lamming, James, Naipaul, and Wynter, the authors cited here certainly have significance, some of whom are discussed in greater detail in Chapter 2.

That Caribbean movement toward Mark Twain is the premise of this project. Lamming's bold assertion that "the West Indian novel, particularly in the aspect of idiom, cannot be understood unless you take a good look at the American nineteenth century, a good look at Melville, Whitman, and Mark Twain" (29) has been vastly neglected. While *The Pleasures of Exile* has received consistent and widespread attention in its half-century lifespan, critics of that seminal text disregard the alignment with aspects of American culture that not only concludes it, but intends to initiate a whole new critical understanding of Caribbean literature, *writ large*. For example, one of the most acclaimed and long-standing of all Lamming critics – Sandra Pouchet Paquet⁷ – recognizes Lamming's attempts of creating "new possibilities for the future" in breaking from the shadow of the colonial past (3). However, like most Lamming readers, Paquet privileges the Prospero/Caliban trope, and pays little attention to what seems to be a seminal suggestion throughout *The Pleasures of Exile*: that in the midst of creating their own literature – one they could explicitly call "*Ours*" – Caribbean novelists and poets would share sentiments with an American spirit that emerged in literary form in the mid-nineteenth century. "We are pro-Whitman and pro-Melville and pro-Mark Twain," Lamming asserts. "We don't mind worshipping in that kind of cathedral; for there is a possibility—indeed, more than a possibility—that we will introduce some new psalms" (153-154).

A shared hemispheric spirit and the need for an introduction of "new psalms" is what led José Martí to craft "Nuestra América"; and not surprisingly, he too would tout certain pro-American literary sentiments. Martí would write that it is of utmost importance that "our America" show itself "as it is, one in spirit and intent, swift conquerors of a suffocating past" (93). This ambition to claim one's New World future (away from Europe) has an especially

⁷ In March of 2011 Paquet's work was recognized at the University of Miami at an event titled, "The Present Future of Caribbean Literary and Cultural Studies: An Academic Symposium in Honor of Sandra Pouchet Paquet." George Lamming, in fact, gave the keynote address.

significant premise among writers of the nineteenth century U.S., and perhaps no individual makes a more concerted case for this reclamation than Ralph Waldo Emerson. As many commentators have already noted, Martí was no stranger to the work of that American transcendentalist.⁸ Long-time Martí scholar Philip Foner observes that Martí was “convinced that to anyone interested in the life and mind and imagination of *America*, Ralph Waldo Emerson is indispensable”; because, simply, Emerson represented a “complete independence of mind from the chains of the past” (19, my emphasis). Following Emerson’s death in 1882, Martí would write an ode to the “Marvellous old man” in which he all but anointed Emerson the most exemplary thinker and writer of this new hemispheric spirit (“Emerson” 167). Emerson’s influence upon “Nuestra América” is quite apparent, allowing Giles to suggest the essay is “characteristically Emersonian in its pragmatic appropriation of alien territory in the interests of domestic responsibilities” (188). Indeed, Emerson would forge his own “Our America” moment in the form of that impassioned talk given to students at Harvard in 1837; due to its stern insistence on the ‘deprivileging’ of Europe’s “iron lid” hold upon U.S. thought and culture, “The American Scholar” speech has since been dubbed America’s literary and intellectual “declaration of independence” (Holmes qtd. in Cheever 34).

It is well known that the decades following Emerson’s call for American intellectual autonomy would eventually be dubbed by F. O. Matthiessen as “the American Renaissance.” Heralded as “one extraordinarily concentrated moment of expression” (vii), the United States in the middle of the nineteenth century would witness the robust publication of a large handful of

⁸ Martí’s own most explicit writing on Emerson comes in an essay (simply titled, “Emerson”) published in *La Opinión Nacional* in 1882 shortly after Emerson’s death. But as Philip S. Foner notes, “The number of other tributes, comments in his notebooks, references in many of his articles, and translations of several poems and fragments of verse by Emerson, reveal that Martí devoted more time, effort, and interest to Emerson than to any other North American author” (Introduction 18). For comparative analyses between their writings, see Giles “The Parallel Worlds of José Martí” (pp. 188-190); or, Lomas’ chapter called “The ‘Evening of Emerson’: Martí’s Double Consciousness” (pp. 130-176) in *Translating Empire* (2008).

its so-called “masterpieces” all within a small window of time. And yet, much like the genre of the Anglophone Caribbean literature which was to emerge the following century in its own “extraordinarily concentrated moment,” American literature – as a recognizable genre in its own right – would have to evolve under the “suffocating” legacy of European literary domination. British reviewer Sydney Smith’s infamous, early nineteenth-century one-liner encapsulates the sentiments under which this American literature would have to grow: “In the four quarters of the globe,” Smith asks, “who reads an American book?” (qtd. in Buell 416).

There is a long and exhaustive tradition which apprehends this literary intimidation (which is often paired with accusations of imitation) of British literature by American writers in the early- and mid-nineteenth century. D. H. Lawrence, who cited the Prospero/Caliban dynamic as a metaphor for this relation, would recognize that, despite the nineteenth century maturation of a literature made within the United States, “there sits the old master, over in Europe. Like a parent. Somewhere deep in every American heart lies a rebellion against the old parenthood of Europe. Yet no American feels he has completely escaped its mastery” (10). Robert Weisbuch thus makes the case that the American writer in the nineteenth century inevitably, much like Caliban, “begins from a defensive position”; Weisbuch adds that “the achievements of British literature and British national life are the chief intimidations against which” American writers must initially defend themselves (xii). Like Martí, who also felt this intellectual burden, Emerson would insist that Americans had “listened too long to the courtly muses of Europe” (70). “Our day of dependence, our long apprenticeship to the learning of other lands,” he ceremonially asserts, “draws to a close” (53). Echoing a similar new era for his own region, C. L. R. James would famously quip in that aforementioned preface, “To establish his own identity, Caliban, after three centuries, must himself pioneer into regions Caesar never knew.”

While the institutional contexts under which the “renaissance” literatures of both the U.S. and the Anglophone Caribbean came to fruition share certain semblances, the main focus of this project is upon the similarly resultant rhetoric of both. Specifically, it is the “aspect of idiom,” writes Lamming, which joins his fellow Caribbean writers with the likes of Melville, Whitman, and Twain. As of this writing, however, no critic has questioned the significance of this supposed relationship (despite ‘idiom’ having much significance in both regions’ fiction and literary criticism). As a literary term, “idiom” is one that is both complicated and yet taken for granted throughout the critical world.⁹ It is most often used – and loosely, at that – to describe one’s literary disposition and/or linguistic presentation. We might see it used to refer to the spoken vernacular of Twain’s fictional characters; certain soliloquies in *Huckleberry Finn*, for example, display “what heights Huck’s idiom of speech is capable of achieving” (Frantz, Jr. 317). Or it may be used to note an author’s personal writing style; “The verbal elements which combine in the idiom of Herman Melville...make his ‘bold and nervous, lofty’ language a dynamic, many-leveled, artistic medium of expression” (Babcock 254). Yet idiom is also used to describe the nuanced language of larger communities; writing on behalf of *The Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms*, Chris Baldick notes that idiom is oftentimes loosely applied to “any style or manner of writing that is characteristic of a particular group or movement” (164). William Carlos Williams, for example, often referred to his tendency to speak and write in the “American idiom.” The “idiom spoken in America,” he would argue, “is not taught in our

⁹ Many – if not the majority of – contemporary critical dictionaries and glossaries fail to include an entry for the term “idiom.” Widely published texts like *The Bedford Glossary of Critical and Literary Terms* (1998 & 2009), *The Routledge Dictionary of Literary Terms* (2006), Frank Lentricchia & Thomas McLaughlin’s *Critical Terms for Literary Study* (1990 & 1995), & Julian Wolfreys’ *Critical Keywords in Literary and Cultural Theory* (2004) are just a small example of publications which, while covering literary terms and definitions, neglect the word “idiom.”

schools but is the property of men and women” (39). Referring to it as a colloquial nation language, Williams adds:

The American idiom is the language we speak in the United States. It is characterized by certain differences from the language used among cultured Englishmen, being completely free from all influences which can be summed up as having to do with “the Establishment”. This, pared to essentials, is the language which governed Walt Whitman in his choice of words. It constituted a revolution in the language (144).

Jonathan Arac suggests that a Whitmanesque idiom like this – latent with new words and inflections, abandoning what one might consider “proper” English – qualifies as a “creolized” American English. Arac notes it is greatly distinct from ‘overseas’ English, or, the more formal version which served as the long-time “standard of literary language” (49). This linguistic distinction of course plays a significant role throughout the Caribbean, discussed most notably in Brathwaite’s *The History of the Voice*. While that 1979 lecture (published five years later and subtitled “The Development of Nation Language in Anglophone Caribbean Poetry”), doesn’t specifically use the term “idiom,” it does contemplate “The process of using English in a different way from the ‘norm’. English in a new sense” (5).

Despite Brathwaite’s project to apprehend this new literary technique, Sarah Lawson Welsh – stopping just short of citing *The Tempest* – contends that the attention given to the language of West Indian literature has often been overshadowed by its participation in a “cross-cultural encounter of texts and minds in the metropole” (262). In her PhD dissertation for the University of Warwick (published later, in parts, in the *Routledge Reader in Caribbean Literature*), Welsh attempts to resuscitate the centrality of creole language in Caribbean writing, and gives special attention to the so-called “problem of idiom.” That specific phrase is culled from an anonymous, late-fifties review in the *Times Literary Supplement* of Samuel Selvon’s *Ways of Sunlight*, in which the reviewer offers the following critique:

In this new book...[Selvon] writes at moments in the West Indian rhythm, at others as a cultivated Englishman might write. The two idioms are not always happy together, but the problem is a real one: Mr. Selvon is attempting to become a dual character without losing the bright individuality of his origins, and unless he narrows his range artificially, or returns to the West Indies, he has no alternative. The problem of idiom can only increase, as the circle of his own identity expands ("Sunlight and Shadow" 57).

As Welsh notes, similar reviews from the period tend to highlight the metropolitan troubles in fully comprehending this distinct West Indian literary form; that it was oftentimes obscure and alien to British readers, essentially highlighting the 'otherness' of these newly-published Caribbean texts (263). The reviews Welsh cites often seem to equate "idiom" with authorial style and dialogical dialect. In fact, this was a common tendency at the time; for example, a latter review of Naipaul's *Miguel Street* notes, "A particular delight of Mr. Naipaul's writing is the dialogue. The West Indian idiom in his hands is full of colour and a rich Elizabethan disregard for conventional correctness" ("Street Scene" 237).¹⁰

The 1950s would also mark for the U.S. a critical concern with the so-called American idiom. As Leo Marx points out in "The Vernacular Tradition in American Literature" (1958), from the very beginning, American novelists had little trouble finding American subject matter, but struggled to find a voice, a "mode appropriate to its expression" (3). It wouldn't be until Twain and Whitman appeared whereby "the literary usefulness of the native idiom" would be established (4). While Marx's take on idiom is quite nuanced (this is discussed in Chapter 5), in the postwar years, a newly emergent group of critics looked to interrogate America's nineteenth century literature in an attempt to locate, understand, and flaunt a written language and literary style which would be unique to the U.S. As Arac and many others have noted, this push became

¹⁰ While Welsh and her co-editor, Alison Donnell, make note of the experimental and poetic barrackyard and/or creole idiom(s) which emerged in this era, it is worth noting that Lamming's specific "aspect of idiom" comment is neglected. In fact, the *Reader* reprints portions of the chapter from *The Pleasures of Exile* ("The Occasion for Speaking") where Lamming puts forth his argument on idiom; the section of that chapter where he compares West Indian writing to Melville, Whitman and Twain, however, is ominously omitted from that which is used in the *Reader*.

a way to define bounds, setting up American literature opposite the more proper English, and contributed to the “remaking of American culture” which followed the War (48-50).

While this focus upon idiom was a seemingly fashionable aspect of literary criticism in the 1950s, the so-called “problem of idiom” remains. In fact, Welsh suggests that these critiques – much like that aforementioned *Times Literary Supplement* review of Selvon – reveal a mid-century critical unwillingness to “envisage a positive inflection to the cross-cultural mappings of diasporic experience...and the possibility of multiple ‘belongings’” (264). While Welsh offers a substantial point in the face of transnational studies in her debunking of strict, nation-based idioms, how they operate *diasporically* actually proves to be a difficult, if not paradoxical, conception. In a technical sense, *an* idiom refers to a phrase which conveys a meaning different than its actual succession of words may suggest. Like, for example, “bite the bullet,” or, “bringing home the bacon”; neither saying actually means what they literally suggest. In this sense, idioms have the tendency of being culturally divisive. For example, telling a new speaker of the English language to “take the bull by the horns” is likely to be met with utter confusion (or, something much different if the recipient of the phrase just so happens to be a matador). Even for native speakers of the same language, however, certain idioms don’t play across cultural boundaries. The phrase “Hail Mary” has a drastically different meaning for a Catholic than it does for a football quarterback; thus, knowing the idiom – in its cultural context – grants access to knowing something about that particular community. Idioms can exhibit, writes Arac, “not what is common, but what is peculiar or particular to a *closed* group” (48, my emphasis). In this scenario, the so-called “problem of idiom” simply highlights the cultural incompatibilities between the aforementioned “West Indian rhythm” and the more “cultivated” English. If idioms operate as strict, cultural access points closed to outsiders, how might Lamming’s “aspect of

idiom” bridge the mid-twentieth century Anglophone Caribbean novel with the literature of the United States from a century prior? How might a colonial Trinidadian like James share an idiom with an American poet like Whitman? Or a student of dance and Spanish literature like Wynter align with the prose of a nineteenth century seafarer like Melville? How might this “problem of idiom” be resolved when contemplating transnational figures?

Welsh, for one, makes the case that Selvon doesn’t necessarily have to choose one idiom or the other, but rather, that he is a hybrid, polyglot writer. While this perspective fits with the current state of transnational studies and elucidates the nation-based premises under which most writers of criticism were coming from in the 1950s, it still remains somewhat problematic. If idioms reveal peculiarities unique to specific cultures, Selvon’s supposedly polyglot idiom does, in fact, create a problem for those British or Caribbean readers who aren’t dual-members like he is. In other words, while Welsh fixes this “problem” under transmigrant contexts, in doing so, she undermines the very aspect of idiom which constitutes its very being: rhetorical signifiers belonging to closed groups. Despite Selvon’s own multiple belongings, his use of idiom inevitably alienates members of either/or, as proven by the critiques which admit confusion in understanding his oscillating literary languages.

In any case, Lamming’s own “aspect of idiom” has an interesting relation to this so-called “problem.” In *Pleasures*, aside from the comparison of the West Indian novel and that of the American nineteenth century, the word “idiom” is only used on one other occasion. When discussing his fictional trio of Singh, Lee, and Bob – boys whose ancestors hail from India, China, and Africa, respectively, and who serve as the thread which interconnect many of his novels – Lamming writes that, “They might have come from three different parts of the world. Yet they speak the same idiom” (18). Whereas Welsh might point out the multiple idioms

spoken by the boys given their various memberships (for Singh: Indian *and* West Indian, for example), Lamming instead notes their common ground. When together, their West Indianness trumps their ancestral backgrounds; Lamming notes their *shared* idiom. This, inevitably, relates to his notion of a shared literary idiom between the U.S and Caribbean. Much like his trio of San Cristobal¹¹ boys, it would seem that Lamming suggest that the gaggle of writers including Melville, Selvon, Twain, Mais, and others, have identified a *monoglot* idiom that is unique to the so-called “cathedral” which houses the literature of the Americas. Using the works of Lamming and his contemporaries, I intend to show how their Anglophone Caribbean writing shares rhetorical commonplace with the likes of nineteenth century American writers, and both can be retrofitted under this Martían signification of “Our America.”

In making this case, however, my argument ultimately has to confront the troublesome project involving the “remaking of American culture” that Arac mentions above. After all, Lamming would make his case for a shared “aspect of idiom” at a watershed moment for American cultural and literary historiography. As Leo Marx remembers, following the Second World War (and in advance of the Cold War), it was just the right moment for he and his fellow critical contemporaries to “provide the prospective [American] superpower with such valuable cultural resources as, for example, a major national literature” (“On Recovering” 121).¹² The project of the myth and symbol school critics, as they would come to be called, would thus be to discern America’s literature and, according to “paradigms of convergence and consensus,” writes Giles (*Virtual* 7), tout writers and texts which would be emblematic of this newly rechristened postwar American nation. As students of American literary studies well know, the “Our America” that the myth and symbol critics concocted would inevitably be an exclusionary one.

¹¹ San Cristobal is the fictional Caribbean island on which many of Lamming’s novels take place.

¹² In the decades leading up World War II, a criticism dedicated specifically to the study of America’s literature was quite sparse. This is discussed in greater detail in Chapter 3.

Those critics themselves, and the nineteenth century writers they handpicked as emblematic representations of this uniquely American writing, were overtly homogenous. Claiming to have discovered a “native [literary] idiom” (we’ll certainly address this blatant err in latter chapters), critics like Marx, Matthiessen, Lionel Trilling, and Richard Chase, among many others – writing about Emerson, Whitman, Hawthorne, Melville and Twain – clearly exclude other (non-male, non-white) identities in their conception of this American literary language.

So if Lamming aligns himself with the idiom in American literature at a time in which its own institutional legitimization was being erected by the so-called myth and symbol critics, it potentially signals two concerns. First, that Lamming was either complicit with, or ignorant of, the way in which these critics erected their field around a homogenous group of writers representing a heterogeneous nation. And second, that the myth and symbol writers, despite the subsequent accusations of homogeneity and essentialism levied against their school of thought, had (unintentionally, perhaps) identified a literary style which had *extranational* currency outside of their *domestic* project. Both of these issues tend to highlight the institutionally-driven, and inevitably faulty *ethos* of nation-based literary canon building. In contemporary contexts, early drafts of both the Anglophone Caribbean and American canons have proven to be insufficient representations for which they claim to exemplify. Ironically, however – like the “problem of idiom” – this troubled process of making a national tradition results in a *transnational* literary commonplace between the U.S. and the Caribbean. While I certainly won’t excuse the errs of the myth and symbol school, I do hope to show that their seemingly homogenous and exclusionary project of canon-building is ultimately synchronous with the same project subsequently undertaken in the Anglophone Caribbean.

As such, my focus throughout this project is upon this neglected literary relation, and how it offers contemporary critics a new cross-cultural nexus for contemplating national literatures in transnational contexts. While the Caribbean flirtation with aspects of American literature maintains center stage throughout the majority of this project, it would be naive to suggest that that this relation – ardently expressed – wouldn’t eventually prove to be fleeting. While I will address this eventual break, I am less concerned with the reasons this literary relation came to an end (Lamming, as discussed in Chapter 3, would markedly detail his own divergence from the United States in the introduction to the reprint of *In the Castle of My Skin*). Quite frankly, what seems all the more interesting to me is that brief moment in time in which Caribbean literature exploded onto the world scene, latent with contemplations of the literature of America’s previous century. My intention is to shed light on this neglected, though fascinating, literary affair.

Admittedly, the title of this dissertation – “Feeling American” – might seem like a dubious one given that its primary topic is that of the Anglophone Caribbean literature of the mid-twentieth century. Upon first glance, it may reek of yet another brash Americentric attempt of cultural colonization, or an insolent hijacking of another’s literary riches. Frankly-speaking, the last thing the literature of the Anglophone Caribbean needs is yet another “old and privileged” Prospero figure, absorbing the region’s art as its own, or just another part of the “commonwealth.” Critically-speaking, however, as I argue throughout the following dissertation, this is, to a certain extent, exactly what the Caribbean canon needs: re-

consideration, re-placement and re-contextualization within the structure of another ascendant dynamic: the liberal and curious confines of this notion of “Our America.”

The title of this project is a nod toward that bittersweet but ingenious short story written by Earl Lovelace. “Joebell and America,” which traces a young Trinidadian’s determination to swindle his way into the United States by “talking Yankee” to border officials underscores something of a transnational rhetoric which is not only readily apparent throughout the early literature of the Anglophone Caribbean, but has been all but ignored. While “Joebell and America” is latent with sarcasm, full of jabs at naive Trinidadians and an American culture obsessed with television, I intend to show how it participates in the reification of the remaking of culture which would take place in the era some have called “the American moment.” For that brief moment in time, the Caribbean could see themselves as a participant in this construction. Of course, it didn’t quite turn out that way, which might be among the reasons Caribbean interests in American literature have been relatively ignored by critics. But the reality is that *multiple* writers in the Caribbean turned their attention to the literature and culture of the United States throughout the 1950s and 60s, and this project attempts to scrutinize this curious and neglected era. It does not claim to be comprehensive; nor does it presume to have discernable answers. In sum, this dissertation is an attempt to create – and quantify – a critical space in which American and Anglophone Caribbean literatures can cohabit. While it is the tendency of transnational studies to elicit and encourage such conjugations, these pairs have been *isolatoes* for far too long.

Chapter 2 begins by tracing the historical contexts under which the Anglophone Caribbean would launch its literary encounter with “America.” Despite close proximity, cultural interaction between the U.S. and the Caribbean was, for a long time, unusually sparse. While the

transatlantic triangular trade would link North America and the Caribbean, it wouldn't be until the Spanish-American War in which sustained economic, political, military, and cultural engagements between both regions would begin to gain consistent traction. The tenets of the Monroe Doctrine and the Treaty of Paris would give the U.S. reason to keep a watchful eye on the Caribbean throughout the early years of the twentieth century. The Banana Wars¹³ and the building of the Panama Canal would put American and Caribbean individuals either side-by-side or face-to-face, and would initiate a co-mingling of cultures.¹⁴ These new interactions would also foster greater migration between regions. By 1940 it is estimated that upwards of 100,000 West Indians were living in the U.S., with most residing in New York City where they would play a significant role in spurring the Harlem Renaissance movement (J. Parker 16). Additionally, U.S. economic investments throughout the Caribbean region would lead to a steady influx of black American laborers, whose political influence is cited as giving a boost to the push for independence (Horne 84). Even still, despite their close proximity, the United States' generally-isolationist pre-War tendencies, paired with European hegemony throughout the Caribbean colonies kept both cultures relatively foreign to one another.

Beginning in the 1930s and 40s, however, after long being subject to strict cultural and colonial standards dictated by powers overseas, a new generation of promising Caribbean writers began seeking cultural alternatives in an attempt to help guide the creation of their own literary

¹³ Ivan Musicant writes that "the Banana Wars" is a colloquial term referring to U.S. economic and military interventions throughout Central America and the Caribbean in the first third of the twentieth century. While it doesn't refer to a specific island or time period, it has become a generally accepted way of referring to U.S./Caribbean interactions following the Spanish American War. For further reading, see his text, *The Banana Wars* (1990), or Lester D. Langley's text with the same name.

¹⁴ It should be noted, however, that while upwards of 20,000 Barbadians were recruited and contracted to assist in the building of the Canal, workers would arrive to find what David McCullough calls a "'Jim Crow' railroad" (472). While segregation was never enforced as law, it was generally accepted and largely practiced. Once recruited by the Americans, and having passed a medical physical, black Barbadian workers would arrive in Panama to do the most grueling of labor: digging ditches, clearing brush, carrying lumber, handling dynamite, and pouring cement. Cultural interaction was quite limited after the recruiting stage; black Barbadian families had their own housing communities and attended separate mess halls, hospitals, and schools. For more on the general history of the Canal's construction, see McCullough and/or M. Parker. For details on social and laborer conditions, see Greene.

niche. As documented by Reinhard Sander, reading groups and regional journals – both of which often promoted locally-made writing – would foster an appetite bent on expanding the colonial confines which previously inhibited creative writing and thought. As these small outlets grew, so did the desire for an engagement with other cultures. World War II would thus mark the watershed moment in which many Caribbean islands and individuals would begin an earnest flirtation with American ideas and products that would eventually grow into a full-fledged cultural re-making. U.S. soldiers stationed on Caribbean islands would disseminate various products of American culture – music, fashion, movies, literature, personality traits, dialect, bigotry and racism – all of which would offer new modalities for the Caribbean writer looking to capture a changing era and attitude. While historians have yielded manifold publications on this topic, literary critics have yet to interrogate the attention that ensuing Anglophone Caribbean writers would give to these newly-received American imports.¹⁵ In fact, there are few writers from this mid-century generation who *don't* discuss the impacts of the new American presence. Novels like Selvon's *A Brighter Sun*, Naipaul's *Miguel Street*, and especially Ralph de Boissière's *Rum and Coca-Cola*, all describe the culture clash that was newly underway. As such, this opening chapter will explore the literary contexts which lead to and result from this new and unique relation.

Chapter 3 takes four of the region's most seminal writers – George Lamming, C. L. R. James, Sylvia Wynter, and V. S. Naipaul – and considers their writings under Lamming's notion that the Anglophone Caribbean novel “cannot be understood unless you take a good look at the

¹⁵ The past decade, especially, has seen a windfall of texts published concerning mid-century U.S./Caribbean interactions. Gerald Horne's *Cold War in a Hot Zone: The United States Confronts Labor and Independence Struggles in the British West Indies* (2007), Harvey R. Neptune's *Caliban and the Yankees: Trinidad and the United States Occupation* (2007), and Jason C. Parker's *Brother's Keeper: The United States, Race, and Empire in the British Caribbean, 1937-1962* (2008) are all discussed in Chapter 1. Other recently-published texts include Alan McPherson's *Yankee No! Anti-Americanism in U.S.-Latin American Relations* (2003), Michael Grow's *U.S. Presidents and Latin American Interventions: Pursuing Regime Change in the Cold War* (2008) and Alex von Tunzelmann's *Red Heat: Conspiracy, Murder, and the Cold War in the Caribbean* (2011).

American nineteenth century” (*Pleasures* 29). This chapter offers a textual inventory of the various Caribbean citations made toward that American trio of Melville, Whitman, and Twain, and how it was that their texts found their way into such Caribbean classics like *The Pleasures of Exile*, *The Hills of Hebron*, and *A House for Mr. Biswas*. Given that James, Lamming, Naipaul, and Wynter were surely not reading these American authors in colonial secondary education systems, this chapter also investigates the premises under which American books would come to occupy Caribbean bookshelves. As such, this chapter highlights the means through which this transaction occurred – i.e., Lamming’s first visit to the United States, or James’s bedridden discovery of *Moby-Dick* – and how these discoveries would eventually launch a textual dialogue which, despite being all but ignored, begs critical attention. It is no coincidence that the canonical texts of these four Caribbean writers all make *repeated* references to the same batch of writers from the American nineteenth century. This phenomenon offers critics of both Caribbean and American studies a new means for apprehending the literatures of both regions. This chapter is thus an attempt to flush out the instances under which this literary relation would develop.

Chapter 4 begins to interrogate the reasons why Lamming would gravitate specifically toward the American renaissance. By aligning Anglophone Caribbean writers with their contemporary critical counterparts in the U.S. – the pioneers of the American studies movement (otherwise known as the myth and symbol school critics) – it can be seen how both groups relate in their participation in the making of a nationalist literary tradition. The process by which America’s literature underwent canonization is clearly among the most alluring reasons Lamming and fellow Caribbean writers would align themselves with it. Following World War II, critics like F. O. Matthiessen, Henry Nash Smith, Lionel Trilling, Leo Marx and R. W. B. Lewis (to name but a few) attempted to identify “American literature” by distinguishing its

unique and exceptional traits while simultaneously seeking an answer to the elusive question, “What is an American?”¹⁶ This search, however, would prove to be problematic, for the errs of America’s early literary critics allowed Toni Morrison to note that U.S. literature was, for a long time, the exclusive “preserve of white male views” (5). Critics in the 1970s and 80s were thus busy opening up the once-exclusionary canon to women, Native American, Asian American, and African American writers. By the 1990s (and continuing into the present century), critics went even further, calling for the disruption of national boundaries as the dictator of what constitutes American literature. These revisions have coalesced into the so-called *new* American studies, allowing Malini Johar Schueller to announce that the original “period of critical isolationism and exceptionalism in American studies is over” (173).

However, Caribbean interests in this American “period” might give us pause in announcing the era’s passing, for it offers contemporary critics a unique transnational exchange in the face of this so-called isolationism. It is no coincidence that Lamming and James would apprehend America’s literature at the same time in which its institutional legitimization was being erected. In sum, the work of Whitman, Twain, and Melville – and the ways in which 1950s critics understood their work in contemporary social contexts – provided a national guidebook for artists writing about their Caribbean homes. This chapter will thus address the transnational aspects of the deliberate *nationalist* project of canonization, and how in both the U.S. and Caribbean, the university emerges out of historical forces and institutional agendas as a mouthpiece for provincial literary studies. The myth and symbol writers developed and authorized a national literary tradition amidst forces begging for its creation, providing writers and critics in the Caribbean a template for their own literary development. Despite legitimate

¹⁶ Henry Nash Smith begins *Virgin Land* with this very question, one once posed by “St. John de Crèvecoeur before the Revolution, and...repeated by every generation from his time to ours” (3).

accusations of being homogenous and exclusionary, I argue that the myth and symbol school's nationalist-based readings of America's so-called literary epics carry some rhetorical and political value in a transnational (or, pre-postcolonial¹⁷) literary climate.

Chapter 5 will complete this dissertation by arguing that this transnational exchange eventually participates in the rhetorical making of a post-national "Our America." In the 1950s and 60s, Caribbean writers can be seen as reorienting their literature away from the colonial metropolis, and toward a postwar America. As I have previously noted, this is, ultimately, a fleeting impulse. The attention Caribbean writers give to the American moment following World War II is short-lived, eventually thwarted by the United States' own geo-political developments throughout the Caribbean region.¹⁸ However still, because the concerted efforts by cultural critics to "remake America" coincides with the emergence of an Anglophone Caribbean also looking to establish its literary identity, their convergence results in a momentary shared sense of spirit, one predicted by Martí a half century earlier. Martí's recognition of Emerson, Whitman, and Twain, followed by Lamming's "pro-Whitman and pro-Melville and pro-Mark Twain" assertion, signals that – despite growing U.S. imperialism (a force both Martí and Lamming were incredibly wary of within their own individual eras) – there is a Hemispheric yearning to contribute in this making of America.

¹⁷ Ella Shohat suggests this term to cope with certain contemporary problems relating to the ambivalence of the term, "post-colonial." She writes that "The 'colonial' in the 'post-colonial' tends to be relegated to the past and marked with a closure – an implied temporal border that undermines a potential oppositional thrust. For whatever the philosophical connotations of the 'post' as an ambiguous locus of continuities and discontinuities, its denotation of 'after' – the teleological lure of the 'post' – evokes a celebratory clearing of a conceptual space" (106). As we know, of course, the colonial remains long after the "post" is initiated. Thus, the seemingly oxymoronic use of *pre-post-colonial* not only negates relegation of the "colonial," but can also describe the temporal moment – and anti-colonial sentiments – which lead up to the eventual activation of the "post." It is the latter's emphasis on the progression to that moment to which I am especially referring to here.

¹⁸ Chapter 4 will dedicate space to this divorce; after James finished both *Mariners, Renegades and Castaways* and *American Civilization*, and after Lamming published *The Pleasures of Exile*, never again do either writer rekindle their affair with nineteenth century U.S. literature. Their interests in this era would be trumped by a handful of reasons, but perhaps none as significant as the "barbarism" fueled by U.S. imperial efforts and the spread of "capitalist consumerism" (Lamming, Introduction xlv-xlvi).

Ultimately, these assertions are rendered in a rhetoric which touts cultural distinction. By interrogating Lamming's "aspect of idiom" alongside Leo Marx's notion of the "vernacular tradition" in American writing, the literature of both regions can be seen as participating in a shared rhetoric rendered under the auspices of culture making. As discussed earlier, idiom (or idioms) connotes cultural unity, providing communities with a means of signifying their distinctiveness from others. The critical tendency to note "idiom" in America's literature was so common in the 1950s for the very reason that critics touted America's supposedly exceptional nature: for distinction. This tactic, albeit a very flawed one, would become the draw by which Caribbean writers can not only relate to America's renaissance literature, but also to *participate* in its cultural digestion.

Using Maurice Charland's notion of constitutive rhetoric, I argue how Lamming and his fellow generation Anglophone Caribbean writers – through idiom – align with a distinctively American *ethos* in attempts to assert their own identities, and ultimately, their own cultures. This chapter will accordingly focus upon the pan-nationalist aspects of this literary idiom, and how Caribbean writers would relate to and eventually (re)deploy it for their own local, national, and postnational needs. But because Caribbean colonials can interpret and understand the idiom of the American renaissance writers, it signals two things. On the one hand, it points to the powerful momentum of the American ideological project following the War. For example, in his attempt to "talk Yankee," Joebell's discernment that he, a Trinidadian, *feels* American signals the global reach this project of "remaking America" would have. On the other hand, Caribbean writers initiate a romance with America at the only time in which a transnational romance is possible: when cultural and literary critics, with sure blindspots in their periphery, can proclaim an embryonic and exceptional America imagined through the literary ideals of the writers from a

century prior. By the time the 1980s arrived, Lamming would write that American culture “spreads itself like a plague everywhere, capturing the simplest appetite with the fastest foods and nameless fripperies the advertising industry instructs us are essential needs.” Lamming suggests that “It is this obstacle the world of the ancestral spirit may not survive” (Introduction xlv-xlvi). That ancestral ‘spirit’ had been handed down from Martí’s generation to Lamming’s, for there is an incredible sense of transcultural optimism which permeates both “Nuestra América” and *The Pleasures of Exile*. Both anticipate postnational expectations which never quite come into fruition. But for that brief moment in time in the middle of the 1950s, however, Lamming – like Martí long before him – can apprehend a shared spirit in which the Caribbean and the U.S., both operating under the same *aspect of idiom*, can contribute to a singular hemispheric literary sentimentality. After all, the participation in the making of this sentiment is akin to the primary thesis found in Martí’s “Nuestra América” essay: “creation holds the key to salvation. ‘Create’ is the password of this generation” (92). The onus, of course, is to make “our” America.

This perspective previews the version of American studies that Shelly Fisher Fishkin would cite as its inevitable future: “As the transnational becomes more central to American studies, we’ll pay increasing attention to the historical roots of multidirectional flows of people, ideas, and goods and the social, political, linguistic, cultural, and economic crossroads generated in the process” (22). While Martí’s “Our America” has been contested under such rubrics, much of the early Anglophone Caribbean literature, despite its associations with this transnational project, remains unrecognized. In sum, this dissertation hopes to capture the “multidirectional flows” between both the U.S. and the Caribbean during that “concentrated moment of expression” in mid-twentieth century literary studies. The literature of the American

renaissance, the subsequent criticism of the myth and symbol school, and the cultural exchanges which result from World War II all allowed Caribbean artists to experiment with new customs and conventions which were previously inhibited under colonial contexts. Most importantly, however, the idiom offered by the likes of Twain, Whitman, and Melville, along with the rhetorical pliability of the term “America” during that brief moment in the 1950s would serve as a creative basis by which manifold Caribbean writers would, in constructing their own so-called “renaissance,” participate in a larger hemispheric hegemony. Through Lamming’s rendition of cross-cultural sentiments expressed through this American idiom, the literary Caribbean and U.S. converge in a sense that offers a new modality for literary critics working in either field. My hope is that, if anything, this dissertation helps open a critical space – that cathedral, if you will – in which these literary relatives can finally interact.

CHAPTER 1 CITED LITERATURE

- Allen, Esther. Afterword. *José Martí: Selected Writings*. Ed. and Trans. E. Allen. New York: Penguin, 2002. 415-418.
- Arac, Jonathan. "Whitman and the Problems of Vernacular." *Breaking Bounds: Whitman and American Cultural Studies*. Eds. Betsy Erkkila and Jay Grossman. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1996. 44-61.
- Babcock, C. Merton. "Melville's Proverbs of the Sea." *Western Folklore* 11.4 (Oct 1952): 254-265.
- Baldick, Chris. *The Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2008.
- Belnap, Jeffrey, and Raúl Fernández, eds. *José Martí's 'Our America': From National to Hemispheric Cultural Studies*. Durham: Duke UP, 1998.
- Brathwaite, Edward Kamau. "The African Presence in Caribbean Literature." *Daedalus* 103.2: Slavery, Colonialism, and Racism (Spring 1974): 73-109.
- . *History of the Voice: The Development of Nation Language in Anglophone Caribbean Poetry*. New Beacon: London, 1984.
- Buell, Lawrence. "American Literary Emergence as a Postcolonial Phenomenon." *American Literary History* 4.3 (Autumn 1992): 411-442.
- Césaire, Aimé. *A Tempest*. 1969. Trans. Richard Miller. New York: Editions du Seuil, 1992.
- Cheever, Susan. *American Bloomsbury: Louisa May Alcott, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Margaret Fuller, Nathaniel Hawthorne, and Henry David Thoreau: Their Lives, Their Loves, Their Work*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2006.
- Donnell, Alison. *Twentieth-Century Caribbean Literature: Critical Moments in Anglophone Literary History*. London: Routledge, 2006.
- Donnell, Alison, and Sarah Lawson Welsh, eds. *The Routledge Reader in Caribbean Literature*. Routledge: London, 1996.
- Emerson, Ralph Waldo. "The American Scholar." 1837. *Essays & Lectures*. Ed. Joel Porte. New York: Library of America, 1983. 51-71.
- Fishkin, Shelley Fisher. "Crossroads of Cultures: The Transnational Turn in American Studies—Presidential Address to the American Studies Association, November 12, 2004." *American Quarterly* 57.1 (Mar 2005): 17-57.
- Foner, Philip S. Introduction. *On Art and Literature: Critical Writings*. By José Martí. Ed. Foner. Trans. Elinor Randall. New York: Monthly Review, 1982. 13-33.

- Frantz, Jr., Ray W. "The Role of Folklore in *Huckleberry Finn*." *American Literature* 28.3 (Nov 1956): 314-327.
- Giles, Paul. "The Parallel Worlds of José Martí." *Radical History Review* 89 (2004): 185-190.
- . *Virtual Americas: Transnational Fictions and the Transatlantic Imaginary*. Durham: Duke UP, 2002.
- Goldberg, Jonathan. *Tempest in the Caribbean*. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 2004.
- Greene, Julie. *The Canal Builders: Making America's Empire at the Panama Canal*. New York: Penguin, 2009.
- Henry, Paget. *Caliban's Reason: Introducing Afro-Caribbean Philosophy*. New York: Routledge, 2000.
- Horne, Gerald. *Cold War in a Hot Zone: The United States Confronts Labor and Independence Struggles in the British West Indies*. Philadelphia: Temple UP, 2007.
- Hulme, Peter, and William H. Sherman, eds. *'The Tempest' and Its Travels*. London: Reaktion, 2000.
- James, C. L. R. *Beyond a Boundary*. 1963. London: Yellow Jersey, 2005.
- Lamming, George. Introduction. *In the Castle of My Skin*. By Lamming. 1983. Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P, 1991. xxxv-xlvi.
- . *The Pleasures of Exile*. 1960. Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P, 1992.
- Langley, Lester D. *The Banana Wars: United States Intervention in the Caribbean, 1898-1934*. 1983. Lexington: U of Kentucky P, 1985.
- Lawrence, D. H. *Studies in Classic American Literature*. 1923. London: Penguin, 1990.
- Lomas, Laura. *Translating Empire: José Martí, Migrant Latino Subjects, and American Modernities*. Durham: Duke UP, 2008.
- Lovelace, Earl. "Joebell and America." *A Brief Conversion and Other Stories*. Oxford: Heinemann, 1988. 111-124.
- Martí, José. "Emerson." *On Art and Literature: Critical Writings*. Ed. Philip S. Foner. Trans. Elinor Randall. New York: Monthly Review, 1982. 149-167.
- . "Our America." *Our America: Writings on Latin America and the Struggle for Cuban Independence*. Ed. Philip Foner. Trans. Elinor Randall. New York: Monthly Review, 1977. 84-94.
- Marx, Leo. "On Recovering the 'Ur' Theory of American Studies." *American Literary History* 17.1 (Spring 2005): 118-134.

- . "The Vernacular Tradition in American Literature: Walt Whitman and Mark Twain." 1958. *The Pilot and the Passenger: Essays on Literature, Technology, and Culture in the United States*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1988. 3-17.
- Matthiessen, F. O. *American Renaissance: Art and Expression in the Age of Emerson and Whitman*. 1941. London: Oxford UP, 1968.
- McCullough, David. *The Path Between the Seas: The Creation of the Panama Canal, 1870-1914*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1977.
- Mead, Matthew. "Empire Windrush: Cultural Memory and Archival Disturbance." *Moveable Type* 3 (2007): 112-128.
- Morrison, Toni. *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination*. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1992.
- Musicant, Ivan. *The Banana Wars: A History of United States Military Intervention in Latin American from the Spanish-American War to the Invasion of Panama*. New York: MacMillan, 1990.
- Nixon, Rob. "Caribbean and African Appropriations of 'The Tempest'." *Critical Inquiry* 13.3 (Spring 1987): 557-578.
- Paquet, Sandra Pouchet. *The Novels of George Lamming*. London: Heinemann, 1982.
- Parker, Jason C. *Brother's Keeper: The United States, Race, and Empire in the British Caribbean, 1937-1962*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2008.
- Parker, Matthew. *Panama Fever: The Epic Story of One of the Greatest Human Achievements of All Time—the Building of the Panama Canal*. New York: Doubleday, 2007.
- Phillips, Caryl. "The Pioneers: Fifty Years of Caribbean Migration to Britain." *A New World Order: Selected Essays*. London: Secker & Warburg, 2001. 264-282.
- Puri, Shalini. Rev of *Twentieth-Century Caribbean Literature*. By Alison Donnell. *Twentieth-Century Caribbean Literature: Critical Moments in Anglophone Literary History*. London: Routledge, 2006. ii.
- Retamar, Roberto Fernández. "Caliban: Notes towards a Discussion of Culture in Our America." Trans. Lynn Garafola, David Arthur McMurray, and Robert Márquez. *The Massachusetts Review* 15.1/2 (Winter/Spring 1974): 7-72.
- Saldívar, José David. *The Dialectics of Our America: Genealogy, Cultural Critique, and Literary History*. Durham: Duke UP, 1991.
- Schueller, Malini Johar. "Postcolonial American Studies." Rev. of *Postcolonial Theory and the United States: Race, Ethnicity, and Literature*, ed. by Amritjit Singh and Peter Schmidt,

- and *Postcolonial America*, ed. by C. Richard King. *American Literary History* 16.1 (2004): 162-175.
- Shakespeare, William. *The Tempest: A Case Study in Critical Controversy*. Eds. Gerald Graff and James Phelan. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2000.
- Shohat, Ella. "Notes on the 'Post-Colonial'." *Social Text* 31/32 (1992): 99-113.
- Smith, Henry Nash. *Virgin Land: The American West as Symbol and Myth*. 1950. New York: Vintage, 1970.
- "Street Scene." Rev. of *Miguel Street*, by V. S. Naipaul. *The Times Literary Supplement* 2,982 (24 Apr 1959): 237.
- "Sunlight and Shadow." Rev. of *Ways of Sunlight* by Samuel Selvon. *The Times Literary Supplement* 2,918 (31 Jan 1958): 57.
- Weisbuch, Robert. *Atlantic Double-Cross: American Literature and British Influence in the Age of Emerson*. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1986.
- Weiss, Timothy. "The Windrush generation." *The Cambridge Companion to the Twentieth-Century English Novel*. Ed. Robert L. Caserio. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2009. 163-175.
- Welsh, Sarah Lawson. "New Wine in New Bottles: The Critical Reception of West Indian Writing in Britain in the 1950s and Early 1960s." Extract from unpublished PhD dissertation, "Language and Literature in the Caribbean: Orality, Literacy and the 'Creole – Standard Debate'", University of Warwick, 1992. *The Routledge Reader in Caribbean Literature*. Eds. Alison Donnell and Welsh. Routledge: London, 1996. 261-268.
- Williams, William Carlos. *The American Idiom: A Correspondence*. Ed. John J. Wilson. San Francisco: Bright Tyger, 1990.
- Wynter, Sylvia. "Afterword: 'Beyond Miranda's Meanings: Un/silencing the 'Demonic Ground' of Caliban's 'Woman'.'" *Out of the Kumbla: Caribbean Women and Literature*. Ed. Carole Boyce Davies and Elaine Savory Fido. Trenton: Africa World, 1990. 355-372.
- . "We Must Learn to Sit Down Together and Discuss a Little Culture: Reflections on West Indian Writing and Criticism." *The Routledge Reader in Caribbean Literature*. Eds. Alison Donnell and Sarah Lawson Welsh. New York: Routledge, 1996. 307-315.
- Zabus, Chantal. *Tempests After Shakespeare*. New York: Palgrave, 2002.

CHAPTER 2

DISCOVERING AMERICA*The World War II Era in the Anglophone Caribbean*

There was a change in the economic and social life and outlook of Trinidadians in 1941. United States personnel arrived... (17).

Samuel Selvon's *A Brighter Sun*

To hell with Africa [and] to hell with Europe too, just call my blue black bloody spade a spade and kiss my ass. O-kay? So let's begin (29).

Kamau Brathwaite's *The Arrivants*

Brathwaite's poetical proclamation in *The Arrivants* comes on the heels of decades – centuries, even – in which the literary Caribbean has been considered and judged in extraneous contexts. Writers and poets much like Brathwaite have recognized – and written – that the Caribbean region's history has long been manipulated by Europeans, and the trajectory of colonialism would leave a residue well beyond the achievements of national independence. And in attempts to deflect that powerful trajectory, many of the same writers and poets would turn their attention away from the so-called “Mother Country” and toward the so-called “Mother Continent” of Africa in an effort to reconnect with the ancestral lineage which was once so

violently uprooted from there. Together, the continents of Africa and Europe combine to leave a cultural and historical wake whose ripples still resonate throughout the Caribbean islands today.

Brathwaite's poem – taken from one of the many preludes in his “New World Trilogy” – succinctly highlights the all-too-common tendency in which the Caribbean is discerned through interrogations with places far, far away. With regards to Europe, that habit and all of its repercussions is perhaps best exemplified by that iconic, infamous metaphor of Wordsworth's daffodil. Readers of Anglophone Caribbean literature most certainly know that this common, spring-blooming flower found in prevalence throughout the rocky hillsides of England has a literary significance unlike any other plant in the already green and plentiful West Indies. The little flower has come to emblemize a tumultuous history of displaced colonial rule; it represents the poetics of a language imposed upon classrooms of schoolchildren, and baffled – yet mesmerized – a generation of aspiring writers merely by its description in a poem. Despite this flower's ubiquitous presence throughout the Caribbean region, it would long remain a figment in the imagination in the minds of the hordes of individuals forced to read and recite the legendary poem which describes its mystique, for the daffodil does not grow there. “A pretty little flower, no doubt,” recalls Nobel laureate V. S. Naipaul, “but we had never seen it. Could [that] poem have any meaning *for us*?” (“Jasmine” 24, my emphasis).

Given the extensiveness of the Caribbean discourse which addresses that poem, the daffodil would certainly inherit a meaning, although one far different than the intentions under which it was originally introduced. The daffodil I speak of is of course lulled from William Wordsworth's 1804 poetic masterpiece, “I wandered lonely as a Cloud.” In it, the poet sings:

When all at once I saw a crowd
A host of golden Daffodils;
Beside the Lake, beneath the trees,
Ten thousand dancing in the breeze (303).

There are few poems written by Wordsworth – not to mention throughout the entire English language – that are better known. Written in response to a casual stroll throughout the English countryside, it was made a staple in the lesson plans of English-speaking Caribbean schoolchildren throughout the first half of the twentieth century, and has since become a relative sore spot, of sorts, for the artists who’ve emerged in that pedagogical wake. For example, in her semi-autobiographical novel *Lucy*, Jamaica Kincaid’s neo-heroine recalls being instructed at Queen Victoria Girls School to memorize the poem, “verse after verse,” in order to recite it in front of an attentive audience of parents, peers, and teachers. “After I was done,” she remembers, “everybody stood up and applauded with an enthusiasm that surprised me, and later they told me how nicely I had pronounced every word, how I had placed just the right amount of special emphasis in places where that was needed, and how proud the poet, now long dead, would have been to hear his words ringing out of my mouth” (17-18). Despite such ringing endorsement from the audience, however, the moment was not a proud one for Kincaid’s protagonist. Years later, long after assuring herself that she’d erase from her mind – “line by line” – every word of that poem, she was confronted with the physical reality of the daffodil. After being shown a field of them upon relocating to the northeastern United States, she vehemently describes her reaction upon seeing them for the very first time, and the lasting impression that *the idea* of that simple little flower had upon her disposition:

they looked beautiful; they looked simple, as if made to erase a complicated and unnecessary idea. I did not know what these flowers were...Mariah said, “These are daffodils”...There was such joy in her voice as she said this, such a music, how could I explain to her the feeling I had about daffodils—that it wasn’t exactly daffodils...I said, “Mariah, do you realize that at ten years of age I had to learn by heart a long poem about some flowers I would not see in real life until I was nineteen?”

As soon as I said this, I felt sorry that I had cast her beloved daffodils in a scene she had never considered, a scene of conquered and conquest; a scene of brutes masquerading as angels and angels portrayed as brutes...It wasn’t her

fault. It wasn't my fault. But nothing could change the fact that where she saw beautiful flowers I saw sorrow and bitterness (29-30).

Since her own childhood and the much latter publication of *Lucy*, Jamaica Kincaid's personal feelings on the daffodil have waned, if ever so slightly. Over the past decade, Kincaid has written much about her gardening hobby,¹⁹ which has allowed for a new appreciation for the daffodil and its associations with spring, when, she admits, the sight of the flower can bring pure joy. However still, the stain of its early associations have never left her mind: "for me," she writes, "'I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud' became not an individual vision coolly astonishing the mind's eye but the tyrannical order of a people, the British people, in my child's life" ("Dances with Daffodils").

That disparity – a gap between lived experience in the Caribbean, and the imported, imposed world brought over from England – has often been referred to by writers and critics as "the daffodil gap" (Tiffin 920 n.7).²⁰ To anyone generally familiar with the history of colonialism in the Caribbean region, it is easy to see why that Wordsworthian poem is so contentious, and why Braithwaite would proclaim, "to hell" with it. As Helen C. Scott writes, "It is not the poem or aesthetic *per se* that is the problem, but the system of inequality and domination it represents" (983). To many of the former students who were forced to learn that poem, the daffodil has come to represent that dubious relationship between Wordsworth's own native England and its Caribbean colonies. Like the figure of Prospero discussed in this dissertation's introduction, the daffodil has become an inevitable and repugnant emblem of that history.

¹⁹ See *My Favorite Plant: Writers and Gardeners on the Plants they Love* (editor, 1998), *My Garden (Book)* (1999), *Among Flowers: A Walk in the Himalayas* (2005).

²⁰ See Helen Tiffin's "Cold Hearts and (Foreign) Tongues: Recitation and the Reclamation of the Female Body in the Works of Erna Brodber and Jamaica Kincaid" (1993) and/or Irlene François' "The Daffodil Gap: Jamaica Kincaid's *Lucy*" (2001).

But long before garnering this reputation, the aim in introducing such a poem to an audience of colonial children surely had ulterior intentions. Ian Smith argues that the teaching of British romantic poetry to colonial students was often wielded as an ideal tool of empire. “The colonial-effect of Wordsworth and English Romantic poetry is to create an alternative world,” he writes, “which leads to the devaluation of one’s own...and sets in progress a cultural forgetting, a diminishment of the historical referent, that de-politicizes thought” (817). Essentially, Smith argues that romantic poetry’s evocation of the beauty in nature serves as a twisted form of what he dubs “colonial replacement therapy”; that if the colonized pupils can be made to celebrate nature in a totally de-contextualized way, hypnotized by poetry’s rhythmic cadences and absorbing its rhetoric as “free-floating signifiers waiting to be assigned content,” they can be distracted from seeing the true history of the Caribbean landscape: centuries of nature conquered and abused as an infamous site of forced labor.

While there is an exhaustive dialectic on the role of the daffodil in the Caribbean’s educational and psychological history,²¹ it seems of no coincidence (and great irony) that the flower’s Latin name is *Narcissus*, culled from the mythological figure who fell in love with his own image. That England’s colonial education syndicate had its Caribbean pupils focused not upon their own local culture but instead affixed upon the foreign world across the Atlantic, is emblematic of this irony, a narcissistic tendency that permeates colonial education. Dr. Eric Williams thereby sites the infamous anecdote of asking Caribbean students to write a composition on “a day in winter.” In *Education in the British West Indies*, Williams notes: “It is taken as a matter of course that the curriculum in the colonial countries is based very largely on foreign materials that have no relation to the daily lives of the pupils or to their environment”

²¹ see Scott (2002), I. Tiffin (1993), Smith (2002), & François (2001); as well as Guyana-born Grace Nichols’s “Spring” (1984) & Vicki Bertram’s *Kicking Daffodils: Twentieth-Century Women Poets* (1997).

(15). Brathwaite describes the irrelevance – re-packaged in an austere reverence – that was latent to colonial education:

What our educational system did was to recognize and maintain the language of the conquistador—the language of the planter, the language of the official, the language of the anglican preacher. It insisted that not only would English be spoken in the Anglophone Caribbean, but that the educational system would carry the contours of an English heritage...Shakespeare, George Eliot, Jane Austen—British literature and literary forms, the models which had very little to do, really, with the environment and the reality of non-Europe—were dominant in the Caribbean educational system...People were forced to learn things which had no relevance to themselves (*History* 8).

Fed a steady diet of Shakespeare and Wordsworth in the classroom, it is no wonder that writers of Anglophone Caribbean literature find their work situated within a dialogic binary involving this colonial impetus; hence the long-standing metaphorical struggle with the daffodil.

While the teaching of British literary figures in Caribbean classrooms might seem dubious, an alternative, locally-written literature wasn't widely available (yet) for these contested colonial curriculums. Herein is the paradoxical nature of the Caribbean's literary situation in the first third of the twentieth century: despite this seeming lack of an established local literature, colonial education surely didn't encourage its growth; given the Anglo-centric focus of school subject matter, the system set by the Cambridge syndicate also emphasized examinations as opposed to critical thinking (Nair 91). Thus, the systematic approach to the teaching of the English language, literature and culture in the colonies allowed George Lamming to liken his childhood education to that of economic trade:

The West Indian's education was imported in much the same way that flour and butter are imported from Canada. Since the cultural negotiation was strictly between England and the natives, and England had acquired, somehow, the divine right to organise the native's reading, it is to be expected that England's export of literature would be English. Deliberately and exclusively English (*Pleasures* 27).

It is no wonder Brathwaite could regrettably admit that his generation of pupils are “more excited” by British literary models, “by the concept of, say, Sherwood Forest and Robin Hood than we are by Nanny of the Maroons” (*History* 8). In similar sentiment, Naipaul is on record saying that *Robinson Crusoe* remains a classic only because it was “forced down the throats of children who were unable to offer any resistance” (*Between* 151). And Lamming may summarize this non-nurturing situation best, in succinctly saying that he would “shudder to think how a country so foreign to our instincts could have achieved the miracle of being called mother” (“Sovereignty” 5).

As contestations with this colonial impetus grew, out of it emerged a desire to connect with African ancestries as a social alternative in the Caribbean region. In summarizing this shift, Sylvia Wynter explains why there is little reason to reduce the Caribbean to a mere binary relative to England:

The West Indian experience was ‘created’ by Europe; and the West Indian experience helped to create Europe as it is today...The dilemma of being either West Indian or European is a false one. To be a West Indian is to accept all the facets of one’s being. The over-emphasis on the European facet is a hangover of the myth: and implies a rejection of the others. The swing of the pendulum, now in vogue, will redress the balance towards the myth of Africa. One then hopes that the West Indian...will work through to the reality of both (“We Must Learn” 312).

Wynter’s objection to the perennial focus on Europe as a foundational staple in Caribbean literature and culture is no doubt warranted. Written in 1968, Wynter observes that the comparativist trends in criticism had begun to consider Caribbean literature among other regions, particularly Africa. Of course, Lamming had pondered this relation in “The African Presence” chapter in *The Pleasures of Exile*,²² and Brathwaite’s work has consistently been infused with

²² It is worth noting that Lamming all but rejects the possibility of a sustainable “African presence” for the Caribbean literary psyche. As his trips to Nigeria and Ghana in the late-1950s would reveal to him, “the difference between my childhood and theirs [Africans] broke wide open. They owed Prospero no debt of vocabulary” (162).

identifying the “living, creative, and still part of the main” aspects of Caribbean literature and poetry which relate to Africa (“African Presence” 99).

While the African continent was viewed as a cultural alternative to the colonial trajectory in the mid-twentieth century Caribbean, it was admittedly done so amidst a sustained attempt to nurture local customs. Reinhard Sander’s research has shed light on the “rich folk culture” and its literary progeny which was, for a long time, neglected in the face of these exterior influences and pressures.²³ Noting how Caribbean slaves and their descendents “modified their customs and beliefs, syncretized European and neo-African forms,” Sander’s work has argued for – and shown – that Caribbean writers “hardly ever surrendered the core of their cultural expression” (*Trinidad Awakening* 1). Sparked by the emergence of local journals, the “outpouring of West Indian creative writing in the 1950s” has come to be known among the most seminal literary movements of the entire twentieth century (2). Lamming would argue that West Indian novelists “did not look out across the sea to another source...[they] looked in and down at what had traditionally been ignored” (*Pleasures* 39). By giving their literary attention to the West Indian common man and peasant, texts like *A Brighter Sun*, *The Hills Were Joyful Together*, and Lamming’s own *In the Castle of My Skin* gave the Anglophone Caribbean a reflective lens by which they could divert the colonial impetus which so dominated their upbringing. The development of a Caribbean literary canon and idiom which could replace the old colonial staples initiated a figurative independence which would lend itself to the subsequent decolonization movements throughout the region.²⁴

Lamming essentially suggests that this language barrier, along with the “prison of Prospero’s gift” [i.e., the English language] is the most significant fissure between the English-speaking Caribbean and its African antecedents.

²³ See *From Trinidad: An Anthology of Early West Indian Writing* (1978) and *The Trinidad Awakening: West Indian Literature of the Nineteen-Thirties* (1988).

²⁴ There is a *large* batch of texts – too large to list in full here – which offer analyses of this movement. For a general introduction, I would recommend Sander’s texts (in previous footnote), Kenneth Ramchand’s *The West*

While once lamenting the dire and homogenous status of the literary scene throughout the Anglophone Caribbean, on the heels of these new mid-century developments Henry Swanzy could insist that “the sense of what books can mean is being spread abroad by a great number of agencies [by providing] reading material for the new generation of self-awareness that is dawning” (266). Writing in the mid-1940s, Dr. Williams could predict that, despite continued colonial presence, “a West Indian culture is slowly but surely evolving” (8). As seen in the second epigraph which begins this chapter, under these contexts Brathwaite appropriately yearns “to hell with Africa and to hell with Europe too.” While I won’t go so far as to banish either (and Brathwaite, the poet, not necessarily is either), I think the poem’s shrugging-off of these themes – both found in great abundance and perhaps over-used in considering the region’s literary scene – is intended to put the focus on Caribbean culture *itself* as an originator; an “arrivant,” *per se*, in the creative arts. After all, Brathwaite’s epic collection of poems begins with an epigraph citing Jamaica’s Kumina Queen, who frankly admits, “Muh gran’muddah an’ muh gran’fadda...is from Africa...[but] I doan belongs to Africa, I belongs to Jamaica. I born here” (vii). But I cite the “to hell with” passage from Brathwaite’s *Arrivants* trilogy to note the role that Europe and Africa – while vastly different – have had upon the literary realm in the Anglophone Caribbean; additionally, it highlights the neglect paid to the incipient roles played by other cultures in this incredibly unique and hybrid culture. Allison Donnell’s recent historiography – *Twentieth-Century Caribbean Literature* (2006) – nicely exposes “new writers, texts and critical moments” which have helped to “reconfigure the Caribbean tradition as [a] more movable, divergent and unruly” field (1). While Donnell’s text exposes countless blind spots in the criticism which has interrogated Anglophone Caribbean literature over the last half-

Indian Novel and its Background (1970), Kamau Brathwaite’s *Roots* (1993), and Allison Donnell’s *Twentieth-Century Caribbean Literature* (2006).

century, it still, like so many that preceded it, neglects a historical exchange which proves to have momentous significance for the region and its contingent literature.

As the years following World War II would initiate the emergence of a concerted and identifiable genre of Anglophone Caribbean literature, the era out of which it grew also would provide West Indians with new resources for contemplating not only their own culture, but also others outside of the traditional Europe/Africa mold. As is witnessed in the manifold texts penned by the so-called “Windrush Generation,” transactions would be made – and new loyalties contemplated – with the literature and culture of the United States of America. Specifically, the arrival of American soldiers into the Caribbean islands during the early years of the War introduces new cultural variables for which the Caribbean writer can contemplate and delineate their own condition. However, the writings which stem from this culture clash have yet to garner the concerted attention of the region’s literary critics. Ultimately, as this dissertation argues, this reveals a *major* blind spot in the criticism which interrogates the seminal literature which C. L. R. James has eminently described as “the West Indian renaissance” (146, 159).

As Sam Selvon would write, “There was a change in the economic and social life and outlook of Trinidadians in 1941. United States personnel arrived” (*Brighter Sun* 17). Selvon’s remark is by no means trivial. That ‘arrival’ would initiate a deep and deliberate Caribbean affair with American ideas, products, and art which would eventually set the stage for the seminal phrase uttered by George Lamming in 1960: “the West Indian novel, particularly in the aspect of idiom, cannot be understood unless you take a good look at the American nineteenth century, a good look at Melville, Whitman, and Mark Twain” (*Pleasures* 29). This phrase, which proves to be the culmination of a concerted but fledgling alliance throughout the 1940s and 50s, offers critics of Anglophone Caribbean literature a new and unique recourse for the

contemplation of that seminal mid-century era, one in which Lamming describes as a literary “phenomenon” (29).²⁵ Accordingly, what follows is thus an attempt to uproot and understand the beginnings to this curious and neglected literary relationship.

While the United States had long been involved in various Caribbean affairs (the Spanish-American War, the building of the Panama Canal, the Banana Wars, to name but a few), the watershed moment of their involvement came in 1940 at the conclusion of the Destroyers for Bases Agreement. In the years leading up to the surprise attack on Pearl Harbor, the U.S. began seeing their involvement in the War as rather inevitable, and viewed the Caribbean islands as critical ‘stepping-stones’ by which it could be challenged by Hitler’s Nazi Germany.²⁶ As such, the U.S. brokered a lend-lease agreement with their allies in the United Kingdom, whose own navy, immersed in the Battle of Britain, were in desperate need of war ships. In return for fifty vessels, the U.S. secured bases throughout the Caribbean on islands such as Jamaica, St. Lucia, and Trinidad.²⁷ As the unfolding years would prove, this pact forever transformed the Caribbean region.

Following the agreement between the U.S. and Britain was the almost-overnight arrival of thousands of American soldiers to a handful of the British-occupied Caribbean islands.

²⁵ For context, Lamming’s full quote reads, “the ‘emergence’ of a dozen or so novelists in the British Caribbean with some fifty books to their credit or disgrace, and all published between 1948 and 1958, is in the nature of a phenomenon” (*Pleasures* 29).

²⁶ Chapter 3 of Anthony P. Maingot’s *The United States and the Caribbean* (2005) – titled “Reinforcing Perceptions: U-boats and Fifth Columns in World War II” – offers a succinct history of the German threat to U.S. national security and economic stability in Caribbean waters during the early 1940s.

²⁷ The agreement – readable in full at <http://www.history.navy.mil/faqs/faq59-24.htm> – stated that “His Majesty’s Government will make available to the United States for immediate establishment and use naval and air bases and facilities for entrance thereto and the operation and protection thereof, on the eastern side of the Bahamas, the southern coast of Jamaica, the western coast of St. Lucia, the west coast of Trinidad in the Gulf of Paria, in the island of Antigua and in British Guiana within fifty miles of Georgetown, in exchange for naval and military equipment and material which the United States Government will transfer to His Majesty’s Government.” For a concerted analysis of the agreement and its repercussions, see Chapter 3 of Horne’s text, *Cold War in a Hot Zone* (2007).

Trinidad, for example, an island of just 400,000 people, quickly swelled with the arrival of 130,000 American soldiers, airmen and sailors (Curtis 66). As one would expect, along with this military migration came an influx of culture, commodities, and occupational opportunities that permeated Caribbean life to the core. Trinidadian novelist Ralph de Boissière made the American arrival the subject of his 1956 novel, suitably titled *Rum and Coca-Cola*, which describes the swift and blinding speed at which the island landscape changed almost overnight:

By 1942 thousands of West Indians were flocking to Trinidad, flocking in haste as barnyard fowls who rush for the corn that is scattered by a lavish hand at sunrise...Endless streams of military trucks, long trailers carrying bulldozers or tanks, moved between Docksite and Cumuto; planes roared overhead in such numbers that it seemed they bred like mosquitoes in the swamps of Caroni...Out of the mud of the foreshore, out of the inland forests, arose complete American towns (121).

If the daffodil is the emblematic icon of the British presence in the Caribbean, then *Coca-Cola* likely operates as a seminal marker of the United States. Of course, *Coca-Cola*'s stature as a world-wide commodity suggests that its logo is not just recognized in, and limited to, the Caribbean. It has become, in a sense, *the* symbol of America's global ubiquity. In describing the redirection of American Studies at the turn of our current century, John Carlos Rowe notes the widespread usage of this pervading metaphor as a symbol for world-wide Americanization:

A common purpose linking these different versions of American Studies should be the critical study of the circulation of "America" as a commodity of the new cultural imperialism and the ways in which local knowledges and arts have responded to such cultural importations--the study of what some have termed "coca-colonization" (56).

While the region has undoubtedly felt the effects of these imperial trajectories, Caribbean creativity with this American-made drink provides us an apt metaphor: using that legendary

spirit so primal to their own region – rum – the comingling of American and Caribbean cultures has often been referred to as “rum and coca-cola.”²⁸

Interestingly, there is but a long and tumultuous history regarding the affair between these two saccharine drinks. Free-lance photographer and self-admitted “calypsophile” Kevin Burke runs a website called “The Rum and Coca-Cola Reader,”²⁹ which meticulously documents the long and winding – not to mention infamous – history of the wildly popular “rum and Coke.” Burke’s research reveals how an entrepreneurial soda bottler named Ernest Canning is responsible for introducing a bootlegged version of Coca-Cola to Trinidad as early as 1919. Canning took old, empty Coke bottles and filled them with the highly coveted recipe which he supposedly garnered from a distributor in Cuba. Eventually Canning would become an officially licensed distributor and, following the arrival of American soldiers during World War II, saw the drink’s popularity boom. The Coca-Cola Company was well aware of the popularity their drink held among soldiers, and always made to sure to have bottling operations nearby American bases overseas.

Rum, of course, has had a much longer tenure in the Caribbean region. In the “first comprehensive study of alcohol in the Caribbean” (2-3), Frederick H. Smith documents the social and economic rise of rum as a byproduct of the region’s colossal sugar industry. Dating back to the seventeenth century when Africans and Europeans first arrived, *en masse*, to the various Caribbean islands, they sought a means to sustain the entrenched drinking habits their cultures exhibited overseas. Coming from places with “strong traditions of alcohol use” (7),

²⁸ As is detailed further in the following pages, novels like de Boissière’s and texts Robert Freeman Smith’s *The Caribbean World and the United States: Mixing Rum and Coca-Cola* (1994) make titular use of the drink as a metaphor for this unique, inner-hemispheric relation.

²⁹ Burke’s cite is a must-see for anyone interested in this topic: <http://rumandcocacolareader.com/>

colonists and slaves would develop *rumbullion* – later shortened to “rum” – as a sugarcane-based alcohol (17), and it wouldn’t be long before the drink would emerge as one of the region’s most coveted and profitable exports. Described by Smith as both a “social escape and an economic safety net” for the Caribbean, rum is currently among the planet’s most widely consumed spirits (233).

The conjugation of rum and Coke, as detailed by Wayne Curtis in an article for *The American Scholar*, has a rather mysterious history. The mixture was supposedly concocted by a pharmaceutical chemist from Atlanta in the 1880s, but the story of its rise in popularity has been obscured by a publicist from Bacardi, who perhaps glamorized the story of the drink’s early years in an effort to behoove his employer. It is said that during the Spanish-American War, American and Cuban soldiers in Havana drank large amounts of Bacardi and Coke together, toasting to the phrase, “¡Por Cuba Libre!” (To a free Cuba!) (64-65). While the drink’s beginnings might be clouded by folklore or rendered for corporate publicity, it is taken for fact that following the Americans’ arrival in Trinidad in the early 1940s, the popularity of the drink rose exponentially. Since rum was cheaper than beer (25 cents to 30), soldiers drank it in masses. As previously mentioned, the mixture would come to become somewhat of an emblem for American and Caribbean interactions.

As Burke’s website describes, the basis for his interest in this liquid history stems from the highly popular 1940s calypso tune, “Rum and Coca-Cola.” Using the drink as its driving metaphor, the song responds to the mixing of cultures that took place throughout the Caribbean (but most notably in Trinidad and Tobago) during the U.S. military’s presence upon the islands throughout the early stages of World War II. The song’s composer, Rupert Westmore Grant (aka

Lord Invader) – a man who eventually had to fight the legal system long and hard in order to be able to make that claim³⁰ – would sing:

Since the Yankees came to Trinidad
They have the young girls goin' mad.
The young girls say they treat 'em nice
And they give them a better price.

They buy rum and Coca-Cola,
Go down Point Cumana.
Both mother and daughter
Workin' for the Yankee dollar.³¹

The song was a *rousing* success. Lord Invader himself would later recount that, at the song's peak, he would have to perform the song as many as three times a night. Burke writes that in true Calypsonian fashion Invader would improvise various verses in order to keep his audience attentive while they weren't gleefully (and perhaps drunkenly) singing along with the song's chorus. As Burke's website fervidly delineates, Invader's song – and its subsequent popularity – would come to typify this new era in U.S./Caribbean relations. Given the cultural 'mixing' that began immediately following the American arrival, the rum and coke drink serves as a highly appropriate metaphor for the era, and contemporary historians have been swift in distilling this concoction.

While the engagement between the United States and the Caribbean during and immediately following World War II would seem to have long been a fruitful topic for the

³⁰ Burke's cite and Curtis' article both have a nice synopsis of the song's controversy. Working with a handful of professionals in the music industry, the highly popular Andrews Sisters trio would record their own version of the song which became a #1 hit in the U.S., and Decca (the record company who pressed their single) couldn't keep up with demand. Curtis notes that the song was the 3rd-highest-selling song of the 1940s, trailing only Bing Crosby's "White Christmas" and Patti Page's "Tennessee Waltz" (70). As Burke writes, "You don't have to be an expert in copyright law to see that this "Rum and Coca-Cola" had been siphoned from Lord Invader's glass." The song thus became the center of a heated lawsuit, with Invader eventually reclaiming the rights (along with some money) to the song. See Burke's cite for a full account of the court proceedings.

³¹ Burke retrieves the official lyrics to the song from a pamphlet sold at many of Invader's performances in the 1940s. Printed by a businessman named Mohamed H. Khan, the "souvenir" pamphlet sold quite well (upwards of ~1,500 copies) and was often taken home by American soldiers as a keepsake of the performance. The small booklet would actually turn out to be the core of a heated legal battle over the song's copyright. As I have already suggested elsewhere, see Burke's fascinating website for the full background to this interesting dispute.

historian,³² it wasn't until the last decade by which an abundance of research would be published on the unique and dissonant nature of this regional relation. Gerald Horne's *Cold War in a Hot Zone* (2007) is among the most meticulously-crafted of the bunch, detailing the American presence throughout the British West Indies, starting with War and working through the end of the Cold War in the late 1980s. Horne argues that the American naval occupation in the Caribbean (in Antigua, specifically), had a contradictory effect in the early years. On the one hand, the presence of certain American ideologies inhibited the previous power held by the minority planter class, and encouraged labor organizing under the democratic premise that the majority should rule. On the other hand, it also introduced American-style racism to the islands. What emerged in this mixture, fortunately, was an "antiracist and progressive militancy that helped drive labor organizing—and, ultimately, independence" (12). Horne notes that along with the American presence came a new circulation of ideas and goods: American cigarettes, clothing, records, radio, news, magazines and comics. There were, on the one hand, the benefits of anti-colonial rhetoric and growing literacy to be had in these imports; on the other hand, as Horne is swift to point out, there was a highly troublesome propagandizing feature to these new arrivals (87). Unlike Gordon Lewis, who has chastised Caribbean intellectuals for not looking "beyond their society as an English cultural dependency" (70), Horne argues that it was in fact natural for West Indians to look beyond the tenets of the colonial relationship, for, given the state of regional, hemispheric, and global affairs in the mid-twentieth century, the domain over their

³² As recently as 1994, Robert Freeman Smith would write that this World War II era in U.S./Caribbean relations (along with its repercussions) is "still something of a literary wasteland when one looks for good scholarly works" (112). A short list of older texts which touch upon this topic (although oftentimes briefly) includes Mary Proudfoot's *Britain and the United States in the Caribbean: A Comparative Study in Methods of Development* (1954), Lester D. Langley's *The United States in the Caribbean* (1982), Smith's own *The Caribbean World and the United States: Mixing Rum and Coca-Cola* (1994), and Fitzroy A. Baptiste's "United States-Caribbean Relations from World War II to the Present: The Social Nexus" (1998). See works cited for complete citations.

residence was not certain from year to year (9). Hence, the arrival of the Americans proved to be timely in this search for alternatives.

Jason C. Parker's *Brother's Keeper: The United States, Race, and Empire in the British Caribbean, 1937-1962* (2008) summons the seminal question Cain asks of God in the Bible – “am I my brother's keeper?” – in considering the American/Caribbean relation through, like Horne, the complicated lens of the Cold War. This question of moral obligation drives Parker's analysis of the “protean partnership” (which, as expected, usually depends on the needs of Washington), and how it lent itself to the decolonizing process of the British Caribbean. While admitting that an understanding of this “Anglo-American-Caribbean triangle” has remained obscure and incomplete (5), Parker argues that despite being a pawn of Britain and the U.S., a West Indian agency developed which helped shape their own national future more so than is often credited (164). Despite the failures of the West Indian Federation movement, Parker argues that a racial-ethnic nationalism emerged which was deeply engaged with the political and sentimental fallouts of the Harlem Renaissance; through this, a transcultural rhetoric emerged between regions, which, if not fully realized in practice, lent solidarity to the relationship (165). We see this, as the following chapters delineate, on display in much of the subsequent literature of the Anglophone Caribbean's boom years.

Harvey R. Neptune's *Caliban and the Yankees: Trinidad and the United States Occupation* (2007) focuses upon the amalgamated ideas and art resulting from the American military presence during the War. Neptune argues while that there was no overt revolution in Trinidad during this time, there most certainly was a strong rejection of British values along with the conscious construction of a unique nationality (found, most expressively, in Trinidadian music) (20). Contributing to this change, Neptune suggests, was the fact that the American

military presence removed the rigorous class stratification that the colonial elites had previously established there, resulting in a new sentiment toward democracy. The totality of these movements results in what Neptune dubs a passive revolution. In the creation of this national culture, Neptune traces some of its American seeds by highlighting Trinidadian figures such as Albert Gomes (who studied journalism at the City College of New York) and Sylvia Chen (a dancer also trained in New York at the New Dance Theater); additionally, Neptune notes the influence of Hollywood and the island's ever-popular cinemas, which, "for all intents and purposes...screened a world that was exclusively American" (68). Neptune also writes how the availability of American clothing and fashion (as brought by soldiers and seen on screen) allowed Trinidadian individuals greater room for self-expression. In the years leading up to occupation, for example, shoes were considered a relative luxury; given the employment opportunities that the American arrival spurred, that changed with the influx of money available to islanders, and a liking for 'style' boomed. Of great popularity were those iconic zoot suits. Despite the lure offered by such changes, Neptune (much like Horne) is wary of their overall influence. He writes:

...a society in limbo between the past and the future...zoot suits, jitterbug shirts, and other saga appropriations might have signaled the coming of a time free of British colonial rule. Troublingly, though, the styles also appeared to foreshadow a future filled with the seductively colonizing commodities of American modernity (128).

While American commodities presented Trinidadians with simultaneously good and bad effects, so did the presence of the swaggering American male personality. Regarding the brash, white American soldiers and oil drillers who came to the region, Neptune writes how their bravado proved seductive to the male Trinidadian youth as a means to disrupt the intents of local British elites. Describing this personality as "renegade," Neptune writes:

In a caste-like world where [British] elites obsessively took care to deport themselves at a respectable distance from the dark, poor, and dangerous classes, white American men embodied deviance. Yankee sojourners, moreover, seemed not simply indifferent to but frankly contemptuous of established colonial codes of comportment. Relishing their local reputations as “outcasts,” they gave the impression of taking great delight in “escapades” that disturbed local elites. As one unrepentant petroleum industry pioneer declared, “You just can’t make oil men adopt British customs.” (57).

Neptune adds that the people in Trinidad accepted this “hypermasculine conceit, apprehending these Yankees as carriers of an unsettlingly aggressive and reckless sensibility, as men who threatened the femininely figured decent society” (58).³³ When inebriated, this ‘hypermasculine conceit’ was, as one would expect, greatly amplified. In an attempt to suppress drunkenly servicemen causing trouble on public streets, area taverns in Trinidad within reach of the U.S. base at Chaguaramas – most of which undoubtedly mixed up those infamous rum and cokes – were ordered closed between lunch and dinner, and an 11 p.m. curfew was mandated. Even the price of beer was lowered to a relatively miniscule 10 cents on the military base as an incentive to keep American soldiers within U.S. confines (Curtis 65-67).

These aforementioned texts are but a small sampling of the recent historiographical boom in which this WWII era is considered.³⁴ Neptune, however, offers a rare tangent to this trend by considering the *literary* impacts of this newly blossoming relationship. As one would expect, the impact of this culture clash is noted far and wide throughout subsequent Anglophone Caribbean literature, yet literary critics have been slow to apprehend this tendency. In one of the earliest

³³ Lamming, in one of the earliest pieces of prose he published, makes these rebellious American attitudes – and the consequences of them – the subject of his underappreciated short story “Birds of a Feather” (1948). Chapter 2 critiques this piece and its meanings.

³⁴ Other relevant texts on this subject include Anthony P. Maingot and Wilfredo Lozano’s *The United States and the Caribbean: Transforming Hegemony and Sovereignty* (2005), which provides a post-Cold War policy analysis of contemporary relations between the regions; Robert Freeman Smith’s *The Caribbean World and the United States: Mixing Rum and Coca-Cola* (1994) offers a nice summation of the tenure of the relation, and argues that despite producing tensions and agitations, overall, the Yankee presence has proved beneficial to the Caribbean region; contrarily, Alex von Alex von Tunzelmann’s *Red Heat: Conspiracy, Murder, and the Cold War in the Caribbean* (2011) documents the American government’s paranoia involving communism and the Caribbean throughout the 1960s, and how it exercised extreme measures to blunt the influence of figures like Castro, Duvalier and Trujillo.

literary accounts of the American arrival, Sam Selvon's *A Brighter Sun* (1952) describes the "change in the economic and social life and outlook of Trinidadians in 1941" (17). His novel highlights the building of Trinidad's Churchill-Roosevelt Highway – the island's first modern automobile thoroughfare – which linked western Port of Spain with the American army base at Fort Read (Anthony 129-130). Selvon describes the swift and massive migration that would result from this intensive project of retrofitting an island peninsula for U.S. military purposes:

United States personnel arrives, and the construction of bases provided work at higher wages—higher than anyone had ever worked for before. Clerks quit their desks and papers and headed for the bases, farmers left the land untilled, labourers deserted the oil and sugar industries in the south, there was a rush to where the money flowed. From neighboring islands, Grenada, St. Vincent, Barbados, natives kissed their wives and relatives good-bye and came to Trinidad to make their fortunes. The city was crammed as the Yankee dollar lured men away from home and family...At the end of March the Stars and Stripes waved over Trinidad territory (17).

That image of the American flag flying over Trinidadian soil – especially in the years leading up to the Anglophone Caribbean's literary boom years – would seem to be an obvious marker for critics to unravel and interrogate its literary impact. Yet still, despite moves in recent years to explore other cultural modalities,³⁵ the U.S. presence in Anglophone Caribbean literature remains untended. What follows is an attempt to excavate some of these neglected responses to this seminal moment in the Caribbean's history.

The widespread changes brought by the War are the subject of *many* Caribbean novels. As the epigraph to this chapter delineates, the American arrival and its impact on Trinidadian life sets the stage for *A Brighter Sun*. As the story's protagonist, Tiger, and his young wife, Urmilla, navigate their innocent approach to adulthood, the island swirls with activity around them. The novel begins with changes brought forth by the early years of the war. The surprise "visit" of a German training ship prompts the activation of emergency regulations and increased prayer in

³⁵ Alison Donnell's *Twentieth-Century Caribbean Literature: Critical Moments in Anglophone Literary History* (2006) is among the best contemporary texts which explore alternative and unexplored influences and trajectories involving the Anglophone Caribbean's literary interests. Chapter 3 of this dissertation further critiques her text.

local churches. Jewish refugees “fleeing Nazi persecution in Europe” fill up empty residences and business places to the point where subsequent emigrants are turned away. Money is collected and sent to England for the “war effort,” and six locals from the “Air Training Scheme” leave Trinidad to join the R.A.F. (3-4). While the island clamor would seem at its height in this opening chapter, the arrival of the Americans (“Joes”) in the second brings momentous change. As the passage above recounts, the construction of the U.S. base brings both jobs and wages “higher than anyone had ever worked for before.” U.S. soldiers and neighboring islanders – who flocked to Trinidad for work – made Port of Spain “crammed as the Yankee dollar lured men away from home and family” (17). The arrival also brought forth American products like Lucky Strike cigarettes and chewing gum; it brought a new liking for fashion (local Trinidadians bought sailor and army caps off the Yankee servicemen, and “wore them proudly in the village and at work”); and it also introduced a new lingo, the Yankee “drawl,” which natives imitated by calling each other “Joe” and “bud” (158). Hollywood pictures began showing on local cinemas, their popularity exemplified by the proclamation made by one of the natives: “Girl, a master double showing at Empire dis evening...Robert Taylor in *Waterloo Bridge*, and *This Gun for Hire*. I don’t miss Robert Taylor pictures at all, girl” (94).

Many of the same lures are described, though much more briefly, in Selvon’s 1957 collection of short stories, *Ways of Sunlight*. The story “Down the Main” opens by describing how American jobs during the war drove people to places like Venezuela, which harbored large iron and ore resources. West Indians would write home describing how “Things was rosy over [here]...money flowing in the country...Americans opening up the place and it have plenty work all about” (38). “Wartime Activities” describes how Trinidadian locals can afford greater spending thanks to U.S. wages, for the “Yankee dollar [was] falling all about” (85). The narrator

of the story dupes a “good-looking [American] sport sitting behind a desk” into giving him a job as a mechanic at the base in Chaguaramas, for “twenty bucks a week.” This monetary increase allows for greater freedoms, as witnessed in the episode where the narrator pays to see *This Gun for Hire* starring Alan Ladd; however, he can only withstand the very beginning of the film, for “after a few reels I was sweating like a horse so I left the theatre and take a tramcar and went for a ride round the savannah” (86).

In *A Brighter Sun*, all of the excitement and fiscal opportunity created by the American arrival is of course contrasted by new and unknown ordeals for many of the island natives. Construction of the base would leave hundreds homeless and displaced. A new scale of taxation is introduced to those “best able to bear it” (17). Drunken soldiers are seen fighting with civilians, and an incident is mentioned at the novel’s end where an Army truck runs over and kills a local.³⁶ Demand for products and services drive island prices to unprecedented levels, perhaps best exemplified by the island’s brothel business:

Before the war you could have got one [prostitute] for a dollar or even two shillings, but since the Americans came the girls sharpened themselves up and wouldn’t be had for less than five Yankee dollars. Young girls from the country districts augmented the ranks, and there was keen rivalry (21).

All taken together, the repercussions of the American arrival brings a certain cultural excitement which Tiger witnesses while standing in the heart of Port of Spain; observing that the city’s shopping district was “crowded with week-end shoppers, Allied servicemen, and poor people looking in the show windows and feeling their pockets and purses,” Tiger relishes the cosmopolitan energy around him: “In five minutes, standing in one spot, [he] could have seen representatives of all the races under the sun” (90).

³⁶ The same themes are used in Lamming’s “Birds of a Feather” which seems to add credibility to the notion that these were real occurrences, appropriated by Selvon and Lamming for literary purposes. As mentioned, an analysis of “Birds” is reserved for the following chapter.

Neville Dawes' *The Last Enchantment* (1960) is brimming with repeated references to the new cultural imports brought to Jamaica, from America, in the mid-1940s. The semi-autobiographical text follows the growth of young Ramsay Tull amidst the years leading up to independence. "The island is on the eve of new constitutional changes," writes George Lamming in his review of the novel, adding that Dawes magnificently captures the "tensions, innocence and optimism" so prevalent throughout Jamaica at the time ("Race" 92). Many of these communal emotions are expressed through the associations that the novel's characters make with American culture. For instance, Dawes notes the island's growing number of "Whitmanesque poets" (50) and staged public readings of the work of T.S. Eliot, which are attended by "all the important writers, poets and painters in Jamaica" (68-69). The jazz music of Count Basie, Glenn Miller, Charlie Parker and Dizzy Gillespie continually blare in the novel's many scenes staged in late-night dance halls and house parties.³⁷ Characters with literary inclinations discuss works by American writers like E. E. Cummings, Jack London, and Williams Faulkner. Suits are "cut to perfection in the modified American fashion of the day" (73), and the main protagonist's sister attends "a nice picture about a doctor and a nurse" which, in all likeliness, is 1947's Hollywood hit, *Possessed*.³⁸ Clearly, *The Last Enchantment* expresses a certain attentiveness to American modalities as an alternative to the colonial trajectory in the years preceding Jamaican independence.

³⁷ Of the relationship of jazz to the Anglophone Caribbean, see Brathwaite's "Jazz and the West Indian Novel" (1967/1968), which makes a brief mention of *The Last Enchantment*'s many American jazz references.

³⁸ Ramsay's sister Mabel goes to see a picture which she claims stars Van Heflin. Mabel says, "You know this nurse was in love with the doctor, but the doctor was married, you see, and he didn't know about it" (62). Mabel's summary isn't exactly an accurate one (and it could be that the movie she refers to is 1949's *Madame Bovary*, which stars Van Heflin as a doctor). In any case, Dawes takes minor liberties with his timeline: his novel begins in November of 1946 and the *Possessed* didn't debut in (American) theaters until 1947 (*Madame Bovary* even later in 1949). Regardless, the film (whichever one it is) is noted here as an example of the lure that American-made products had throughout the Caribbean at this time. As an additional example, there's a party early in Dawes' story at which a record of American R&B artist Joe Liggins' "Honey Dripper" is playing. Of the song, one of the attendees says, "Yuh know it? Is greet eeh? I going mad dem with it" (65).

Ralph de Boissière's aforementioned *Rum and Coca-Cola* (1956) is the quintessential Caribbean text involving the changes brought forth by the American arrival. Reinhard Sander, who reviews the reprint of that novel, notes that the War brought West Indians into contact with new mediums and new ideas (*Trinidad Awakening* 14), and de Boissière's novel documents the good, bad, and ugly results of these American influences and imports. Above all characters in *Rum and Coca-Cola*, "there are the 'Invaders'," writes Sander, "the American soldiers and civilians whose presence places the inhabitants of the island under a state of virtual siege" ("American Invaders" 100).³⁹ As the American base at "Docksite" is erected, islanders watch in awe. The "rare, fantastic sight" of bulldozers "roaring, clattering, lurching...crushing stones [and] the limbs of trees" pave the way for bases at Chaguaramas and Waller Field. Jeeps haul tree trunks "like so many carcasses to the roadside" (78), while once-inhabited shacks are plowed over, leaving destitute locals homeless. Fred, one of the novel's main characters, observes the process with a mix of shock and veneration: "Appalled by the devastation, the nakedness, the poverty he was, as well, impressed against his will by the irresistible efficiency of the new white masters and their machines" (79-80). Jobs at American bases provide locals with a temporary feeling of prosperity. "The times had changed," de Boissière writes, for there was a complete "exodus from the sugar estates and oilfields to the bases" (121-122).

Even though the Americans are said to be "More democratic," helping to "break down British prestige" (98). they are viewed by locals with a mix of optimism and apprehension. Mopsy, a young, beautiful barrack-yard prostitute, sees opportunity within the American arrival; Sander notes that her experience throughout the story delineates "the typical uncritical attitude of the average Trinidadian vis-à-vis the American invaders: she sees in them a lucrative source of

³⁹ Sander notes that de Boissière had originally intended on calling the novel 'The Invaders' but instead went with the more apt *Rum and Coca-Cola* as a nod to Lord Invader's transcendent song and its relevance in symbolizing the new cultural mixture which resulted from the American presence (93).

income and a way of lifting herself out of her class and the dire poverty in which she is depicted at the beginning of the novel” (103). She postulates that Trinidadians would “live better” under American control, because “They not stingy like the English”; to which Fred replies, “White people is white people...What they does give you wid one hand they does take away wid the next. Don’t trust none-a dem” (39). A crowd of children – both “Indian and Negro” – are seen surrounding two white American soldiers, looking at them “as at clown in a circus, but also with admiration” (89). The soldiers give the local children American candy and are generally kindhearted, “unlike the white men they [the children] had known from birth.” While known to harbor a much harsher form of racism than that of the local British elites, American soldiers “abandoned racial discrimination for the charms of black women and embraced them for all to see, for they bore no responsibility for Trinidad’s past or Trinidad’s future” (121). Shortly after the arrival, it is said that “Who the real masters of the island were became clearer day by day.” Indra, who completes Fred’s love triangle with Mopsy, warns that these new changes are merely a “momentary thing” (98). The local British elite also feel the brunt changes brought forth by the American occupation, seeing their land values go down while the Americans “were pinching the servants from under their very noses” (134). “Night after night,” it is observed, “the Americans had calypso singers in to entertain them [and one] could no longer retire with the confidence that one would enjoy a night’s rest.” One islander makes an apt comparison between their former masters and the new ones: “It look as if under the English you dyin’ with you’ belly empty...and under the Americans you dyin’ with it full” (40).

While American jobs prove to be lucrative for local workers, the draw of American ideas offers individuals new modes for the imagination. One of the female islanders would find discarded American magazines at Docksite, whose “pictures, frequently sensational, wove a web

of mystery and excitement about life in that country, which she knew from the movies only” (94). Mopsy attempts to make good on that contemplation by agreeing to marry an American civilian (Wal Brown) who is employed at the naval base; she then dreams of seeing the United States for herself, first hand:

[Wal’s] friends kept urging her to come Stateside. They prophesied she would do well. She would be happy. She would see the painted desert, New York, Frisco and other wonders. Great place, America!...She saw success and respectability. She would become an American in thought, in aims and in fact (289).

The novel ends with the most apt summation of the island’s American years; Fred contemplates how the “American occupation had broken down walls and snapped ancient chains without freeing him or Mopsy or anyone at all” (302). But most importantly, perhaps, the occupation had forced “ideas upon him, ideas that could be weapons.”⁴⁰

Over the course of a half-century, V. S. Naipaul has regularly recalled the American influx along with some of the subsequent Caribbean reverberations. His first novel, *The Mystic Masseur* (1957) describes when “the American soldiers began to pour into [Trinidad] and the village children had their first chew of gum” (148). The novel traces the writerly hopes of Ganesh Ramsumair, who uses American magazines and a bulletin composed by a group of men called the Hollywood Hindus as a guideline for publishing his own Trinidadian newspaper, *The Dharma* (ironically enough, Ganesh and his fellow editors discuss the newspaper’s contents while swilling bottles of Coca-Cola).

In *Miguel Street* (1959), Naipaul delineates many of the cultural changes brought forth by the Americans; “Then the war came,” he writes, “Hitler invaded France and the Americans

⁴⁰ Sander suggests that this ending “comes uneasily close to expressing a naïve utopian vision of a cultural nationalist solution to Trinidad’s problems” (107). I would somewhat disagree with that conclusion, instead suggesting that Fred’s discordant contemplations reveals both the false hopes in relying on the Americans to “free” Trinidadians from the British, but that the American occupation does in fact contribute to local ruminations on nationalist potentials and a more concerted push for decolonization. This argument parallels that of Neptune’s in *Caliban and the Yankees*.

invaded Trinidad” (143). The text describes how the emergence of cinemas screening American films like *Casablanca* would spread Henry Bogart’s “fame...like fire through Port of Spain,” causing “hundreds of young men” to begin “adopting the hardboiled Bogartian attitude” (9). Mixing humor and despair in the inimitable Naipaulian fashion, the novel traces the gravitational shift resulting from the newly arrived Americans, and how it spurred a change in attitudes, accents, and clothing among the island’s natives. The character of Edward, for example, is especially swept up by these changes; he “surrendered completely to the Americans” and “began wearing clothes in the American style...began chewing gum, and he tried to talk with an American accent,” uttering mimicked phrases like “What’s cooking, Joe?” (144). Edward’s “Americanisms” would lead him to concoct grand speculations about that country, suggesting that people who live there “is people. They know about things” (144), and that American doctors are “smart like hell, you know. They could do anything” (150). In comparing his neighborhood with the U.S., he says, “Look at Miguel Street. In America you think they have streets so narrow? In America this street could pass for a sidewalk” (144). On one occasion the narrator joins Edward outside the American army base at “Docksite,” where they peer through a barbed wire fence to watch movies on the “huge screen of an open-air cinema.” Edward’s many attempts to befriend the Americans would ultimately backfire, ending as the Lord Invader song does, with one Yankee soldier running away with his wife; sadly, Edward laments, “And I give the man so much of my rum to drink” (152).

In 1962's *The Middle Passage* – which is notorious for its cynicism towards the West Indies⁴¹ – Naipaul takes a highly critical approach to the commingling of American and Caribbean cultures that began taking place in the 1940s. He writes:

If curiosity is characteristic of the cosmopolitan, the cosmopolitanism on which Trinidad prides itself is fraudulent. In the immigrant colonial society, with no standards of its own, subjected for years to the second rate in newspapers, radio and cinema, minds are rigidly closed; and Trinidadians of all races and classes are remaking themselves in the image of the Hollywood B-man (61).

In 1983's "Prologue to an Autobiography," Naipaul recalls the naval bases and the evening cinemas which both left an indelible mark upon his childhood:

On the American base at the end of the street the flag was raised every morning and lowered every evening; the bugle sounded twice a day. The street was full of Americans, very neat in their shiny starched uniforms. At night the soundtrack of the open-air American cinema thundered away (44).

And in 1994's *A Way in the World*, Naipaul describes the pervading influence of the new sounds introduced through American-based radio:

You could walk down a street and hear the American advertising jingles coming out of the Rediffusion sets in all the little open houses. Six years before I had known the jingles the Rediffusion sets played; but these jingles were all new to me and were like somebody else's folksong now (3).

Naipaul's judgment of the American influence upon Trinidadians is (not all that surprisingly) largely negative; or, as Kenneth Ramchand would describe Naipaul's work in general, "illusion is followed by rapid disillusion" ("Partial Truths" 69). As the following chapter will discuss, while Naipaul does admit a heartfelt appreciation of certain American literary figures, he is consistently harsh regarding the widespread mimicry he discerned as a result of the U.S. presence throughout Trinidad. Comparing the British colonial hegemony with the newly arrived American one, he writes, "while much energy has been spent in the campaign against

⁴¹ The text is perhaps best known for what is one of the most infamous and yet widely quoted passages in all of Caribbean literature: "The history of the islands can never be satisfactorily told...History is built around achievement and creation; and nothing was created in the West Indies" (29).

Wordsworth, no one has spoken out against the [American] fantasy which Trinidadians live out every day of their lives” (*Middle Passage* 65).

Earl Lovelace also broaches the topic of the American presence, though he arrives at a much different conclusion than Naipaul does. Descendants of that so-called “hardboiled Bogartian attitude” provide the contextual stimulus for *The Dragon Can’t Dance* (1979).⁴² In describing how much of Port of Spain’s gang mentality is adopted from American films, Lovelace writes:

...these walls on which they have scrawled their own names and that of their gangs...hard names derived from the movies which on some nights they slip off to see, Western movies of the gun talk and the quick draw and the slow crawl, smooth grand gestures which they imitate so exquisitely as though those gestures were their own borrowed to the movie stars for them to later reclaim as proper to their person (25-26).

Unlike Naipaul, Lovelace is careful to situate the American presence in a context which privileges that of his own culture: he marks the identity appropriation that Caribbean youth were freely and actively in the habit of practicing, in favor of positing it instead as an American-driven imposition.

Roger Mais, who depicts a similar stock of characters in his fiction, likely fits somewhere in-between Naipaul and Lovelace. Characters in his novels, writes Evelyn O’Callaghan, use “linguistic code-switching” – between creole and American slang – as a means of negotiating “self-identity and fulfillment” during these mid-century years (131). The looming and influential image of Humphrey Bogart again shows up in the beginning of *Brother Man* (1954), where one

⁴² It should be pointed out that Lovelace’s novel, published in 1979, falls within what we might call the second generation of Anglophone Caribbean novelists; including, but not limited to writers like Jamaica Kincaid and Michelle Cliff. While Lovelace isn’t considered a member or contemporary of the so-called “Windrush” writers, he attended primary and secondary school in Trinidad and Tobago during the American occupation, and, as shown in Chapter 5, is quite poised to comment upon the impacts of American culture upon Caribbean life.

of the novel's female characters becomes somewhat consumed with a picture of the Hollywood icon in a magazine:

But when he looked up, quickly, challengingly, ready to get on with it, she wasn't looking at him at all. Her gaze had returned to the thumbbed-down page of the magazine she held open across her knees. She put her head a little to one side, and might just as well have been addressing herself to the half-length photograph of Humphrey Bogart (10).

O'Callaghan adds that characters in this novel "are devoid of moral and cultural identities, and so live out roles derived from second-rate fantasy, articulated in stereotyped idiom," and cites Mais' contention that much of this stems from an "American 'B-movie' ethos" (130-131). "The creole of small-time crooks like Papacita and Fellowes switches to American slang," notes O'Callaghan, who references that renowned line from *Casablanca*, "here's lookin' at you, kid" (131). And the Hollywood stereotype of the 'tough guy' takes hold of Surjue's character in *The Hills Were Joyful Together* (1953), in which Lloyd W. Brown has noted that "the numbing violence of the cops-and-robbers movie dramatizes the social environment of [Mais'] novel" ("American Image" 41).

Of course, this tough-guy tendency would eventually influence Jamaica's first feature film, Perry Henzell's *The Harder They Come*, which stars Jimmy Cliff as a hopeful reggae singer turned glorified outlaw. All in all, Gordon K. Lewis suggests that the American occupation, and the subsequent impact it would have upon the attitudes of local youth would be nothing short of "disastrous." In 1969 Lewis writes that "Many of the modern Trinidad types—the sophisticated prostitute, the 'saga-boy', the gang leader—are direct creations of American influence, of 'working for the Yankee dollar'" (211). In essence, Lewis contends that the "disruptive influence of Americanization" results in a Trinidadian identity roughly shaped by "British snobbery and American vulgarity" (212).

While many of these examples emit a certain skepticism and angst for the American presence (especially in the work of Lewis and Naipaul), there are manifold Caribbean texts which admit an appreciation for the cultural ideas and products which were brought by the Americans. As discussed in greater detail in the following chapter, Lamming would write that their arrival would bring forth a certain excitement, one that lifted island life from the monotony that had existed before (“Birds” 186). For a culture whose creative outlets were inhibited by the colonial system, the arrival initiated new imaginaries and would redirect many island interests toward the American continent. In fact, Neptune concludes his text by apprehending the “critical imagining and engagement of America” (198) that literary figures like Lamming would put forth as a result of the occupation. But even a decade prior to the U.S. arrival during the War, American literary and political ideas would become the interest of the seminal *Beacon* group. The plot for Alfred Mendes’ *Pitch Lake* (1934), for example, uses the storyline from Theodore Dreiser’s *An American Tragedy* for its own premise (Dance 322); additionally, in de Boissiere’s *Rum and Coca-Cola*, Dreiser’s classic is said to be Fred’s “favourite novel” (16), which fuels the presumption that *An American Tragedy* must’ve been the topic for discussion amongst the *Beacon*’s members at some point. Citing such early interests in American culture, Neptune recounts how members of the group were swayed by much larger U.S. attributes:

Gomes attended New York’s City University, Hugh Stollmeyer and Alfred Mendes left for New York in the 1930s, and by the end of the decade, C. L. R. James, who first migrated to London, had taken up residence in the United States...They kept up with the ideas and activities of West Indian-born agitators and intellectuals based in the United States...as well as turned to the broader American political scene for exemplary models (73).

As Sander notes in *From Trinidad*, as far back as 1933 the *Beacon* group was in search of their own literary ideology, and cited Walt Whitman as an exemplar of how they might develop one. From an editorial manifesto entitled “West Indian Literature,” the group would write, “The day

will come when we, like America, will produce our Walt Whitman; then and only then will the movement towards an art and language indigenous to our spirit and environment commence” (6-7).

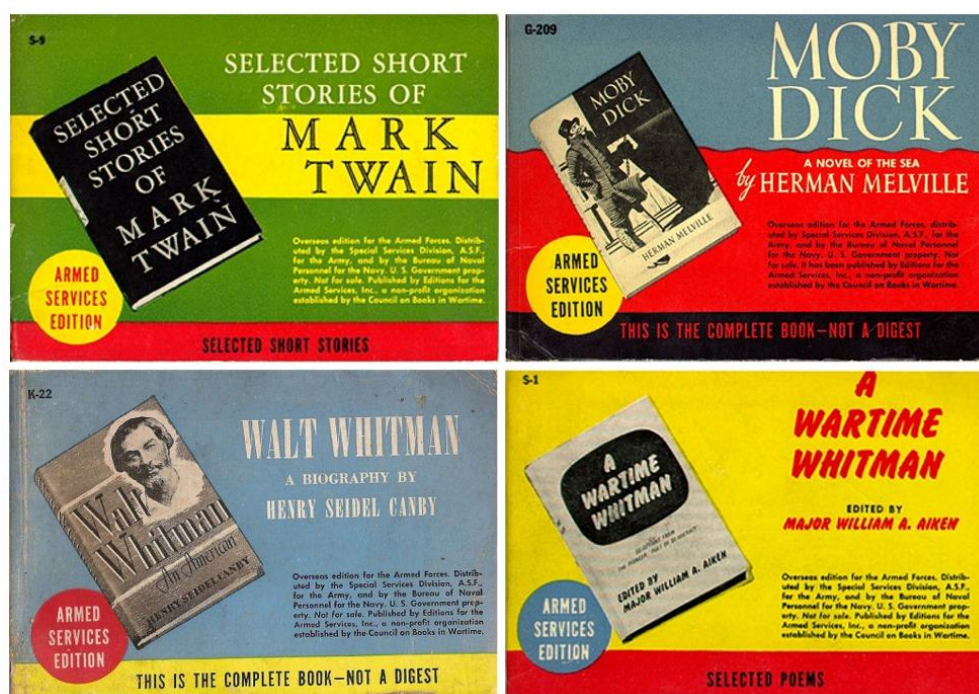
Not surprisingly, the War accelerated this commencement, and initiated for the region’s growing group of writers a deep and curious interest in America’s literature. While the image of American soldiers introducing American novels to Caribbean natives may seem like somewhat of a farce, in certain cases, this is exactly what happened. Kenneth Ramchand, for instance, recalls that following the closure of the U.S. army base near his village, his father would salvage several boxes of American literature (353). In those boxes were texts from the famed Armed Services Editions,⁴³ which have the esteemed notoriety of being the most widely-distributed free books in world history (“Armed”). Beginning in 1943 the U.S. Armed Forces elected to finance the publication of over 123 million pocket-sized paperbacks as a means to appease soldiers who “found themselves in a situation where periods of boredom alternated with periods of intense activity” (Hackenberg 16-17). Of course, there were ulterior motives behind the ASE editions; seeing that “books are weapons in the war of ideas,”⁴⁴ the Council on Books in Wartime⁴⁵ was assigned the task of selecting which texts would be included in this massive undertaking, the hope being that texts much like *A Wartime Whitman*, for example, would captivate soldiers and

⁴³ For more on these editions and their history, see John Cole’s *Books in Action* (1984) and the “virtual catalog” done by the University of Virginia library’s Special Collections department, entitled “Books Go To War: The Armed Services Editions in World War II,” available online at <http://www2.lib.virginia.edu/exhibits/ase/>.

⁴⁴ This became the council’s unofficial slogan, a quote appropriated from Franklin Roosevelt’s numerous contentions made against Nazi book burning: “We all know that books burn – yet we have the greater knowledge that books can not be killed by fire. People die, but books never die...In this war, we know, books are weapons. And it is part of your dedication always to make them weapons for man’s freedom” (646). A similar version of FDR’s quote can be seen in that iconic 1942 poster, visible here at The Library of Congress’ website: <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/96502725/>.

⁴⁵ The Council was a group made up of various American publishers, booksellers and librarians, all of whom reaped great benefits from their involvement with this project. Michael Hackenberg writes that the monumental success of the postwar paperback market was influenced by this ASE project. For more on the Council and their selection process, see Cole’s *Books in Action* and John B. Hench’s *Books as Weapons: Propaganda, Publishing, and the Battle for Global Markets in the Era of World War II* (2010).

create a generation of postwar readers (i.e., book buyers). Consisting of 1,324 titles – ranging from classics to poetry to history to popular pulp fiction – the texts were made freely available to soldiers serving the U.S. across the globe. While it is unknown what exact texts, for example, Ramchand's father was able to salvage from the abandoned base, it is a likely assumption that these ASE editions offered the Caribbean readers who came across them a divergence from the typical literature they were used to in standard colonial education systems.⁴⁶ The American writers which Lamming cites as having central significance in the critical understanding of the Caribbean novel – Melville, Twain and Whitman – all had multiple texts published under the ASE heading.⁴⁷



⁴⁶ It should be noted that while these texts often served as propaganda tools for the U.S. government (more on this in Chapter 4), there were plenty of non-American texts published under the ASE heading; many of which colonial students would've been already familiar with, including but are not limited to works by authors such as Dickens, Conrad, Wordsworth and Thackeray. For reference purposes, the appendix in Cole's text contains a complete list of all 1,324 ASE titles.

⁴⁷ for Melville: *Typee*, *Omoo*, and *Moby-Dick*; for Twain: *Tom Sawyer*, *Huckleberry Finn*, *Connecticut Yankee*, *Life on the Mississippi*, *The Mysterious Stranger*, and a selection of short stories; for Whitman, a collection of poems edited by Major William Aiken under the title, *A Wartime Whitman*, and a biography called *Walt Whitman* done by Henry Seidel Canby.

In *Caliban and the Yankees*, Neptune references Lamming's acknowledgment of Whitman, Melville, and Twain, stating that fellow Caribbean writers "shared faith in the democratic vision" rendered in much of the literature of nineteenth century America (197). However, despite the fact that this relation would seem to have great contemporary significance for both literary and cultural studies, especially given the so-called "transnational turn" (Fishkin), there is little criticism to be found which contemplates this unique trend. Most instances which consider Caribbean and American literary similarities are most often ambiguous and/or indirectly comparative; and rarely do they cite the American occupation as a stimulus for this curious affair. For example, Gerald Moore's *The Chosen Tongue: English Writing in the Tropical World* (1969) analyzes the generations of writers whom have "struggled to accommodate English to the expression of values, climates, landscapes and historical experiences quite different from those which originally shaped it" (ix). In other words, Moore traces those who "have been engaged in using English to define cultures not English, or no longer English" (ix). He begins his text by noting the trio of Americans cited by Lamming – Whitman, Melville, and Twain – and how they shaped English into an 'American' language definitive of their own stock. Moore cites Whitman as being the "first American poet whose work carries, however crudely at times, the whole sense of America and of being an American" (xiii). His text goes on to trace similar literary exploits in other regions; in the Caribbean, he notes the linguistic appropriations in the works of Reid, Lamming, Walcott, Naipaul, Anthony, Mittelholzer, and Brathwaite. Despite noting how "even the most ideologically hostile West Indian has been shaped to some extent by the immense cultural and material pressures which America projects across the islands" (112), Moore does not specify the ways in which those American pressures shape or linguistically inform the Caribbean batch.

Lloyd W. Brown's work has often been concerned with the literature of both the Caribbean and U.S.⁴⁸ Brown has argued that Caribbean fiction is oft demonstrative of how the "West Indian experience is really a microcosm of the New World ethos" ("West Indian Literature" 412); he suggests that the "castaway-isolato" who figures so prominently in the region's literature is really "the quintessence of" a West Indian psyche which "encapsulates what the New World experience can and should be," i.e., discovery (435). Unfortunately, Brown doesn't reveal how that New World "ethos" is also played out in America's fiction; but, in a previous article entitled "The American Image in British West Indian Literature" (1971), Brown interrogates Caribbean pseudo-expatriates like Claude McKay and Paule Marshall, and how their projections of being black in America ultimately idealize their West Indian backgrounds (34). Additionally, he has explored how the Caribbean figure operates as an ethnic stereotype in the works of black American writers like Ellison and Baldwin ("West Indian as Ethnic Stereotype"). While Brown's work is undoubtedly unique in that it considers certain U.S./Caribbean exchanges, it never addresses the specific claim Lamming makes in *Pleasures*, which links the Anglophone Caribbean novel with those of Melville, Whitman and Twain.

Randy Boyagoda's 2003 article titled "Just Where and What Is 'the (comparatively speaking) South'?": Caribbean Writers on Melville and Faulkner" represents the best of the albeit slim contemporary critical work available on this pan-American topic. Boyagoda contemplates the "sense of sympathetic interest" (66) that Caribbean writers like C. L. R. James, Wilson Harris, and Édouard Glissant have for their said American counterparts, and argues that this relation creates a cross-cultural nexus by which critics may be able to reconfigure American literary and cultural identity (73). Boyagoda argues that Caribbean readings of Melville, for

⁴⁸ Brown is, after all, a Jamaican-born critic and poet, and for a long time was a Professor of Comparative Literature at the University of Southern California.

example, are not acts of repossession but of *identification* (69), which creates a metaphorical region grounded in geographic and historical realities that, in turn, allows readers to realize that the works of these writers “come from, and create, the very same places” (73). Boyagoda’s article is chock-full of new directives for American and Caribbean literary studies, but what the relatively brief article lacks, unfortunately, is more space for unpacking many of the original ideas he portends. Boyagoda begins his article with Lamming’s acknowledgement of that American “cathedral” in *Pleasures*, but no analysis of Lamming’s writings are given beyond that. Furthermore, while Boyagoda infers that Caribbean writers take interest in American literature for its “democratic underpinnings” (67) and “foundation for heterogeneity” (71), he fails to offer more developed analyses on the supposed “shared historical past” between regions, which is certainly a complicated comparison to make without detailed elucidation. Boyagoda also seems more invested in the potential impacts of this relation for American studies, writing that “the relations between Caribbean and American writing can potentially lead to a reconfiguration of America’s literary and cultural identity” (65). While I certainly agree, this dissertation hopes to reveal that nature of this relation is much more reciprocal than that.

J. Michael Dash’s book-length text, *The Other America: Caribbean Literature in a New World Context* (1998), uses postmodern theory alongside concepts from Martí’s “Our America” in an attempt to remedy the generalized “romance of otherness” and “fetishistic ideal of difference” (x) that so often permeates Caribbean literary criticism. Dash suggests that postmodern approaches have “helped to dismantle [the] binary oppositions that traditionally fixed the Caribbean in terms of metropole against periphery, nationalist opacity against universalizing sameness” (6-7). Because the region is nearly impossible to discern as a whole unit, Dash suggests that liminality and indeterminacy should drive theoretical approaches to the

Caribbean, which, consequently, allows the region to be referentially compared to other areas throughout the Western Hemisphere (hence his interest in Martí). While Dash provides a fresh and much-needed look at these relations – and one that was ahead of its time even as recent as 1998 – his specialty is in the Hispanic and Francophone realms; thus, Anglophone literature necessarily inhabits a relatively insignificant role in his analysis.

Like Boyagoda's article, Matthew Pratt Guterl's "'I Went to the West Indies': Race, Place, and the Antebellum South" (2006) also participates as part of new global South scholarship. Guterl posits the theory that "The Caribbean and the Mississippi appear in their imaginings as a singular American Mediterranean....with the scattered New World colonies and fledgling republics standing in for the ancient cities and empires of the classical world" (447). Citing Thomas Sutpen's contemplations of his West Indian youth in Faulkner's *Absalom, Absalom!*, Guterl traces the "close, even intimate, association of the Old South and the Caribbean" in various travelogues by noting their transnational, composite natures in an attempt to do away with the lingering shadow of "sectional" manifest destiny – and biased U.S. exceptionalism – that exists across the Americas (464). Guterl is among a growing group of historians attempting to eschew certain archaic practices in favor of seeing the Americas *at large*. By noting the shared circumstances and sentiments which exist between regions (i.e., slavery, nation formation out of European domination, and the shared sense of culture which binds the planter class), Guterl argues for the inclusion of "the antebellum South as a part of the Caribbean, as a region of the US, and as a participant in an overlapping "creole" world" (448). His hemispheric motivations represents a common tendency in many other contemporary critiques, and is perhaps pursued most explicitly in Gustavo Pérez Firmat's collection of essays, *Do the Americas Have a Common Literature?* (1990). While this text limits the Caribbean to a

small handful of Cuban writers, mainly focusing on the United States and its interaction among greater Hispanic Latin America, the text is among a growing group of works which note shared interests and exchanges betwixt literatures which have been previously-pigeonholed in national traditions.

Despite contemporary interests in certain transnational connections, however, the literary bridge between the U.S. and the Anglophone Caribbean has yet to be fully constructed. George Lamming has been arguing for its assembly for over a half century now. In *The Pleasures of Exile*, Lamming would note that his colonial status in England along with the “habitual superciliousness” of the English towards anything and everything American had instilled in him a sympathetic and natural defense of the U.S. (186). Unearthing how exactly this sympathetic alignment formed, however, is a daunting task, which might in fact be somewhat responsible for the general lack of critical attention given to Lamming’s comment regarding the centrality of the nineteenth-century American novel in Caribbean fiction. For one, the educational system in which the likes of Lamming grew up not only neglected American writing, but generally abhorred it. Lamming recounts the story of a conversation he would have with the Chairman of the English Department at the University of the West Indies, an encounter he describes as “one of my most vivid experiences on returning to the Caribbean in 1955 or ’56” (“On West Indian Writing” 130). Upon asking the Chairman if the department required its students to read any of recent Nobel winner William Faulkner’s works, the Chairman replied, “What is there of Faulkner to do?” The brashness – perhaps the “habitual superciliousness” – of the reply dumbfounded Lamming. But it also reified for him the powerful trajectory of the colonial imperative. Stating that “although historically and geographically we were an essential part of the Americas,” Lamming recounts that there was absolutely no “influence of America” upon his

childhood reading. And this fact, established long before Lamming attended school in the 1930s, had remained so well into the 1950s, even at the region's highest institution for literary learning. As Lamming would recall, "the system of education, the people who organized it and who applied it, did not accept that there was something called American literature, or if there were something called American literature, it was exclusively for something called American consumption. It did not acquire the status of promotion" (129). Lamming would postulate that this neglect was the result of the longstanding "cultural rigidities of the imperial indoctrination" ("Caribbean Literature" 106-107). Because UWI housed no department of American studies, Lamming would lament that:

A history graduate...can leave the University of the West Indies with an impressive grasp of the English Tudor period and little knowledge of the American nineteenth century. The same is true of the department of English studies: Neither Herman Melville nor Mark Twain is a sufficiently relevant force to replace the historical urgency of Jane Austen; the study of Anglo-Saxon is considered essential, but the study of literary transition from the colonial period to the American discovery of its genius in Melville and Mark Twain is considered irrelevant...Yet the West Indies is to be understood in relation to the development of civilization in the Americas. That is a dilemma which still informs and inhibits the West Indian intelligence in its pursuit of total liberation (107).

In fact, Lamming would find that this sort of regional neglect would be reciprocated at American institutions. In 1970 Lamming worked as a writer-in-residence at Texas Southern University in Houston, where he would help students in their English Department to develop a literary journal called *Roots*.⁴⁹ In conjunction with its publication, Lamming was asked by people from the University of Texas – notably, Ian Munro and Reinhard Sander – to deliver lectures on Caribbean literature to various classrooms that fall. There, Lamming would lament the lack of attention given to the Caribbean by the American studies field. He says:

⁴⁹ According to the Special Collections Department at TSU, *Roots* was only published in two volumes by the university's English Department, both in 1970. The editors listed on both issues are Tommy Guy, Jeffree Jane, Turner Warton, and Mance Williams, and the volumes were published by Armadillo Press in Austin.

I'd like to say frankly that it has astonished me to notice in the various prospectuses for what are called "Black Studies" across the United States the conspicuous omission of Caribbean literature, when it should be an immediate cultural concern for the United States, because the Caribbean is part of the Americas ("Interview" 19).

Lamming would also admit in these discussions that the "literary center for West Indians" was beginning to shift from London to New York City, in part, due to the "growing awareness of the continuity of black experience between the mainland and the islands" (17). Lamming contends that you cannot consider the Harlem Renaissance, for example, without noting the large-scale West Indian migration there, which brought seminal figures like Marcus Garvey and Claude McKay (19). Despite such deep-seeded connections, Lamming is oft quick to admit that the connections are not merely a racial one. Stating that "Black writing from the United States was a very, very small part of the experience for myself and people like me in the Caribbean," (Kent 96-97), Lamming suggests that the strongest link between regions is to be found in *language*, which is the basis for latter chapters in this dissertation.

Unfortunately, Lamming's experience with hemispheric literary parochialism at academic institutions in both the U.S. and the Caribbean still permeates American and Caribbean literary studies today. If the Caribbean's colonial educational system shunned America's literature, yet seminal regional writers like Lamming, James, Naipaul, and Wynter were still finding ways to engage with it, the seemingly clandestine avenues under which these American texts were uncovered by Caribbean readers must be traced. The following chapter not only exposes the depth by which those four writers would engage with American literary ideals, but also *how* those interactions would be made possible.

For too long the works of that generation have been considered in the binary stratagem that is colonialism and postcolonialism; and yet, dating to their earliest years as writers, they looked to sever that colonial bond by articulating affinities elsewhere. Lamming's *The*

Pleasures of Exile – a text which explicitly attempts to delineate this desire – sets forth these alternative pathways. He writes:

I have lately tried to argue, in another connection, that the West Indian student, for example, should not be sent to study in England. Not because England is a bad place for studying, but because the student's whole development as a person is thwarted by the memory, the accumulated stuff of a childhood and adolescence which has been maintained and fertilised by England's historic ties with the West Indies (25).

Relating to such cognitive 'fertilization,' Gordon K. Lewis would add that "West Indians, as persons...have to emancipate themselves in their innermost selves from the English psycho-complex" (392). And yet, in concluding that seminal historical text, *The Growth of the Modern West Indies*, Lewis offers a forewarning to the potential transfer from the protective English umbrella to an American one (413). While the political ramifications of such a statement are undoubtedly warranted, the neglect it pays to the creative possibilities of this shift is far too dismissive; it serves to highlight the critical disregard given to the vigorous flirtations with American literature and culture that Caribbean writers have long been in the midst of pursuing. The following chapters thus attempt to expose and explain this little-explored literary predilection.

CHAPTER 2 CITED LITERATURE

- Anthony, Michael. *Historical Dictionary of Trinidad and Tobago*. Lanham, MD: Scarecrow, 1997.
- “Armed Services Editions.” *warletters.com*. The Legacy Project. 2005. Web. 18 Aug 2011.
<<http://www.warletters.com/ases/index.html>>.
- Baptiste, Fitzroy A. “United States-Caribbean Relations from World War II to the Present: The Social Nexus.” *U.S.-Caribbean Relations: Their Impact on Peoples and Culture*. Ed. Ransford W. Palmer. Westport, CT: Praeger, 1998. 7-52.
- Bertram, Vicki, ed. *Kicking Daffodils: Twentieth-Century Women Poets*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 1997.
- “Books Go To War: The Armed Services Editions in World War II.” 1996. *The University of Virginia: Special Collections Library*. 16 Dec 2009. Web. 26 Aug 2011.
<<http://www2.lib.virginia.edu/exhibits/ase/>>.
- Boyagoda, Randy. “Just Where and What Is ‘the (comparatively speaking) South’? Caribbean Writers on Melville and Faulkner.” *The Mississippi Quarterly* 57.1 (Winter 2003/2004): 65-73.
- Brathwaite, Edward Kamau. “The African Presence in Caribbean Literature.” *Daedalus* 103.2: Slavery, Colonialism, and Racism (Spring 1974): 73-109.
- . *The Arrivants: A New World Trilogy*. 1973. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1998.
- . *History of the Voice: The Development of Nation Language in Anglophone Caribbean Poetry*. New Beacon: London, 1984.
- . “Jazz and the West Indian Novel.” *Roots*. 1986. Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P, 1993. 55-110.
- . *Roots*. 1986. Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P, 1993.
- Brown, Lloyd W. “The American Image in British West Indian Literature.” *Caribbean Studies* 11.1 (Apr 1971): 30-45.
- . “The West Indian as an Ethnic Stereotype in Black American Literature.” *Negro American Literature Forum* 5.1 (Spring 1971): 8-14.
- . “West Indian Literature: Road to a ‘New World’ Sensibility.” *Journal of Black Studies* 7.4 (June 1977): 411-436.
- Burke, Kevin. “Calypso on Trial.” *The Rum and Coca-Cola Reader*. Web. 26 Aug 2011.
<http://www.rumandcocacolareader.com/RumAndCocaCola/Calypso_on_Trial.html>.

- Cole, John Y., ed. *Books in Action: The Armed Services Editions*. Washington: Library of Congress, 1984.
- Curtis, Wayne. "Rum and Coca-Cola: The Murky Derivations of a Sweet Drink and a Sassy World War II Song." *The American Scholar* 75.3 (Summer 2006): 64-70.
- Dance, Daryl Cumber. *Fifty Caribbean Writers: A Bio-Bibliographical Critical Sourcebook*. New York: Greenwood, 1986.
- Dash, J. Michael. *The Other America: Caribbean Literature in a New World Context*. Charlottesville: UP of Virginia, 1998.
- Dawes, Neville. *The Last Enchantment*. 1960. Leeds: Peepal Tree, 2009.
- de Boissière, Ralph. *Rum and Coca-Cola*. 1956. London: Allison & Busby, 1984.
- Donnell, Alison. *Twentieth-Century Caribbean Literature: Critical Moments in Anglophone Literary History*. London: Routledge, 2006.
- Fishkin, Shelley Fisher. "Crossroads of Cultures: The Transnational Turn in American Studies—Presidential Address to the American Studies Association, November 12, 2004." *American Quarterly* 57.1 (Mar 2005): 17-57.
- François, Irlene. "The Daffodil Gap: Jamaica Kincaid's *Lucy*." *MaComère: Journal of the Association of Caribbean Women Writers and Scholars* 4 (2001): 84-100.
- Guterl, Matthew Pratt. "I Went to the West Indies": Race, Place, and the Antebellum South. *American Literary History* 18.3 (Fall 2006): 446-467.
- Hackenberg, Michael. "The Armed Services Editions in Publishing History." *Books in Action: The Armed Services Editions*. Ed. John Y. Cole. Washington: Library of Congress, 1984. 13-21.
- Hench, John B. *Books as Weapons: Propaganda, Publishing, and the Battle for Global Markets in the Era of World War II*. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 2010.
- Horne, Gerald. *Cold War in a Hot Zone: The United States Confronts Labor and Independence Struggles in the British West Indies*. Philadelphia: Temple UP, 2007.
- James, C. L. R. *Beyond a Boundary*. 1963. London: Yellow Jersey, 2005.
- Kincaid, Jamaica. "Dances with Daffodils: Wordsworth Inspires a Meadow of Flowers at the Author's Vermont Home." *Architectural Digest* (Apr 2007). Web. 27 Oct 2009.
<http://www.architecturaldigest.com/homes/spaces/2007/04/gardens_article>.
- . *Lucy*. 1990. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2002.
- Lamming, George. "Birds of a Feather." 1948. *Stories from the Caribbean: An Anthology*. Ed. Andrew Salkey. London: Elek, 1965. 178-188.

- . "Caribbean Literature: The Black Rock of Africa." 1966. *Conversations: George Lamming: Essays, Addresses and Interviews 1953-1990*. Eds. Richard Drayton and Andaiye. London: Kaira, 1992. 106-125.
- . "A Conversation with George Lamming." By George E. Kent. *Black World* 22. 5 (1973): 4-14, 88-97.
- . "Conversation with George Lamming." 1979. *New World Adams: Conversations with Contemporary West Indian Writers*. Ed. Daryl Cumber Dance. 1992. Leeds, England: Peepal Tree, 2008. 141-154.
- . "Interview with George Lamming." *Kas-Kas: Interviews with Three Caribbean Writers in Texas*. Eds. Ian Munro & Reinhard Sander. Austin: African and Afro-American Research Institute, 1972. 4-21.
- . "On West Indian Writing." 1974. *Conversations: George Lamming: Essays, Addresses and Interviews 1953-1990*. Eds. Richard Drayton and Andaiye. London: Kaira, 1992. 126-140.
- . *The Pleasures of Exile*. 1960. Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P, 1992.
- . "Race." Review. *The Last Enchantment*, by Neville Dawes. *Race & Class* 2.2 (Apr 1960): 92.
- . "Sovereignty of the Imagination." *Sovereignty of the Imagination: Conversations III*. Philipsburg: St. Martin, 2009. 1-50.
- Langley, Lester D. *The United States and the Caribbean in the Twentieth Century*. Athens: U of Georgia P, 1982.
- Lewis, Gordon K. *The Growth of the Modern West Indies*. 1968. New York: Modern Reader, 1969.
- Lovelace, Earl. *The Dragon Can't Dance*. 1979. Essex: Longman, 1998.
- Maingot, Anthony P. *The United States and the Caribbean: Challenges of an Asymmetrical Relationship*. Boulder, CO: Westview, 1994.
- Maingot, Anthony P., and Wilfredo Lozano, eds. *The United States and the Caribbean: Transforming Hegemony and Sovereignty*. New York: Routledge, 2005.
- Mais, Roger. *The Hills Were Joyful Together*. 1953. London: Heinemann, 1987.
- . *Brother Man*. 1954. Oxford: Heinemann, 1974.
- Mendes, Alfred H. *Pitch Lake: A Story from Trinidad*. 1934. Liechtenstein, Germany: Kraus, 1970.

- Moore, Gerald. *The Chosen Tongue: English Writing in the Tropical World*. 1969. New York: Harper & Row, 1970.
- Muthyala, John. *Reworlding America: Myth, History, and Narrative*. Athens, OH: Ohio UP, 2006.
- Naipaul, V.S. *Between Father and Son: Family Letters*. Ed. Gillon Aitken. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2000.
- . "Jasmine." *The Overcrowded Barracoon and Other Articles*. 1972. Middlesex, England: Penguin, 1984. 24-31.
- . *The Middle Passage: Impressions of Five Societies—British, French and Dutch—in the West Indies and South America*. 1962. New York: Vintage, 1981.
- . *Miguel Street*. 1959. London: Penguin, 1993.
- . *The Mystic Masseur: A Novel*. 1957. New York: Vintage International, 2002.
- . "Prologue to an Autobiography." *Finding the Centre: Two Narratives*. London: Andre Deutsch, 1984. 15-85.
- . *A Way in the World*. 1994. New York: Vintage International, 1995.
- Nair, Supriya. *Caliban's Curse: George Lamming and the Revisioning of History*. Ann Arbor, MI: U of Michigan P, 1996.
- Neptune, Harvey R. *Caliban and the Yankees: Trinidad and the United States Occupation*. Chapel Hill: U of North Carolina P, 2007.
- Nichols, Grace. "Spring." *The Fat Black Woman's Poems*. London: Virago, 1984. 34.
- O'Callaghan, Evelyn. "Selected Creole Sociolinguistic Patterns in the West Indian Novel." *Critical Issues in West Indian Literature: Selected Papers from West Indian Literature Conferences, 1981-1983*. Eds. Erike Sollish Smilowitz and Roberta Quarles Knowles. Parkersburg, IA: Caribbean Books, 1984. 125-136.
- Parker, Jason C. *Brother's Keeper: The United States, Race, and Empire in the British Caribbean, 1937-1962*. Oxford, England: Oxford UP, 2008.
- Pérez Firmat, Gustavo, ed. *Do the Americas Have a Common Literature?* Durham: Duke UP, 1990.
- Proudfoot, Mary. *Britain and the United States in the Caribbean: A Comparative Study in Methods of Development*. London: Faber & Faber, 1954.
- Ramchand, Kenneth. "Partial Truths: A Critical Account of V.S. Naipaul's Later Fiction." *Critical Issues in West Indian Literature: Selected Papers from West Indian Literature*

- Conferences, 1981-1983*. Eds. Erike Sollish Smilowitz and Roberta Quarles Knowles. Parkersburg, IA: Caribbean Books, 1984. 65-89.
- . *The West Indian Novel and its Background*. New York: Barnes & Noble, 1970.
- . "'The West Indian Novel and its Background' — Thirty Years Later." *ARIEL: A Review of International English Literature* 31:1/2 (Jan-Apr 2000): 351-373.
- Roosevelt, Franklin D. "Message to the Booksellers of America." 1942. *The Yale Book of Quotations*. New Haven: Yale UP, 2006. 646.
- Rowe, John Carlos. *The New American Studies*. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 2002. 51-63.
- Sander, Reinhard W. "The American Invaders: Ralph de Boissière's *Rum and Coca-Cola*." *The Journal of Commonwealth Literature* 21 (1986): 93-108.
- . *The Trinidad Awakening: West Indian Literature of the Nineteen-Thirties*. New York: Greenwood, 1988.
- Sander, Reinhard W., ed. *From Trinidad: An Anthology of Early West Indian Writing*. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1978.
- Scott, Helen C. "'Dem tief, dem a dam tief': Jamaica Kincaid's Literature of Protest." *Callaloo* 25.3 (Summer 2002): 977-989.
- Selvon, Samuel. *A Brighter Sun*. 1952. Essex, England: Longman, 1985.
- . *Ways of Sunlight*. 1957. Essex: Longman, 1985.
- Smith, Frederick H. *Caribbean Rum: A Social and Economic History*. Gainesville: UP of Florida, 2005.
- Smith, Ian. "Misusing Canonical Intertexts: Jamaica Kincaid, Wordsworth, and Colonialism's 'absent things'." *Callaloo* 25.3 (2002): 801-820.
- Smith, Robert Freeman. *The Caribbean World and the United States: Mixing Rum and Coca-Cola*. New York: Twayne, 1994.
- Swanzy, Henry. "The Literary Situation in the Contemporary Caribbean." *Books Abroad* 30.3 (Summer 1956): 266-274.
- Tiffin, Helen. "Cold Hearts and (Foreign) Tongues: Recitation and the Reclamation of the Female Body in the Works of Erna Brodber and Jamaica Kincaid." *Callaloo* 16.4 (Autumn 1993): 909-921.
- Tunzelmann, Alex von. *Red Heat: Conspiracy, Murder, and the Cold War in the Caribbean*. New York: Henry Holt, 2011.
- Williams, Eric. *Education in the British West Indies*. 1945. New York: A & B, 1994.

Wordsworth, William. "I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud." 1807. *The Major Works*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2000. 303-304.

Wynter, Sylvia. "We Must Learn to Sit Down Together and Discuss a Little Culture: Reflections on West Indian Writing and Criticism." *The Routledge Reader in Caribbean Literature*. Eds. Alison Donnell and Sarah Lawson Welsh. New York: Routledge, 1996. 307-315.

CHAPTER 3

FROM THE CINEMA TO THE LIBRARY*The Assertion of American Literature in Caribbean Writing*

Our fathers and our fathers before them
 Came like yours from many peoples, many places
 Some came in search of gold and Spanish plate
 Others in search of freedom and perhaps peace,
 And others yet again with shackles on their limbs
 And iron in their souls (43).

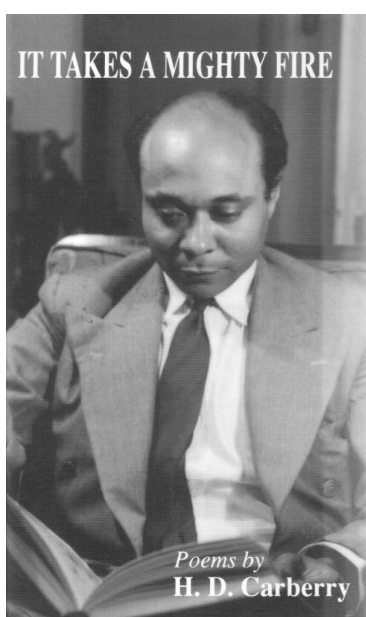
H. D. Carberry's "Oh America"

When I got to the States and spent some time there,
 I started to realize the immense importance of that
 nineteenth-century literature (134).

**George Lamming in conversation
 with David Scott**

Jamaican minor poet H. D. Carberry was a busy man. Born in Montreal, raised in Jamaica, and educated at Oxford, Carberry's vast exploits would be reflected in his life work. He was a father, a poet, a lawyer, and a judge. He published poems in Jamaica's *Public Opinion* newspaper and the literary magazine *Focus*, founded by Edna Manley. He read his work on the BBC's famed *Caribbean Voices* program. He held esteemed positions in Jamaican judicature. While studying law in England, he helped establish the West Indian Students' Union and served as the group's president. As Sir Philip Sherlock has noted, Carberry belongs to that kinetic and

industrious generation of West Indians who would witness the passing of colonialism and the growth of nationalism (ix). Sherlock recalls that the era incited a “stir or wonder” and an “elation of discovery,” and writes that these fervent sentiments are exhibited in Carberry’s poetry.⁵⁰ Amidst all of Carberry’s endeavors, however, his most passionate occupation may have been *reading*. The cover to his posthumous collection of poems, *It Takes a Mighty Fire*, situates a seated Carberry with a book on his lap, his facial expression exhibiting that “stir or wonder” and “elation of discovery” that Sherlock cites above.



Known among family and friends as “Dossie,” Hugh Doston Carberry’s passion for reading can be witnessed in the Carberry Collection of Caribbean Literature at the University of Illinois at Chicago.⁵¹ Carberry began collecting books in the late 1940s – at the beginning of Caribbean literature’s boom years – and continued to do so up until his passing in 1989. Over

⁵⁰ For more on Carberry and his work, see *It Takes a Mighty Fire: Poems by H. D. Carberry* (1995).

⁵¹ The collection was purchased by UIC and is currently housed in the Special Collections department of the Richard J. Daley Library. It must be stressed here that the subject of American libraries buying valuable collections like Carberry’s is an ethical issue that has weighed heavily on the mind of Cirillo, who contemplates this dilemma and its repercussions in “The Caribbean Library in Diaspora: Perspectives from Scholarship and Librarianship” (2007, co-authored by Linda Naru and Ellen Starkman). More details on the Carberry collection, along with a database relating to the digitization project of archiving and preserving the collection’s book jackets, can be found here: <http://libsys.lib.uic.edu:591/carberry/hdbio.html>.

the course of those four decades, Carberry amassed an immense collection of over 1,000 Caribbean-based volumes. He obtained first editions of would-be Nobel authors like Walcott and Naipaul. He bought C. L. R. James' early pamphlets, and texts including Norman Manley's speeches. He collected travelogues and folk anthologies; books ranging from Caribbean anthropology to poetry to voodoo to literary criticism to cricket. He had many of the texts inscribed; signatures and personalized notes from the likes of Jean Rhys, George Lamming, and Sylvia Wynter grace the opening pages of these incredibly rare texts, revealing just how immersed in this reading culture Carberry himself was.⁵² Anything in print that touched upon the Caribbean, from a closely Caribbean perspective, likely found its way into Carberry's collection.

With Carberry's passing in 1989, the large collection of texts he left behind in Mona would need a new curator. Dossie's widow, Dorothea, had little need for the large quantity of books and eventually began entertaining the idea of selling the collection to another bibliophile who might have a use for them. Ian Randle (he who had recently opened his eponymous publishing house in Kingston), was familiar H. D.'s collection, and was told by a bookshop owner in St. Kitts that people from the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC) had inquired about the possibility of obtaining a Caribbean collection for their research institution. In the mid-1990s the UIC library – with blessings from their English department – began searching for a collection of Caribbean literature that would, theoretically, form a postcolonial research triangle along with the Africana collection at Northwestern University, and the South Asian collection at the

⁵² Lamming, for instance, has signed all of his novels in the collection, usually adding a personalized note like, "Especially for Dorothy and Dossie" (in *Season of Adventure*) or "Happy Christmas 1962" (in *The Pleasures of Exile*). Additionally, Jean Rhys signs a first edition copy of *Wide Sargasso Sea*, "Uncle D -- Happy Christmas." And then there's the humorous anecdote regarding Wynter's inscription in *The Hills of Hebron*: Wynter originally signs the book "To Dossie with affection, Sylvia Carew" as a nod to her marriage to Jan, but she crosses out the "Carew" – as a nod to her then-recent divorce – and writes "Wynter" underneath.

University of Chicago.⁵³ Literature professor Nancy Cirillo, who had spearheaded this search at UIC, was eventually put in touch with Randle through a mutual contact, and subsequently connected with Mrs. Carberry. Then, in the fall of 1996, Cirillo and a small cohort of associates traveled to Kingston to view the collection and discuss its potential transfer to Chicago. While many of Carberry's texts had been ravaged by the unforgiving Jamaican heat – not to mention a few persistent bookworms – Cirillo arrived to find the collection in stunning shape.

Aside from the quality of the texts, Cirillo took curious note of the way in which Carberry had organized his collection. After Dossie's passing, Dorothea had left his library completely intact. Cirillo recalls that the collection was housed throughout two rooms of the Carberry's rather modest home in Mona. One room, which had been retrofitted with a specially-treated wall to protect from a prior bookworm infestation, housed all the non-literary works (texts on cricket, Caribbean political history, etc.). The other room was dedicated entirely to literature; on one wall, Carberry had alphabetized his Caribbean texts, by author, in exact, painstaking fashion. Cirillo noted that these texts were not ordered *regionally*, as is often done, assuming that Carberry – like so many others from his generation⁵⁴ – envisioned the entire Caribbean region as a whole unit.

Directly across the room on a smaller bookshelf sat a conspicuous collection of paperbacks, which happened to be the only other texts in the house. Upon closer inspection – and much to Cirillo's surprise – the shelf contained *nothing but* American literature.⁵⁵ What made this bookshelf all the more curious was that despite the colonial upbringing that Carberry

⁵³ For information on those collections, see <http://www.library.northwestern.edu/libraries-collections/evanston-campus/africana-collection> and <http://www.lib.uchicago.edu/e/su/southasia/rmrl.html>, respectively.

⁵⁴ Carberry was born in 1921, the same decade which birthed would-be Caribbean writers like George Lamming, Sylvia Wynter, and Sam Selvon.

⁵⁵ While these texts were not included in the Carberry purchase, Cirillo recalls seeing all of "the major players" of U.S. literature.

received in Jamaica, Cirillo found nary a single piece of British literature throughout the entire library. *Not a one*. I recount Cirillo's discovery of Carberry's unique library taxonomy because it represents a literary trend few scholars have found worth exploring: that amidst the process of building Caribbean-based libraries and literature, Caribbean readers, poets and novelists in the mid-twentieth century regularly invoked America and its literature. While Carberry himself was a minor poet, his own writings provide us with an example of this invocation.⁵⁶ In a poem titled "Oh America," Carberry aligns the parallel histories of the Caribbean and the United States: "Our fathers and our fathers before them came like yours from many peoples, many places," he writes (43). Carberry's poem adds that many came in search of riches, others in search of freedom and peace, and even others "with shackles on their limbs and iron in their souls" (43). While the poem recognizes that the regions would take vastly differing routes on the path of history, Carberry's own library taxonomy – American and Caribbean fiction directly facing one another – highlights a shared literary sensibility between both regions which has gone all but unrecognized in the realm of Caribbean and American literary studies.

Like Carberry, the renowned Eric Williams would witness this tendency unfold on Caribbean bookshelves. Citing the gradual emergence of a distinct West Indian culture amidst the waning years of colonialism, Williams argues:

The effects of this development are already clearly visible. Formerly, Dickens, Shakespeare, Thackeray and Scott were the authors read and found on bookshelves. These were the marks of the educated person. Today, Shaw, Wells, Hemingway, Dos Passos and other modern writers are well known and appreciated all over the West Indies (*Education* 8).

⁵⁶ Edward Baugh has noted that the majority of Carberry's poetry was written in the late 1930s and early 1940s, amidst the backdrop of "a fertile climate in the surge of nationalist and progressive socio-political consciousness which defined the 'new' Jamaica" (xiii). By the time Carberry turned twenty-five, however, he virtually ceased writing poetry and focused on his career in Jamaican judicature. After passing the Bar in 1951, Carberry worked in private practice throughout most of the 1950s. From 1969-1978 he was Clerk to the Houses of Parliament and a member of the commonwealth Parliamentary Association; in 1978 he was appointed Judge of the Jamaican court of appeal. Sir Philip Sherlock aptly describes Carberry as a "Lawyer by profession, poet by calling" (x).

Williams makes this observation in the mid-1940s – just a few years before the onset of the Caribbean’s own literary renaissance – and it reveals the engagement that he and fellow Caribbean intellectuals were beginning to have with a global culture that was not *just* British. Williams suggests that the literary climate which would produce a concerted and recognizable Caribbean literature ultimately has manifold connections to literatures outside of that colonial binary; but most especially, unique connections with authors and texts from the United States.

A survey of the Anglophone Caribbean literature from the 1950s and 1960s reveals this link to be quite robust. The American texts found on Williams’s and Carberry’s shelves – ranging from the so-called ‘American renaissance’ period of the nineteenth century up through twentieth century works from the likes of Faulkner, Ellison, and Baldwin – are recurrently referenced in mid-twentieth century Caribbean writing. While Chapter 2 highlights the cultural reverberations triggered by the Second World War regarding Caribbean interests in American creations, the following chapter traces how that cultural flirtation matured. Beginning in the late 1940s a Caribbean contingent of intellectuals began reading and touting an alternative circulation of texts that existed outside of the colonial trajectory. By analyzing the American references in the literary works of Lamming, James, Naipaul and Wynter, it becomes obvious that the nineteenth century literature of the U.S. plays a seminal role in the Caribbean’s own literary development. While Chapters 4 and 5 look to isolate and explain these unique transactions, the current chapter operates as an inventory, of sorts. The subsequent pages lay out many of the various references, commentaries, and literary nods made from the Caribbean in the direction of nineteenth century American writers. As shall be seen, there are *many*.

For the writers of the Caribbean's literary boom years, the American culture which had become a regular part of life during the War evolved into more advanced, highbrow stages. If the cinema were a place where Caribbean locals could go to indulge in aspects of America's newly-arrived pop culture, the library offered a similar introduction to America's literature. Libraries throughout the Caribbean region have been cherished, if not somewhat contentious, institutions. In a Carnegie-funded report on the region's libraries in the 1930s, Dr. Ernest A. Savage would argue that the system throughout the West Indies was among the worst in the entire British Empire. Stating that the library system was flirting with inevitable doom, Savage would write that it "cannot be left where it is, because when it is...not permitted to develop under enlightened direction and with ample opportunities for satisfying natural curiosities and aspirations, the community is in danger" (99).

The quality of Caribbean libraries has been the center of a heated debate between two of the region's Nobel laureates. V. S. Naipaul has often been quite brash in sharing his opinion regarding the supposedly lackluster libraries throughout his home region. He states there were "few libraries, few histories of literature to turn to," and the shoddy editions which were available instilled in him a "physical distaste" for such texts along with "the libraries that housed them" ("Jasmine" 28). Derek Walcott vehemently disagrees, and has stated that "Naipaul moans about the fact that in our youth the bookshelves of English literature were lined with Penguins and Everymans, when in fact the islands had small but excellent libraries" ("Garden Path" 128). Their dispute is best settled by regional librarian Enid M. Baa,⁵⁷ who concedes to both. Baa has

⁵⁷ Baa holds an *incredibly* distinguished record as a librarian in the Caribbean region, and an insignificant footnote like this cannot do justice to her pioneering work. In 1933 she was appointed by the Governor of the Virgin Islands to be its Supervising Librarian, the head of the island's Department of Libraries and thus the first woman to occupy a cabinet level office in the Virgin Islands government. Baa published many articles on the Caribbean's library system, and also held esteemed library positions throughout the United States. For more on her illustrious career, see the "Digitization for Access and Preservation" website at the University of the Virgin Islands, which includes archived "Profiles of Outstanding Virgin Islanders": http://webpac.uvi.edu/imls/pi_uvi/profiles/aesthetes.shtml.

written that the Caribbean's public libraries were indeed deplorable, but notes that the Savage report was responsible for procuring the eventual Carnegie grants, which, by 1941, could claim responsibility for the development of centralized library systems stretching from Trinidad northward to the British Virgin Islands (29-30). All in all, this provided great upgrades to the once-decayed institutions.

The perusal of the region's libraries by its would-be writers would be preempted by a frenetic love of reading. The four authors considered in this chapter – James, Lamming, Naipaul, and Wynter – place significant precedence on the act of consuming text. Books all but govern their adolescence, and the characters they would render in their early fiction are often literary reflections of those rabid reading habits. As an example, there's Naipaul's Ganesh Ramsumair, the mystic masseur, whose library astonishes the narrator ("There were books, books, here, there, and everywhere") and whose wife Leela is ever-irritated by her husband's inseparable habits ("you can't stop him from reading. Night and day he reading") (5). There's James' Haynes, Wynter's Isaac, and Lamming's G., all of whom are often described as being entrenched in the pages of books.

But the ability to discover *American* texts proves to be more of a challenge than it would initially seem. The aforementioned anecdote of Kenneth Ramchand's father bringing home a discarded box of American books from the U.S. army base reveals but one of the highly unique ways in which Caribbean would-be writers could first encounter literature made in the United States; in most cases, as this chapter describes, each writer's 'discovery' of American literature was unique in and of itself. But some general similarities which preempt those discoveries can be traced. Though held to a strict colonial curriculum by the Cambridge syndicate in the classroom, individual teachers and headmasters are often cited as responsible for offering

divergent books to their students in certain extracurricular contexts. Upon being given the “gift of reading,” Lamming cites *BIM* founder and secondary school instructor Frank Collymore, who often lent out copies of texts from his own personal library, many of which were different from approved classroom readings. Lamming, in turn, used those books to discover “that there were a people and a history outside something they called the British Empire and Barbados” (“Sovereignty” 83). Citing H. G. Wells’ *The Outline of History*, Lamming used Collymore’s copy to discover “that there were Egyptians and there were civilizations one had to come to terms with. This was the great value of the book for me” (6). In a humorous anecdote that reveals a teacher’s irksome dilemma, Lamming remembers being kicked out of class on many occasions for preferring to read Collymore’s personal texts over classroom materials. “For me,” Lamming would tell Ian Munro and Reinhard Sander, “the whole school curriculum became absolute nonsense. When I was supposed to studying school material I was reading books from Collymore’s library” (“Interview with” 6).

Despite being forced to uphold strict colonial standards in class, Lamming’s mentor ultimately encouraged a healthy and diverse habit of reading.⁵⁸ Naipaul had a similar experience with his headmaster for the fifth standard – Mr. Worm – who would read to the class from atypical texts like Jules Verne’s *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea*. In promoting a novel that wasn’t a colonial examination text, the effect was, as Naipaul notes, to encourage reading and to give “background” (*Reading and Writing* 6). In her novel, *The Hills of Hebron*, Wynter aptly summarizes an instructor’s dilemma of adhering to the colonial syllabus versus offering new and more relevant works to their students: “These headmasters were like eunuchs, themselves deprived, but guarding carefully the seeds of the future” (251).

⁵⁸ Lamming recalls that Collymore “followed the curriculum as it was. He did what he had to do: Jane Austen, some Shakespeare...[he was] teaching exactly whatever the Cambridge Syndicate demanded. That was the point of it” (“Interview with” 6).

Lamming admits from the discoveries he made in Collymore's care it allowed him to veer off and discover other writers on his own, many of which he found in the Barbados public library ("Interview with" 7).⁵⁹ This resembles the experience of a young C. L. R. James, who is described as being hypnotized by the classical texts (notably, Thackeray) in the masters' library room at Queen's Royal College (Grinshaw 4). These experiences of literary discovery are also duplicated in Wynter's novel, where Isaac unearths aberrant texts in his school's library, which is described as follows:

The library was a long high-ceilinged room. Its walls were paneled with mahogany, which lent a cool gloom to the interior. Its collection of books, the pride of its former owner, had been maintained and added to by the college authorities. It had also become a custom for well-off islanders to bequeath their books to the college. Such a bequest was always certain of a eulogy in the daily newspaper and the titles of the books donated were printed in full. Several years before Isaac came to the college, the first black man to be appointed to the college board of governors gave the library a gift of two thousand pounds. *The headmaster was thereby enabled to purchase books which corresponded more nearly to his own enlightened taste* (252, my emphasis).

While Wynter's delineation paints an idealized and serene portrait, not all libraries in the region had the benefit of endowments or an ambitiously well-read headmaster. This contrast is highlighted in an episode in *In the Castle of My Skin*, where G. and his mother discuss her friend Dave, who has returned to the village after having been stationed in Trinidad for some years:

"Did Dave say anything about the libraries?" I asked. I was very curious to know whether the libraries were as good as ours. "'Tis that that take the wind out of my sail," she said. "He say that one day he wus standin' in a certain library, an' a couple o' English people come in, an' the lady turn to the gentleman an' say how pleasing the atmosphere was an the gentleman say, yes, it's one o' the few libraries in the world that have everything except the books you want! An' in the same library he say he know for a fact things that go on there could never happen here in Kirton's rum shop" (277).

⁵⁹ It is worth noting here that the main library in Bridgetown was one of the many neoclassical libraries funded by the Andrew Carnegie grants; for more, see: <http://barbados.usembassy.gov/pe01292009.html>.

While libraries like this particular one may leave much to be desired – at least for those in search of *books* – G.’s curiosity is but another example of how libraries, as regional institutions, were important hubs for extra-curricular discoveries.

And while Caribbean libraries needed time to flourish, so did the region’s bookshop industry. Henry Swanzy – eventual producer of the BBC’s legendary *Caribbean Voices* program – could insist that “The canon of literary achievement, the very commerce of ideas, depends so largely on the development of outlets” (267), while simultaneously noting that, in the Caribbean, there was an utter lack of these creative avenues. Swanzy notes that prior to the boom, “there did not exist a single separate book shop in Kingston, the capital of Jamaica, a city of over a quarter million souls” (249). In describing the same situation in Trinidad, Naipaul laments:

Great cities possessed bookshops...Colonial towns or settlements like my own didn’t have bookshops. In the old colonial main square in Port of Spain...there were emporia that sold schoolbooks and perhaps children’s books and coloring books, and had perhaps as well a short shelf or two of Penguin books, a few copies of a few titles, and a few of the Collins Classics (looking like Bibles): emporia as dull as the emporia of those days could be, suggesting warehouses for a colonial population, where absolutely necessary goods (with a few specialist lines, like mosquito nets and the Collins Classics) were imported and stored in as unattractive and practical a way as possible (*Enigma* 117-118).

And while certain West Indian texts did circulate throughout the Caribbean, they oft remained within a small, literary elite. Swanzy notes that upon publication – and despite being “the most interesting talent in the West Indies” – a mere *three* copies of Lamming’s *In the Castle of My Skin* were purchased by one of Kingston’s newly-opened bookshops (267). That industry slowly began to grow, offering Caribbean writers a place to cultivate their obsession with reading. In James’ *Minty Alley*, as discussed below, the character of Haynes makes his living in one of these little bookshops.

And finally, Caribbean writers discovered divergent literatures through familial means. Walcott often notes how he grew up with a “terrific mother in a house full of books” (“Man of

the Theatre” 19). Naipaul’s father had bestowed upon his son a “private anthology of literature” (*Reading* 16-17). James’s father was a teacher, and his mother an avid reader who possessed personal copies of “*Vanity Fair*, an English classic...her own Shakespeare and *The Last of the Mohicans* by James Fenimore Cooper, an American classic” (“Language” 83).

In sum, these three venues – libraries, bookshops, and kin – offered means through which Anglophone Caribbean readers could explore non-classroom and non-colonial texts. By interrogating these aberrant reading habits alongside the American musings of four of the Caribbean region’s most seminal writers – James, Naipaul, Wynter, and Lamming – it becomes apparent that their unique exploits offers a new trajectory for the understanding of the Caribbean’s own literary developments.

PART I: C. L. R. JAMES

What the writing of this book has taught the writer is the inseparability of great literature and of social life (132).

Mariners, Renegades, and Castaways

C. L. R. James is the first Anglophone Caribbean writer to offer a sustained engagement with this literary alternative. In 1952, from the McCarthyist confines of the Ellis Island detention center, “with all its officers and armed guards, its bolts and its bars, its thick walls and its power” (*Mariners* 138), James penned his analytical ode to Herman Melville. *Mariners, Renegades and Castaways*, written over a 6-month internment for long overstaying his visa, offers an ambitious and innovative reading of Melville’s whaling epic. While the text was originally ignored, it has since undergone its own renaissance.⁶⁰ Understood alongside *American Civilization*, a manuscript on U.S. culture that went unpublished for decades, James’s writings on American literature and society have been the basis for contemporary critiques which posit James in the center of transnational and postnational circles. While critiques of *Mariners* and *American Civilization* often note the significance that Whitman and Melville would have upon James’ own thinking, rarely do those arguments consider the contexts of James’ *discovery* of those writers, and how this is preempted by the paradoxical considerations involving literature and culture in *Minty Alley*. As that novel reveals, James – dating back to his earliest years – was

⁶⁰ The contemporary attention given to *Mariners* comes on the heels of, and quite possibly from, the long-awaited publication of the *American Civilization* manuscript in 1993. It has already been well documented that *Mariners* was initially neglected. First and foremost, American critics found it abrasive given their own academic trajectories on Melville, and they didn’t want to associate themselves with a Marxist and potential target of the INS (Pease, “C. L. R. James” xxviii-xxix). Secondly, the text’s distribution was wrought from the start, as the original publisher called back 90% of the 20,000 copies printed due to nonpayment from James’ Johnsonite associates who had financed the project (xii-xiii). But following the publication of the once and long-time “absolutely confidential” *American Civilization* text, critics could see that James’ engagement with Melville was more than just trifling, more than a mere publicity attempt to sway immigration officials. For more on *Mariners* criticism, see Pease’s introduction to the reprint (2001) and Christopher Gair’s (ed.) *Beyond Boundaries: C. L. R. James and Postnational Studies* (2006).

stricken with a desire to link literature and social life, but the circumstances of his colonial upbringing long impeded that; as the epigraph to this section reveals, however, reading Melville would aid James's search for this missing link. As such, the following argument suggests that *Minty Alley* – a novel rarely considered alongside James's American musings – in fact sets the stage for James's eventual alignment with American writers. Furthermore, as the subsequent sections reveal, James's seeking out of these literary alternatives commences the practice which is duplicated by many of the Anglophone Caribbean writers who follow.

While *Mariners* provides readers with a unique and still progressive reading of Melville's *Moby-Dick*, how to fit the text into James's larger literary oeuvre, however, has proven to be a high challenge for even the master historian and critic. Perhaps more than any other working writer throughout the twentieth century, James jumped from one job to another (and one *place* to another), leaving behind a wake of fruitful – though capacious – material. "He was always mentally composing unless there was external distraction" (133), noted James's wife, Constance Webb. James penned newspaper editorials, stage plays, political manifestos, revisionist histories, children's stories, sports journalism, philosophical criticism, love letters, petitions, biographies, novels, speeches, and short fiction. He lived in Trinidad, England, the United States, and had extended stays in Mexico, Canada, and Ghana. In sum, it seems the man never stopped writing *while he never stopped moving*. And the rapid pace by which James crafted and continuously re-crafted his thinking parallels this incessant and industrious appetite for writing and work. As such, categorizing him (and his massive bibliography) is a mighty task. As Pease notes, critics have often been trapped in their attempts to wrangle the work of James – that once you privilege (or pigeonhole) one aspect of James's thinking on categorical topics such as

anticolonialism or Marxism, for example – inevitably, you’ll find aspects of his thinking which undermine those very premises (“C. L. R.” xi-xii).⁶¹

While the prospect of summarizing James’s entire bibliography is a task that far exceeds this project, the following analysis considers James’ American-based literary musings, and how his craving for literary alternatives begins long before his discovery of Melville and Whitman. Though James’ pen may have seemed forever affixed to the page, he was clearly one of the most well-read men of his generation. Beginning at an early age, James was glued to books. *Beyond a Boundary* begins with the childhood anecdote noting that he would routinely stand on a chair at the window of his house, watching cricket while reading his family’s collection of books between bowls. “Thus early the pattern of my life was set” (3), he would state. That image of a young James sitting at the window, exploring the literary world with one eye while watching the Caribbean world unfold with the other, is replicated in his first novel, *Minty Alley*. The novel’s protagonist, Haynes, is clearly modeled after the author; Haynes spends his days seated at the window of his house at Alley No. 2 with a book on his lap, watching as the community’s drama unfolds. James would admit that many of the happenings in that novel actually happened to him in real life (“Interview” 33). Ironically, however, for someone like James who so privileged the act of reading, books ultimately serve no positive purpose for Haynes in *Minty Alley*, the small community’s only devout reader. This is obvious from the novel’s outset:

Haynes remained at home that day, nursing an injured foot. A case of books had fallen on his shin and bruised him severely. He had struggled on with his work, but his limp was so obvious that old Carritt had told him to go home and stay

⁶¹ Even still, however, there are multiple texts of late that attempt to live up to the task of lassoing the C. L. R. James canon. In *Urbane Revolutionary: C. L. R. James and the Struggle for a New Society* (2008), Frank Rosengarten is keenly aware of the traps in offering a holistic analysis of James’s career and instead proceeds with a comprehensive evaluation of his writing and experiences from era to era, noting how one leads into and thus influences the next. Other texts that seem to succeed in this light are Farrukh Dhondy’s *C. L. R. James: A Life* (2001) which offers a first-hand account of many of James’ ‘episodes’ from the perspective of a close confidant and friend; and Christopher Gair’s (ed.) *Beyond Boundaries: C.L.R. James and Postnational Studies* (2006), which realizes that James’ work most often “cannot be reduced to a form constrained by, or privileging, this or that” (“Introduction” 4).

there until he was better. Haynes went gladly, his first holiday for two years. He could sit in an arm-chair and read as in the good old days, and not feel any twinge of nervousness about his job. After all, Carritt himself had said to go home and not come back until he could walk properly. And he could not only read but could always turn from his books and watch No. 2 at work and play (41-42).

Critics abound have missed the fact that this semi-humorous episode presents James' readers with a curious, though highly relevant, paradox. By having his main protagonist incur an injury, *by books*, James seems to be commenting upon the seeming ineptitude of reading, especially within a working class community like the Alley. Many critics have noted Haynes' alienation from the rest of his community by recognizing the novel's delineation of the relation of the intellectual to the masses (Nielsen 27, Hamilton 439); but such critiques fail to interrogate how Haynes' *books* play a seminal role in this divide. In fact, while most critics pay their attention to the text's social realism (N. King 75), or to its commentary on the colonial class system (Parris, Ramchand), or even to its voyeurism (Emery 108, Nielsen 29), no sustained piece of criticism has accounted for the central premise of *books* within that book.

Put simply, books are Haynes' fanatical habit; he works at the only bookshop in town by day, and returns home to "read the books in the evenings" (22). Texts are seemingly scattered everywhere throughout Haynes' Alley No. 2 abode; it would seem it is the only thing he truly knows: "The book business, such as it was in that small island, he knew inside out. But if he should displease [his boss and get fired] all his knowledge would go for nothing and he would have to begin again elsewhere" (23). Sans the self-indulgent pleasure he gets from consuming text, along with the miniscule salary the "drowsy" shop provides, books only cause physical and social harm to Haynes: they fall on his shin rendering him temporarily handicapped, and they prevent him from becoming an interactive "human creature" (202) within the community. Once injured, books only increase the social distance between Haynes and his Alley neighbors. James would admit that he himself grew up intellectually curious, which contributed to his awkward

relations with other adolescents in his Trinidadian community; before turning ten, he would admit to being “already an alien in my own environment” (*Beyond* 24). Books, while serving as a respite from this social detachment, only added to this distance (Buhle 17); they were a “refuge into which I withdrew,” James admits (*Beyond* 23-24). In *Minty Alley*, while Haynes derives pleasure from withdrawing into the world of reading during his leg recovery, he begins to realize a discord between his sheltered literary world and the social happenings of his community. When Haynes witnesses his friend Benoit flirting with the servant girl, Wilhelmina, it causes him to contemplate this reality gap: “To read of these things in books was one thing, to hear and see them was another” (37).

Despite Haynes’ reclusive reading habits – though also because of – the residents of the Alley sincerely like him. Miss Atwell, one of his neighbors, says, “We has all liked you from the day you come here. You sits in your room, you doesn’t go out, you reads your book, you writes your papers, you plays your gramophone, you troubles nobody” (149-150). While Haynes does provide good, sound advice to many of the community’s residents, and is looked upon (thanks to his books) as an educated man (even though, formally, he isn’t), most of the Alley’s residents see him as an outlier, an eccentric. After seeing a pile of books and magazines scattered across Haynes’s bed, Benoit comments, “you are a funny fellow. You only reading books the whole day. A young man like you. Man, when I was your age, by the time one was out another was in. You have a nice little batchie here where girls can pass through the back without nobody seeing them. What’s wrong? You sick?” (79). Taken together, these ill-effects beg the question: if James’ intentions in setting out to write *Minty Alley* were, as Kenneth Ramchand suggests, to “get [his] country-men to read, and at the same time to teach them how to read” (9-10), then what is to be made of the hindrances Haynes incurs through reading books? What do we make

of the fact that reading gets the main protagonist relatively nowhere? In sum, what sort of twisted point is James trying to make?

While *Minty Alley* is among the first novels to shed light on certain cultural realities of the 1920s Caribbean, James also uses the story to relay his personal concerns regarding the disposition of the intellectual. Ramchand writes that by structuring the story's point-of-view through a believable character like Haynes, "James achieves the distance necessary to explore his *own* alienation from the West Indian proletariat" (14, my emphasis). James was a serious reader from a generally non-reading community. He aspired to be a writer in a place that had a miniscule publishing industry. He was of a middle class family, using fiction to articulate the class beneath his own. The irony that *Minty Alley* would contemplate these dilemmas is made ever the more cruel in that while written for Caribbean readers,⁶² the novel would be published in London and mainly (at first, at least) consumed there. In essence, James would later admit that *Minty Alley* was a relatively simple story – one written purely to "exercise" his writing abilities ("Conversation" 18) – which ultimately reveals "a lot about the handling of the language and the subject matter by someone of the Caribbean at the time." When James finished the *Minty Alley* manuscript, he had yet to begin thinking about the tenets which would later consume him; he then had "no ideas about Marxism" in his head ("Language" 82).⁶³ But *Minty Alley* would also be an early expression of an affliction which would seemingly plague James for years; it details

⁶² James would tell Constance Webb that he wrote the novel "to purely amuse myself" (*Special Delivery* 199), but he also has said that he let his mother read it, and perhaps Mendes too; upon publication, however, it would help do for the region what hadn't previously been done (as Ramchand argues): develop a local readership.

⁶³ James' Marxism would undergo multiple metamorphoses throughout his career. When he left Trinidad for England, it was dormant; he "had not read one line of Marx" ("Conversation" 20). But his predilection of reading history and the sentiment he felt for ordinary, oppressed people found perfect harmony under the Marxist ideology. It would guide his thinking when he wrote the epic historical piece, *The Black Jacobins*. It would, essentially, as many critics have pointed out (James included), serve as the basis for James' thinking, career-wide. There are multiple texts which contemplate James' Marxism and the changes they underwent. For a start, see John H. McClendon's *C. L. R. James's Notes on Dialectics: Left Hegelianism or Marxism-Leninism?* (2005), Scott McLemee's introduction to *C. L. R. James on the 'Negro Question'* (1996) and Anthony Bogues' *Caliban's Freedom: The Early Political Thought of C. L. R. James* (1997).

the insufficiency of literature as a resource for the Caribbean region at a specific moment in time, and ultimately serves as a precursor to his discovery of – and eventual alignment with – certain American writers. If Melville’s book taught James the “inseparability of great literature and of social life” (132), then *Minty Alley* deserves to be included in the critiques which apprehend James’s appreciation American literature as an alternative to the colonial system.

James wrote *Minty Alley* in the late 1920s, years before leaving Trinidad for England. While James wouldn’t visit the United States for another decade, he did, however, develop budding ideas about that country. Much like Lamming’s debut novel, as documented below, *Minty Alley* contemplates America through speculation. The Alley’s members assume it is a place of potential, offering “work for good money” (206). Maisie, Haynes growing love interest throughout the story, wants to emigrate north because, “In America you worked hard but you got good food and pay and had a fine time.” Maisie is the one character in the novel capable of drawing Haynes away from his books, he “found himself liking her more and more and spending hours talking with her where formerly he would have been reading” (202). By the novel’s conclusion, however, Maisie abruptly leaves for New York; but her work at making a “human creature” out of Haynes seems rather successful: in the novel’s closing paragraph, readers are left with the image of Haynes again looking through a window, only this time he looks *in*, observing a family from the city streets, and not out, from within. When the story ends, it would seem that Haynes has left his sheltered literary perch in favor of the real world.

The end of *Minty Alley* would seem to suggest that, despite the intense personal enjoyments to be had in reading, the texts available to a Caribbean man like Haynes (in the 1920s and 30s, mind you) stifled his ability to become an interactive social organism; it would, after all, require the work of a woman to break Haynes’ debilitating attachment to literature.

Aside from the brief mention of one science book about “birds and animals and electricity and so on” (79), there is no direct reference to the specific texts in Haynes’ little library; one can only assume that they parallel the texts which would’ve been available to James himself at that time. As such, it would seem pertinent to make the inference that *these* texts inhibit Haynes’ abilities. While *Minty Alley* might seem a relative blip on the Jamesean bibliographic radar, I think the subtle point being made here is an important one that segues (albeit a decade later) into his engagement with the American writers of the nineteenth century. Because James would later cite Melville and Whitman when noting the *imperative* relation of literature to social life, one can only pause to wonder how Haynes’ path in *Minty Alley* may have differed were he reading the likes of *Moby-Dick* or *Leaves of Grass* instead of those in the colonial circuit. The same can be pondered of a young James who saw himself as a social alien within his own culture.

Despite the traps of reading expressed in *Minty Alley*, James’ personal appetite for books never waned; in his early Trinidadian years, it would seem as if James couldn’t get *enough*. As a young reader, a colonial upbringing afforded him the usual British-centric writers, his favorite foursome being ‘Williams’: Wordsworth, Hazlitt, Shakespeare (whom he adored through and through) and, last but certainly not least, Makepeace Thackeray (Rosengarten 17). James is said to have read *Vanity Fair* a whopping ten times before turning that age (“Language” 83). He appreciated that book for its “passions, conflicts, and vivid characters” (Grimshaw 5), but especially for its satirism and its mockery of the English establishment: “I laughed without satiety at Thackeray’s constant jokes and sneers and gibes at the aristocracy and at people in high places” (*Beyond* 51-52). At one point in his life, James could quote passages from that novel at length, and he would admit that it was Thackeray, *not Marx*, who would “bear the heaviest

responsibility on me,” a comment most critics seem to nudge to the periphery.⁶⁴ Frank Rosengarten notes that the writings of Thackeray taught James “how the novel form can integrate the intimate and the social...how literature can educate a reader’s historical and moral sensibilities” (18).

But in addition to naming Thackeray his greatest influence, James chides the author for certain lacking aspects of *Vanity Fair*. In *Beyond a Boundary*, James describes one scene in which Thackeray fails to provide social criticism in a circumstance which would seem ripe for it; instead, the author retreats into reticence: “It is Thackeray who does not speak,” James writes, “He shies away from the big scene” (52). Ultimately, James suggests this critical reluctance is a side-effect of the British cultural “code.” While the incessant “gibes at the aristocracy” in *Vanity Fair* influenced and humored a young James, it would be the lasting subtleties of Thackeray’s restraint of internal inhibitions which were inherited from the British sensibility. As a youth, James admits he “did not notice and took for granted” this genteel tendency, and his eventual identification of it in Thackeray proved all the “more enduring” to him. West Indian society, as James knew it, “did not care a damn about this [“code”]. They [instead] shouted and stamped and yelled and expressed themselves fully in anger and joy” (53). As such, despite James’ own personal enjoyment of English literature, he eventually recognized its relative deficiency for the Caribbean reader; it proved incapable of linking its fictional delineations with real social life in the Caribbean. Quoting Heidegger, James would admit that, “the English novel so far as we were concerned would be an ‘inauthentic experience’ and the ‘authentic experience’ would be a creative tool that did not depend on the previous style” (“Interview” 29). This disparity is

⁶⁴ This tendency is rudimentarily exemplified in a Google Scholar search: “CLR James and Marx” turns up about 5,000 hits while “CLR James and Thackeray,” on the other hand, fetches a mere ~180. Grant Farred accounts for this lack in that James never wrote explicitly about Thackeray and/or *Vanity Fair*, and it wasn’t until *Beyond a Boundary* in which their influence were so greatly admitted (37 n18).

alluded to in *Minty Alley*. Miss Atwell, who would occasionally borrow books from Haynes's collection, makes the following observation: "the last [book] was good, a little high for me, but good. I is not a person of much education and I knows nothing about stories and so on. I used to be a great reader of novels in my day. That is a long time now. And novels isn't serious books. Though some of them has good morals" (152). In other words, outside of an occasional moral lesson, the books Atwell reads aren't of social value *to her*. Referring to this same discord, James admits in *Beyond a Boundary*:

It was only long years after that I understood the limitation on spirit, vision and self-respect which was imposed on us by the fact that our masters, our curriculum, our code of morals, *everything* began from the basis that Britain was the source of all light and leading, and our business was to admire, wonder, imitate, learn; our criterion of success was to have succeeded in approaching that distant ideal – to attain it was, of course, impossible (*Beyond* 39).

Thanks to a devoutly literary mother, however, James had access to atypical texts which would seem to buck the cultural imposition he notes above.⁶⁵ He would consume the Bible at an early age. He also read the French: Gautier, Hugo, Lamartine, and Balzac. He also recalls reading his mother's copy of James Fenimore Cooper's "American classic," *The Last of the Mohicans* ("Language" 83-84), and his mother also supposedly had some Hawthorne in the house, yet another exception to the colonial standard. As James matured, so did his reading. He eventually graduated on to the writings of Rousseau, then Marx and Engels, then Lenin, then Trotsky, Hegel, Heidegger, and so on. Other than what might be described as occasional snippets, James's American readings were quite limited, at least until he traveled to the States in the late thirties. He summarizes his arrival and the colonial unfamiliarity with which he came: "The British and the European tradition educational systems pay little attention to the United States, and I knew more about France and Russia and Ancient Greece and Rome than I did about this country" (*Mariners* 167).

⁶⁵ James would actually dedicate *Minty Alley* to his mother.

Despite arriving in the States having already digested a massive literary checklist, a seminal reading moment would await James in the coming years. James came to America, from England, in October 1938 at the behest of James Cannon of the American Socialist Workers' Party, whom had asked James to speak to audiences about "the Negro Question," the Trotskyist movement, and the situation in Europe as WWII approached. From the moment he arrived, James began devouring all-things American. He spoke to worker's unions, attended baseball games, fell in love with slot machines, frequented the movies (sometimes watching the same film multiple times *a day*), and traveled coast-to-coast where he "experienced a sense of expansion which...permanently altered [his] attitude to the world" (*Mariners* 167). While in New York City, James frequented a restaurant in Greenwich Village called "The Calypso" where he met James Baldwin, who was then waiting tables there (McLemee xxv). Later, James socialized with Ralph Ellison and Richard Wright (the latter whom he, and their wives, became very close friends with). James became familiar with the literature of these colleagues, having written a "revolutionary interpretation" of Wright's *Native Son* in 1940.⁶⁶ By 1943, James' involvement with other American texts continued to expand; he claims to have read *some* Hawthorne and Melville with "the Johnsonites" (a small faction within the Workers Party named after James' alias at the time), which sometimes served as a pseudo-book club (xxiv).

In December of 1942, James had an operation for a perforated ulcer following a frightening collapse in the streets of New York City. At the time he wouldn't realize it, but this occurrence would have a seminal effect upon the trajectory of his literary outlook. In the subsequent post-surgery years James would have sporadic recurring bouts with the ulcer in which the only way to find respite from the agonizing stomach pain would be to "lie in bed for a few days" (*Special* 167). One particular episode kept James in bed for most of July of 1944.

⁶⁶ "Native Son and Revolution" (1940).

Ironically re-enacting the image he had crafted nearly two decades prior in his first novel, James would spend his mending days “voraciously” reading. Conjuring the image of Haynes’ Alley home, James would admit that he “seemed to be slipping back into primeval or at least colonial frontier days, particularly because my things [books & newspapers] are still scattered over the apartment.” In the midst of that summer recovery on an unassuming day, and despite feeling “horribly *weak*,” James excitedly mustered the impulse to write his friend and eventual lover Constance Webb and admit that he had undergone a personal revelation. He writes:

I read Moby Dick on Wednesday. It was an experience. There are many pages, many, in that book which are among the most amazing I have ever read. They kept me and have kept me in a state of almost continuous excitement...I am convinced now that as the history of America must be studied around the Civil War—leading up to it and from it, so American literature revolves around Melville and Whitman...So to-day...[I] went to the library a few blocks away and got 6 books, 4 on American literature, to read about Melville...*I have to study him* (167, my emphasis).

One wouldn’t put it past the bookish James to consume that massive American epic in a single day; but more importantly, his rapid consumption of that text would mark a swift change in his literary exploits. *Moby-Dick* seems to have taught James a seminal lesson; he would realize and admit that Melville “wrote of the people,” and because of this, “He had a colossal *power*” (168). From that day forward, James would contemplate this combination and begin to re-think his own approach to reading and writing.

Mariners and *American Civilization* are now understood as signs marking James’s metamorphosis.⁶⁷ James himself has regularly insisted that the years he spent in the U.S. would culminate into the most important in his intellectual and political development (Grimshaw 16), and Farrukh Dhondy has written that the era would afford James an “independence of thought”

⁶⁷ For critiques which consider James’s American writings as a turning point in his literary career, and also a prelude to *Beyond a Boundary*, see Darrell E. Levi’s “C. L. R. James: A Radical West Indian Vision of American Studies” (1991), Anna Grimshaw and Keith Hart’s introduction to *American Civilization* and Robert A. Hill’s “Literary Executor’s Afterword” (1993).

(111). By now, readers and critics are quite familiar with James's American-based texts. It is well-known that *Mariners* was penned while James awaited inevitable deportation on Ellis Island; that it offers one of the first truly alternative Melville analyses at the time, lending its focus to the "meanest mariners, renegades and castaways" instead of to the then-faddish Ahab/Ishmael relation.⁶⁸ Readers know it correlates Ahab's power aboard the Pequod with the McCarthyist INS, and his monomania with the antithesis of twentieth century political leadership. We know it was James' desperate plea to remain in America. We know it offers pro-American hopes, but isn't shy in expressing anti-American sentiments. Simply, *Mariners, Renegades and Castaways* has garnered more attention than most others from the James bibliography over the last decade; getting the reprint treatment in 2001, and being the focus of pieces by respected literary critics like Donald Pease, Anthony Bogues, Lawrence Buell, and Christopher Gair.

Yet if these critiques are all lacking something, they fail to recognize that James's metamorphosis from Trinidadian colonial to a reader of Melville and Whitman serves as prelude to the same odyssey that many other Anglophone Caribbean writers would set out upon. As witnessed in the American allusions made by Naipaul, Wynter, and Lamming, James was a Caribbean pioneer in ways more than he already receives credit for.

⁶⁸ Of which Richard Chase and F. O. Matthiessen are central critics, to name but two. While this is discussed in greater detail in the following chapter, Christopher Gair notes that, "Whereas Chase had read *Moby-Dick* in terms that 'posited Ahab's monomania as the signifier of the totalitarian Other in opposition to which Ishmael's Americanness was defined, elaborated upon and defended', and had constructed an understanding of American Studies around this opposition, James sees Ishmael as an 'intellectual Ahab', a further harbinger of an American security state that, far from representing freedom, 'had put into place the totalitarian rule that it purported to oppose'" (3-4).

PART II: V. S. NAIPAUL

For the West Indian intellectual, speaking no language but English, educated in the English way, the experience of England is usually traumatic. The foundations of his life are removed. He has to look for new loyalties (827).

“New Novels”

On the 1st of August, 1950, a future Nobel laureate left his home of Trinidad to begin a scholarship at the renowned University College at Oxford. In contrast to the retrospective he offers in the passage above, V. S. Naipaul fled his colonial island with the hopes that an education overseas – in the so-called metropole – would pave the way for an illustrious career in writing. It was, after all, a voyage that a handful of similarly hopeful Caribbean scholars had made before him: C. L. R. James, Edgar Mittelholzer, Sam Selvon, and George Lamming had each taken the trip with similar desires to land a life in writing. And they all ultimately did, each securing the publication of prized scripts which now constitute the foundation of the Anglophone Caribbean’s literary canon. Naipaul, however, has always been different from his contemporaries, and his trip would be rather different too.

James, Lamming, and Selvon all embarked in steamships, and despite brief stops among other islands in the Caribbean, sailed directly to Great Britain. In Naipaul’s case, because there were no boats leaving Port au Spain on a suitable date, he was forced to book a ticket on a flight to New York City, from where he would then sail direct to England the following day. It was a roundabout way of getting from Trinidad to Oxford, yet while his stay in America was only a mere 24 hours, it was an experience that would stand out. In subsequent letters to his father Seepersad, and his sisters Sati and Kamala, Naipaul describes the awe he felt: seeing the New York City skyscrapers, his literary familiarity in hearing a mashup of transient accents, and the

courtesy of being called “sir” for the first time. He would later recount colorful chats with talkative taxi drivers, drinking “ice cold” water, and the gift of receiving free (*free!*) matches upon purchasing a pack of Old Gold cigarettes. “Largesse!,” he would boast (*Enigma* 114). Leaving home for the first time, on the verge of personal independence, and smack in the middle of a large, cosmopolitan city like the ones he had always read about, Naipaul was overcome with an optimistic sense of beginning; in a letter to home, he writes: “I was free and I was honoured. I was deeply happy. Freedom and desire achieved is sublime” (*Between* 13).

Much like Lamming’s New York account in *Pleasures*, these might be expected reactions from a small islander to the then-largest city in the world. But despite the enormity of Naipaul’s awe for the city’s size, sound, and pace, his most significant experience in New York may have come from a visit to a quiet downtown bookshop. Marveling at the look and feel of books unfamiliar to him, Naipaul would remember, “This was an American shop, not one with English stock, the stock I was more familiar with” (*Enigma* 118). He would come across the Modern Library series, eventually deciding to purchase a copy of Norman Douglas’ *South Wind*, a text that had been recommended to him by an instructor from home who knew of Naipaul’s writing ambitions. While Naipaul admits that he never read Douglas’ novel, the purchase marked a seminal moment in his life: “I had despaired of finding this book in the emporia of Trinidad,” he says, but “Here, [in] the great wealth of New York, was the book, immediately available” (118). While the moment signified *access* for the young, would-be writer, it would also serve as a prelude to Naipaul’s search for the alternative “loyalties” he cites above. Despite the significance of that moment – buying a text in an American shop amidst the bustle of New York – Naipaul felt detached. The book he had just purchased seemed emblematic of this sentiment: *South Wind*, he remembers, much like “the books of Aldous Huxley and D. H. Lawrence and

certain other contemporary writers whose names had come to me through my father or through teachers at school...was alien, far from anything in my experience, and beyond my comprehension” (119). Like James before him, Naipaul yearned for a literature to which he could wholly relate.

While the book-buying episode marks what seems a promising beginning for the young Naipaul, his exhilaration didn't last long and was quickly trumped by melancholy. Naipaul's arrival in London, and subsequent study at Oxford, was marked by a lengthy “breakdown” caused by fierce asthma and despondent loneliness (*Between* 195-196). Additionally, Naipaul was depressed; he felt estranged:

I had come to London as to a place I knew very well. I found a city that was strange and unknown—in its style of houses, and even in the names of its districts; as strange as my boardinghouse, which was quite unexpected; a city as strange and unread-about as the Englishness of *South Wind*, which I had bought in New York for the sake of its culture (*Enigma* 134).

While Naipaul was raised on the literature of England and arrived in London thinking it was a place he “knew very well,” much to his own chagrin, he instead found that his large literary background had left him lacking. This was made all the more apparent once he began officially studying literature at University College. He recalls:

The fact was, I had no taste for scholarship, for tracing the growth of schools and trends. *I sought continuously to relate literature to life*. My training at school [in Trinidad] didn't help. We had few libraries, few histories of literature to turn to; and when we wrote essays on *Tartuffe* we wrote out of a direct response to the play. Now I discovered that the study of literature had been made scientific, that each writer had to be approached through the booby-traps of scholarship (“Jasmine” 28, my emphasis).

The posturing associated with criticism, and the seeming distance it put between literature and life filled the young writer with pessimism. And Naipaul couldn't find solace in his own writing, for he felt the oddity of being “an Indian writer writing in English for an English audience about non-English characters who talk their own sort of English” (“London” 12).

One might propose that Naipaul's "traumatic" experience of London developed long before he ever stepped foot on the island of Great Britain. His pessimism is well documented,⁶⁹ and probably has seeds dating back to his early Trinidadian years. After all, as he writes about his childhood, "I had no social sense, no sense of other societies; and as a result, reading (mainly English books) was difficult for me. I couldn't enter worlds that were not like mine" ("Prologue" 43). Reiterating this troublesome disposition in his 2001 Nobel lecture, he states: "With my limited background it was hard for me imaginatively to enter into other societies or societies that were far away. I loved the idea of books, but I found it hard to read them" ("Two Worlds" 190). An inability to *relate* permeated Naipaul's reception to much of the literature he came across as a young student. Regarding Wordsworth's "notorious poem about the daffodil," Naipaul would famously ask, "A pretty little flower, no doubt; but we had never seen it. Could the poem have any meaning for us?" ("Jasmine" 24). We know from the second chapter of this dissertation the unfamiliarity with which Caribbean children received English poetry and prose, and it might be said that this divide (the so-called daffodil gap) – between what one reads and what one experiences – instilled a vehemence for much of the literature that Naipaul would eventually study at Oxford.

Naipaul would write his sister Kamala admitting that in school few British texts intrigued him; Jane Austen's work, for example, "really bored me. It is mere gossip" (*Between* 4). That dislike has been sustained, for Austen has consistently taken a verbal beating from Naipaul over the years. A half-century after noting his boredom with Austen's work, Naipaul agreed to give her another try while recovering from an illness. Halfway through the book, Naipaul thought to himself, "Here am I, a grown man reading about this terrible vapid woman and her so-called love life – she calls it 'love', having seen this fellow once. I said to myself, What am I doing with this

⁶⁹ for the most famous account, see Paul Theroux's *Sir Vidia's Shadow* (1998).

material?” (“Farrukh”). Despite reaffirming his dislike for Austen, Naipaul would continue his verbal lashing in a 2006 interview with Farrukh Dhondy, a follow-up to one five years earlier which had made BBC headlines for similar tirades against the literary giants⁷⁰:

What trouble I have with Jane Austen! Jane Austen is for those people who wish to be educated in English manners. If that isn't part of your mission, you don't know what to do with this material...If you come from England when your country is important, then this kind of nonsensical writing becomes important for you. If the country had failed in the nineteenth century no one would have been reading Jane Austen.

Dhondy, as all good interviewers do, continued to pry upon Naipaul's druthers, who would go on to call Thomas Hardy “an unbearable writer [who] can't write” while adding that “There's so much rubbish in Dickens.” But Naipaul would reserve his harshest criticism for an American writer (although an honorary Brit in the mind of Naipaul), by calling Henry James “The worst writer in the world actually.”

While nasty one-liners like these come as no surprise to anyone familiar with the career of V. S. Naipaul, to his credit, he's often willing to support these claims, if prompted. Pinning his disgust with Henry James upon a discord between literature and life, Naipaul states:

[Henry James] never went out in the world. Yes, he came to Europe and he 'did' and lived the writer's life. He never risked anything. He never exposed himself to anything. He travelled always as a gentleman. When he wrote *English Hours* about what he was seeing in England – written for an American magazine – this man would write about the races at Epsom and do it all from a distance. He never thought he should mingle with the crowd and find out what they were there for, or how they behaved. He did it all from the top of a carriage or the top of a coach. A lot of his writing is like that.

To Naipaul's credit, there are few writers of his generation who have immersed themselves in crowds as much and as often as he has. Like James before him, Naipaul has always “sought continuously to relate literature to life”; whether or not he ever found that – or developed it himself – is up for debate.

⁷⁰ see Dhondy's original 2001 interview and the BBC response article, “VS Naipaul Attacks Forster” (2001).

Like his Caribbean contemporaries, Naipaul was a habitual reader dating back to his earliest days. His self-educated father had piles of texts around the house. By the age of twelve, in mixing select colonial schoolbooks with those of his father's collection, Naipaul "had begun to put together an English literary anthology of [his] own" (8). Pieces in this personal compendium included early chapters of certain Dickens novels (*David Copperfield*, *Oliver Twist*, and *Nicholas Nickleby*), stories from Maupassant and O. Henry (his father's favorite), along with some Shakespeare, Ackerley, and Maugham. Later, Naipaul grew to like the French realists – Balzac and Flaubert, particularly (although, as you'll see in the box quote on the following page, even Flaubert doesn't escape certain criticism). While Naipaul has often said that in relating his literary likes it is better to relate his dislikes (hence his rants above), that doesn't tell us much in the way of *who* he took serious interest in or which works influenced his own artistic tendencies. Furthermore, in scouring Naipaul's literary commentaries over the years it is rather challenging into find consistent affirmation of authors whom he's developed (or admitted) a true respect for. In regards to those he often has praised – Charles Dickens and Joseph Conrad, notably – Naipaul has regularly waived in his respect for them, offering crude criticism at times. For example, along with Dickens's "rubbish," Naipaul has called Conrad's work overly "extravagant" and thus "unreal" ("Reading" 9).⁷¹

Despite the headline-making rants, and Naipaul's proclivity to criticize than to praise, he has often alluded to his ideal writer as one who can write *clear* and *universally*. Of course, from a contextual standpoint, both of those terms are loaded. But in one of his more recent publications, *A Writer's People*, Naipaul offers some clarity on those ambiguous descriptions.

⁷¹ Of note here is Naipaul's latest publication, *The Masque of Africa: Glimpses of African Belief* (2010), which makes several references to Conrad throughout. According to the reviewer for *The Guardian/Observer*, however, these nods ultimately fail: "Already this feels clichéd and tiresome; one yearns for the day when an author from outside can approach Africa without invoking the 'heart of darkness' mythology" (Forna).

The book is a reflection on the various authors and texts which both influenced and inhibited Naipaul's development at a maturing age. Of the many British-centered texts he read in school, Naipaul recalls asking himself as a child, "What was a court? What were courtiers? What was an aristocrat? I had to make them up in my mind...I lived in a cloud of not-knowing" (54). Despite admitting his own naïveté with other cultures, Naipaul explains this puzzlement by placing some of the fault upon the messengers. In an important though longish passage, he writes:

But I feel that the writers I couldn't read were also partly to blame. If in 1955 I didn't know what *The Quiet American* was about, and had to leave the book two-thirds of the way, it was because Graham Greene hadn't made his subject clear. He had assumed that his world was the only one that mattered. He was like Flaubert in *Sentimental Education*, assuming that the complicated, clotted history of mid-nineteenth-century France was all-important and known. Not all metropolitan writers were like Flaubert and Greene, though. Maupassant in his stories, with little room to manoeuvre, but with details of time and place always concrete, giving even minor figures a name and a family history (he always deals with a whole life), made his far-off world complete and accessible, even universal. You didn't need to know the history of nineteenth-century France to understand the awfulness of his peasants or the wounds of the Franco-Prussian War. The Russians (with the exception of Turgenev) were always clear. Mark Twain from far-away Missouri was always clear. And it seemed, in a strange way, that at the end, when the dust settled, the people who wrote as though they were at the centre of things might be revealed as the provincials (54-55).

As exemplified in this passage, Naipaul's ultimate respect for writers is reserved for those who are clear and accessible; and a writer who accomplished this, for Naipaul, was the aforesaid Mark Twain from "far-away" Missouri. In the midst of those aforementioned rants on Austen and others, Naipaul would tell Dhondy that "Mark Twain is universal, in that anybody can read his work and find matter...we can find humour [and] a tone of voice that appears to talk to all people" ("Farrukh"). These literary skills have allowed Naipaul to argue that Twain should've long preceded him as a recipient of the Nobel Prize: "when the prizes were established, Twain was a man of only 66...I suppose he was considered to be a vernacular writer, not a serious

writer. He should have won” (Gussow). Twain’s writing style has regularly appeared as a topic in the interviews, essays, and literature of Naipaul for decades now, and it is my contention that Twain’s influence (which has gone unrecognized) is readily apparent in Naipaul’s fiction.

Naipaul’s most significant literary reference to the American humorist comes in the 1961 classic novel, *A House for Mr. Biswas*. However, little attention, if any, has been paid to both Twain’s influence upon – *and presence in* – the *Biswas* text. The Dickensian influences in that novel have been duly noted. Naipaul’s main character in that text – Mr. Mohun Biswas, an aspiring writer in his own right – finds a certain affinity for the literature of Dickens. Describing Biswas’ literary exploits, the text’s narrator notes:

Then it was that he discovered the solace of Dickens. Without difficulty he transferred characters and settings to people and places he knew. In the grotesques of Dickens everything he feared and suffered from was ridiculed and diminished, so that his own anger, his own contempt became unnecessary, and he was given strength to bear with the most difficult part of his day (374).

John Thieme thereby finds these Dickensian allusions in Naipaul’s works notable, suggesting that “Naipaul’s admiration for Dickens is mirrored by that of Biswas and [his son] Anand” (*Web* 65). Thieme argues that the “solace” cited above reduces the blight by which Naipaul often refers to the work of most others from the English canon. “Dickens had provided a touchstone for him,” Thieme writes; Dickens wasn’t bashful about critiquing the English class system; he “challenged the assumptions of genteel English society” (*Postcolonial* 105). Caribbean critical pioneer Bruce King is another who sees the pervading influence of Dickens throughout *Biswas*. He writes:

Just as it is impossible for Biswas to find the resources to build a house in his circumstances in Trinidad, so he lacks suitable literary models. He reads books on self-improvement that have no relevance to his life, he hears avant garde poetry of a complexity that he cannot master and which is foreign to his circumstances. The only model mentioned which seems appropriate to Biswas’s society is Dickens, the Dickens of grotesques and the Dickens of those who struggle to survive and to find a place in their world while needing emotional

satisfaction. Anand's liking for Dickens points to the Dickensque characteristics of *Biswas* (44).

Critiques like this reveal the colonial priorities under which Naipaul's texts are most often considered. This is not to say that interpretations which privilege Naipaul's engagement with the metropole master texts aren't warranted. Rather the contrary: Naipaul has had a lasting (though tenuous) engagement with the English canon. Of course, characters with names like Black Wordsworth (in *Miguel Street*), who is supposedly penning the world's greatest poem begs of this aforesaid connection. Of innuendos like these, Thieme can conclude that "The extensive use of literary allusion in a writer's work usually has the effect of locating it in relation to the tradition to which it alludes" (*Web* 9).

But all too often, readers coming from this perspective neglect the ulterior influences and engagements readily found in Caribbean texts and novels like Naipaul's. For every character like B. Wordsworth in *Miguel Street*, for example, there's another like Bogart, that local mimicker of America's hard-boiled Hollywood star. And yet, the former receives more critical attention than the latter due to the longstanding colonial links.⁷² While Thieme's argument regarding the Dickensian fingerprint upon *Biswas* is undoubtedly valid, he fails to note (in a text subtitled "*Uses of Allusion in V. S. Naipaul's Fiction*," mind you) the *multiple* allusions Naipaul makes to Mark Twain. Thieme writes that literary allusions should be discerned under a "repudiation of narrow nationalist concerns in favour of a broad-based view of culture which ignores traditional divisions and eschews any form of provincialism" (11); thus, in the case of Naipaul, allusions can be understood "as a means of commenting on...Trinidadian subject-matter by relating it to the experience of other societies" (12).

⁷² For example, Google Scholar returns twice as many articles which cite "Wordsworth" in *Miguel Street* than those which cite "Bogart."

A House for Mr. Biswas is a semi-autobiographical tale that makes use of Naipaul's childhood experiences. "Of all my books this is the one that is closest to me," he admits. "It is the most personal, created out of what I saw and felt as a child" ("Foreword" 128). Described as a reader of "innumerable novels" (*Biswas* 183) – much like the author himself – Biswas would read and contemplate texts outside of the expected colonial binary. In the crowded waiting room of a medical specialist's office – a scene in which Biswas is clearly anxious, for many topics were "too worrying to think about" (315) – he seeks a distracting mental respite from the stress caused by waiting among the ill; the subject he settles upon is rather unorthodox:

His mind wandered and settled on *Tom Sawyer* and *Huckleberry Finn*, which he had read at Ramchand's. He smiled at the memory of Huckleberry Finn, whose trousers 'bagged low and contained nothing', nigger Jim who had seen ghosts and told stories. He chuckled (315).

Despite Biswas' diversionary daydreaming, the episode proves more than a mere fleeting and insignificant allusion to the work of Twain, for the American writer would come up *again* during Biswas' interview for a writing job at the local newspaper. In his discussion with the editor, Biswas, who lacks experience working as a journalist, instead drops some of the prominent names he regularly reads: "I have read a lot," he insists, "Hall Caine, Marie Corelli, Jacob Boehme, Mark Twain, Hall Caine, Mark Twain" (320-321).

While nerves likely play a role in Biswas' humorously unintended repetition of Twain's name, it can also be seen as Naipaul's duplicated affirmation of Twain's significance. If Naipaul truly put everything he knew into that novel (Theroux 141), it is worth considering these multiple references to the American author. Like so many Caribbean acknowledgements of American literature, however, little has been said about these episodes. Robert Holsworth sees some similarities between Naipaul and Twain, and has argued that:

There is more than a touch of Mark Twain in the early Naipaul as characters who profess to have a "sensa values" are repeatedly shown to be self-seeking

and manipulative...personal interaction deteriorates into nothing more than a confidence game, with various schemes striving to outfox others with similarly devious intentions (108).

Writing in the *New York Times* in 1960, Charles Poore would review *Miguel Street* and contend that it causes readers to “remember Mark Twain’s tales of life on the Mississippi” (33). Aside from these passing comparisons, however, no literary critic (at least no critic found as of this writing), has bothered extrapolating Twain’s larger influence on Naipaul or what the episodic references in *Biswas* might suggest.

Naipaul has offered snippets, admitting that in the writing of *Biswas* he would set his sights on blending humor and sentiment (French 198). Naipaul would insist that this mixture – as evidenced in an essay called “The Documentary Heresy” – makes the quintessential writer. Noting Mark Twain and his own use of this blend, Naipaul writes:

True satire grows out of the largest vision...Huck Finn wondering whether it is right for Nigger Jim to run away and so deprive his mistress, who had done no one any harm, of her property: these are the peaks of satire, issuing out of a larger vision, that “all-embracing Christlike” vision which even a writer like Arnold Bennett thought worthy of achieving. Today sights are set lower; satire is compounded of anger and fear, which exalt what they seek to diminish (24).

A House for Mr. Biswas attempts to achieve this “true satire,” and Naipaul would argue that *Biswas* stands alone as his most complete text; it is “universal in [that]...the book makes no apologies for itself, and does not contextualize or exoticize its characters. It reveals a complete world,” while lending great “sympathy for the characters” (French 198).

If Naipaul couldn’t enter the texts of his upbringing, but the far-away world of Huck Finn was always clear (and twice on the mind of Naipaul’s paramount literary character), it begs for analysis. Naipaul’s allusions to metropole writers like Dickens, might in fact help explain these allusions to Twain. After all, Thieme writes that “Naipaul’s allusions to reading-matter which represents cultural colonialism in one form or another, is once again to suggest that individual

creativity is being stifled and that metropolitan mimicry is an index of the society's inhabitants' entrapment in the colonial/determinist predicament" (*Web* 82). Such entrapment is *exactly* why Naipaul summons Huck Finn, a character who threatens to light out for the territory because he's done with the so-called 'sivilized' thing. Biswas – and even Naipaul, throughout his career – might best be described by this fleeting desire, a desire to remain totally and fully independent, ready to pack up and shun this colonial predicament at moment's notice. For a man whose motto is "paddle your own canoe" (*Biswas* 107), it is no wonder Biswas found literary kinship with a boy who spurned social codes and travelled the Mississippi by raft.

PART III: SYLVIA WYNTER

He had just finished reading *Moby Dick* and under the spell of its power wanted to create an image of himself and of his people that would be epic (253).

The Hills of Hebron: A Jamaican Novel

If pinpointing the political and philosophical “pluri-consciousness” of one C. L. R. James is deemed a challenge among critics, then one might wither at the prospects of doing the same for Sylvia Wynter, a writer who has ironically noted James’ lithe ability to live “all [his] contradictions” (“Beyond” 69-70). The similarly diverse trajectory of Wynter’s career resembles nothing less than that of a literary juggernaut. Born in Cuba, raised in Jamaica and having attended King’s College in London to study modern languages, Wynter initially set out to be a dancer and a singer. She subsequently flirted with acting, but a failure to secure substantial roles led to the attempt to try writing her own parts; it was soon thereafter that Wynter took greater interest in scribing than in performing. Since that transition, she has written fiction, translations, and theory. She’s written for television, stage, print and radio. She’s held paramount teaching positions in the West Indies and the U.S., in departments as vast as Spanish and Portuguese, to African-American Studies, to Literature. Depending who you ask, Wynter is a feminist, a humanist, a theorist, a dramatist, a novelist, a rhetorician, a professor, or, simply, a mother. Her story is, as noted by Natasha Barnes, “the story of exceptionalism” (37). David Scott would succinctly add that “no set of coordinates can exhaustively situate an aesthetic-intellectual career as full and plural as that of Wynter” (121).

As such, taking a comprehensive approach to Wynter’s half-century career is daunting. The one critical text that “seeks to cover the range of Wynter’s thought” (Bogues, Preface xv) – *After Man, Towards the Human: Critical Essays on Sylvia Wynter* – thereby proceeds by

breaking up Wynter's work into three distinct (though interconnected) periods. It begins with the early period between 1968 and 1972 in which many of Wynter's seminal essays were published; her middle phase is centered around the academic field of Black Studies during her early teaching years in the U.S.; finally bookended by her present stage, which has ambitiously confronted "the entire intellectual architecture of the West" (xv) by contemplating the historical constructs and contemporary concept of 'man'. If one is to interrogate the works of Sylvia Wynter, breaking it down like so would seem a suitable approach.

Under these rubrics, however, those familiar with Wynter's first and only novel, 1962's *The Hills of Hebron: A Jamaican Novel*, might wonder where it fits into this triad of intellectual categorization. In fact, the critical essays which comprise *After Man, Towards the Human* make *no* reference to Wynter's fictional tale of the New Believers community. Its absence in that interdisciplinary text and its position outside of Wynter's three work phases seems to suggest that *The Hills of Hebron* is nothing more than a mere blip on Wynter's early literary radar. And even though Wynter's book is known as the only Anglophone Afro-Caribbean novel written by a woman which appropriates the epic narrative of the nation (Toland-Dix 60), it still remains undervalued. In all fairness, some of the utter neglect given to *Hills* is due to the fact that up until January of 2010, Wynter's novel had remained incredibly rare and out of print for a near half-century. And as Natasha Barnes has noted, the novel itself has many issues, including an "overly burdened plot structure" (45); *TIME Magazine*'s brief review upon publication notes that it is a "thickly peopled first novel" ("Books"). Paget Henry remarks that the error-prone tendency to conceive of Caribbean history through "totalized discourse" is evident in *Hills* (124). The novel is cumbersome, convoluted, overly-intricate, and dense; even Wynter herself has expressed discontent with some of the novel's overly-wrought shortcomings ("Conversation").

However, despite the story's own structural drawbacks and the critical neglect which has followed, there might not be another novel of the entire Caribbean renaissance movement that is more ambitious, more concerned with the *total* system of colonialism. *The Hills of Hebron* tells the story of the New Believers sect, a group of disenfranchised Afro-Caribbean peasant farmers who break from the main town of Cockpit Centre and begin their own revivalist community. Set in 1930s-era Jamaica, Wynter's novel traces "a community which...comes to an awareness of itself" ("Conversation" 299) by wrestling with and emerging from the longstanding hierarchies that dominate Caribbean colonial history. It is a fictional microcosm of the Jamaican independence movement, ironically published in the same year in which that country finally broke free from British colonial rule. Wynter's omniscient narrator describes the mighty challenge associated with the Believers' independent break from the island's status quo, which serves as an allegory for the Jamaican national situation:

For as far back as they could remember they had never been their own masters. Always behind them there had been a "boss" and behind the "boss" a government, and behind the government, the white governor, and behind him, the King of England with the power of ships and guns and myths and distances of wide seas; and a brief while Prophet Moses had changed the hierarchy, had led them up to Hebron, set himself above them, made them believe that behind him there was a God, black and made in their image and partial to them, His Chosen People (72-73).

Led by this Prophet Moses, and following the exodus to Hebron, is a twisted tale of deceit, compassion, madness, love, and exasperation that – in the belief of this writer, perhaps better than any other text in its era – completely captures the Caribbean situation of the mid-twentieth century. The novel contemplates and confronts issues relating to nationalism, culture, race, sex, and class. It juxtaposes urban life with rural, economics with agriculture, religion with reality, and folklore with written literature. And, as noted by Shirley Toland-Dix, it covers the seminal issues relevant to so many of the other novels written within that era, contemplating the role of

the intellectual while experimenting with the epic narrative genre. “Wynter is concerned with exploring how newly independent Jamaica could become a viable, cohesive, and progressive society,” Toland-Dix notes. “Through her depiction of the Revivalist counter-community of Hebron, she examines the challenges the new nation will face and queries how a society responsive to the needs of all of the citizenry can be created” (58).

Toland-Dix also notes that *The Hills of Hebron* engages with the role of marginalized groups within societies. In “Beyond the Category of the Master Conception: The Counterdoctrine of the Jamesian Poiesis,” Wynter explains that liminal groups within societies create a “counter-imaginaire” when they refuse the society’s designation or definition of them and claim historical agency. By reinventing the world and their place in it, those groups create a “new vision of life for the whole body of people” (86). The literary residents of Hebron enact this very alternate imaginary in establishing their community in the hills; it becomes their “new Canaan” (*Hills* 15). Within this already liminal group, however, is a liminal member: Isaac Barton, the disfigured son of the community’s spiritual leader, through birthright and intellect, is Hebron’s next heir to leadership; however, a club foot (as well as that very intellect) set Isaac apart from the rest of the community. Unable to engage with the likes of regular adolescent boys, Isaac’s childhood is marked, much like Haynes in *Minty Alley*, by a tendency to bury himself in books. And while his engagement with literature becomes a social hindrance, it also becomes a stimulus, for Isaac has aspirations of writing an epic about his people.

Isaac wishes to write about his Hebron community because “the black characters whom he had come upon in his reading seemed to him a miserable and despicable lot” (253), and Isaac felt his people deserved better. They are an illiterate people, scratching at the surface of the earth, resiliently getting by between one natural disaster after another. Like so many of the

region's actual writers – James and Lamming, most notably – Isaac desired to change the neglect paid to his people, for they were all but ignored:

And even if they had been able to read, in the history books they would have found themselves only in the blank spaces between the lines, in the dashes, the pauses between commas, semicolons, colons, in the microcosmic shadow world between periods...imprisoned in mute anonymity (61).

Like Isaac, Wynter's own adolescence was regularly governed by books: "I read a lot," she recalls, "Several people remember me reading as I walked along the streets, losing my hair ribbons, reading on buses, and so on" ("Re-Enchantment" 127). Like Wynter's own childhood, Isaac is granted a scholarship for an education in urban Kingston where he would gain a "mechanical knowledge" of English and arithmetic, after which he would be expected to return to Hebron to lead his people. On weekends, when other students were off exploring the city, Isaac "would stay in the college savoring the silence and the loneliness. All day long he would read" (*Hills* 253). Isaac's headmaster encouraged this habit, lending his own library for the curious reader's perusal; there, Isaac would discover epic texts like the Bible, the *Complete Works of Shakespeare*, *Pilgrim's Progress*, and the *Complete Works of John Milton* (251).

Isaac's mother, Miss Gatha, is certain that her son's completion of school and subsequent return to Hebron would be nothing less than celebratory; Isaac would return with "knowledge obtained from books and from the big world outside"; he would know about agriculture and economics; he would provide the literary means by which to record their history; and he would aid the community in their fight against hurricanes and the terrible drought – teaching them "how to dig wells deep into the earth" (95). And yet, the promise of this coveted education was confounded by a certain irrelevancy to daily life:

The headmaster, like his headmaster before him, was the product of a colonial education which had become ossified over the years. They were like blinkered horses who could see the path before them but could not relate it to wider horizons (251).

Isaac's pedagogical indoctrination into the colonial school system is reminiscent of the education that so many of the writers from this era received, Wynter included. Of her own early academic experiences, Wynter recalls:

We weren't even taught Caribbean geography in the schools. The geography that was taught was that of England, the history that was taught was English history. We weren't even taught the geography of the United States. At that time the United States was considered a second-rate country ("Re-Enchantment" 129).

Despite the headmaster's antiquated erudition, he invests all he has into students with the curiosity and potential like that of Isaac. "These headmasters were like eunuchs," the novel notes, "themselves deprived, but guarding carefully the seeds of the future" (*Hills* 251). As noted in the beginning of this chapter, Isaac's perusal of the headmaster's unique library would be the place where he would make an unorthodox discovery. This library, the fortunate recipient of a large grant, allowed the current headmaster, Anthony Holland, to shop for texts which aligned "more nearly to his enlightened taste" (252). While Isaac reads the epic works Milton and Shakespeare, it would be an *American* author which ultimately galvanizes Isaac's ambitions. While other students were off cavorting in Kingston, Isaac would unearth a copy of Melville's *Moby-Dick*, and "Under the spell of its power wanted to create an image of himself and of his people that would be epic" (253). This American text would prove to be of major influence to Isaac's young and growing psyche. First, *Moby Dick* offers Isaac a rare literary example of a black character with selfhood and dynamism. Melville's harpooner Daggoo bucks the racial trend found so regularly in Isaac's other readings; most often, black characters "were always pitied and patronized, the done-to's and never the doers, the slaves and never the masters, the conquered, never the conquerors" (253). But Daggoo, a seminal part of the harpooner's quadrant aboard the Pequod, offers a different literary image.

Throughout much of *Moby-Dick*, the massive Daggoo – a six-and-a-half foot tall “giraffe” – is described by Melville in size, not sentiment. He is “broad, baronial, and superb” (130), Melville writes, “There was a corporeal humility in looking up at him” (106-107). But despite Daggoo’s equation to massive beings (which has, over the years, allowed critics to accuse Melville of racial stereotyping⁷³), he is a dutiful and highly respected member of the crew. Ishmael would admirably observe the harpooner’s propensity to breathe in the “sublime life of the worlds,” noting that it seemed the serene ocean air, not food, is where Daggoo received his bodily sustenance. C. L. R. James takes note of Daggoo’s ever-present concern for the status of his fellow whalers (*Mariners* 37); and along with the other harpooners, Queequeg and Tashtego, Daggoo is noted for having “magnificent physique, dazzling skill, and striking personality” (25).

While Isaac explores and contemplates this newly discovered literary alternative, his Kingston schoolmates imagine their future as the leaders of Jamaica. In the evenings they would sit around and discuss their tomorrows, noting that “Once they threw out the British a new day would dawn and the world would be theirs” (*Hills* 260). Despite the promise afforded by the idea of coming independence, “they spoke glibly of freedom and democracy but were incapable of understanding their meaning” (260). Isaac grew to feel his classmates were blind to the inevitable psychological trap they were enmeshed within:

In exploring the symbols of power that their rulers had trapped in books, they had become enmeshed in its complexities, had fallen victims to a servitude more absolute than the one imposed by guns, whips, chains and hunger...[it] would make themselves the supreme clichés of the men whom ostensibly they had overthrown. For them, politics was a game with a set of rules codified by their adversaries. They would play the game brilliantly without ever questioning the rules (260-261).

⁷³ for a general summation of this issue, see Justin Sfiariac’s “The Question of Race in ‘Moby Dick’” (2003).

Isaac's perusal of *Moby-Dick* offers an alternative to this "codified" colonialism; additionally, unlike the veiled "symbols of power" latent in colonial school literature, Melville provides Isaac with alternate literary exemplifications, like Daggoo, to which he could relate. Isaac is also drawn to Melville's delineations of the sea; on a rare evening away from campus, Isaac visits the shores, "For he knew the sea from *Moby Dick* and there it was even vaster and more powerful than he had imagined it" (256-257). The exiled characters aboard the whaling ship also prove to be of interest to Isaac; his home in Hebron is, after all, like a microcosmic Pequod, a collection of renegades and castaways, shunning the status quo while living life on the periphery. Isaac's father Moses, in fact, is described in the novel as "a prophet of the castaways" (115).

Though *Moby-Dick* provides Isaac with literary attributes of which he could identify with, Melville's epic ultimately instigates Isaac's desire to write about his own people:

he had planned a novel about Hebron...He would write an epic, another *Moby Dick*, in which Ahab's search for the white whale would be paralleled by his father's pursuit of a black God. The congregation would be the crew, and Obadiah, Daggoo, the harpooner, "so broad, baronial and superb a person"; Hugh would be the cook "who always brought his best ear into play" and he himself, Ishmael, with Rose the symbol of home, the fixed star of his return (*Hills* 269-270).

Isaac had hopes that he would return to Hebron after his 15-month sabbatical, and be "set free to write without having to share experience vicariously through books written by other peoples, in their language, holding up their images, informed with their rhythms, their words" (266). What Isaac saw in Melville was a divorce from the literary forbearers that preceded him. Isaac does not intend to reproduce Melville's images, rhythms, and words – for that would be merely to associate with another version of codified colonialism – rather, it is the *independence* of Melville's own images, rhythms, and words which intrigues Isaac. *Moby-Dick* enacts its own language in documenting a culture unique to the American northeast and the wide oceans,

specifically, unique to the whaler's culture aboard the *Pequod*. Melville uses *Moby-Dick* to claim that culture for his own. It is this which Isaac wishes to do for his own people.

Of course, Isaac never achieves his epic literary hopes, and like the end of *Moby-Dick*, Wynter's story ends with Hebron's figurative drowning. Isaac returns home to find that it would not be as he had imagined it while away; he had instead "romanticized its horizons" (265):

But nothing in Hebron was as he had imagined it. For several days he wrestled with his writing. Then one day he asked himself, "For whom am I writing? And why?" For a people who could not read, he told himself. And the few who could, so suborned by the false coin of shallow dreams that they would deny Moses and his visions. And to the strangers outside he could speak across only great distances (270).⁷⁴

The disfigured intellectual becomes increasingly aware of the differences between he and his Hebronese kin – "he became more conscious than ever of his own isolation" (267) – and Isaac ultimately gives up his novelistic hopes. Shortly after his unceremonious return, he is ruined by moments of impulsive villainy, and runs away with the infamous labels thief and rapist. Like Melville's story, it is a bitter end to a tale that had promising moments of hope.

While Wynter's novel is dogged with accusations of being overly cumbersome *The Hills of Hebron* is ultimately a seminal Caribbean text which deserves belated attention and critical reconsideration; and for someone whose career has been concerned "with connections" ("We Must Learn" 307), Wynter's inclusion of Herman Melville begs further analysis.

⁷⁴ As Chapter 5 points out, these very dilemmas are contemplated throughout Lamming's *Pleasures*.

PART IV: *GEORGE LAMMING*

Something startles where I thought I was safest (iii).

**Walt Whitman in the epigraph to
Lamming's *In the Castle of My Skin***

Because paradox is a common motif in the work of George Lamming, the epigraph to *In the Castle of My Skin* is a fitting start to the novel considered by many as *the* postcolonial literary opus.⁷⁵ Lamming text begins his novel with Walt Whitman's opening line in "This Compost," a poem which marvels at the paradoxical enigma of Earth; that despite humankind filling it with "distemper'd corpses" and the "sour dead," the planet still resurrects. Of this seeming contradiction, Whitman writes, "It grows such sweet things out of such corruptions" (311). It is no wonder that Lamming's adolescent tale, written amidst the waning years of colonialism, should find kinship with Whitman's sweet and sorrowful poem about comfort and anguish, death and rebirth. Lamming's novel begins with the words of Whitman – "Something startles me where I thought I was safest"⁷⁶ – and this epigraph can be seen as a premonition for a story which traces how the comfort of youth is 'startled' by a boy coming to understand the nightmares of colonialism and history.⁷⁷ At the conclusion of *In the Castle of My Skin*, "G." – Lamming's eponymously-named main character – feels the brunt force of the contrasts noted in Whitman's poem. G. decides he must leave his boyhood home and his respected friend, the old

⁷⁵ Many writers have made this claim; of Lamming's contemporaries, see C. L. R. James' *Party Politics in the West Indies* (72), and Kamau Brathwaite's "Timehri" (346); and critics like Sandra Pouchet Paquet (in the foreword to the 1991 version of *Castle*) and Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o (in "Freeing the Imagination: George Lamming's Aesthetics of Decolonization") also speak to its primacy within the genre.

⁷⁶ For some reason the "me" here is left out of Lamming's epigraph.

⁷⁷ This, of course, brings to mind yet another Lamming epigraph: *The Pleasures of Exile* opens with the well-known passage from James Joyce's *Ulysses*, "History is a nightmare from which I am trying to awaken" (9). For the record, Joyce's exact quote reads "History, Stephen said, is a nightmare from which I am trying to awake" (34).

man who will soon return to “the pebble under the grape leaf on the sand” (312).⁷⁸ Despite the sorrow G. feels in saying goodbye, his sentiment is marked by the optimism of a new beginning, for he is set to embark upon a new life on a new island. Noting such bittersweet contrasts in life, Whitman’s poem laments, “What chemistry!”

Lamming’s use of the first line of Whitman’s poem reveals much more than a mere appreciation for poetry and paradox, and yet despite the manifold attention given to *In the Castle of My Skin*, few have bothered to consider the seemingly unarbitrary choice of an epigraph by an American poet whom Lamming, a colonial Barbadian, would appear to have little tangible connection to. As mentioned in the previous chapter, historian Harvey R. Neptune argues that Lamming’s citation of Whitman reveals a “shared faith in the democratic vision” (197); and Tony Simoes da Silva suggests that it reveals Lamming’s childhood fear of the tenuous nature surrounding his colonial upbringing, that Whitman’s line “refers to the extent to which the notion of a Caribbean subjectivity was itself a ‘necessary’ colonial fabrication...that being a colonial was, in a perverse kind of way, to be safe in the comfort of one’s imprisonment” (39). Aside from the passing analyses of Neptune and Simoes da Silva, as of the time of this writing, no other critic has contemplated the meaning of this transnational selection. While Simoes da Silva likens the epigraph to the ‘safe imprisonment’ of colonialism – the binary topic which often dominates, and sometimes plagues, Lamming criticism – Whitman’s appearance at the beginning of Lamming’s debut novel marks the start of an unorthodox relation that he consistently sought in the early stages of his burgeoning career as a writer, a relationship that would reach its apotheosis in his epic collection of essays, *The Pleasures of Exile*.

⁷⁸ It is worth noting here is that the character of the old man in *In the Castle of My Skin* is appropriated from Lamming’s late godfather, Papa Grandison (see Paquet, *Caribbean Autobiography*, pg. 132).

Ambiguity and difficulty are regular words used to describe the work of George Lamming,⁷⁹ and many critics agree that his attitudes towards the U.S. – much like his attitudes on other issues – remain ambivalent. The U.S. has, after all, inherited a rather contradictory role throughout the Caribbean region; as Mary Chamberlain notes, “the US is both the region’s bully, and its biggest draw, for there is scarcely a family in the Caribbean who does not have at least one member living there” (“Consolation” 83). While Lamming’s own literary writings may come across as rather elusive at times, the following declaration is far from ambiguous:

the West Indian novel, particularly in the aspect of idiom, cannot be understood unless you take a good look at the American nineteenth century, a good look at Melville, Whitman, and Mark Twain (*Pleasures* 29).

While C. L. R. James’ *Mariners, Renegades and Castaways* has garnered the most attention from critics regarding this American/Caribbean literary connection, Lamming’s *The Pleasures of Exile* might make the most convincing case for the existence of this multifaceted relationship, one he later calls “an affair of the Americas” (“Conversation” 148).

The world received *The Pleasures of Exile* in 1960, seven years after Lamming earned critical success with *In the Castle of My Skin*, and its pseudo-sequels *The Emigrants* (1954), *Of Age and Innocents* (1958), and *Season of Adventure* (1960). While Lamming’s first four books – all novels – relied upon fictionalized aspects of his own life, Lamming took to the critical essay for his next piece, and used it to explore the development of his own psyche as a Caribbean-born writer living and working in self-imposed exile in the colonial metropole. The epic-like trajectory of the book carefully attempts to reconcile – and end – the longstanding impasse between colonizer and colonized. Like so many other writers from the Caribbean, Lamming contemplates this relationship by concentrating upon the infamous duo that is Shakespeare’s

⁷⁹ See J. Dillon Brown’s “Exile and Cunning: The Tactical Difficulties of George Lamming” (2006).

Caliban and Prospero.⁸⁰ Lamming's subject would be, he writes, "the migration of the West Indian writer, as colonial and exile, from his native kingdom, once inhabited by Caliban, to the tempestuous island of Prospero's and his language" (13). As such, there is a longstanding critical tendency to apprehend *The Pleasures of Exile* through the Prospero/Caliban bond; after all, Lamming writes in the book's introduction that he intends to "make use of *The Tempest* as a way of presenting a certain state of feeling which is the heritage of the exiled and colonial writer from the British Caribbean" (9). Of course, the historical legacy imbued by colonialism makes it impossible *not* to consider the twofold relationships it enacts. Accordingly, many writers, Lamming included, see Shakespeare's seventeenth century play against "the background of England's experiment in colonization" as well as "prophetic of a political future" which would define the Caribbean in the twentieth century (13). Unfortunately, however, this tendency has all too often dominated the critical reception to Lamming's work.⁸¹

An example of this can be discerned in Dr. Reed Way Dasenbrock's review of the text's second printing in 1985. Dasenbrock, a literary theorist and critic, argued that Lamming's 1960 text hadn't "worn well" in its first twenty five years. Calling the text a "jumble," Dasenbrock argues that the only aspect holding *Pleasures* together is the "recurring use of Shakespeare's *Tempest* as a myth of the West Indian situation," a play that contains social hegemonies that Lamming wishes to "invert and overturn" (141). Ultimately, Dasenbrock argues that this binary

⁸⁰ Specifically, see Aimé Césaire's *Une Tempête* (1969); or, as the Introduction to this dissertation already points out, for a detailed account and analysis of *The Tempest* and its significance to the Caribbean, see Jonathan Goldberg's *Tempest in the Caribbean* (2004), Rob Nixon's "Caribbean and African Appropriations of 'The Tempest'" (1987), Chantal Zabus' *Tempests After Shakespeare* (2002), and/or Peter Hulme and William H. Sherman's *The Tempest and Its Travels* (2000).

⁸¹ As a brief contemporary example of this, Jonathan Goldberg summarizes Lamming's literary trajectory in writing that, "Lamming writes frequently of the role the intellectual must play in revolutionizing society...this has meant to...loosen the hold of European education in order to allow the reclamation of buried experiences so that the various forms of degradation and alienation that persist as the colonial legacy can be surmounted at an individual and collective level" (13).

is a “grotesque oversimplification of what [Lamming] wishes to represent.” Continuing, Dasenbrock contends:

Even if Lamming, as a black, wishes to identify with Caliban and see the excolonialists as Prosperos who have lost their magic, to represent the complex reality of the West Indies one needs many more roles not found in Shakespeare. Lamming neither supplies those roles or shows any awareness of their necessity (141).

Dasenbrock’s own oversimplification of *Pleasures* is inevitably rather ironic here; like many readers of Lamming’s work, Dasenbrock neglects the text’s ambitious, even worldly, objectives in favor of those linear Shakespearean variables. Had Dasenbrock considered the text’s closing chapters, for example, he may have found the “many more roles” which might suffice in representing the “complex reality” of the Caribbean region. In any case, Dasenbrock’s flippant review is emblematic of the abridged tendency by which *The Pleasures of Exile* (and other Lamming texts) is often considered. While Lamming invites a binary critique in his privileging of the Prospero/Caliban dynamic, his text is also an assertion of the alternate cultural traditions at play in the Caribbean region. Simoes da Silva writes that “in their dialectical complexity, the essays that make up *The Pleasures of Exile* strive to go beyond the irremediably polarized stances of a Hegelian master-slave dichotomy intrinsic to the colonial enterprise” (5). Contemporary critic J. Dillon Brown suggests that by reading Lamming’s novels in contexts different than those “traditionally pursued within postcolonial literary studies,” it results in a sort of “institutional defamiliarization.” Brown argues that Lamming’s concerns “with breaking up habitual patterns of thought in order to allow for a newly perceived view of a world,” welcomes such a reading (691).

In *Pleasures*, Lamming’s discussions of nineteenth century U.S. literature affords critics like Brown (and skeptics like Dasenbrock) an example of this nontraditional reading. While commenting on a review of West Indian novelists written by Kingsley Amis, a well-known

British writer, professor and critic, Lamming notes that the piece is a “consideration of eight [Caribbean] books...but the name ‘America’ is never used once” (29). Lamming suggests that such neglect is irresponsible, and yet all too common in the realm of the 1950s criticism that considers the Anglophone Caribbean novel.⁸² Unfortunately, as we celebrate the 50th anniversary of Lamming’s monumental text, that case remains the same.

In representing “the complex reality of the West Indies” with “many more roles not found in Shakespeare” (Dasenbrock), Lamming turns to America and its nineteenth century literature, finding it a fertile resource for the contemplation of his own situation as a Caribbean writer in a changing world. Lamming writes in *Pleasures* that “there is every reason why America should be in our midst” (154); of the unique opportunities the U.S. would afford his native Caribbean, Lamming writes:

The West Indies are lucky to be where they are: next door to America, not the America of the Mason Dixon line or the colonising policies in the guise of freedom and self-defence, not the America that is afraid of the possibilities of its own strength. It’s a different America that the West Indies can explore. It’s the America that started in a womb of promise, the America that started as an alternative to the old and privileged Prospero, too old and too privileged to pay attention to the needs of his own native Calibans. In the Caribbean we are no more than island peaks; but our human content bears a striking parallel with that expectation upon which America was launched in the result, if not the method, of its early settlement (152).

While the driving focus throughout *The Pleasures of Exile* is upon that notorious colonial binary, little has been written on the book’s closing chapters – on America (“Ishmael at Home”), Africa (“The African Presence”), and the Caribbean future (“Journey to an Expectation”) – all of which boldly attempt to carve a new path for the artists, critics and politicians working in the Caribbean. In those chapters Lamming also constructs a new critical agenda for the literary

⁸² To this critique Lamming adds, that “Amis is a critic or novelist is of no more than topical importance; but it is not irrelevant to point out that he is also a teacher of English literature in a British university”; clearly an important distinction, especially given British academic “superciliousness” towards American literature in the 1950s; for more, see the following chapter and the section dedicated to the work of British American studies critic Marcus Cunliffe.

scholars that read his work. In a series of interviews and classroom lectures conducted at the University of Texas in the fall of 1970, Lamming describes one of his justifications for this (then) new approach to his work:

the English language does not belong to the Englishman. It belongs to a lot of people who do a lot of things with it; it is really a tree that has now grown innumerable branches, and you cannot any longer be alarmed by the size or quality of the branch ("Interview with" 20).

Trees have always been a significant metaphor for George Lamming. *In the Castle of My Skin* begins, in fact, with a description of Creighton village's aging cherry tree, which often provided a shaded respite from the hot sun for the novel's quadrant of boys: "They sat in the shade under the cherry tree that spread out over the fences in all directions. The roots were in one yard, but its body bulged forth into another, and its branches struck out over three or four more" (16).⁸³ One could say that Lamming's philosophical beliefs are rooted – no pun intended – in this idea of the integral connectivity of the roots, branches, and leaves of a tree, but also of their unique distinctiveness and their widespread reach. Lamming has always found it a necessity to trace how and where these limbs, leaves and roots grow, as revealed by the epigraph to his "Western Education and the Caribbean Intellectual" lecture. It states:

[the] starting point of critical elaboration is the consciousness of what one really is, and is knowing "thysself" as a product of the historical processes to date, which has deposited in you an **infinity of traces**, without leaving an **inventory**...therefore it is imperative at the outset to compile such an inventory (3, Lamming's emphasis).

In the closing chapters of *The Pleasures of Exile*, Lamming sets forth upon an exploration of the parts of the tree that – like the aging cherry tree in *Castle* – bulge forth into other, unexplored yards. Lamming looks to compile the traces of the widespread inventory that constitutes the

⁸³ Much later on in the novel, Trumper uses another tree metaphor in describing Creighton Village: "Everybody in the village sort of belong. Is like a tree. It can't kind of take up the roots by itself; we all live sort of together" (144).

Caribbean artist and writer, and after fifty long years, it is time to explore the branches of Lamming's tree that hangs over his neighbors' yard to the north.

Lamming's cultural engagement with America – and later its literature – began at a very early stage in his career, even prior to those two aforementioned classics, *In the Castle of My Skin* and *The Pleasures of Exile*. In 1948 Lamming would publish a short story in *BIM* – a Caribbean literary magazine spearheaded by his teacher and mentor, Frank Collymore. “Birds of a Feather” is a fictional delineation of the local effects that the American military had upon the Caribbean islands during World War II. As the previous chapter describes, through the Destroyers for Bases Agreement, Winston Churchill agreed to let the United States' military establish camp on various naval and air bases throughout the British-occupied islands in the Caribbean. As Lamming's West Indian narrator notes, the arrival of the Americans shook Caribbean life to the core. While the colonial system on the islands had steeped itself in “Tradition!,” boasting a rigid “System!,” and forcing its subjects to live “under the awful shadow of those [colonial] Gods” (181), the culture brought forth by the American soldiers seemed, on the contrary, rather liberating. The “freedom and hilarity in which [the American soldiers] were steeped” (179) ran counter to the stiff society of which most West Indians were used to. Lamming's narrator welcomes the changes that accompanied their arrival:

And then there was the war, and mingled with the gifts it brought to these parts was the treasure of the Americans. The Americans came and moved about our community like new brooms around a dust-laden room. And not a few were suffocated and choked and poisoned against them. None were ever fully convinced that it was the dust which had obscured the lives of the neglected natives which was blinding (181).

As pointed out in the previous chapter, the historical research regarding this sweeping American arrival doesn't always conclude with the so-called “gifts” that Lamming notes here. However, what the American presence did afford Lamming's character – among many others living in the

British-occupied islands – was not only much needed employment, but also exposure to a new culture. As Lamming’s protagonist describes, this change was nothing short of a cultural “treasure,” for the “gaiety and exuberance of spirit [brought by American soldiers] seemed to contain an element of revolt to that delicate organism which is West Indian society” (179).

“Birds of a Feather” focuses upon the rebellious and carousing nature of the American soldiers, who habitually drink their way through the service. Lamming’s nameless narrator – a native West Indian – finds employment as an office staffer and typist on the new base, and subsequently develops a bond with two American soldiers (named Dalton and Hendrickson) who take him under their wing. The trio spends their time off base drinking, socializing, and flirting with local women. All three are arrested for drunkenly disturbing the peace at a party and placed in a detox holding cell for a night (where the story opens). Their brash and drunkenly actions eventually leads the two American soldiers to incur a reassignment to New Jersey. This news is relatively devastating to Lamming’s narrator; he describes the anguish he feels following word of their forced exile from the island: “As had been the case with their arrival, [their departure] was going to strike the very foundations of my society...It was probably in the nature of our destiny that we, born in these parts, should know and feel the violence of these changes” (186). Dalton and Hendrickson’s departure would bring back monotony, the narrator fears, returning him to a state “with nothing to hope for.”

But the spokesperson in “Birds of a Feather” is eventually able to admit that not all is ultimately hopeless in this loss, for the Americans teach him “to live the present to the fullest...to look upon the drama of life in an hour of intoxication” (186). “I would be all the wiser,” he thinks, because Dalton and Hendrickson were “in themselves a well of life from which I could draw in the future” (186). Lamming summarizes the relationship with a metaphor

much like that all-encompassing notion of the tree; “Let the Americans go if their work was done,” he writes; “All would be absorbed in the melting-pot to form another link in the chain of experience which would encircle my days” (186-187). The story closes with a violent and tumultuous car crash, which certainly questions the optimism by which Lamming’s narrator speaks of the American presence. Yet regardless of the message Lamming may wish to convey, this early short story marks the beginning of an affair that has been neglected throughout the course of his writing career. The “chain of experience” which Lamming’s narrator speaks of throughout “Birds of a Feather” would initiate a pseudo ‘flocking-together’ that would continue to grace the pages of Lamming’s subsequent works.

Five years after the publication of “Birds,” Lamming secured a publisher for his first novel, *In the Castle of My Skin*, in 1953. He had been living in London since 1950, supplementing living expenses by working nights at various factories.⁸⁴ Writing by day, Lamming finished the novel about a year and a half after arriving in England. *In the Castle of My Skin* is a classic document of the colonial’s experience amidst global infiltrations.⁸⁵ Early reviews praised the novel for its negotiation of the changing situation in Barbados; hinged on a precipice between new and old worlds, *TIME Magazine* dubbed the novel a “curious mixture of autobiography and a poetic evocation of a native life that has changed in the author’s brief lifetime from careless, laughing simplicity to uneasy social awareness” (“In Between”). Anthony West, writing in the *New Yorker*, noted Lamming’s account of the “social trend in Barbados—the ousting of the old pattern of paternalistic plantation colonialism by the newer and

⁸⁴ in his epic interview with David Scott, Lamming tells a semi-humorous story of getting overly ambitious, and clumsy, at a Firestone tire factory, nearly breaking another man’s leg.

⁸⁵ It should be noted, that Lamming recalls that he was reading French writers “voraciously” at the time: Camus, Sartre, de Beauvoir, and Malraux, all whose work helped infuse *Castle* with a political and philosophical existentialism (as exemplified when the boys banter on the beach), that extends beyond the England/Caribbean colonial binary.

colder international capitalism” (222). Richard Wright, who was urged by his editor at Harper’s to write the novel’s introduction, sees the novel as a “story of change from folk life to the borders of the industrial world,” which, “adds a new and poignant dimension to a reality that is already global in its meaning” (Ward, Jr. & Butler 198, viii). Stopping just short of calling it an instant classic, Marjory Stoneman Douglas of the *Chicago Tribune* suggests it is “probably very close to genius” (B20). While one reviewer even claims it is “about life in Trinidad” (Jarrett 423), the novel was highly-regarded enough that it won the esteemed Somerset Maugham Award in 1957.

But among all of the novel’s positive reviews, the most powerful may have come from *New Statesman and Nation* reviewer V. S. Pritchett. Pritchett praised the novel for its reminiscent relation to “pure Mark Twain,” suggesting that “One is again back in the pages of *Huckleberry Finn*” (460). Describing how Lamming shares literary traits and sensibilities with Twain, Pritchett writes:

there is the feeling for landscape, for times of day and night and there is nothing rhetorical, studied or conventional about [Lamming’s] descriptions. They rise in the boys’ minds, the sights of the sea and land, interrupt the boys’ absurd conversations and trouble their half-formed feelings. Mr. Lamming catches the myth-making and myth-dissolving mind of boyhood, the sudden stupors and astonishments. He has caught the endless jawing of boys as they grow up into a life which is very different from the one they imagine (460).

It is unlikely that *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* had much – if any – influence upon *In the Castle of My Skin*. Lamming, at this stage in his career, has yet to begin reading that generation of American writers. But Lamming was *very* aware of Pritchett, stating that a “review by Pritchett carried weight” (“Sovereignty” 109). Given the comparison to a literary giant like Mark Twain, it is fair to presume that Lamming’s interest in American literature was piqued.

While the United States seemingly plays a very peripheral role throughout *Castle*, Lamming writes that America actually participates in “shaping essential features of the novel”

(Introduction xl). This would seem a curious contention, for throughout the first three-quarters of the text the only substantial references to America come through dialogical speculation. Influenced by the ostentatious rhetoric of Mr. Slime, who describes the U.S. as a land of milk and honey, the village boys come to understand it as a place where “food in galore” and “things good there” (170). When Lamming was writing *Castle*, he admits that, much like his fictional characters in the village, America “existed for [me] as a dream,” a “kingdom of material possibilities accessible to all” (Introduction xl). Late in the novel, however, G.’s best friend Trumper is given the opportunity to travel to the United States. At the urging of Slime, an island delegation from the local House of Assembly is sent to Washington and returns with word that the U.S. government would contract a number of island laborers for a few years. Trumper jumps at the opportunity because the pay, G. notes, “seemed fantastic” (229).

Despite the monetary excitements, Trumper’s departure for America is marked by many unknowns. G. states:

Trumper had emigrated to America and no one could tell what he would become. Most people who went to America in such circumstances usually came back changed. They had not only acquired a new idiom but their whole concept of the way life should be lived was altered (229).

As Chapter 5 of this dissertation reveals, *idiom* is a seminal part of Lamming’s understanding of America along with its nineteenth century writers; but in this specific case Trumper’s experience affirms America’s significant role throughout *Castle*. Trumper inherits this “new idiom” during his stay in the States, and affords him an entirely new disposition; shortly before his return to the village, he pens a letter to G. confirming these changes:

Trumper...had written [it] in a way I hadn’t thought him capable of and which in fact I didn’t quite understand. He had been away three years and the new place had done something to him. The language was not unlike what he was used to speaking in the village, but the sentiments were so different. He had learnt a new word, and the word seemed like some other world which I had never heard of. Trumper had changed (231).

Trumper returns to tell G. that “America make you feel...that where you been livin’ before is a kind of cage” (292). The experience of America, Lamming writes, provides Trumper “with a political experience which the subtle force of British imperialism had never allowed to flourish in the islands” (Introduction xli). Lamming uses Trumper’s voyage to the States to complicate and challenge the colonial status quo.

While many critics read Trumper’s experience in the U.S. in terms of his ignited race consciousness, his return marks so much more than that.⁸⁶ Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o, for example, suggests that Trumper illustrates how the global arena infuses an “awakening” within Creighton Village at large, which provides the central dramatic premise of the narrative: the introduction of not only black struggles, but of social struggles *worldwide* (164-165). Despite the reformed conception of blackness that Trumper brings back to Creighton, *for G.*, Trumper’s return marks the arrival of foreign ideas. Being the novel’s main protagonist, and also the character which most closely aligns with Lamming himself, there is something to be said for the way in which G. himself wrestles with Trumper’s American report. The plot of *Castle* is never situated within America; readers only witness Creighton’s characters have discussions about it. As such, for both G. and Lamming himself, the *idea* of America operates solely within the speculative imagination. Lamming clarifies this in the introduction to the novel’s reprint:

⁸⁶ Lloyd W. Brown, for example, writes that Trumper comes to understand the idea of the American Negro as an archetype of racial pride (35). Brown argues that the intensification of racial self-awareness in Anglophone Caribbean literature following World War II “postulate[s] a closer identification with the black American,” and suggests that Trumper’s role in *Castle* is to “articulate ‘radical’ or transcendental views of blackness by allying [himself] with the American Negro” (35). Throughout Brown’s article, however, Trumper is referred to as “Trumpet”; a character whose name, it is said, symbolizes the revolutionary notes of a coming Afro-West Indian awareness. While it is unknown whether this simple gaffe comes from Brown himself or the editors at the *Caribbean Studies* journal in which the article was published, in the contexts of Brown’s argument, it is worth acknowledging Trumper’s relevance to that instrument so central to the African American jazz tradition. However still, I cannot see Trumper’s return solely within the racialized lens that Brown does. After all, in *The Pleasures of Exile*, Lamming himself admits his inability to relate to the African American experience, writing that the “great difference” between a black American and a comparable West Indian is that the latter “could never have felt the experience of being in a minority” (33). While Trumper’s experience undoubtedly exposes the differences between American and Caribbean conceptions of race, Trumper’s return is marked by so much more than that; as Lamming writes, his “*whole concept* of the way life should be lived was altered” (229, my emphasis)

I had never visited the United States before writing *In the Castle of My Skin*; but America had often touched our lives with gifts that seemed spectacular at the time, and reminded us that this dream of unique luxury beyond our shores was true. This image of America has not changed. Almost everyone had some distant relation there who had done well. I had never heard of anyone being a failure in the United States (xl-xli).

While Trumper is the novel's main spokesperson for this American experience, it would be the ever-curious and autobiographical character of G. who attempts to reconcile these imported and oftentimes incomprehensible imaginations. If America truly plays an "essential" role in the book – even if only through dreams – its importance in *Castle* would be the start of a growing curiosity that Lamming would continue to contemplate in subsequent works.

The Emigrants, published in 1954, has very little to do with America. It is, after all, an autobiographically-based tale that recalls Lamming's experience of moving to London in the early '50s. However, Lamming would arrive in England during a watershed era for American and British military relations, and like "Birds of a Feather," the novel includes appearances by American soldiers. Between 1945 and 1954, the United States established a military rapport with their British allies in strategic preparation for the buildup to the Cold and Korean Wars. In a matter of four years, beginning in June of 1949, the United Kingdom allowed its American air bases grow from five to a whopping forty-three (Duke 7). *The Emigrants* inevitably deals with that sudden growth, which prompted a massive influx of American soldiers to the U.K. And until 1954, when the Visiting Forces Act was passed, U.S. soldiers were often *not* subject to territorial laws (114-122).⁸⁷ Thus, this lack of applicable jurisdiction contributed to the swaggering, brash nature in which many of the American soldiers carried themselves overseas. Troop misbehavior relating to fighting and drunkenness was so common that many bar owners

⁸⁷ the previous United States Visiting Forces Act of 1942 allowed for vast legal powers and immunities available to soldiers serving the U.S. abroad; for more on this topic, see Simon Duke's *US Defence Bases in the United Kingdom: A Matter for Joint Decision?* (1987) and Anni P. Baker's *American Soldiers Overseas: The Global Military Presence* (2004).

put their establishments “off-limits” to American soldiers (Baker 61). In *The Emigrants*, Lamming offers the following description from the perspective of the Governor, the ex-R.A.F. owner of the nightclub Mozamba which hosts Caribbean immigrants and Americans soldiers under the late night, smoky haze of music and dance:

There was compassion in the look he turned on the Americans. The room was full of Americans, bronze bodies encased in blue uniforms, faces split with laughter and liquor. They had a mania for laughing. The voices were reckless and resonant...The Americans were laughing...all at once, merrily and insistently like lunatics at a holiday camp. They seemed to do it on purpose, he thought. The way they laughed, prolonged and rowdy, and, it would seem, to no purpose but laughing. They laughed for the sake of laughing...There was nothing else to do (269).

Aside from this seemingly ‘compassionate’ discernment of American soldiers, along with the humorous, and brief, speculation rendered by Tornado and Lilian that American trains far exceed the length of British ones (114), Lamming’s second novel remains within the aforementioned colonial binary by dealing with the experience of the colonial subject in exile, arriving in the metropole for the very first time. It is a fascinating, albeit dense, take on this subject.

Lamming’s next novel, *Of Age and Innocence*, published in 1958, also has little in regards to American contemplations. The story highlights the various social and political maneuvers leading up to the independence movement on San Cristobal – the fabricated, hybrid, and emblematic Caribbean island central to so much of Lamming’s fiction. While the novel contains conditions which might seem relevant for a consideration of any other post-colonial nation (the United States included), the novel remains strictly tethered to the various interactions of the island’s political players as independence dawns. Even though independence is contemplated with optimism – “Everyone talked about the future as though they had discovered by accident a new dimension to time” (85) – the novel focuses upon *present* conditions. Because *Of Age and Innocence* describes the “psychological stress that attends the last stages of

colonialism,” esteemed Lamming critic Sandra Pouchet Paquet contends that the future is set aside in favor of a therapeutic search for identity amidst such tumult (*Novels* 57).⁸⁸

Lamming’s final novel before taking a decade-long respite from fiction reifies the dream-like conceptions of America that began in *In the Castle of My Skin*. Like most of Lamming’s novels, 1960’s *Season of Adventure* takes place on San Cristobal, where a small handful of characters are lured by the financial potentials of fulfilling American jobs left open by the young men who’ve been sent off to the Vietnam War. As Paquet has noted, these jobs provide some of the residents of San Cristobal opportunity in the face of post-independence oppression; while the ruling classes try to maintain control of the island’s power by establishing a neo-colonial state, the small community of the Forest Reserve attempts to “assert its ethos and...shape its own reality” (*Novels* 67) by selling its labor to the United States, thus undermining the new ruling class. As in *Castle*, America operates throughout *Season of Adventure* as a place which offers material possibilities; on the other hand, it is conceived of as an abstract and alluring alternative to England:

And so America remained in their memory. America that was no royal land of hope and glory, but a miracle of money and bread! America which would always be felt under their feet like the stride of the drums over the *tonelle* each night! (64).⁸⁹

For those individuals who remain behind on San Cristobal, like Gort, they are inevitably caught up by these new cultural prospects: “[America] was a universe like heaven above their heads, too far to touch; yet real since Chiki and the rest were there” (59). Twice, on completely

⁸⁸ It is worth mentioning that the character of Mark Kennedy, an exile who has returned to San Cristobal, has traveled throughout the U.S., but little is said about his experience there.

⁸⁹ This alternative can be witnessed in Powell, who reads American newspapers in addition to British ones (346). But also in the figure of Jim Aswell, a white businessman from Virginia who comes to San Cristobal to distribute Coca-Cola, and his neon signs are ubiquitous. “There was no village in San Cristobal where the word, Aswell, was not raised like a flag above the trees” (352), his name could be seen “like a rainbow of lights over that legendary bottle of gaseous fluid,” causing villagers to assume “that the name Aswell and the title Coca-Cola belonged to the president of the New Republic” (353).

separate occasions, America is compared to the moon (228, 293), close enough for all to see, but still all too far away. Hoping to bridge that literal and figurative distance, Gort intones, “*O America! America! Oh Lord, let America come out of hiding from behind that cloud*” (60).

While romanticized renditions of the United States circulate throughout *Season of Adventure*, the darker sides of American culture are also exposed. The harsh physical realities of working in the U.S. are revealed through the character of Chiki, who returns from the States almost unrecognizable, for America had “brutalised his body, disfigured his face beyond the recognition of his nearest friends” (189). Chiki also returns, much like Trumper in *Castle*, with an awakened understanding of race. The harsh experience of American racism is exemplified by Chiki’s recollection of the “white cracker” who paid his wages and once vehemently told him, “Chiki, it says somewhere how man come from the monkey, but whenever I see you I feel sure he gradually going back” (237). And ultimately, America cannot offer true solace to the residents of San Cristobal for historical reasons. Liza and Fola recognize that “Americans [take] pleasure in their past because they were descended from men whose migration was a freely chosen act. They were descended from a history that was recorded, a history which was wholly contained in their own way of looking at the world” (93). These distinctions understandably prevent a full-fledged alignment with America by the residents of Forest Preserve.

Despite the American speculations found in his early writings, Lamming finally experienced America for himself in the fall of 1955 after being awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship. The trip provided Lamming with a wildly new experience; he was exposed to a high-speed urban culture, independent women, and found clarifications for many of the concepts he previously received through secondhand sources. Most importantly, from an artistic standpoint, it introduced to him the nineteenth century American literary canon which would

become a reference point that he would align himself with in crafting his own literary opus, *The Pleasures of Exile*. As Lamming told David Scott in 2001:

It's later, then, in stages [around] '55, on the Guggenheim [that I] went to the [United] States and realized that there was this whole omission, because American literature didn't come into my reading very much. I had some Mark Twain and fragments of Whitman, and so on. But when I got to the States and spent some time there, I started to realize the immense importance of that nineteenth-century literature ("Sovereignty" 134).

Lamming's first trip to the U.S. has remained a relative footnote amidst the otherwise fruitful commentaries on his long and vibrant career. Outside of the details that he shares in "The African Presence" chapter of *Pleasures*, there is very little circulated in regards to his trip, which offers some fascinating first impressions of American culture. Reaffirming some of the sentiments expressed in his previous novels, Lamming would remind his readers that before he stepped foot on American soil, it "had always existed as a dream in my imagination, a place where everything was possible, a kingdom next door to the sky" (188). But the possibility of living that dream would gain steam when, after being granted the Guggenheim, Lamming had to visit the American Consul in London for his pre-arrival physical. Upon being poked and prodded by American medics, Lamming jokes that the inspection gave him a "new and formidable power of physical well-being" (187). He was given the "American O.K.," thus procuring his pass to the United States. Much like the lunar descriptions of America in *Season of Adventure*, Lamming reveals that the receipt of his Visa gave him a feeling of surreal joyousness, admitting that "I felt that I was on my way to the moon." Before departing for the States, he excitedly celebrated by downing a pint at the local pub.

Lamming set sail from Southampton to New York aboard the tourist class decks of the *Queen Mary* at the end of summer in 1955. Upon arrival, American Customs proved to be a small but humorous annoyance, ending with Lamming's recitation of a pledge that he would not

overthrow the Government of the United States (remember, this in the midst of the so-called Red Scare). Lamming would initially stay in New York City, just blocks from Times Square, and his first week was spent wandering Manhattan “like a boy scout on holiday.” His explorations took place by day and night – and even through rain – until his back reverberated with aches. Despite pain and exhaustion, it was outweighed by awe; it was “pure magic” (188), he would recall, “Spontaneity was everywhere” (189). Struck by the seemingly never-ending height of New York’s skyscrapers, and marveling at the “work of human hands, man’s energy, a collective enterprise,” he wondered if the buildings were perhaps a “short cut to heaven.” He writes:

my attention had been captured by this relation to nature, this example of human power and energy which could transform simple stone into such formidable monuments. This architecture was not only new, it was an essential ingredient of a wholly New World; and since the Caribbean was only next door, this World was, in a sense, mine (188).

This begins Lamming’s practice of aligning the United States with the Caribbean under the New World umbrella. Because both regions offered cultures which were relative works-in-progress (at least in respect to the Europe), Lamming saw each region as having the potential for shaping the embryonic other. While New York offered what may have seemed an alien environment to Lamming, early on, he was particularly struck by – and drawn to – the *inventive* aspects of the city. Of its unique, energetic cadences, Lamming would write:

the repetition of small bars, the sound of jazz, near and endless as the kitchen odours which drifted from closed doors and open-air spit. Food seemed a part of the nation’s constitution. There was a rhythm of impermanence which seemed to impose a surface of energy on everything. It didn’t seem to anyone that death was a fact; yet every face had negotiated some compromise with mortality. Everything was invention: food, relaxation, noise, crisis, silence (188-189)

Richard Drayton observes that Lamming was drawn to the “optimism” that something “new and significant is moving” in the U.S. (xii). While New York was wholly foreign to him, Lamming would feel that “The rhythm of speech and movement was right” (*Pleasures* 188).

Despite these notable first impressions, subsequent commentary has remained scant. When critics do, in fact, contemplate Lamming's American musings in *Pleasures*, it is often argued that his experience and subsequent alignment with the States comes from a certain empathy with the black Americans of his generation. Bill Schwarz, for one, argues that Lamming's writing invokes a shared Atlantic-centered experience that blends the Caribbean, London, South Africa, and black America ("Locating" 2); that Lamming was a "paradigmatic intellectual of the black Atlantic" during the mid-50s (11). The motives behind an argument like Schwarz's probably stems from some of Lamming's literary circles at the time. Mary Chamberlain, in her chapter on Lamming in Schwarz's *West Indian Intellectuals in London*, notes that Langston Hughes was Lamming's guide during his initial trip to New York (184). Then there's the brief discussion of the brilliant James Baldwin in *Pleasures*, who of course joined Lamming in participating in the seminal, *Le Congrès International des Ecrivains et Artistes Noirs* (the 1st International Congress of Black Writers and Artists) in Paris, in September of 1956. Lamming gave a paper on the third day of that gathering, entitled, "The Negro Writer and His World," which urged other black artists to "find a centre as well as a circumference which embraces some reality whose meaning satisfies his intellect and may prove pleasing to his senses" (41). While Lamming recognizes that the reality of black people's experience worldwide was surely a shared and unique one, he argues that black writers should join hands "with every other writer whose work is a form of self-enquiry, a clarification of his relations with other men, and a report of his own very highly subjective conception of the possible meaning of man's life." Lamming's argument in Paris was not to shun race, but looks to understand and transcend it in an effort to achieve artistic power and contentment.

The talk prompted praise from Baldwin, who recounts Lamming's speech (and the rest of the Conference) in the "Princes and Powers" essay (40-43). Baldwin describes Lamming as intense – albeit untidy – who drew great respect from the audience because he "knew what he was doing" in recognizing a subtle, though difficult, "double-edgedness" that the black writer needed to embrace. Baldwin felt Lamming recognized the "supreme tension between the difficult and dangerous relationship in which [the Negro writer] stood to the white world and the relationship, not a whit less painful or dangerous, in which [the Negro writer] stood to each other"; in this duality, Baldwin understood Lamming's argument as identifying "their means of defining and controlling the world in which they lived" (43). Despite being underwhelmed by Lamming's slovenly attire, Baldwin came away impressed.⁹⁰

While Lamming's respect for African American writers such as Baldwin is reciprocated, it is contrarily rendered in a certain disassociation. In that Paris speech, Lamming states his troubles with the essentialist tendency to discern "black writing" as a cohesive genre. He argues:

It would be very difficult to establish, from the premise of literature, the close connection between the matter and method of three such writers as Mr. Richard Wright in *Native Son* and *Black Boy*, Mr. Amos Tutuola in the *Palm Wine Drinkard*, and the late Jamaican novelist Roger Mais in *Brother Man*. America, Nigeria, and the British Caribbean have [met] there under the embracing function of an activity called writing; but the manifestations of that activity in the work of these three, are at once delightful and perplexing. The only thing which holds them together, apart from the belief they are men, is the fact they are black (36).

Lamming's contention here was likely aided by that trip to New York in the previous year. Prior to his arrival in the States, Lamming admitted "Black America" was a curiosity to him, and one he wished to explore. He explains:

I could have no illusions about my situation in the general context of American culture. If America was a dream in my imagination, then Harlem was the source

⁹⁰ In describing Lamming, Baldwin writes, "Lamming is tall, raw-boned, untidy, and intense, and one of his real distinctions is his refusal to be intimidated by the fact that he is a genuine writer." Humorously recalling Lamming's attire, Baldwin writes: "'The profession of letters is an untidy one,' [Lamming] began, looking as though he had dressed to prove it" (43).

of a most consuming curiosity. I wanted to see what was happening ‘up there’
(*Pleasures* 190).

After living a few weeks in central Manhattan, Lamming eventually ventured ‘up there’ for an exploratory stay in Harlem (but not ‘really’ Harlem, he admits; his residence was on Riverside Drive, a more affluent and scenic section of Harlem proper). While there, Lamming frequented various ‘up town’ drinking holes, and met up with a female acquaintance who help clarify many of the cultural curiosities that confounded him (for example, Lamming was shocked to find another woman eating lunch at a restaurant all by herself – to which his American guide revealed that American women were not like West Indian women, “They were independent” (194), she told him). Lamming found Harlem to be “a world which is part of and other than America.” Despite admitting certain sympathies for the plights of blacks in America, however, from a cultural standpoint Lamming ultimately found it challenging to relate. Throughout *Pleasures* Lamming insists that he feels incompatible with black Americans; for example, at a Long Island gathering of significant members of the community, Lamming would admit: “This party was being given by an American Negro, but the bond of Negro wouldn’t help me through my mistakes” (196). Quite simply, despite his skin color, Lamming’s own London-infused, Barbadian-based upbringing couldn’t quite bridge this cultural gap with Black America. Lamming crystallizes this disparity in writing:

there is a great difference between Baldwin and a comparable West Indian. No black West Indian, in his own native environment, would have this highly oppressive sense of being Negro...[because] The West Indian, however black and dispossessed, could never have felt the experience of being in a minority (33).

In other words, while Lamming would respect the genre of writers which includes the likes of Wright and Baldwin, he couldn’t psychologically relate to their experience *as* black Americans, which renders those arguments like Schwarz’s somewhat problematic.

But as the subsequent chapters of this dissertation argue, curiously, Lamming's U.S. trip would instead result in a connection with another body of American writers; it would hereby be fitting to repeat that seminal phrase which is so central to this dissertation. In the early pages of *Pleasures*, Lamming would boldly assert:

the West Indian novel, particularly in the aspect of *idiom*, cannot be understood unless you take a good look at the American nineteenth century, a good look at Melville, Whitman, and Mark Twain (29, my emphasis).

Somewhere between his arrival in America and his penning of *Pleasures*, Lamming's explorations of American culture led him to its nineteenth century literature. He would tell an audience at the University of Puerto Rico in 1974 that thanks to the constrictive nature of his colonial upbringing, it wasn't until much later that he "discovered that there was such a thing as the American writer!" ("On West Indian Writing" 129). He would add that, "Up until the age of 18 I did not encounter Melville, and had barely heard of Huckleberry Finn as a boys' book." But when Lamming finally did make that discovery, it clearly became an important one to him, as evidenced in the various references made of Melville, Whitman, and Twain throughout *Pleasures*. In fact, the final chapter of that text – "Journey to an Expectation" – includes yet another epigraphic nod to America's iconic nineteenth century 'spokespoet,' Walt Whitman. From a *Leaves of Grass* poem called "Reconciliation," Lamming opens his final essay with the following:

Word over all, beautiful as the sky,
Beautiful that war and all its deeds of carnage
must in time be utterly lost,
That the hands of the sisters Death and Night
wash again, and ever again this soil'd world. (*Pleasures* 211).

This epigraph is a revealing link in Lamming's choice to align with certain American writers of the previous century. As the subsequent two chapters will argue, Lamming would make his pro-American claims during a very pro-American era. And pro-American *rhetoric* throughout the

1950s – especially in academic contexts – was manifold, so it is no wonder that Lamming’s desire to side with the writers of the American nineteenth century hinges on “Word over all” and the constitutive value of language.

The Pleasures of Exile, to me, marks the height of Lamming’s literary production. Only two novels would follow it, and both in 1971: *Water with Berries* (which returns to the Shakespearean premise of *The Tempest*), and *Natives of My Person*, a novel which, though set long before any of his prior novels, is a final “installment” of those works (“Sovereignty” 174). While the pseudo-prequel of *Natives* has parallels to Melville’s *Moby-Dick* (as seen through the Ahab-like tendencies of the Commandant), Lamming’s career following his return to the Caribbean region in the 1960s and 70s would remain steadfast with a Caribbean focus; it initiates a “new level of practical involvement” with his home region (Drayton xiv). Over the last quarter century, Lamming has routinely given lectures, advised worker’s unions, edited journals, chaired regional committees, and has taught at various colleges (both in the Caribbean and in the United States). Mary Chamberlain notes that “Lamming was and remains a committed West Indian. His first and his last reference points are the Caribbean, and the Caribbean in the widest sense” (“George Lamming” 187).

While Lamming rarely returned to his American contemplations following *Pleasures*, as evidenced in his writings throughout the 1950s, he would come to see the United States as a significant limb to the tree that is the Caribbean artist. While there are certainly aspects of that limb which might seem unruly and unattractive, a Caribbean relationship with that American branch would be a necessity: “So the question is not fighting off the influence [of America],” he asserts, “but how to develop a critical relationship to that influence” (“Damming”). While more is said on the literary relations between Lamming and his nineteenth century American

predecessors in the following chapters, my hope is that the current section has exposed some parts of the “whole world of [Lamming’s] accumulated emotional experience, vast areas of which,” to this day, still “remain unexplored” (*Pleasures* 12).

CHAPTER 3 CITED LITERATURE

- Baa, Enid M. "Caribbean Library Development." *Libri* 20.1-2 (1970): 29-34.
- Baker, Anni P. *American Soldiers Overseas: The Global Military Presence*. Westport, CT: Preager, 2004.
- Baldwin, James. "Princes and Powers." 1960. *Nobody Knows My Name: More Notes of a Native Son*. New York: The Dial, 1961, 13-55.
- Barnes, Natasha. "Reluctant Matriarch: Sylvia Wynter and the Problematics of Caribbean Feminism." *Small Axe* 5 (Mar 1999): 34-47.
- Baugh, Edward. Introduction. *It Takes a Mighty Fire: Poems by H. D. Carberry*. By H. D. Carberry. Kingston: Ian Randle, 1995. xiii-xvi.
- Bogues, Anthony. *Caliban's Freedom: The Early Political Thought of C. L. R. James*. London: Pluto, 1997.
- . "C. L. R. James and the Politics of the Subject, Culture and Desire." *Beyond Boundaries: C. L. R. James and Postnational Studies*. Ed. Christopher Gair. London: Pluto, 2006. 157-174.
- . Preface. *After Man, Towards the Human: Critical Essays on Sylvia Wynter*. Ed. Bogues. Kingston: Ian Randle, 2006. xiii-xvi.
- "Books: The Black God." Rev. of *The Hills of Hebron*, by Sylvia Wynter. *TIME*. 10 Aug 1962. Web. 28 Sep 2011.
<<http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,873735,00.html>>.
- Brathwaite, Kamau. "Timehri." 1970. *The Routledge Reader in Caribbean Literature*. Eds. Alison Donnell & Sarah Lawson Welsh. London: Routledge, 1996. 344-350.
- Brown, J. Dillon. "Exile and Cunning: The Tactical Difficulties of George Lamming." *Contemporary Literature* XLVII.4 (2006): 669-694.
- Brown, Lloyd W. "The American Image in British West Indian Literature." *Caribbean Studies* 11.1 (Apr 1971): 30-45.
- Buell, Lawrence. "The Unkillable Dream of the Great American Novel: *Moby-Dick* as Test Case." *American Literary History* 20.1-2 (Spring/Summer 2008): 132-155.
- Buhle, Paul. *C.L.R. James: The Artist as Revolutionary*. London: Verso, 1988.
- Carberry, H. D. *It Takes a Mighty Fire: Poems by H. D. Carberry*. Kingston: Ian Randle, 1995.
- . "Oh America." *It Takes a Mighty Fire: Poems by H. D. Carberry*. Kingston: Ian Randle, 1995. 43-44.

- Chamberlain, Mary. "The 'Consolation of Freedom': Reflections on Nationalist Hopes." *The Locations of George Lamming*. Ed. Bill Schwarz. Oxford: Macmillan Caribbean, 2007. 67-90.
- . "George Lamming." *West Indian Intellectuals in Britain*. Ed. Bill Schwarz. Manchester: Manchester UP, 2003. 175-195.
- Chandler, G. Lewis. "At the Edge of Two Worlds." Rev. of *In the Castle of My Skin*, by George Lamming. *Phylon* 14.4 (1953): 437-439.
- Cirillo, Nancy, Linda Naru, and Ellen Starkman. "The Caribbean Library in Diaspora: Perspectives from Scholarship and Librarianship." *Caribbean Libraries in the 21st Century: Changes, Challenges, and Choices*. Eds. Cheryl Ann Peltier-Davis and Shamin Renwick. Medford, NJ: Information Today, 2007. 227-242.
- Dasenbrock, Reed Way. Rev. of *The Pleasures of Exile*, by George Lamming. 1985. *Contemporary Literary Criticism* 144 (Sep 2001): 141.
- Dhondy, Farrukh. *C. L. R. James: A Life*. New York: Pantheon, 2001.
- "Digitization for Access and Preservation: Profiles of Outstanding Virgin Islanders Aesthetes." *The University of the Virgin Islands Libraries*. 2002. Web. 27 Sep 2011. <http://webpac.uvi.edu/imls/pi_uvi/profiles/aesthetes.shtml>.
- Douglas, Marjory Stoneman. "Sunny Little England." Rev. of *In the Castle of My Skin*, by George Lamming. *Chicago Daily Tribune* (22 Nov 1953): B20.
- Drayton, Richard. "Taking Back the Head: *The Pleasures of Exile* Viewed from the Caribbean." Introduction. *The Pleasures of Exile*. By George Lamming. London: Pluto, 2005, ix-xvi.
- Duke, Simon. *US Defence Bases in the United Kingdom: A Matter for Joint Decision?* Hampshire, England: Macmillan, 1987.
- Emery, Mary Lou. *Modernism, the Visual, and Caribbean Literature*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2007.
- Farred, Grant. "'Victorian with the Rebel Seed': C. L. R. James, Postcolonial Intellectual." *Social Text* 38 (Spring 1994): 21-38.
- Forna, Aminatta. Rev. of *The Masque of Africa: Glimpses of African Belief*, by V. S. Naipaul. *The Observer*. 29 Aug 2010. 31 Aug 2010. <<http://www.guardian.co.uk/books/2010/aug/29/vs-naipaul-masque-of-africa-review>>.
- French, Patrick. *The World Is What It Is: The Authorized Biography of V. S. Naipaul*. London: Picador, 2008.
- Gair, Christopher, ed. *Beyond Boundaries: C. L. R. James and Postnational Studies*. London: Pluto, 2006.

- . "Introduction: C.L.R. James and Postnational Studies." *Beyond Boundaries: C. L. R. James and Postnational Studies*. Ed. Gair. London: Pluto, 2006. 1-12.
- Grimshaw, Anna. Introduction. *Special Delivery: The Letters of C. L. R. James to Constance Webb, 1939-1948*. By C. L. R. James. Ed. Grimshaw. Oxford: Blackwell, 1996. 1-35.
- Grimshaw, Anna and Keith Hart. "American Civilization: An Introduction." *American Civilization*. By C. L. R. James. Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1993. 1-25.
- Gussow, Mel. "Another Bend In the River For Naipaul; He Tests the Water For Nobel Prize Speech." *The New York Times*. 15 Nov 2001. Web. 9 Jun 2009.
<<http://www.nytimes.com/2001/11/15/books/another-bend-in-the-river-for-naipaul-he-tests-the-water-for-nobel-prize-speech.html>>.
- Hamilton, Cynthia. "A Way of Seeing: Culture as Political Expression in the Works of C. L. R. James." *Journal of Black Studies* 22.3 (Mar 1992): 429-443.
- Henry, Paget. *Caliban's Reason: Introducing Afro-Caribbean Philosophy*. New York: Routledge, 2000.
- Hill, Robert A. "Literary Executor's Afterword." *American Civilization*. By C. L. R. James. Ed. Anna Grimshaw & Keith Hart. Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1993. 293-366.
- Holsworth, Robert D. "V.S. Naipaul and the Whole Truth." *New Political Science* 5.1 (Winter 1984), 107-121.
- "In Between Is Brown." Rev. of *In the Castle of My Skin*, by George Lamming. *TIME Magazine* (9 Nov 1953): 116-118.
- James, C. L. R. *American Civilization*. Ed. Anna Grimshaw & Keith Hart. Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1993.
- . *Beyond a Boundary*. 1963. London: Yellow Jersey, 2005.
- . "A Conversation with C. L. R. James." Interview by Stuart Hall. *Rethinking C. L. R. James*. Ed. Grant Farred. Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1996. 15-44.
- . "Interview with C. L. R. James." *Kas-Kas: Interviews with Three Caribbean Writers in Texas*. Eds. Ian Munro & Reinhard Sander. Austin: African and Afro-American Research Institute, 1972. 22-41.
- . "Language and the Seizure of Power: An Interview with C. L. R. James." 1982. By Chris Searle. *Race & Class* 50.1 (2008): 79-87.
- . *Mariners, Renegades and Castaways: The Story of Herman Melville and the World We Live In*. 1953. London: Allison & Busby, 1985.
- . *Minty Alley*. 1936. Jackson: UP of Mississippi, 1997.

- . (as J. R. Johnson). "Native Son and Revolution." *New International* 6.4 (May 1940): 92-93. Web. <<http://www.marxists.org/archive/james-clr/works/1940/05/nativeson.htm>>.
- . *Party Politics in the West Indies*. San Juan, Trinidad: Vedic Enterprises, 1962.
- . *Special Delivery: The Letters of C. L. R. James to Constance Webb, 1939-1948*. Ed. Anna Grimshaw. Oxford: Blackwell, 1996.
- Jarrett, Thomas D. "Recent Fiction by Negroes." Rev. of *In the Castle of My Skin*, by George Lamming. *The English Journal* 43.8 (Nov 1954): 419-425.
- Joyce, James. *Ulysses*. 1934. New York: Vintage International, 1990.
- King, Bruce. *V. S. Naipaul*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003.
- King, Nicole. *C. L. R. James and Creolization: Circles of Influence*. Jackson: UP of Mississippi, 2007.
- Lamming, George. "Birds of a Feather." 1948. *Stories from the Caribbean: An Anthology*. Ed. Andrew Salkey. London: Elek, 1965. 178-188.
- . "Caribbean Literature: The Black Rock of Africa." 1966. *Conversations: George Lamming: Essays, Addresses and Interviews 1953-1990*. Eds. Richard Drayton and Andaiye. London: Kaira, 1992. 106-125.
- . "Conversation with George Lamming." 1979. *New World Adams: Conversations with Contemporary West Indian Writers*. Ed. Daryl Cumber Dance. 1992. Leeds, England: Peepal Tree, 2008. 141-154.
- . "Damming Lamming." Interview with Knolly Moses. *PanMedia*. Web. 23 Jun 2010. <<http://www.panmedia.com.jm/archive/features/lamming.htm>>.
- . *The Emigrants*. 1954. Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P, 1994.
- . *In the Castle of My Skin*. 1953. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1954.
- . "Interview with George Lamming." *Kas-Kas: Interviews with Three Caribbean Writers in Texas*. Eds. Ian Munro & Reinhard Sander. Austin: African and Afro-American Research Institute, 1972. 4-21.
- . Introduction. *In the Castle of My Skin*. By Lamming. 1983. Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P, 1991. xxxv-xlvi.
- . "Nationalism and Nation." 1982. *Conversations George Lamming: Essays, Addresses and Interviews 1953-1990*. Eds. Richard Drayton and Andaiye. London: Karia, 226-236.
- . *Natives of My Person*. 1971. London: Allison & Busby, 1986.

- . "The Negro Writer and his World." 1956. *Conversations George Lamming: Essays, Addresses and Interviews 1953-1990*. Eds. Richard Drayton and Andaiye. London: Karia, 36-45.
- . *Of Age and Innocence*. 1958. London: Allison & Busby, 1981.
- . "On West Indian Writing." 1974. *Conversations: George Lamming: Essays, Addresses and Interviews 1953-1990*. Eds. Richard Drayton and Andaiye. London: Kaira, 1992. 126-140.
- . *The Pleasures of Exile*. 1960. Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P, 1992.
- . *Season of Adventure*. 1960. Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P, 1999.
- . "The Sovereignty of the Imagination: An Interview with George Lamming." By David Scott. *Small Axe* 12 (Sep 2002): 72-200.
- . *Water with Berries*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1971.
- . "Western Education and the Caribbean Intellectual." *Coming Coming Home: Conversations II*. St. Martin, Caribbean: House of Nershi, 2000, 3-26.
- Levi, Darrell E. "C. L. R. James: A Radical West Indian Vision of American Studies." *American Quarterly* 43.3 (Sep 1991): 486-501.
- Matthiessen, F. O. *American Renaissance: Art and Expression in the Age of Emerson and Whitman*. 1941. London: Oxford UP, 1968.
- McClendon, John H. III. *C. L. R. James's Notes on Dialectics: Left Hegelianism or Marxism-Leninism?* Lanham, MD: Lexington, 2005.
- McLemee, Scott. Introduction. *C. L. R. James on the 'Negro Question'*. By C. L. R. James. Ed. McLemee. Jackson: UP of Mississippi, 1996, xi-xxxvii.
- Melville, Herman. *Moby-Dick; or, The Whale*. 1851. Ed. Hershel Parker and Harrison Hayford. New York: W. W. Norton, 2002.
- Naipaul, V. S. *Between a Father and Son: Family Letters*. 1999. Ed. Gillon Aitken. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2000.
- . "The Documentary Heresy." *Critical Perspectives on V. S. Naipaul*. Ed. Robert D. Hamner. London: Heinemann, 1977. 23-25.
- . *The Enigma of Arrival*. 1987. New York: Vintage, 1988.
- . "Farrukh Dhondy talks to V. S. Naipaul." *Literary Review* (Aug 2001): 29-37.
- . "Farrukh Dhondy talks to V. S. Naipaul." *Literary Review* (Apr 2006): 20-25. Web. <http://www.literaryreview.co.uk/Naipaul_04_06.html>.

- . "Foreword to *A House for Mr. Biswas*." 1983. *Literary Occasions: Essays*. Ed. Pankaj Mishra. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2003. 128-135.
- . *A House for Mr Biswas*. 1961. Middlesex, England: Penguin, 1977.
- . "Images." 1965. *Critical Perspectives on V. S. Naipaul*. Ed. Robert D. Hamner. London: Heinemann, 1977. 13-15.
- . "Jasmine." 1964. *The Overcrowded Barracoon and Other Articles*. 1972. Middlesex, England: Penguin, 1984. 24-31.
- . "London." 1958. *The Overcrowded Barracoon and Other Articles*. 1972. Middlesex, England: Penguin, 1984. 9-17.
- . *The Mystic Masseur: A Novel*. 1957. New York: Vintage International, 2002.
- . "Naipaul: An Interview with Ewart Rouse." 1968. *Conversations with V. S. Naipaul*. Ed. Feroza Jussawalla. Jackson: UP of Mississippi, 1997. 10-13.
- . "New Novels." Rev. of *Of Age and Innocence*, by George Lamming. *New Statesman* (6 Dec 1958): 826-827.
- . "Prologue to an Autobiography." 1982. *Finding the Centre: Two Narratives*. London: Andre Deutsch, 1984. 15-85.
- . "Reading and Writing." *Reading & Writing: A Personal Account*. New York: New York Review of Books, 2000. 1-38.
- . "Two Worlds (The Nobel Lecture)." 2001. *Literary Occasions: Essays*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2003. 181-195.
- . *A Writer's People*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2007.
- Neptune, Harvey R. *Caliban and the Yankees: Trinidad and the United States Occupation*. Chapel Hill: U of North Carolina P, 2007.
- Nielsen, Aldon Lynn. *C.L.R. James: A Critical Introduction*. Jackson: UP of Mississippi, 1997.
- Nixon, Rob. "Caribbean and African Appropriations of 'The Tempest'." *Critical Inquiry* 13.3 (Spring 1987): 557-578.
- Paquet, Sandra Pouchet. *Caribbean Autobiography: Cultural Identity and Self-Representation*. Madison: U of Wisconsin P, 2002.
- . Foreword. *In the Castle of My Skin*. By George Lamming. Ann Arbor: U of Michigan Paperbacks, 1991. ix-xxxiii.
- . *The Novels of George Lamming*. London: Heinemann, 1982.

- Parris, D. Elliott. "Minty Alley." *Urgent Tasks* 12: Special Issue on C. L. R. James (Summer 1981): 97-98.
- Pease, Donald E. "C. L. R. James's *Mariners, Renegades and Castaways* and the World We Live In." Introduction. *Mariners, Renegades, and Castaways: The Story of Herman Melville and the World We Live In*. By C. L. R. James. Hanover: UP of New England, 2001. vii-xxxiii.
- Poore, Charles. "Books of The Times." Rev. of *Miguel Street* by V. S. Naipaul. *New York Times*. 5 May 1960. ProQuest Historical Newspapers via ProQuest Web. 25 Aug 2010.
- Pritchett, V. S. "A Barbados Village." Rev. of *In the Castle of My Skin*, by George Lamming. *The New Statesman and Nation* XLV.1154 (18 Apr 1953): 460.
- Ramchand, Kenneth. Introduction. *Minty Alley*. By C. L. R. James. Jackson: UP of Mississippi, 1997, 5-15.
- Rosengarten, Frank. *Urbane Revolutionary: C. L. R. James and the Struggle for a New Society*. Jackson: U of Mississippi P, 2008.
- Savage, Ernest A. *The Libraries of Bermuda, the Bahamas, the British West Indies, British Guyana, British Honduras, Puerto Rico, and the American Virgin Islands: A Report to the Carnegie Corporation of New York*. London: The Library Association, 1933.
- Schwarz, Bill. "C. L. R. James's *American Civilization*." *Atlantic Studies* 2.1 (Apr. 2005): 15-43.
- . "Locating Lamming." *The Locations of George Lamming*. Ed. Schwarz. Oxford: Macmillan Education, 2007. 1-25
- , ed. *The Locations of George Lamming*. Oxford: Macmillan Education, 2007.
- Scott, David. "The Re-Enchantment of Humanism: An Interview with Sylvia Wynter." *Small Axe* 8 (Sep 2000): 119-207.
- Sfâriac, Iustin. "The Question of Race in 'Moby Dick'." *Studia Universitatis Petru Maior - Philologia* 2 (2003): 111-116.
- Sherlock, Sir Philip. Forward. *It Takes a Mighty Fire: Poems by H. D. Carberry*. By H. D. Carberry. Kingston: Ian Randle, 1995. ix-xii.
- Simoës da Silva, A. J. *The Luxury of Nationalist Despair: George Lamming's Fiction as Decolonizing Project*. Amsterdam: Rodopi B. V., 2000.
- Swanzy, Henry. "The Literary Situation in the Contemporary Caribbean." *Books Abroad* 30.3 (Summer 1956): 266-274.
- Theroux, Paul. *Sir Vidia's Shadow: A Friendship Across Five Continents*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1998.

- Thieme, John. *Postcolonial Con-texts: Writing Back to the Canon*. London: Continuum, 2001.
- . *The Web of Tradition: Uses of Allusion in V. S. Naipaul's Fiction*. London: Hansib, 1987.
- Thiong'o, Ngũgĩ wa. "Freeing the Imagination: George Lamming's Aesthetics of Decolonization." *Transition* 100 (2009): 164-169.
- Toland-Dix, Shirley. "The Hills of Hebron: Sylvia Wynter's Disruption of the Narrative of the Nation." *Small Axe* 25 (Feb 2008): 57-76.
- "VS Naipaul Attacks Forster." *BBC News*. 2 Aug 2001. Web. 28 Sep 2011. <<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/entertainment/1470492.stm>>.
- Ward, Jr., Jerry W. & Robert J. Butler. *The Richard Wright Encyclopedia*. Westport, CT: Greenwood, 2008.
- Walcott, Derek. "The Garden Path: V. S. Naipaul." 1987. *What the Twilight Says: Essays*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1998. 121-133.
- . "Man of the Theatre." 1971. *Conversations with Derek Walcott*. Jackson: UP of Mississippi, 1996. 17-20.
- West, Anthony. "Shadow and Substance." Rev. of *In the Castle of My Skin*, by George Lamming. *New Yorker* (5 Dec 1953): 222.
- Whitman, Walt. "This Compost." 1881. *Leaves of Grass and Other Writings*. Ed. Michael Moon. New York: W. W. Norton, 2002. 309-311.
- Williams, Eric. *Education in the British West Indies*. 1945. New York: A & B Books, 1967.
- Wright, Richard. Introduction. *In the Castle of My Skin*. By George Lamming. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1954, v-viii.
- Wynter, Sylvia. "Beyond the Category of the Master Conception: The Counter Doctrine of the Jamesian Poiesis." *C. L. R. James's Caribbean*. Ed. Paget Henry and Paul Buhle. Durham: Duke UP, 1992. 63-91.
- . "Conversation with Sylvia Wynter." By Daryl Cumber Dance. *New World Adams: Conversations with West Indian Writers*. Leeds, England: Peepal Tree, 2008. 297-305.
- . *The Hills of Hebron: A Jamaican Novel*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1962.
- . "The Re-Enchantment of Humanism: An Interview with Sylvia Wynter." By David Scott. *Small Axe* 8 (Sep 2000): 119-207.
- . "We Must Learn to Sit Down Together and Discuss a Little Culture – Reflections on West Indian Writing and Criticism." *The Routledge Reader in Caribbean Literature*. Ed. Alison Donnell & Sarah Lawson Welsh. London: Routledge, 1996, 307-315.

CHAPTER 4

THE CANON BUILDERS*Myth, Symbol, and the Institutionalization of 'New World' Literature*

The monarchical world very generally imagines, that in demagogical America the sacred Past hath no fixed statues erected to it, but all things irreverently seethe and boil in the vulgar cauldron of an everlasting uncrystalizing Present (13).

Herman Melville, *Pierre; or, The Ambiguities*.

R. W. B. Lewis' *The American Adam: Innocence, Tragedy and Tradition in the Nineteenth Century* (1955) begins with a proclamation stating that "This book has to do with the beginnings and the first tentative outlines of a native American mythology" (1). Its premise would be, like so many of its critical contemporaries, an attempt to erect some of the "fixed statues" of which Melville's narrator in *Pierre* notes are lacking under this European-based perspective that the United States of America exhibits a rash and fledgling history. Of course, Lewis' text has nothing to do with "native" Americans; and its motive to trace the "authentic American as a figure of heroic innocence and vast potentialities, poised at the start of a new

history” is, thanks to our twenty-first century perspective, run amok with shades of ignorance, essentialism and neglect. However still, contrary to how we receive Lewis’ opening line from the removed perspective of over a half century now, his text is among a handful that are cited as the foundational pieces of the American literary studies movement; texts that attempt to redeem that “vulgar cauldron” from the abyss of history, and cleanse it with an institutional legitimacy. Beginning with F. O. Matthiessen’s *American Renaissance: Art and Expression in the Age of Emerson and Whitman* (1941), and including but not limited to subsequent pieces by Lewis, Henry Nash Smith, Lionel Trilling, Charles Feidelson, Leo Marx, Richard Chase, Harry Levin, and Leslie Fiedler, this group – dubbed the “myth and symbol” school – looked to interrogate U.S. literature in an attempt to both establish and celebrate a canon of texts emblematic of the so-called American experience.⁹¹ Taken together, their work throughout the 1940s and 50s would launch the field of American literary studies into cultural and institutional respect. Their attention identified an “American literature” as such, and gave it a critical esteem that earlier commentaries had generally denied.⁹² Matthiessen, like many of those who followed him, would focus upon the “extraordinarily concentrated moment of expression” in mid-nineteenth century American writing, and would arrive at the conclusion that this seminal era, and many of the writers it birthed, was “America’s way of producing a renaissance, [and] by coming to its first maturity and affirming its rightful heritage in the whole expanse of art and culture” (vii).

⁹¹ The myth-and-symbol ‘group’ isn’t an absolute one; the various authors and texts considered a part of that movement can differ widely depending on the specific critique. For the purposes of congruency, I’ve chosen to go with the predominant ones of the 40s and 50s (which fit with the Anglophone Caribbean’s flirtation with U.S. literature and culture). With the exception of Trilling’s *The Liberal Imagination* (1950), most of them are found in Gerald Graff’s unofficial ‘list’ of the genre’s “major works”: F. O. Matthiessen’s *American Renaissance* (1941); Henry Nash Smith’s *Virgin Land* (1950); Charles Feidelson’s *Symbolism and American Literature* (1953); R. W. B. Lewis’s *The American Adam* (1955); Richard Chase’s *The American Novel and Its Tradition* (1957); Harry Levin’s *The Power of Blackness: Hawthorne, Poe, Melville* (1958); Leslie Fiedler’s *Love and Death in the American Novel* (1960); and Leo Marx’s *The Machine in the Garden* (1965), which stems from his essay of the same name read at the MLA in late 1954. For more on the general tendencies of this movement, see Graff’s *Professing Literature*, pgs. 216-220, and/or Daryl Umberger’s entry in the *Encyclopedia of American Studies* called “Myth and Symbol.”

⁹² D. H. Lawrence’s *Studies in Classic American Literature* (1923), for example, had noted the genre’s tendency to often be viewed as “mere childishness” (83).

In Lewis' *The American Adam*, "native," of course, means *national*, and this becomes the driving premise of the myth and symbol writers: a domestic campaign to identify the so-called "masterpieces" of American writing, while proclaiming them as authentic and emblematic representations of U.S. life and thought. As Leo Marx would recall, it was no mere coincidence that beginning in the shadows of World War II and gaining traction amidst the emergence of the Cold War, the myth and symbol impetus would occur at "just the right moment to provide the prospective [American] superpower with such valuable cultural resources as, for example, a major national literature" ("On Recovering" 121). Critics were thus pressured to distinguish what constituted certain U.S. national traits while academic departments dedicated to the study of American 'things' – history, literature, culture, technology – would emerge. Volatile notions like the American 'character' and the American 'experience' were contemplated. Using literature, myth and symbol critics looked at "the American" as a unitary figure, a test subject in stasis that could be identified by discerning eyes recognizing certain traits; in turn, this allowed the nation to be seen as an organic, unified, and knowable whole. Lewis' work would typify these essentialist generalities; citing the nineteenth century emergence of American literary figures like Emerson and Hawthorne, he would write:

The American was to be acknowledged in his complete emancipation from the history of mankind. He was to be recognized now for what he was—a new Adam, miraculously free of family and race, untouched by those dismal conditions which prior tragedies and entanglements monotonously prepared for the newborn European (41).

It has been well-rehearsed that passages much like this are emblematic of the flagrant errs of the myth and symbol writers. In subsequent decades, harsh critiques would be levied against their simplistic and homogenous approach to U.S. literature and culture. Their criticism would lack a responsible historicism. They would rely upon generic and simplistic archetypes. They were driven by personal beliefs in myths, instead of by a concerted methodology or theory. Their

unified “America” wouldn’t cooperate with the divisive America that came to be recognized by graduate students in the tumultuous 1960s, and it would soon become consensus among that subsequent generation of young critics that, in the annals of American literary life, “myth and symbol was our quiet shame” (Fabian 542).

Lewis’ passage above surely highlights the shame his field would eventually elicit. It naively neglects the “complete emancipation” of genders and races not within that identity category of middle-aged, white male. Its ceremonious decree of the “new Adam” reeks of metaphoric simplicity. It assumes a free break from historical burdens and national geopolitical transgressions. In sum, it is but a passing example of why the myth and symbol approach has been rightly critiqued as essentialist, homogenous, and inconsistent with the multitudes of identities and experiences which would all fall under the “American” national banner. As such, for all practical purposes, the myth-and-symbol project has been entombed as a relic of criticism’s past, left like dinosaur bones in the museum of America’s literary history. “Like exhausted scientific paradigms,” writes Charles B. Harris, they “have lost their explanatory power” (x).

However still, despite the claims of rudimentary beginnings wielded against their project, the legacy of the myth and symbol ideology remains with us, for their work singlehandedly unveiled the American literary *canon*, and provided the framework by which subsequent generations of readers and critics would engage – oftentimes passionately – regarding the question of substantial and representative literatures in the United States of America. And while the inconsistent and erroneous methodologies of the myth and symbol writers have trumped the texts they wrote, the *impulse* which sparked their movement remains of seminal significance, and proves to have manifold parallels with the establishment of a literary criticism in the Anglophone

Caribbean. In fact, Lewis' passage above is akin to how many critics would view the initial swath of Caribbean writers whom emerged in the late-1940s and early-50s: new writers of their own history, penning a literature "miraculously free" from Europe; controllers of their own social and political destinies, all unburdened from "prior tragedies and entanglements." That "new Adam" archetype would also be used to epitomize these Caribbean negotiations: "We would walk," writes Derek Walcott, "like new Adams, in a nourishing ignorance which would name plants and people with a child's belief that the world is its own age" ("What the Twilight" 6).

It is not unremarkable that George Lamming's first arrival in the United States in 1955 coincides with the publication of texts much like Lewis' *The American Adam*. Especially at a time when Lamming was consulting American literature – as he puts it, for the very first time – its cultural digestion in the public sphere would come filtered through the likes of the myth and symbol school, the newly-crowned officiators of America's literature. The same can be noted of other Anglophone Caribbean writers of the time; like C. L. R. James, whose own writings on Whitman and Melville come right in the midst of the 1950s publication boom which would be early American literary criticism. While this coincidence may seem trivial, the stern attention that Lamming and James give to American writing – at a time in which the institutional groundwork for its own premises are being laid – signals that there is something to be said for their reception and reaction to the texts which were critically designated "American masterpieces" at this very time.

This chapter will thus make the case that despite the flawed beginnings of the myth and symbol school, their post-War project of establishing a national tradition shares with the Anglophone Caribbean a seminal rhetorical *ethos* in the mid-twentieth century process of literary

canon formation. As this chapter will contend, swayed by certain historical and ideological pressures, both canons commence under institutionalized contexts which ultimately prove to be incapable of sustaining the representational basis for which they claim to exemplify. However inadequate these early canonical drafts are, both the American and Anglophone Caribbean versions similarly initiate a tradition which, although they ironically employ the same simple metaphors and archetypes, attempts to mark the distinctive qualities of their respective literatures. The archetypes of Adam, Caliban, and Robinson Crusoe, for example, are rendered by writers and critics from both regions in contexts which assert the necessary filling of a literary and cultural void. In the Caribbean, this cultural lack is noted by Edward Kamau Brathwaite, who remarks that the most significant feature of West Indian life up through 1970 was its “sense of rootlessness...dissociation, in fact, of art from act of living” (“Timehri” 344). Accordingly, while the West Indian Federation movement had ultimately failed, the residue of its attempted formation would contribute to the establishment of a regional literary and critical tradition throughout the Caribbean; furthermore, the nationalistic bent of the myth and symbol project in America would provide Anglophone Caribbean writers and critics with a keen window on how a literature (and its criticism) can attempt to bridge Brathwaite’s aforesaid gap between art and life. Ultimately, however, as I argue throughout this chapter, that bridge is falsely constructed by the forces of various institutional agendas. As such, this chapter proceeds with the argument that despite the desire of contemporary critics to note the shortsightedness of certain ‘outdated’ critics and their movements, those movements, including the critiques of them, are often the result of cultural and historical forces which elicit and authorize their agency. A comparative look at the establishment of the American and Anglophone Caribbean canons reveals a shared though faulty

ethos which is driven by the school system through its attempts to legitimize a cultural – and ultimately national – literary tradition.

PART I: *MARKETING THE CANON*

Tradition signifies a dynamic effort to create and sustain an establishment. David Scott writes that it is an active process, it is ongoing; tradition “presupposes an active relation in which the present *calls upon* the past...it is less nostalgia than memory, and memory more as a source and sustenance of *vision*” (*Refashioning* 115). In the literary realm, tradition in this sense is marked by the process of canon-formation and, subsequently, canon-revision. Canons generally coalesce under common qualifiers; they tend to be regional or generational, or sometimes form under attributes related to writing style or identity (like the Canon of Early Modern Women’s Writing, for example). Historically, however, canon-formation has most often been done under nationalist pretexts; as Gerald Graff writes in *Professing Literature*, it is often a “certain ideology of citizenship,” usually national, which determines the constitution of a literary canon (131). While canons are formed by certain categorical commonalities, perhaps more importantly, they come into fruition through a process which John Guillory cites as the accumulation of “cultural capital”; that the means through which a canon is constructed is inherently tied to literary production and consumption. Citing the restless political interventions over the last three decades regarding acts of canonical revision – working to get certain ‘excluded’ texts ‘included’ in a certain canon – Guillory writes:

An individual’s judgment that a work is great does nothing in itself to preserve that work, unless that judgment is made in a certain institutional context, a setting in which it is possible to insure the *reproduction* of the work, its continual reintroduction to generations of readers. The work of preservation has other, more complex social contexts than the immediate responses of readers, even communities of readers, to texts...these institutional contexts shape and constrain judgment according to *institutional* agendas, and in such a way that the

selection of texts never represents merely the consensus of a community of readers, either dominant or subordinate. The scene in which a group of readers, defined by a common social identity and common values, confronts a group of texts with the intention of making a judgment as to canonicity, is an *imaginary* scene (*Cultural* 28).

Throughout his text *Cultural Capital* (and two correlating articles), Guillory contends that canonical establishments are not purely the result of aesthetic judgments, nor that canonical interventions are the result of a more pluralistic liberalism or responsible historicism in respect to previous eras, as is often presumed. Instead, Guillory contends that historical forces and institutional agendas produce and reproduce texts for a constituency that profits the ideological trajectory driving its dispersal. While Guillory's text isn't concerned specifically with the American literary canon, its own formation – and subsequent revisions – supports his thesis that a literary tradition emerges not under the volition of critics or communities, *per se*, but under more forceful hegemonies. A close look at the early versions of the American and Anglophone Caribbean canons – and the similar contexts under which they formed – bolsters Guillory's contention.

The individual who is often credited with igniting the American studies movement – and thus its literary canon – is F. O. Matthiessen. His text, *American Renaissance*, was published under countless accolades and has come to be recognized by many as the text which “virtually created the field of American literature” (D. Smith); Sacvan Bercovitch writes that its arrival “marked the seeding-time of a new academic field” (632). While Matthiessen's text is oft cited as the first significant step towards the creation of the American canon, Guillory contends that the school system plays an indelible – and usually invisible – role in its promotion. By controlling the access to the means of literary production, reproduction, and the dissemination of knowledge and ideas, schools use the canon as a “discursive instrument of ‘transmission’” (56); the cannon becomes an ideological construct which is “represented to its constituency, to literary

culture, at a particular historical moment” (135). Of course, Matthiessen is the individual responsible for writing *American Renaissance*, but certain ideological forces surrounding its publication might in fact be more responsible for its dispersal and its subsequent accession; a brief case study of *American Renaissance* merely reifies Guillory’s notion of the centrality of the institution as the hegemonic force behind the literary canon.

Matthiessen’s text arrived in 1941 at a time in which the American nation was in the midst of activating what Guillory would call a “nostalgia for community” (34). The country’s academic institutions had only recently begun the project of asserting America’s cultural heritage. For example, *American Renaissance* was published shortly following Harvard’s unveiling of their History of American Civilization program, the first doctoral program of its kind (of which Matthiessen himself was a central architect). David W. Noble recalls this national academic atmosphere within which *American Renaissance* would be published and consumed:

Matthiessen came of age in the academic community of literary studies when there was a renewed attempt to bring American literature out from under the shadow of English literature. It was this revitalization of the Anglo-Protestant myth of national origins that had found expression in the creation of American civilization programs at a number of Ivy League universities during the 1930s. And *American Renaissance* was a powerful manifesto for the study of an exceptional American literature (*Death* 92).

In the preface to *American Renaissance* Matthiessen affirms his motive to establish the literature of five nineteenth century American writers – Emerson, Thoreau, Hawthorne, Melville, and Whitman – as *the* “literature for our [American] democracy” (xv). But while the text openly admits its parochial intentions, it proceeds under comparative premises. As Jonathan Arac has pointed out, Matthiessen attempts to place America’s “renaissance” literature amidst that of other “renaissances,” as witnessed by the ironic tidbit that Shakespeare occupies more lines in the text’s index than Thoreau does (95). But the term “renaissance,” Arac notes, carries with it a

“glamorous freight of secularism, progress, and preeminent individuality” (94), and Matthiessen’s text arrived in the midst of renewed efforts to see the American nation as a unique and consolidated unit. Arac thus writes that its publication promoted a national “euphoria” that “gained power against the grain of [Matthiessen’s] own methodological precepts and critical practice” (95). In other words, despite Matthiessen’s comparative intentions and his attempts to posit U.S. literature among “the whole expanse of art and culture,” publication of the text coincided with an American culture that craved a certain authentication. As Arac notes, the country was wrestling with a pseudo-national identity crisis. The War “reconstellated” U.S. politics, and the rhetorical idea of “America” that began as a Depression-era “tactic of harmony” quickly became crossed with post-War experiments involving empire and imperialism. It is within this transitional era, Arac argues, that newly emergent American studies programs gain much of their power “by nationalistically appropriating Matthiessen” (98-99).

This appropriation would occur even at the most superficial of levels, as exemplified by the story of the text’s title. In explaining the *American Renaissance* title in the text’s preface,⁹³ Matthiessen writes that “It may not seem precisely accurate to refer to our mid-nineteenth century as a *re-birth*; but that was how the writers themselves judged it” (vii). While the book’s title refers to the revival of America’s literature in the previous century, it also points to the vigor Matthiessen saw it as having for his own contemporary contexts; his stated “double aim” throughout the text is to place those mid-nineteenth century works “both in their age and in ours” (viii). Originally, however, Matthiessen’s predilection for touting this dual perspective would be embodied by his initial choice for the text’s title: “Man in the Open Air.” That phrase (and a subsequent commentary) is culled from the notebooks of Walt Whitman, and went unpublished during his lifetime. Discovered by his literary executors under the titular headline “for criticism

⁹³ Which is written under the title, “Method and Scope” (vii-xvi).

of *Leaves of Grass*,” Whitman’s brief fragment seems to be making a point regarding cultural and literary relativity. Writing that while the likes of Homer and Shakespeare had previously, and respectively, documented the “personal haughtiness” and the “passions, crimes, [and] ambitions” of man, never before had writers located “*man in the open air*, his attitude adjusted to the seasons and as one might describe it, adjusted to the sun by day and the stars by night” (29). It is a curious passage, even by Whitman standards. Bercovitch has suggested that Matthiessen’s contemplation of this phrase as a potential title aligns with his nationalist project involving the “possibilities of democracy”; that Whitman’s quote elicits the various freedoms yearned by the nineteenth century American writers who touted circumscribed ideals like “initiative, individualism, [and] self-reliance,” which Matthiessen, according to Bercovitch, also celebrates in his own text (632-3). But while Bercovitch suggests the phrase signifies a certain national secularism, Whitman’s literary brainstorm ends with a curious statement of *international* acknowledgement; he writes: “As the Universal comrade each nation courteously saluting all others” (29). Whitman’s passage is a mere three sentences in length and written with little context, thus making it challenging to infer what exactly he meant by it. But Matthiessen’s fondness for it (he quoted it at length as the epigraph to the final chapter of *American Renaissance*), would seem to align with the comparative contexts – the “double-aim” amidst the “whole expanse of art and culture” – within which Matthiessen hoped to posit this American literary era.

In any case, despite his preference for this Whitman-based title, Matthiessen’s publisher at Oxford University Press desired something more deliberately and descriptively categorical. It was thus Matthiessen’s student at the time, Harry Levin, who would suggest the *American Renaissance* title. Recalling that while his suggestion was a fitting parallel to Matthiessen’s

“liberal idealism” and his “warm feeling for the creative potentialities of American life,” Levin still remained concerned that his suggestion tended to obscure the adverse of these, the “vision of evil” which Matthiessen found so central in American writing (exemplified most explicitly in the writings of Hawthorne and Melville). While Levin insists that his suggestion should be “deprecated” (vii-vii), the *American Renaissance* title would come to take on a life of its own.

Arac suggests that because the text’s eventual title specifically identifies an “American” rebirth, it resulted in an insular provincialism as opposed to its grander motive: locating an American renaissance among *other* renaissances (94-95). Aside from the explanation in the preface, the term “renaissance” in fact receives little sustained attention throughout Matthiessen’s text. In the handful of occasions in which it is employed, it most often refers to the proper Renaissance in Europe, whose “various seventeenth century authors fed the New England renaissance” (101). Matthiessen’s third chapter – entitled “The Metaphysical Strain” – is dedicated to this contention, and describes the influence that John Milton, Thomas Hobbes, Edward Herbert, Sir Thomas Browne, John Donne, and, of course, Shakespeare, among others, had upon Matthiessen’s five New England Americans. As Matthiessen insists, “the writers whom an age most admires provide a frame of reference against which its own contours can be sharply defined” (102). While “Man in the Open Air” may have reflected this relative frame of reference, *American Renaissance* was chosen as the text’s title for its ability to reflect a sellable (and re-sellable) structure for the publishers at Oxford.

This titular anecdote recalls Guillory’s allegation regarding the force of institutional agendas as a corollary to canon formation and revision. The title which was eventually settled upon – *to its publishers* – signaled a referential and reproducible taxonomy. And more than a half-century later, that choice has seemingly proven to be a successful one; for as Ed Folsom

notes, Matthiessen “built and named *the structure* that we have learned to inhabit and have grown accustomed to...[his] title has become so much a part of our working vocabulary that it now reappears in odd guises to signal new areas of our literature that need to be taken seriously” (163, my emphasis). Despite the manifold arguments that would emerge in the subsequent decades which claim Matthiessen was complicit with a certain homogeneity – that he failed to be “pluralistic”⁹⁴ – the *publisher*, ironically, nary takes flak for the seemingly egregious pairing of America’s “renaissance” with five white male writers from the mid-nineteenth century. As Guillory suggests, amidst the haggling debate over the canon, the agendas of the publishing industry – to sell and to re-sell books – usually “remains invisible” (38). While this anecdote doesn’t exempt Matthiessen from criticism, it surely adds a new ancillary that must be taken into account when accusing his text of creating a faulty tradition.

PART II: MYTH & SYMBOL’S INVISIBLE SCAFFOLDING

The 1940s era which received Matthiessen’s text would prove to be a seminal one for the book publishing industry; and that industry would seem to buttress the growth of the American studies field which followed. If there exists one uncontested trait that Matthiessen and his myth and symbol followers all share, it would likely be their literary involvement amidst what Alison Donnell has dubbed a “critical moment of cultural nationalism” (7). As mentioned, these writers’ work is seen as spearheading the effort to establish a literary criticism bound by U.S. national borders. The frenzy with which the American Studies field emerged – within a deeply

⁹⁴ Many of these arguments emerged in the 1980s following the revelation of Matthiessen’s homosexuality, which was revealed in *Rat & the Devil: Journal Letters of F. O. Matthiessen and Russell Cheney* (1978), ed. Louis Hyde. For a general collection of texts which critique Matthiessen’s supposed homogenous complacency and his shortcomings as a critic, see Russell J. Reising’s *The Unusable Past* (1987), William Cain’s *F. O. Matthiessen and the Politics of Criticism* (1988), Jane Tompkins’ *Sensational Designs* (1985), David S. Reynolds’ *Beneath the American Renaissance* (1988), and *Ideology and Classic American Literature* (1987), eds. Sacvan Bercovitch & Myra Jehlen.

nationalistic post-War society – perhaps retarded the methods by which the myth and symbol writers constructed their American canon. Swayed by the largely rhetorical sense of the term “America,” they contributed to its historical manifestation in an era that begged for it. Surely, one cannot adequately answer the questions which would seem to drive their method, “What is an American?” (H.N. Smith, *Virgin Land* 3) or “What is American about America?” (Umberger 181), and subsequent American studies critics have noted the sheer absurdity in attempting to do so. Regardless, the *impulse* behind those questions was ubiquitous at the time, and the academic contexts within which that impulse is pursued would leave an indelible residue upon their work.

The publication of texts written by myth and symbol writers – not to mention the texts they critiqued – required (even demanded, perhaps) circumstances which allowed for dispersal and subsequent reproduction of those texts, and the institutional scaffolding which helped promote that myth and symbol ideology ultimately arranges that structure. In Guillory’s terminology, the locus for sustaining any accrued capital for a literary canon occurs most centrally in the school. As Guillory writes:

The school controls access to literacy, and the dissemination of its cultural capital to some of the population is better served by selections of texts on principles of evaluation not directly based upon the social identity of the author. With regard to the social function of the educational system, the identity of the author matters less than the capacity of the text to interest students sufficiently to acquire the knowledge the school has the function of disseminating (“Canon” 45).

By writing their texts from the institutional backing of sites like Harvard, Yale, and Columbia – in the mid-century era which saw a reading public boom, hungry for American ideas – the texts of the myth and symbol writers worked to reify the “system of credentialization” which such schools rely upon in order to assert their pedagogical authority (“Canonical” 495). Texts like *American Renaissance* thus represented a form of capital for those institutions they sprung from;

they signify emblems of achievement, or, signs marking their jurisdiction over the literature they critiqued.

Guillory's argument is intrinsically meant to explain how a critical tradition is established and sustained by forces often unseen, and the exponential growth of America's publishing industry following the War is but another corollary to the myth and symbol movement. In the newly published *Books as Weapons: Propaganda, Publishing, and the Battle for Global Markets in the Era of World War II* (2010), John B. Hench argues that the American publishing industry co-opted with the U.S. government to respond to the large literary void left by the War. Hench delineates how U.S. publishers saw manifold growth opportunities under circumstances created by the War. Britain, for example – a global leader in publishing prior to World War II – was in a challenging position during and after the War; they experienced widespread paper shortages and, during the infamous Blitz of 1940-41, the Luftwaffe air-bombed a handful of publishers' and distributors' warehouses, destroying an estimated 20,000,000 texts (26). Following the War and the subsequent redaction of the British Empire, once-controlled areas ("traditional zones of influence," in Hench's terminology) were no longer certain (207), and the ability to introduce to foreign populations to the long tradition that is British literature, waned.

Publishers throughout the U.S. paid close attention to this reality. As Hench writes, "The shrinkage of book stock available...combined with censorship of the books that remained, resulted in a deep, widely documented worldwide hunger for fresh, uncensored books that could help overcome the effects of a long intellectual blackout" (3). Officials working with the Council on Books in Wartime⁹⁵ and the Office of War Information saw this as an opportunity to

⁹⁵ Formed as a nonprofit organization in 1942, the "CBW" was a collective group of influential U.S. publishers who sought to "reexamine [the American publishing industry's] own identity, with eyes on what it could accomplish for the nation and itself not only during wartime but afterward as well." W. W. Norton, for example, was the Council's first chairman. One of their most ambitious projects was the making of the Armed Services Editions (see Chapter

“reacquaint Europeans with the heritage, history and fundamental makeup of the USA” (6). Those two entities shared the process of selecting books which would be shipped overseas to both soldiers and depleted markets, and they did so, as Hensch suggests, to meet the U.S. government’s own propaganda needs. He writes:

The selection process was thus largely designed to identify books...that would counter negative impressions communicated by [the Hollywood film industry, particularly, the ever-popular gangster genre], by projecting positive images of Americans and their culture (96).⁹⁶

As one Office of War Information official frankly stated: “The opportunity exists as it never may again for American books to have an inside track to the world’s bookshelves” (vii). Hensch’s text thus details the massive growth of the U.S. publishing industry during and following the War. As referenced by many Caribbean writers (Naipaul and Walcott, mainly), the establishment of mass-market paperbacks and series like the Modern Library, Pocket Books, and Penguin offered cheap, ideological, and highly profitable means for the distribution of American ideas (11). By the late 40s, schools across the globe (domestic U.S. universities included) craved and demanded American texts. Thanks in part to the GI Bill, enrollment in U.S. universities boomed, and publishers were there to capitalize on the new needs of readers (264-265).⁹⁷ And there would follow a need for an intellectual culture to help understand and authorize this new demand; while texts like *American Renaissance* weren’t necessarily at the forefront of this publishing boom, they served as critical corollaries which gave a certain license to many of the

2), which distributed over 100 million texts (including over 1,000 titles) to U.S. military forces at home and abroad. Essentially, the Council determined that they could perform an important public service while simultaneously reaping massive profits. In sum, they did both (see Hensch 45-50, and Cole’s “Armed Services Editions”).

⁹⁶ Alfred Kazin’s *On Native Grounds: An Interpretation of Modern American Prose Literature* (1942), for example – often seen as a more contemporary corollary to Matthiessen’s text – was offered in an abridged version for this project (Hensch 99-100). At the beginning of that text, Kazin states, “the emergence of our modern American literature after a period of dark ignorance and repressive Victorian gentility was regarded as the world’s eighth wonder, a proof that America had at last ‘come of age’” (vii).

⁹⁷ For a more detailed description of the American book industry and its rapid growth following the War, see *A History of the Book in America, Vol. 5: The Enduring Book, Print Culture in Postwar America*, eds. Nord, Rubin & Schudson (2009).

nineteenth century U.S. texts that were being globalized as part of this movement. It is also no coincidence that, as detailed by Harvey Teres, beginning in the 1950s academic institutions absorbed once-independent groups of critics (like the New York Intellectuals, for example), as a means to capitalize on this growing interest in books and literary culture (233-236). That migration of critical culture into the schools would make U.S. universities the official nexus for the evaluation and dissemination of America's newly enshrined literary heritage.

By taking these contexts into consideration, the establishment and legitimization of the American canon in the 1950s can thus be seen less as the sole work of a handful of critics (as Kuklick and others argue⁹⁸), but instead a fusion of historical and institutional forces which would promote the myth and symbol texts for their own capital needs. As Guillory writes, "To repress the fact of reproduction by the inertial structures of institutions, as though the classroom had no walls, does not mean that the social effectivity of such strategies as curricular revision is merely illusory, but rather that it will never be quite what is intended, that pedagogy is never wholly within the control of pedagogues" ("Canonical" 497). If we apply Guillory's argument to the myth and symbol writers, we stand to gain something from their all-but-forgotten texts if we see them as what he calls "discursive instrument[s] of 'transmission' situated historically within a specific institution of reproduction" (*Cultural* 56).

PART III: *CONTINUED CAPITAL GAINS*

In regards to Matthiessen's *American Renaissance*, it was of course more than a mere tweaking of the text's title which led to its accession as the original authority for early American studies trends and the subsequent development of the canon. Guillory contends that the "concept

⁹⁸ See pages 25-26 in this chapter for a discussion of this tendency and citations of specific works.

of a given tradition is much more revealing about the immediate context in which that tradition is defined than it is about the works retroactively so organized” (“Canon” 49). As mentioned, Matthiessen’s text arrived amidst an elaborate coalescence of forces. In 1941 America would enter a global war and emerge a new imperial suitor, which lent credence to the push by academic institutions – like Harvard’s American civilization program, for one – to document and interrogate the country’s past. *American Renaissance*, received in such contexts, marks but one of the many growing capital gains for the American canon circa World War II. And that Harvard program would prove to be central to its continued profit, for it ushers in some of the cardinal architects who, using Matthiessen as a mentor and model, would participate in the building of the literary wing of the American studies field. Four of Matthiessen’s students at Harvard would publish seminal American studies texts in the years following the publication of *American Renaissance*: Levin, Henry Nash Smith, R. W. B. Lewis, and Leo Marx, all of whose work would bolster the canon for the next decade to come. It is not a coincidence that the American Studies Association would emerge on the heels of these developments. Institutionalized in 1949 by the founding of its mouthpiece, the *American Quarterly* journal, the Association became a national professional body at a time in which Americans were consuming books at record rates; in 1948 alone, for example, Americans bought 135 million paperbacks (Harris v). Even today, the Association credits the myth and symbol practitioners as being responsible for igniting “the first clearly identifiable school of American studies theory and method” (Umberger 180). And Henry Nash Smith – the first doctoral graduate of that Harvard program – would be among the earliest to suggest that his mentor, Matthiessen, initiates the American literary/critical tradition:

[*American Renaissance*] achieve[s] cultural continuity...[by] discovering and making available an American tradition, and to explore the meaning of that tradition in the present. Matthiessen does not treat the writers of the past as repositories of absolute truth, but he does discern in them a general movement of

ideas which point toward affirmations having the highest relevance for our own day ("American" 225).

Following the publication of Smith's *Virgin Land* in 1950, texts critiquing and touting this newly available tradition snowballed. While there were prior texts which heralded an "American literature" as such,⁹⁹ as the American Studies Association notes above, it wouldn't become a full-fledged, institutionalized practice until the myth critics came along.

But the ideological and institutional pressures which initiated and sustained the myth and symbol school project are also those which would be its eventual downfall. As a group, they have since been accused of "generating an imaginary homogeneity out of discrepant life worlds" (Pease & Wiegman 16), of being "excited above all by the prospect of grasping the culture of the United States as an organic whole" (Giles, *Virtual* 7), which, inevitably resulted in an essentialist tendency to develop "implicit or even explicit assumptions about formations of race, gender and national identity that silently occluded all or almost all non-canonical or non-hegemonic dimensions, influences and/or forces" (Giles & Ellis 3). Thus, by neglecting the history of women, Native Americans, and/or African Americans, the myth and symbol's "story of American exceptionalism" implicitly reifies a notion they were trying to shed: that the sway of Old World ideals was long dead (Noble, *Death* xxiv). It would be these monumental gaffes which would instigate the next generation of American Studies critics to develop ulterior approaches to America's literature (we'll return to these changes shortly).

While such accusations are both well-rehearsed and warranted, the myth and symbol writers prove to have agendas far from the plainly homogenous ones they've often been accused of. To some degree, the tendency to group the so-called myth and symbol critics together in one

⁹⁹ Some of the more-respected early critical pieces which apprehend American literature include Barrett Wendell's *A Literary History of America* (1900), the aforementioned Lawrence text, and Vernon L. Parrington's *Main Currents in American Thought* (1927).

generalized batch reeks of a similar essentialism that has been levied against them.¹⁰⁰ True, aside from superficial or passing critiques of writers like James Baldwin or Harriet Beecher Stowe, their texts were overtly homogenous, and focused mainly upon the literary writings of white American men. But what the myth critics lacked in multiculturalism, they made up for in scope; their topics often differed widely, and the authors they interrogated range from the aforesaid first draft of canonical renaissance writers (Matthiessen's five white males) to all-but-forgotten dime-novelists like Edward Lytton Wheeler (Smith), or, congregational clergymen like Horace Bushnell (Feidelson). They interrogated the works of America's earliest writers up through contemporary ones; from Thomas Jefferson (Marx), to Charles Brockden Brown (Fiedler) and James Fenimore Cooper (Lewis), to Edgar Allen Poe (Levin) and Henry James (Chase), to F. Scott Fitzgerald (Trilling) and William Faulkner (Levin), and even up through their own mid-twentieth century contemporaries like Saul Bellow, Ralph Ellison, and Norman Mailer.¹⁰¹ They posited theses on literary topics ranging from theme to style to romance to myth to symbols to language. They broke from the New Critical tradition of apprehending literature in purely aesthetic contexts, and looked to fuse the novel with culture and history. In fact, that interdisciplinary method would rub off on cultural historians who were taught to apprehend the past through an objective and unliterary lens.¹⁰² They contemplated Biblical symbolism (Levin

¹⁰⁰ Summarizing the entire myth-and-symbol 'canon' in one sentence, Donald Pease writes, "While these master-texts in American Studies provide slightly different meta-narratives with which Americanists define their practices, all of these titles presuppose a realm of pure possibility (*Virgin Land, A World Elsewhere*) where a whole self (*American Adam, The Imperial Self*) can internalize the major contradictions at work in American history (*The Machine in the Garden, The Power of Blackness*) in a language and in a set of actions and relations confirmative of the difference between a particular cultural location and the rest of the world (*Love and Death in the American Novel, The Eccentric Design, The American Novel and Its Tradition, American Jeremiad, American Renaissance*) ("New Americanists" 12).

¹⁰¹ A few of these more contemporary reviews include Chase's "A Novel is a Novel" (on Ellison), Fiedler's "The Fate of the Novel" (on Bellow) and "On the Road; or the Adventures of Karl Shapiro" (on Mailer and Bellow), and Lewis' "Eccentrics' Pilgrimage" (on Ellison).

¹⁰² In *The Eternal Adam and the New World Garden* (1968), for example, historian David W. Noble credits Leslie Fiedler, Henry Nash Smith, and Lionel Trilling for ending his loyalties to the so-called "Puritan tradition" in the writing of American history. "In its place," Noble writes, "they taught me to recognize the magnificent richness of

and Lewis), Wild West shows (Smith), technology (Marx), pathological violence (Fiedler) and manners (Trilling). And they would bicker – infamously – regarding who and what should garner the critical attention of their field.¹⁰³ Chase, for one, would take issue with being categorized as a so-called “myth critic,”¹⁰⁴ and Fiedler is often viewed as being unnecessarily included in that group given his darker interpretations of American history.¹⁰⁵

Smith’s *Virgin Land* (1950) – a publication often seen as marking the official arrival of the myth-and-symbol school movement (Umberger 181) – based itself on a literary appropriation of Frederick Jackson Turner’s thesis that the open frontier of the West fueled America’s societal development. Smith thus contemplates how that grand “myth and symbol” – the “vacant continent beyond the frontier” – lay at the forefront of the “American consciousness” and ultimately had seminal impact upon the literature born in it (4). Like Matthiessen, Smith looked to distinguish the literature produced in the nineteenth century U.S. from Europe and a so-called “Atlantic community”; he writes that the nation’s self-reflective gaze “has had a formative influence on the American mind and deserves historical treatment in its own right” (4). As Ann Fabian has noted, Smith’s work encouraged new approaches to the “sterile confines” that had dominated literary criticism in previous decades; he subjected all types of writings to rhetorical analyses, he challenged writers in other disciplines to break down rigid academic boundaries, and he tried to show how “myths” have real, tangible meaning to people (“In Retrospect”).

In *Symbolism and American Literature* (1953), Charles Feidelson interrogates the so-called “unified phase of American literature” (1); beginning with Poe and Hawthorne, and

tradition expressed in the American novel” (vii). Noble suggests that his historical compass was redirected, thanks to their works, towards an “analysis of the way a community defines its place in time” (x-xi), and the American novel, as discerned by the myth and symbol critics, offers historians a window into that communal understanding.

¹⁰³ see, for example, R. W. B. Lewis’ “Contemporary American Literature” (1958) and/or Leslie Fiedler’s “The War Against the Academy” (1964).

¹⁰⁴ See “Appendix II: Romance, the Folk Imagination, and Myth Criticism” in *The American Novel and Its Tradition*.

¹⁰⁵ See Lavezzo & Stecopoulos.

ending with Melville and Whitman, the text argues that these nineteenth century writers are “minor disciples” of their European predecessors, yet distinct in their use of symbols representative of the rift between “imaginative thought in a world grown abstract and material” (4). Feidelson argues that these writers had shunned the problems with which English literature had long concerned itself – “unambiguous narrative and orthodox mediation” – instead favoring the more indeterminate world of their domestic realities, which thus becomes their title to literary independence (4, 42-43, 174).

Lewis’ aforementioned *American Adam* (1955) contends that in the second quarter of the nineteenth century, America’s literary intellectuals entered into a dialogue concerning the so-called identity of American culture. Those writers – historians, preachers, critics, essayists, novelists and poets – wrestled over the cultural directions of the relatively young country. While Lewis suggest that “there may be no such thing as ‘American experience’” (8), his text does look to expose the general tendencies of the dialogical rhetoric of the mid-nineteenth century. Under the premises of newness and innocence, Lewis looks at how writers like Emerson and Whitman provided the American public with “occasions for reflection and invention” (9); put simply, Lewis argues that “American fiction is the story begotten by the noble but illusory myth of the American as Adam” (89). Without that illusion, Lewis contends, the burden of history trumps any future national potential.

Chase’s *The American Novel and Its Tradition* (1957) looks to the originality and “Americanness” of various texts published between Charles Brockden Brown and William Faulkner, and argues that by extension, the American novel is one invariably wed to its English predecessor under its romantic elements. Chase remarks that among America’s “most important [literary] discoveries” – and thus its distinction from its European forebearer – is its own

language. He writes that “The language of *Huckleberry Finn* is itself a new literary style...[it] is a kind of joyous exorcism of traditional literary English” (139-140). Chase is very clear, throughout, regarding his essentialist concerns. “Let me note again,” he insists, “my general awareness of the difficulty of making accurate judgments about what is specially American in American novels or American culture” (xii). However still, in an attempt to distinguish himself from the so-called “myth critics,” Chase sees the American novel as one which is involved with cultural “dilemmas,” drawing upon “the *reality* and the moral contradictions of human experience” (245, my emphasis). Romance, he argues, “arises from and modifies” this realism (246), and Chase suggests this tendency is among the “leading qualities of the American novel” (xii).

In *The Power of Blackness: Hawthorne, Poe, Melville* (1958), Harry Levin writes that the legitimization of the myth-and-symbol project is merely a “a logical and productive consequence of that movement toward self-examination and rediscovery” (v). Levin often writes in the essentialist terms which his school has been accused of; contemplating vague notions such as the “true voice of America,” the “American imagination,” and the “American way of life” (xii, 4-5, 8-9). Levin interrogates “literary iconology” and a process he dubs “fabulation”: man’s imaginative habit of telling stories “as a means of summarizing his activities and crystallizing his attitudes” (ix). Like Smith he suggests that the American continent offered “a blank page in the book of historians, an uncharted region on the map of the geographers” (9), yet its writers saw it as “a garden, an agrarian Eden, which was losing its innocence by becoming citified” (234).

While Leslie Fiedler is often considered among the myth and symbol school writers, many contemporary critics maintain his divergence, citing that his work is “Far from offering a reassuring myth of national identity” (Lavezzo & Stecopoulos 868). *Love and Death in the*

American Novel (1960) most certainly takes an unorthodox approach to U.S. literature. Concerned with the “largely depth-psychological and anthropological,” Fiedler explores the neglected aspects of the American novel, arriving at the thesis that the literary thread holding the American genre together is its dangerous and disturbing predilections (10-11). Fielder sees the American novel as existing among a long line of literary traditions: “The American novel is only finally American; its appearance is an event in the history of the European spirit—as, indeed, is the very invention of America itself” (31).

Although Leo Marx’s *The Machine in the Garden: Technology and the Pastoral Ideal in America* wasn’t published until 1964, many of the chapters were presented in previous contexts throughout the 1950s.¹⁰⁶ Marx – a student of Henry Nash Smith – suggests that his text “is not, strictly speaking, a book about literature; it is about the region of culture where literature, general ideas, and certain products of the collective imagination – we may call them ‘cultural symbols’ – meet” (4). Marx’s concern is with fables – specifically, American ones – and how the “interplay” between literature and culture meet at a crossroads which reveal a “metaphor of contradiction”: that the pastoral ideal is challenged by technological advances. The American canon, Marx argues, highlights this paradox, because “the theme of withdrawal from society into an idealized landscape is central to a remarkably large number of” America’s novels (10). And yet, “America was neither Eden nor a howling desert,” Marx concludes. “These are poetic metaphors, imaginative constructions which heighten meaning far beyond the limits of fact” (43).

¹⁰⁶ See Marx’s acknowledgements in *The Machine in the Garden* (386) for publishing specifics, along with “The Machine in the Garden” (1956), “The Pilot and the Passenger: Landscape Conventions and the Style of *Huckleberry Finn*” (1956), “Literature and Covert Culture” (1957, written with Bernard Bowron and Arnold Rose), “Two Kingdoms of Force” (1959), and “Shakespeare’s American Fable” (1960).

Regardless of certain individual differences, and despite concerted efforts which note an awareness of the “difficulty of making accurate judgments about what is specially American in American novels or American culture” (Chase xii), the so-called “totalizing impulse” (Reising 3) of these myth and symbol critiques would be the most common complaint levied against them. Bruce Kuklick’s 1972 *American Quarterly* article (“Myth and Symbol in American Studies”) is often cited as the fissure which would forever change the approach to the American studies field, for it challenged the grand hegemonic intents of the myth and symbol school, positing the thesis that “the imputation of collective beliefs is an extraordinarily complex empirical procedure which ought not to be undertaken lightly” (445). Kuklick’s article also argues the myth and symbol writers lacked a responsible method, that their “scholarship in American Studies illustrates a set of classic errors” (450), most especially because the myth and symbol writers anointed themselves the jurors of literary and artistic greatness, and alone determined “the material out of which they are to reconstruct [a] usable past” (448). Other critics like R. Gordon Kelly, Gene Wise, and Nina Baym, all followed by noting the flagrant oversights of the foundational myth critics.¹⁰⁷ Meanwhile, in the face of this, once-peripheral modes of study – African American studies, Latino/a, Asian American, Native American, LGBT, women’s – all emerged and questioned the cognate directives of the initial American studies school of thought, making their own claims for inclusion in the once-homogenous canon. Kelly perhaps summarizes these developments most succinctly, stating:

Given the complexity and diversity of cultural knowledge in American society, it seems equally unwarranted to conceive of America as a unitary culture for the purposes of historical analysis or to define a handful of literary figures as qualitatively superior cultural informants (148).

¹⁰⁷ For instance, see Kelly’s “Literature and the Historian” (1974), Wise’s “‘Paradigm Dramas’ in American Studies: A Cultural and Institutional History of the Movement” (1979), and Baym’s “Melodramas of Beset Manhood: How Theories of American Fiction Exclude Women Authors” (1981).

George Lipsitz has since dubbed this moment the “anthropological turn” in literary studies, highlighted by the abandonment of the essentialist and unitary focus of the myth and symbol project, in favor of a more concerted and theoretical one which pursues how smaller groups and communities make meaning for themselves (“Listening” 623, *American Studies* 68-69). Despite the egregious errs of their movement, the myth and symbol writers participated in an inevitable parallel to literary production in the mid-twentieth century as interlocutors of a *national* culture. Ultimately, that movement proves to have transnational currencies, an ironic twist given their intentionally-domestic agenda.

PART IV: *CARIBBEAN GRAVITATIONS*

While the myth and symbol school was still in its adolescent stages at the beginning of the 1950s, its prevalence in academic circles would seem to have inevitable and indelible effect upon the likes of Caribbean writers who would visit the U.S. – either literally or figuratively (through its literature) – around this time. Writers like Lamming and James would ultimately be drawn into its critical orbit. As mentioned in the previous chapter, following receipt of his Guggenheim fellowship in 1955, Lamming would make visits to American universities like Howard in Washington, as well as other schools throughout the New York City area (Columbia, for example, was a myth-and-symbol hub at the time, boasting a faculty which included both Lionel Trilling and Richard Chase). When not attending lectures or giving talks of his own, Lamming would spend much of his time in libraries reading up on America’s nineteenth century literature, where he would quickly come to realize its “immense importance” (“Sovereignty” 134). As discussed in subsequent paragraphs in this chapter, Lamming would also read the newly emergent criticism which was gaining traction at the time, pointing specifically to Marcus

Cunliffe's *The Literature of the United States* (1954). In *The Pleasures of Exile*, Lamming would also recount his week-long stay with an Anglo-American couple (described only as "Mr. & Mrs. A") in an affluent New York "exurbia."¹⁰⁸ The husband had "deserted the white supremacy of Georgia for the more civilised atmosphere of Harvard" (203), and later taught at St. Lawrence University while eventually settling for a white collar job in the publishing industry. Lamming relied upon this gentleman as a mouthpiece for various aspects of American culture; regarding topics of American life as wide-ranging as politics, race, violence and literature, "he would respond with the greatest frankness to my questions," Lamming recalls (203). It is quite likely (though conjectured) that this gentleman was at Harvard concurrently with Matthiessen (who was there for more than two decades up until his suicide in 1950), possibly Leslie Fiedler (1947-48), and most certainly Harry Levin (1939-1983). Whatever the case, it is in all likeliness that Lamming's indoctrination to the literature of the nineteenth century U.S. – while occurring simultaneously with the emergence of its criticism – provided him with a glimpse of how it would come to be understood and established in contemporary U.S. culture.

C. L. R. James, on the other hand, had been well entrenched in U.S. by the time the myth and symbol school movement exploded, and his various social circles would have many connections to the men who would eventually make up that school of thought. Although he once

¹⁰⁸ In all likeliness, Lamming stayed in the 'hamlet' community of Chappaqua. He describes the area as a "village which had retained its Indian name and was reputed to be part of the richest county in the world" (204). Chappaqua is a "hive" in the suburban town of New Castle ("Suburbia is the kingdom of those who have just arrived at comfort; but this hive surpassed the suburbs and was known as Exurbia"), and to this day is still often ranked among the highest-income areas in the U.S. (Bill and Hillary Clinton have owned a home there since their White House departure in 1999). Lamming's description of his stay at the home of "Mr. & Mrs. A" is among the most humorous in his entire *oeuvre*; he writes: "Everything here (America) seems so rarefied: the order and the tidiness of things; and the lavatories are positively terrifying in their contradictory spotlessness. You've got to remind yourself why you are there" (204-205). Following a visit to the vet's office where "Mrs. A" laughs off the vet's suggestion that one of the family's male cats should be castrated, Lamming writes: "The male principle, I observe, doesn't thrive well in this country. It is certainly the kingdom of women; not so much a matriarchy as a feminine conspiracy....It's they who invented the dotted line, and turned every signature into a warrant" (205).

gibed with girlfriend Constance Webb that of all critiques of American studies he could only recommend one – a book by D. H. Lawrence which he humorously claimed to have never read (*Special* 166) – James read tons of criticism. Shortly after completing *Moby-Dick* in that one epic sitting, he was so moved that he immediately went to the local library to get “4 [books] on American literature, to read about Melville” (167). In *American Civilization*, James would write that, “F. O. A. Matthieson [sic], [is] an author of a very fine and liberal-minded study of American literature of the nineteenth century” (258).¹⁰⁹ Because Matthiessen’s text is often cited at the spark which effectively launched the Melville revival in the U.S., Robert A. Hill proposes that *American Renaissance* would be especially important to James, going so far as to suggest that James’ thesis of Ahab’s monomania as an emblem for the individual ‘in extremis’ is but an “adaptation and expansion of Matthiessen’s paradigm into the present” (350-353). As noted in the introduction to this dissertation, James’s denomination of the so-called “West Indian renaissance” in *Beyond a Boundary* is, in all likeliness, a respectful nod in the direction of Matthiessen’s text.

James’ involvement with the Workers Party in the 40s would notably coincide with many central literary figures in the U.S., like Saul Bellow and Irving Howe.¹¹⁰ The Party was also involved with the *Partisan Review* and the New York Intellectuals groups, whose members included notable myth and symbol writers like Lionel Trilling and Richard Chase. In fact, James wrote Trilling at the conclusion of *Mariners, Renegades and Castaways* in the hopes of getting the critic’s feedback; Trilling read the book and replied stating that while he admired James’ take, felt it was inevitably a reductive one because it prioritized the political aspects of *Moby-*

¹⁰⁹ For what it’s worth, James lists Matthiessen’s *American Renaissance* in the bibliography of *American Civilization* (281).

¹¹⁰ Apparently the disagreements between James and Howe got somewhat ugly, turning from political differences into personal ones; for details, see Worcester (66-67) and Rosengarten (80).

Dick over other elements (Rosengarten 178-179). James also socialized in the same circles as Ralph Ellison, who himself had become a fond admirer of the myth-and-symbol school, and was very close family friends with R. W. B. (“Dick”) Lewis, and his wife, Nancy.¹¹¹

Given the speed and force under which these events took place, it was inevitable that other Caribbean writers would be drawn into the myth and symbol orbit. After Naipaul’s initial layover in the U.S., he wouldn’t return until the 1960s, where he would take an assignment to document Norman Mailer’s mayoral campaign.¹¹² In 1969, Naipaul would attend a “Theater for Ideas” session in Manhattan where he would see Leslie Fiedler participate in a discussion questioning “The End of the Rationalist Tradition?” Mailer and Robert Lowell were also involved, and Naipaul humorously notes that the debate left him totally “baffled” (French 280). Derek Walcott was awarded a Rockefeller fellowship to study American theater in 1957; during his tenure in New York City he would become connected to the *Partisan Review* community and others at “the centre of American literary life” (King 190-191).¹¹³

While many of these examples may seem anecdotal, they are cited to show that, along with the sustained attention being given to America’s nineteenth century literature (the subject of Chapter 3 in this dissertation), Caribbean writers were tuned in to the contemporary *literary*

¹¹¹ See Arnold Rampersad’s *Ralph Ellison: A Biography* (2007).

¹¹² see Naipaul’s “New York with Norman Mailer” (1969).

¹¹³ Because Walcott is not included in the previous chapter, it might be worth noting some of his connections to America’s literature. Admittedly, Walcott’s relation to the literature of the United States has always been rather tenuous. As a child, he was introduced to the poetry of Whitman through a friend of his father’s, although it is said that she warned him against it, presumably for the poetry’s oftentimes overt homosexuality (King 24); he was also drawn to the writings of Hawthorne, Steinbeck, Faulkner, Hemingway and Sinclair Lewis (32). By the time he first visited New York in the late 50s, Lamming and James had already abandoned their American affair. Staying at a surly hotel in Greenwich Village in October of 1958, Walcott could hear strange urban sounds (howls, horns, etc.) – vastly different than the relatively quiet island life he was accustomed to. Bruce King’s biography of Walcott documents this first extended stay in the city, and recalls a figure much like Melville’s Bartleby: Walcott lived alone, in a small apartment room, where the sole window looked out to a concrete wall. Walcott began writing *Dream on Monkey Mountain* in this room, amidst struggles (of which King accounts to Walcott’s inability to “understand and distance the rich but confused experience of New York, where he felt himself to be an outsider with a foreign accent, a curiosity with black skin and British speech, yet neither an American black nor English” (154). Seems apt to quote Bartleby, “I would prefer not to.”

culture of the U.S., keenly watching how it would unfold at various public and institutional levels. Alison Donnell's recent work¹¹⁴ – one which will likely have a lasting and seminal effect upon future contemplations of the Anglophone Caribbean's literary canon – locates Lamming and James in what she calls the “critical moment of cultural nationalism” (7). While Donnell surely isn't the first to suggest this (in fact, it's been a recurrent critique since the genre's earliest days¹¹⁵), her recognition of an immature and unsustainable Caribbean canon formed amidst a certain cultural frenzy aligns with the fervent beginnings which would accompany American studies. Furthermore, taking Donnell's suggestion a step further, that “critical moment” sets the stage for Caribbean alignments with America's then-booming literary culture.

Many of those alignments are played out in the parallel archetypes and rhetorics of ‘newness’ employed by writers and critics in both regions. These similarities likely exist because both the U.S. and Anglophone Caribbean have often been seen as developing their literature opposite their European predecessors. There are, of course, many critiques which trace these literary developments; Robert Weisbuch, for example, writes that eighteenth and nineteenth century American writers operated under a “moral urgency” in the “castigation of British influence” (4).¹¹⁶ Matthiessen, Smith, and Chase, for example, frame their own literary critiques in a comparative sense, with the intent of distinguishing U.S. literature from long-time European dominance. Due to a similar practice in the Caribbean, this becomes an early catalyst by which Caribbean writers can align themselves with American texts and the subsequent

¹¹⁴ *Twentieth-Century Caribbean Literature: Critical Moments in Anglophone Literary History* (2006).

¹¹⁵ Leah Reade Rosenberg suggests that Donnell might actually be the first to link “the nationalist teleology” with early incarnations of the Caribbean canon (5), but this notion has been rehearsed in manifold texts and critiques. Surely, those are far too numbered to list here; but for a general start, see James' *Beyond a Boundary* (1963), Brathwaite's *History of the Voice* (1984), Barnes' “Reluctant Matriarch” (1999), and Rosenberg's *Nationalism and the Formation of Caribbean Literature* (2007), the last of which offers a succinct background on this link between literary experimentations and nationhood.

¹¹⁶ For more on this tendency, see Weisbuch's first chapter in *Atlantic Double-Cross* (1986) titled, “The Burden of Britain and the American Writer.”

critiques of them.¹¹⁷ Lamming has admitted in both interviews and emails that Marcus Cunliffe's *The Literature of the United States* (1954), would have seminal impact upon his understanding of America's nineteenth century literature, and also, in somewhat of a twisted way, his appreciation of it.¹¹⁸ Lamming would tell students and faculty at the University of Texas in the fall of 1970 that he remembers "reading with great amusement in [that] little book...about the extremely derogatory remarks that used to be made" toward America's literature ("Interview" 20). Cunliffe is among the early batch of *British* critics to apprehend American literature, and as Lamming writes in *Pleasures*, his instincts at the time of reading Cunliffe's book were naturally defensive: "my colonial status in England, and the habitual superciliousness of the English towards anything American had always urged me towards passionate defence of the New World" (186).

In 1949, Cunliffe completed a 2-year course in American literature at Yale before returning to England to teach American studies at the University of Manchester. His time in New Haven notably coincides with Charles Feidelson, who had joined the faculty in 1947. Cunliffe would publish his own survey of America's literature with a British audience in mind, and the text's tone doesn't shrink from that juxtaposition. Cunliffe's critical basis in *The Literature of the United States* stems from the argument that since the United States nation was "founded upon European, and especially British, precedents," it may as well be "called a

¹¹⁷ For more on the Caribbean version of this "moral urgency" in the "castigation of British influence," probably best to begin with Lamming's *The Pleasures of Exile*, which states "The world from which our reciprocal ways of seeing have sprung was once Prospero's world. It is no longer his. Moreover, it will never be his again. It is ours, the legacy of many centuries, demanding of us a new kind of effort, a new kind of sight for viewing the possible horizons of our own century" (203).

¹¹⁸ When asked about his early engagements with American literary culture, Lamming, in two emails to me, cites Cunliffe's text. This exchange is referenced in the Lamming section of the works cited under the email's subject line, "From George Lamming" (2011).

European colony” (13, 1st ed).¹¹⁹ The text is openly brash; Cunliffe cunningly reassures his British readers to “accept my assumption that there is such a thing as American literature” (10). He suggests that in order to elicit any appreciation of the American genre, British readers should dismount their “English high horse” and put aside any “hereditary disdain” (12). The text surveys America’s literature beginning in the colonial era and works through the literary generation which follows World War I. Despite noting the “minor flaws” which ink Melville’s *Moby-Dick* (114), and that Whitman “at his worst is unbelievably bad” (122), Cunliffe shows a relatively sincere appreciation of both writers and their attempts to “appeal to the multitude” (127). But it would ultimately be the humorists – Twain in particular – who would best appeal to the British masses, for that style reified the perceived notion that Americans, “if quaint, were uncivilized” (152). Cunliffe writes that the “English appetite for authentic Americanism” was fed following the Civil War by writings which revealed (and seemed to substantiate) the aforementioned notion that Americans were savage and uncivil; the frontier humor of the second half of the 1800s showed welcome signs of a “really indigenous American literature” (152). Cunliffe concludes with the suggestion that, if American literature is to ever reach its full literary potential, writers must follow the example set by Twain: “All that the American novelist has to do is to come into his heritage” (346).

In the publishing realm of literary criticism, Cunliffe’s book would be considered a rousing success. The text has since undergone multiple editions and reprints; with each new version Cunliffe has taken the “opportunity to make minor changes and additions” (9, 3rd ed). In

¹¹⁹ This passage, by the 4th edition, evolves into the less-brash statement, “the United States was culturally an offshoot of Europe” (12, 4th ed). The changes that the text has undergone from one edition to the next provides for a fascinating case study in twentieth century literary criticism. Cunliffe’s tone changes drastically from the earliest editions (in the 1950s) to the most recent ones (in the 1980s & 90s), and he eventually incorporates chapters on women’s writing in America (Chapter 11 – “Women’s Voices” – in the 4th edition). In sum, his texts provides both a glimpse of one critic’s changing disposition over the course of a career, along with the critical trajectory of literary criticism from the 1950s through the end of the century.

1966, in prepping for the 3rd edition, he would make more extensive revisions than usual, bashfully stating that he was then “less ignorant of America than [he] once was.” By 1986, in the text’s 4th edition, Cunliffe suggests that his latest rendition is “almost a new book” (9). In that version, he would offer the following picture of how Americans had historically been viewed overseas by Europeans:

In European eyes the native Americans often appeared as Calibans – uncouth savages. White settlers, too, often seemed uncouth: provincial nobodies. Little by little interpretation grew more real *and* more mythic. He enlarged from nobody to everyman, from nonentity to universality (22).

While this passage wasn’t available in the 1st edition version (the so-called “derogatory” one that Lamming would’ve read), it nonetheless provides a sense of how many British readers (not to mention Cunliffe himself) imagined the U.S., especially its literature. The figure of Caliban was a relevant point of familiarity with which Cunliffe employs to relate American literature to his British audience. In introducing a separate volume of essays on U.S. literature up to 1900, Cunliffe writes that, in relation to the “mother-continent of Europe,” America’s literature “must necessarily be either derivative, even plagiaristic, or else uncouth, bizarre Caliban-cries” (“Conditions” 3). While such passages offer contemporary readers a binary glimpse of how much of the criticism of the 50s era was drawn in essentialist terms,¹²⁰ that Caliban motif provides a stimulus for which Caribbean writers could – and would – align with the U.S. literary tradition.

While Lamming has been known to be among the first to give sustained attention (and redemption) to Shakespeare’s “monstrous slave,” it would be D. H. Lawrence in 1915’s aforementioned *Studies in Classic American Literature* in which *The Tempest* (and the figure of Caliban) would first be raised as a metaphorical representation of this old vs. new duality.

¹²⁰ For example, in the 1st edition of *The Literature of the United States*, Cunliffe writes that American literature exhibits a “double consciousness of Old World modes and New World possibilities” (13).

Discussing the emergence of America's first significant generation of writers (the same general batch cited later by Matthiessen), Lawrence would quip:

But there sits the old master, over in Europe. Like a parent. Somewhere deep in every American heart lies a rebellion against the old parenthood of Europe...“Ca Ca Caliban...Get a new master, be a new man.” (10-11).

Alden T. Vaughan writes that the connection between Caliban and the American continent makes historical sense; that while Shakespeare never explicitly identifies *The Tempest* as an allegory of Colonial America, it was certainly his basis and personal interpretation of New World happenings (137, 153). This Shakespearean binary – Caliban as American, Prospero as European – thus paves the way for the manifold essentialist appropriations which can be found in America's mid-twentieth century literary criticism.

Leslie Fiedler is probably the forerunner of this ‘American Caliban’ archetype. In *Love and Death in the American Novel*, he writes that, “In America...we are a nation of Calibans...Europe is the master from which we have all fled” (367). Fiedler contemplates this topic throughout his career, and had meant to complete a full text on Shakespeare long before it finally arrived – *The Stranger in Shakespeare* – in 1972. Since Fiedler's admitted literary concerns had always been driven by binaries – “the relations between America and Europe, white men and black, Gentiles and Jews, masters of arts and savages, males and females, and within the family, as it has turned out, between fathers and daughters” (11) – a critical rumination on *The Tempest* would most certainly be fitting.

Fiedler's commentary comes on the heels of Lamming's, Fanon's and Césaire's, the latter two of whom are referenced in *The Stranger in Shakespeare*. Given the benefit of having read their perspectives, Fiedler can assert that no future consideration of *The Tempest* can be made without giving heed to the “sense in which it is a parable of transatlantic imperialism [and] the colonization of the West” (209). While Fiedler's attention to *all* aspects and characters in the

play is rather comprehensive, his focus on Caliban's creativity is akin to Lamming's (Fiedler however does not cite *Pleasures*, and it is unknown if he had read Lamming's work). Rendering the island slave as an inventive American, Fiedler writes:

Even drunk, Caliban remains a poet and a visionary, singing that new freedom in a new kind of song [i.e., "'Ban, 'Ban, Ca-Caliban, Has a new master, Get a new man'"]...Particularly in its Whitmanian long last lines...he has created something new under the sun: the first American poem (236).

Caliban's linguistic appropriations have been similarly well-noted in the works of both Lamming and Césaire; Fiedler writes that "as black writers have learned in the last decades to invert the racist mythology of their former masters, [Caliban] has been remade in fiction and drama into a central symbol both for their old indignities and the possibility of revolt against them" (248). But Fiedler quibbles with analyses that discern Caliban through a strict African lens, for it neglects "what it specifically *Indian*" in him, especially if we are to take Shakespeare's play as an allegory of the discovery of the New World. Taking it a step further, Fiedler argues that African-based appropriations generally ignore the sense in which Caliban "represents not merely the oppressed nonwhite minorities in America but *all* America insofar as that country remains Europe's bad nigger" (248). Remarking that Caliban may in fact be the true creator of America's national anthem, Fiedler extensively writes:

The Stranger in Shakespeare ends, therefore, though it is in fact the only book I have entirely written abroad, by bringing me back home again; which is to say, to Prospero's island and that prototypical American, Caliban. Not only does that "Monster" in relationship to the "Master of Arts" represent the fate of the Indian under the yoke of European imperialism, but he foreshadows the plight of white Americans as well: those refugees from Europe whose consciousness was altered by the confrontation with an alternative way of being human into something new under the sun—different from and profoundly troubling to the European mind. "Ca-Ca-Caliban, / Have a New Master, / Be a new man," D. H. Lawrence quotes from his chant, suggesting that it has remained the theme song of America ever since; and James Joyce in *Ulysses* refers snidely to the immigrant Irish as "Patsy Caliban, our American cousin"—both illustrating the persistence of that mythological figure at the heart of European anti-Americanism (*What Was Literature?* 18).

For Fiedler, Caliban was the uncouth American seen through European eyes, and while he doesn't celebrate him to the extent that Lamming does, Fiedler clearly views Caliban as the allegorical progenitor of America's literature.

Leo Marx broaches the same topic in *The Machine in the Garden* in a chapter pertinently titled, "Shakespeare's American Fable." Like Fiedler, Marx sees Shakespeare's play as "a prologue to American literature" (72). The "pattern" of *The Tempest*, asserts Marx, is "remarkably like the pattern of our typical American fables" (72). Noting the dual myths of the American landscape – one being the vast garden as a "site for a new golden age" (37) and the other, a "hideous wilderness" and "howling landscape" (43) – Marx discerned this binary as being emblemized in *The Tempest*'s main protagonists, where the cultivating Prospero would wrest the barbarism out of Caliban and instill promise and civility. But a larger point that Marx intends to make, is that *The Tempest* is a *template*, if you will, whose design prefigures the "classic American fables" (69). Its relation to the texts of Twain, Melville, and Thoreau, Marx argues, lies in "the idea of a redemptive journey away from society in the direction of nature." Precisely because Caliban's island is "untainted by civilization, man's true home in history, it offers the chance of a temporary return to first things" (69). "Men regain contact with essentials," Marx says, because, as Emerson would also note, America "is a land without history" (69).

This idea that America lacks history – whenever the contention is made, either in Emerson's era or Marx's – is obviously a false one. Then again, it's a notion that isn't necessarily meant to be taken *literally*. The metaphor of a "new history" is a literary tactic – albeit an essentialist one – which writers use to assert a certain literary independence. Of course, whatever history is, it is nothing if not ubiquitous. As Melville writes in *Pierre*, the pervading

perception that the Past, in America, simply dissipates doesn't mean that it is completely erased from time; rather, it "seethes and boils" and forms something new for the present. This is the argument put forth by Philip Fisher in *Still the New World: American Literature in a Culture of Creative Destruction* (1999). Fisher's text contends that the American nation is forever renewing itself. The past is not absent, *per se*, but merely trumped in favor of a perennial, unfinished newness, a "permanently unsettled rhythm of creation and destruction" (3). The idea is better explained by Fisher's reference to America's ever-morphing transportation industry (which might operate as an extension of Leo Marx's argument throughout *The Machine in the Garden*). Fisher writes:

America became a culture willing to pay the deep cost of obsolescence and ghost towns as part of what might be called the bargain of invention. The airplanes that crisscross the skies in America today fly over tens of thousands of miles of rusting and little-used railroad tracks. Some of the tracks themselves have been covered with asphalt to make recreational trails for bicyclists and weekend hikers (3).

Fisher uses this idea – and the oft-employed tactic of envisioning America as the inventive New World – as the means through which nineteenth century writers like Twain, Melville and Whitman (among others) are able to create something new for themselves in a fossilized society.

It is no wonder, then, that Adam – the Biblical first male – is an ever-present figure throughout American literature in the nineteenth century, and a central motif in the myth and symbol criticism which looks to substantiate it. Lewis' *The American Adam* is the most obvious example of this, a critical piece which notes the "Adamic tradition" found in the writings of Emerson, Whitman, Hawthorne and Melville (among other lesser known writers).¹²¹ Most often,

¹²¹ For some of their more explicit references to Adam, see Whitman's "Children of Adam" poems in *Leaves of Grass* (1881); Hawthorne's "The New Adam and Eve" from *Mosses from an Old Manse* (1846); and Emerson, who often made passing references to Adam, as in "Nature," which includes that famous line, "All that Adam had, all that Caesar could, you have and can do...Build, therefore, your own world" (48); see also "Representative Men," which notes that the "world still wants its poet-priest" with "doleful histories of Adam's fall and curse, behind us" (726). And of course Twain wrote extensively on the figure of Adam, though less as an emblem of America in favor of the whole human race; see *Letters from the Earth: Uncensored Writings by Mark Twain* (1938).

Adam represents a polarized figure: a conscious-free man filled with innocence and potential, versus an original sinner weighed down by the burden of forever living with that transgression. Many of America's nineteenth century writers saw that disposition as representative of their literary inheritance. "Adam was the first," Lewis observes, "the archetypal...His moral position was prior to experience, and in his very newness he was fundamentally innocent. The world and history lay before him" (5). Because of these mythic contexts, Lewis observes that "the Adamic image was invoked often" in America's literature, and the "literal use of the story of Adam and the Fall of Man" became an apt "model for narrative" in a seemingly young literary America (6).

Fiedler sees this motif at play in Hawthorne's *The Scarlett Letter*: "In the seeming Eden of the New World," Fiedler writes, "a man and woman, who are still essentially the old Adam and Eve, deceive themselves for a moment into believing that they can escape the consequences of sin...they meet in the forest, plot a flight from the world of law and religion" (*Love and Death* 233). Levin cites the figure of Adam as one which fits into the "usual Jamesian dialectic between old-world experience and new-world innocence" (124), suggesting that Adam's departure from the Garden of Eden is "a transition from innocence into experience" (53). And last but not least, Matthiessen would also see the value of touting Adam as an artistic figure for the American writer: "Emerson declared, shortly after the outset of his career: 'Adam in the garden, I am to new-name all the beasts in the field and all the gods in the sky.' To name a thing exactly was somehow magically to evoke it" (32); Matthiessen also suggests that "Whitman was the new Adam whose words became one with the things he named" (44).¹²²

The dual iconolgy of Adam and Caliban – figures rendered in a New World sentient – serves the purpose of negotiating a certain literary limbo unique to the so-called New World. Caribbean writers concurrently elicited similar inferences of these two metaphorical figures.

¹²² This subject – naming under the guise of newness – is discussed throughout the following chapter.

Regarding the West Indian generation of writers who “often view themselves as New Adams in a New World Eden,” Daryl Cumber Dance has noted how those metaphors prove to be a powerful invocation for the Anglophone Caribbean. Especially for writers like James, Lamming, and Walcott, who find themselves pressured by the “long literary and cultural tradition” which is European history, Dance notes how they are also situated at “the beginning of an exciting new cultural development,” i.e., potential Caribbean nationhood (14). Walcott has been the most persistent of this group, rendering many of his poems and speeches in an Adamic rhetoric of new opportunities contrasted against lingering sin. In his *Sea Grapes* poem called “New World,” Walcott writes that “when Adam was exiled to our New Eden...He and the snake would share the loss of Eden for a profit. So both made the New World. And it looked good” (300-301). In *Pleasures*, ruminating on Prospero’s “gift” of language bestowed upon Caliban, Lamming compares that situation to “the risk which God took with Man,” suggesting that Adam is forever tied to that original relation; like Caliban, Adam can “go so far and no farther” (109-110), for he is trapped by history among a certain opportunism. As John Thieme notes, the same theme is used by Lamming in *Natives of My Person*, where the ship, the *Reconnaissance*¹²³ is situated within Walcott’s Edenic New World; it is “variously prelapsarian and postlapsarian” as Lamming’s ship moves from the “promise of an *ob ovo* new start to a tragic and violent end” (141-142).

The figure of Robinson Crusoe, another fruitful persona for the Caribbean writer,¹²⁴ is also a widespread metaphor for the American critic under these claims of burdened newness. Leslie Fiedler, for example, writes:

¹²³ Could this, by chance, be an innuendo of the term Matthiessen and James found so significant, “renaissance”?

¹²⁴ Walcott is the most notable employer of the Crusoe metaphor, and has been so recurrently throughout his career. In the poem “Crusoe’s Island” from *The Castaway and Other Poems*, Walcott writes “Upon this rock the bearded

Robinson Crusoe, in particular, seems to embody an archetype much like that which haunts out classic fiction; and this is proper enough for a novel so bourgeois and Protestant that one is tempted to think of it as an American novel before the fact. The protagonists are not only black and white, but they exists on the archetypal island, cut off from the home community by the estranging sea. Cannibal and castaway, man-eater and journal-keeper, they learn to adjust to each other and to domesticity, on what is surely the most meager and puritanic Eden in all literature (*Love and Death* 366-367).

While these archetypes are widely used by both American and Caribbean writers and critics, they certainly fail to emblemize the large societal tract which they claim to stand for. Sylvia Wynter has thus written of the “patriarchal discourse” which occludes a character like Shakespeare’s Miranda, a figure who has been all but ignored in the manifold Prospero/Caliban ruminations. As Wynter writes, “the absence of Caliban’s woman, is an absence which is functional to the new secularizing schema by which the peoples of Western Europe legitimized their global expansion as well as their expropriation and/their marginalization of all the other population groups of the globe, including, partially, some of their own national groupings such as, for example, the Irish” (“Afterword” 361-362).

Wynter’s critique is apt in noting the insufficient use of such metaphors as national emblems. However, these allegorical figures prove to have a certain agency given the contexts under which they are elicited; to use Guillory’s terminology, these metaphors offer for the *institutions* who back them a certain form of capital. To recall Guillory’s argument, “the process of canon formation has an institutional context, the school, and it is this institution which is responsible for the systematic regulation of reading and writing as social practices” (“Canon” 45). In regards to the project of literary canon building, the blank slate which these ‘fresh’ archetypes offer fit perfectly with the project of filling the supposed national historical voids which had existed before, thereby opening a new market for publishers and universities by which

hermit built His Eden,” and calls Crusoe the “second Adam since the fall” (69). His late-70s play *Pantomime* explores colonial relationships through the Defoe story.

to tout their unique specialties. By apprehending these insufficient metaphors under institutional contexts, one can see how the privileging of figures like Caliban and/or Adam amidst the ever-present force of European history, would activate for writers like Lamming – or dupe him into believing in – a certain literary gravity within the so-called New World. And yet it also initiates new directives and pathways for the *market* of literature. As Melville writes in *White-Jacket*: “We are the pioneers of the world; the advance-guard, sent on through the wilderness of untried things, to break a path in the New World that is ours” (151). For a brief moment in time in the 1950s, it would not only be the American critics of the myth and symbol school who felt they could clear this path, but also Lamming and other newly-emergent Caribbean writers, who felt invited to participate in that New World construction project. A quick look at the “systematic regulation of reading and writing as social practices” in the Caribbean only bolsters its relation to the myth and symbol school and its institutional backings.

PART V: *CONSTRUCTING A CARIBBEAN CANON*

Critical developments in the Caribbean most certainly emerge under different contexts than they did in the United States. While the so-called boom years of Caribbean writing occur in the early 1950s, a coordinated criticism of that literature wouldn’t emerge until the late 1960s and early 1970s; as an example, while the University of the West Indies was established in 1948, the first full course dedicated solely to “West Indian Literature” wouldn’t be taught there until 1969.¹²⁵ Alison Donnell cites the 1971 ACLALS conference (Association for Commonwealth Literature and Language Studies) as *the* seminal moment in the establishment of the Anglophone Caribbean’s literature, criticism and its canon (19, 27-31). Laurence Breiner writes that the

¹²⁵ It is noteworthy that, originally, the University was founded as an extension of the University of London and went by the University College of the West Indies; it wouldn’t become fully independent until 1962.

conference marked “the first comprehensive presentation of West Indian literature *by West Indians* that included fully articulated critical positions” (qtd. in Donnell 29, my emphasis); however still, as Donnell notes, little attention has been paid to that conference. In the years leading up to it, some critical publications and literary anthologies began to trickle out, all of which contributed to the region’s literature being seen through an authenticated critical lens. Andrew Salkey’s *West Indian Stories* (1960) and *Stories from the Caribbean: An Anthology* (1965), Kenneth Ramchand’s *West Indian Narrative: An Introductory Anthology* (1966), and G. R. Coulthard’s *Caribbean Literature: An Anthology* (1966) began a critical trend of compiling (and comprehending) the region’s literature as an interrelated unit.¹²⁶ Despite the perturbing question regarding how to define West Indian writing both regionally and thematically (in fact, most of these aforementioned anthology editors divulge this very difficulty in their introductions), the region’s writing began to coalesce in such a way that emergent critics could trace its arc and “present a narrative of writing” unique to the Anglophone Caribbean (Ramchand, Introduction 4). For example, Ramchand’s own personal hope was that an anthology like his – geared specifically toward the West Indian *student* – would spurn a greater realization in the way “in which literature is related to society and life” (2-3).

If Matthiessen’s text is cited as spearheading the growth of American Studies, its opposite in the Caribbean is probably Kenneth Ramchand’s *The West Indian Novel and its Background*. Published in 1970 as an expansion of his doctoral thesis, the text was the first of its kind. It ushered in the institutionalization of a critical discipline centered solely upon the literature of the Anglophone Caribbean region, both at the University of Edinburgh (where he was granted his PhD in March, 1968), as well as at the University of the West Indies, where he

¹²⁶ John Figueroa’s *Caribbean Voices: An Anthology of West Indian Poetry* (1966) can likely be included here, although I have not had the privilege of viewing that specific text.

developed that first full course in “West Indian Literature.”¹²⁷ Ramchand’s project, much like Matthiessen’s, indeed sets forth the study of the distinct aspects of his region’s writing. By tracing the threads which interweaved the Anglophone Caribbean’s highly diverse body of writers, Ramchand excavated the “raw material” found throughout its literature: dialect, obeah, popular education, race and class relations. He focused mainly on the concerted “increase in West Indian writing since 1950” (63), and its “quest for national and personal identity” (6), which, as he openly admits, gives his text a clear West Indian premise. He writes:

West Indians of the late 1950s and the 1960s were inspired and ennobled by the notion that the English-speaking territories, to begin with, could unite and form a nation to stand up in the world with pride. The substantial benefit was going to be economic but what excited many imaginations and inspired a great flowering in literature and art was a dream of national unity already embodied in music, in cricket, and in the University of the West Indies (“Thirty Years Later” 367-368).

For a long time, Ramchand admittedly believed that his text was free from any imposed ideology (367); it was his sincere belief that the text arrived out of the purest of intentions, mainly, “the wish to steep myself in [West Indian] literature and make it known to West Indians” (355). He simply wanted to “spread the word that these books and writers existed, and to help people to enjoy them and learn from them.” He recalls that *The West Indian Novel and its Background* “insisted on the specificity of the context”; eschewing the emergent theoretical trends at the time – particularly, structuralism and postmodernism – Ramchand held to the more rudimentary belief that “that books and authors use language and are used by language not to illustrate meaninglessness, or the difficulty of communication or the tyrannies of logocentricity, but to say something to people about themselves, their particular society and the world that they share with

¹²⁷ Ramchand credits his text – and the clout of his overseas degree – as the means by which he would convince the skeptical department head at UWI that Caribbean literature could be taught in its own right, apart from that of other literatures. For more on these developments, see Ramchand’s “‘The West Indian Novel and its Background’ — Thirty Years Later” (2000) and Mervyn Morris’ “Making West Indian Literature” (2005).

all other human beings” (365). It was, if not a bit more critically conscientious, a similar humanist approach which was used by the myth and symbol critics a decade earlier.

In a retrospective penned on the 30th anniversary of the text’s publication, however, Ramchand willingly admits that the text in fact does have an obvious ideology, and, a “very conscious one which clearly determined the arrangement of its content” (367). In hindsight, Ramchand sees how the original project was written amidst the backdrop of the Federation era. While the official West Indian Federation had collapsed six years before Ramchand’s thesis was published, the legacy of a Caribbean confederation still caused him to conceive of the British West Indies as one communal unit.¹²⁸ “It was an ideology of *being West Indian*” (368, my emphasis), Ramchand writes, that drove the impetus for his text. Much like the situation in the U.S. following World War II, the forceful nature of societal pressures which yearned a certain coalescence – i.e., Guillory’s “nostalgia for community” notion (*Cultural* 34) – inevitably lent itself to Ramchand’s critical disposition. And while the Federation itself had failed, another institution – The University of the West Indies, Ramchand’s first post-PhD workplace – certainly continued to fuel that communal longing. Campuses at Mona (1948), St. Augustine (1960), and Cave Hill (1962), were erected and “committed to the development of *the region*” (“Overview,” my emphasis). Today, the interisland institution still “stands proud as an icon for the promotion of Caribbean integration, culture and pride” (“Contribution”).

Ramchand now realizes that these developments had an inevitable impact upon his own literary trajectory. He admits that he wrote *The West Indian Novel and its Background* at “just the right time” (351), which, ironically, parallels Marx’s recollection of the era out of which the

¹²⁸ For further reading on the Federation – its formation and failure – see the following two texts edited by David Lowenthal: *The West Indies Federation: Perspectives on a New Nation* (1961) & *The Aftermath of Sovereignty: West Indian Perspectives* (1973, co-edited with Lambros Comitas). In particular, see W. A. Domingo’s “British West Indian Federation—A Critique” (1956), Hugh W. Springer’s “Federation in the Caribbean: An Attempt That Failed” (1962) and W. Arthur Lewis’ “The Agony of the Eight” (1965) all of which are available in the latter text.

myth and symbol movement emerged, at “just the right moment to provide the prospective [American] superpower with such valuable cultural resources as, for example, a major national literature” (“On Recovering” 121). Ramchand’s text spearheaded a concerted movement to discern Caribbean writing at various institutional levels (graduate departments, academic conferences, publishing outfits, university syllabi, etc.). And yet, the ultimate irony is that while Ramchand’s project was a provincial one, he admits taking a cue from the myth and symbol school. Recalling his first encounters with Caribbean fiction as a youth, he writes:

[my] response was sensuous, immediate, and instinctive. I could “hear” and “see” and “feel” what was being represented realistically, and I could respond intuitively to things that were not being literally represented...With respect to social and cultural issues, I could pick up what Lionel Trilling calls “the buzz of implication” (“Thirty Years Later” 353).

Trilling’s “buzz” is explained in a paper he gave at the “Conference on the Heritage of the English-Speaking Peoples and Their Responsibilities” back in 1947. Asked by the conference organizers to discuss the relation of manners to literature, Trilling states, “What I understand by manners...is a culture’s hum and buzz of implication” (“Manners” 12). Distinguishing manners from the more domesticated (i.e., Jane Austin) sense, Trilling likens them to cultural signifiers expressed “through its art, religion, architecture, [and] legislation” (11). He adds:

They are the things that for good or bad draw the people of a culture together and that separate them from the people of another culture. They make the part of culture which is not art, or religion, or morals, or politics, and yet it relates to all these highly formulated departments of culture. It is modified by them; it modifies them; it is generated by them; it generates them (12-13).

While Trilling admits that the subject of ‘manners’ is a “nearly indefinable” one, he also acknowledges that there is an inevitable cultural impulse to trace them; and it is in the form of the novel, suggests Trilling – that “perpetual quest for reality” whose “field of research” is that of the social world – where this impulse is often sought out (17).

Thus, despite Ramchand's youthful insistence that he wrote *The West Indian Novel and its Background* purely to introduce literature to young Caribbean readers, it would be the isolation and identification of certain West Indian "manners" which ultimately goads project; as he later admits, the forcefulness of the Federation movement clearly (although unconsciously) shepherds his critical trajectory. And shortly following the publication of his text, it was the University, writes Donnell, which accelerates the "momentum of critical debate" surrounding cultural 'manners' in Anglophone Caribbean literature (31). Donnell describes how this archeological-like excavation would snowball around this time:

Suddenly, the University, via the conference, had accelerated the momentum of critical debate greatly and had also defined the shape of intellectual exchange along a divide between the Great Tradition inherited from colonial institutions and, as Brathwaite called it, the Little Tradition, grown from folk traditions, Caribbean languages and the politics of social commitment. Of course, as many made clear at the conference itself, as well as in their work that followed, there was now a sense of shared conviction among a group of key scholars that the Little Tradition carried the future of critical emergence and integrity for the region (31).

Despite the pioneering steps that critics such as Ramchand made in the touting and analysis of that Little Tradition, much like the myth and symbol writers, their critical era is now marked by its essentialist generalities, like, for example, its occlusions of women and/or writers unconcerned with the decolonization and nationalist movements.¹²⁹ In fairness, Ramchand's project of giving his Caribbean readership a 'background' in its literature is notably ahead of its time. It was among the first sustained critical accounts of the cross between Caribbean orality and writing. It interrogated West Indian Standard English and various written versions of island dialects. As Donnell notes, the attention Ramchand gives to writers like McKay, Delisser, and MacDermot as "the prominent early voices" of Anglophone Caribbean writing contributes to the

¹²⁹ Ramchand argues otherwise, stating that his text "cannot be criticized for excluding feminist issues" ("Thirty Years Later" 370). Ramchand may well be right, but he surely doesn't unravel and interrogate those issues; while he does lend attention to writers like Jean Rhys and Sylvia Wynter, and their "Alienation Within Alienation" (*West Indian Novel* 231), it is done so quite abruptly.

“forging of a new literary history [which cuts] loose from a historical narrative coming out of colonialism” (38-39). Donnell adds that Ramchand’s project, constructed in these comprehensive terms, enables “the writing [he] valued to be viewed within a context that assumes its own cultural wholeness.” And thus, much like the myth and symbol approach years prior, is how the so-called Little Tradition asserted itself.

PART VI: *CANONICAL RECONCILIATIONS*

In contemporary practices, that attempt to mark a national cultural wholeness is usually met with critical rebuttals. In regards to the American studies field, those changes rendered in the 1970s by the likes of Kuklick, Baym, etc., still resonate with today’s practices. Donald Pease and Robyn Wiegman cite Gene Wise’s 1979 article¹³⁰ – “perhaps the most frequently cited text on the history of the field” – as the contemporary guide for how to proceed within the New American studies framework following the shortcomings of the essentialist approach of the myth and symbol school. Pease and Wiegman write that our current conceptions of American studies are still guided by Wise’s assertions, which promoted “a pluralistic rather than a holistic approach to American culture, the rediscovery of the particular, the repudiation of American exceptionalism, and the rise of comparativist and cross-cultural approaches to American studies” (1). That pluralistic approach, in fact, would later be picked up by Caribbean critics who also had to fight off similar accusations of essentialism. As Donnell points out, certain writers in the 70s like Wynter and Brathwaite attempt to do away with notions of “cultural wholeness,” especially those critical instances which saw Caribbean literature merely participating in “the production of a colonial matrix” (33). For example, in reviewing the “first full-scale published

¹³⁰ “‘Paradigm Dramas’ in American Studies: A Cultural and Institutional History of the Movement” (1979).

work of West Indian literary criticism,”¹³¹ Brathwaite would quarrel with the editors’ attempt to isolate what West Indian literature, as a *cultural genre*, is ‘about’ (“Caribbean” 268). Brathwaite takes issue with the critics’ tendency to boil the various authors in question down to a single, unifying cultural trait. “There will be no ‘one West Indian voice’,” Brathwaite writes, “because there is no ‘one West Indian voice’. The West Indian voice is a complex of imposed ‘establishment’ tongues and the mainly submerged patters of the ‘folk’—the peasants and illiterates who carry within themselves a transformed but still very real and essentially non-European tradition of Africa, Asia and the Amerindians” (270). Similar to the anthropological turn in American studies, Brathwaite finds that the concept of Caribbean culture put forth by the text’s editors is a reductive one, operating under the essentialist assumption that it can be an agreeable, unified, and identifiable.

These anthropological-like developments – for both regions – of course still resonate with critical practices today. The so-called New American Studies has gone beyond the revisions suggested by those critics of the 70s, which looked to destabilize the onus that the myth and symbol writers placed upon seeing the U.S. as a consolidated unit. If critics like Wise and Kuklick looked to interrogate the various communal pockets in favor of the whole national unit, New American Studies thus intends to look at those ‘units’ in a more transnational or even postnational sense. Pease elaborates upon this development, stating that if narratives of national wholeness resulted in the assimilation of differences under the “self-sameness of ruling assumptions,” then the postnational critiques look to subvert those attempts (“National Identities” 4). The agents of this change would be, he adds, “the national subject peoples, figures of race, class, and gender, who had been previously interpellated within the hegemonic category of disqualified social agency” (4).

¹³¹ *The Islands in Between: Essays in West Indian Literature* (1968, ed. by Louis James).

A similar argument has been put forth in regards to canonical interrogations in the Caribbean. Donnell specifically points out that the anthologies of the 60s came far short in representing the “broad continuum of cultural involvement and allegiance and...codes, idioms and values” (43) which was Anglophone Caribbean literature taken in its full, chaotic spectrum. For example, Natasha Barnes has noted how the independence movements of the 50s and 60s elicit a “crisis of nationalism and feminism” (47); that the era documented by the likes of Lamming and James proves that gender was never made a “central conceptual category in its discourse of anticolonial revolution” (35), and we can mark this reality by noting the lack of critical attention paid to the many women writers working within this period. Furthermore, by neglecting much of Caribbean writing prior to 1950 (which early critical texts, much like Ramchand’s, generally do), Donnell says it reveals the institutional forces which buttress the “need to articulate and narrate an emergent nationalist tradition with West Indian literature at a critical moment of academic and political consolidation” (42). Thus, because a large contingency of voices and identities were inherently ‘disqualified’ (as Pease would write) amidst the forging of this tradition, it has since been the contemporary critic’s duty – exemplified by the projects of Donnell and Barnes – to critique and rectify those omissions.

Of course, the summary I’ve provided here is an all-too swift rendition of literary criticism’s changes over the years; however, the progressive nature of literary studies over the last half-century thus reveals somewhat of a contemporary dilemma. If the current New Americanists can agree on anything, it’s that the myth and symbol approach to literature in the 1950s was nothing if not marred by homogenous motives for national unification. As such, the tendency of the New Americanists to eschew that problematic myth and symbol methodology – for its own eschewal of certain ‘disqualified’ literatures written in America – leaves one to

wonder how to explain *transnational* gravitations to this flawed domestic campaign. How does one explain the curiosity that foreign observers like Lamming and James (and even Ramchand, who identifies with Trilling) would have with this myth and symbol school? Certainly, Caribbean foreigners of African or Indian ancestry wouldn't fit within the homogenous, mythological American model that the myth and symbol school has been accused of creating. And yet, throughout the 1950s, given the Caribbean gravitations towards those authors identified by the myth critics, writers like Lamming and James would almost seem somewhat complicitous with the school's noted shortcomings. How can this be explained and/or reconciled?

The fact of the matter is, much like the myth and symbol members themselves, Lamming and James are writing from within their *own* institutionally-driven, hegemonic category. In a rudimentary sense, one can suggest that both regions – the Caribbean and the U.S. – underwent similar “critical moments of cultural nationalism,” where certain historical and institutional forces required writers to step in and contribute to a provincial lack of a self-authentication regarding their respective cultures. The archetypes and metaphors used by the myth and symbol school help give life to this lack, and subsequently contributes to a rhetorically romanticized America, a nation conceived in a unitary and optimistic framework. While those characterizations ultimately fail to live up to the nation-wide standards they intend, because they are rendered in embryonic and in unhindered terms – especially when looked at as *rhetorical appeals* – they strike right at the heart of Lamming's writerly psyche at that time.

Donnell's methodology throughout *Twentieth-Century Caribbean Literature* identifies a space whereby Lamming's American musings can finally be considered. Donnell writes that by understanding these “critical moments” in contemporary contexts, we are not necessarily offering a renaissance to the antiquated critiques we've all but abandoned, but rather we afford

ourselves, as critics, a better means to discern silenced and occluded perspectives. In order to understand certain literary occlusions (“disavowals,” she calls them), Donnell claims she has to understand the moments in which those occlusions were made. For example, by identifying the post-1950 Caribbean literary boom as a male-centered genre driven by nationalist agendas, Donnell can identify certain writers like Constance Hollar and Una Marson, whom don’t fit into that schematic. Furthermore, by interrogating these moments (instead of eschewing the critical tendencies born in them), Donnell can claim to identify the rhetorical currencies of the time which occlude those voices:

In our own historical moment which is less charged with the urgency of claiming representations for a devalued majority and more aware of the pressures that historical narratives place on unruly moments in time, opening up an archive of uneven and unpredictable writings will yield a sense of an unstable past that may be less directly useful to a teleology of literary nationalism, *but more honest to the cultural transitions and transactions* from which Caribbean literature took its first soundings and made its first voicings (49-50, my emphasis).

Unfortunately, in noting the so-called “cultural amnesia” (32) which plagues contemporary criticism, Donnell suggests that “the historical point at which the crucial separation between a literary past and a literary present is figured is less important than the trend towards the disavowal of particular kinds of writing and the construction of a teleology of cultural progression that has flattened out many interesting texts and moments” (43). Lamming’s *The Pleasures of Exile* is a fine example of this amnesia, for it is a text highly notable for its participation in the Caribbean decolonization narrative, yet relatively unknown for its alignments with aspects of 1950s American literary culture. Published in 1960, Lamming’s text became a force for the independence movements and aided the domestic push for artistic autonomy throughout the Caribbean region. Yet, because it earned this cultural capital in contexts which governed how and where that cultural capital would be distributed, *The Pleasures of Exile* is rarely seen as participating in other agendas. If, as Jonathan Arac argues, certain texts are

saturated by critics with the national meta-narrative (through a process he dubs “hypercanonization”), we only behoove ourselves to destabilize that scaffolding in order to uncover ulterior cultural capitals. The following chapter thus attempts to understand Lamming’s *The Pleasures of Exile* under its unacknowledged American contexts.

CHAPTER 4 CITED LITERATURE

- Arac, Jonathan. "F. O. Matthiessen: Authorizing an American Renaissance." *The American Renaissance Reconsidered: Selected Papers from the English Institute, 1982-83*. Ed. Walter Benn Michaels & Donald E. Pease. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1985. 90-112.
- Barnes, Natasha. "Reluctant Matriarch: Sylvia Wynter and the Problematics of Caribbean Feminism." *Small Axe* 5 (Mar 1999): 34-47.
- Baym, Nina. "Melodramas of Beset Manhood: How Theories of American Fiction Exclude Women Authors." *American Quarterly* 33.2 (Summer 1981): 123-139.
- Bercovitch, Sacvan. "The Problem of Ideology in American Literary History." *Critical Inquiry* 12.4 (Summer 1986): 631-653.
- Bercovitch, Sacvan, and Myra Jehlen, eds. *Ideology and Classic American Literature*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1987.
- Brathwaite, Edward Kamau. "Caribbean Critics." *Critical Quarterly* 11.3 (Autumn 1969): 268-276.
- . *History of the Voice: The Development of Nation Language in Anglophone Caribbean Poetry*. New Beacon: London, 1984.
- . "Timehri." 1970. *The Routledge Reader in Caribbean Literature*. Eds. Alison Donnell & Sarah Lawson Welsh. London: Routledge, 1996. 344-350.
- Cain, William. *F. O. Matthiessen and the Politics of Criticism*. Madison: U of Wisconsin P, 1988.
- Chase, Richard. *The American Novel and Its Tradition*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday Anchor, 1957.
- . "A Novel is a Novel." Rev. of *Invisible Man*, by Ralph Ellison; and *Let It Come Down*, by Paul Bowles. *The Kenyon Review* 14.4 (Autumn 1952): 678-684.
- Cole, John Y. "The Armed Services Editions: An Introduction." *Books in Action: The Armed Services Editions*. Ed. Cole. Washington: Library of Congress, 1984. 1-11.
- "Contribution to the Region." *The University of the West Indies*. 15 Jun 2011. <uwu.edu/aboutuwu/regioncontribution.aspx>.
- Coulthard, G. R., ed. *Caribbean Literature: An Anthology*. 1966. London: U of London P, 1971.
- Cunliffe, Marcus. "The Conditions of an American Literature." *American Literature to 1900*. 1973. Ed. Cunliffe. New York: Peter Bedrick, 1987. 1-22.
- . *The Literature of the United States*. 1st ed. Harmondsworth, England: Penguin, 1954.

- . *The Literature of the United States*. 3rd ed. Harmondsworth, England: Penguin, 1975.
- . *The Literature of the United States*. 4th ed. London: Penguin, 1991.
- Dance, Daryl Cumber. Introduction. *New World Adams: Conversations with West Indian Writers*. By Dance. 1984. Leeds, England: Peepal Tree, 1992. 11-14.
- Domingo, W. A. "British West Indian Federation—A Critique." 1956. *The Aftermath of Sovereignty: West Indian Perspectives*. Eds. David Lowenthal and Lambros Comitas. Garden City, NY: Anchor, 1973. 163-188.
- Donnell, Alison. *Twentieth-Century Caribbean Literature: Critical Moments in Anglophone Literary History*. London: Routledge, 2006.
- Emerson, Ralph Waldo. "Nature." 1836. *Essays and Lectures*. New York: Library of America, 1983. 3-49.
- . "Representative Men." 1850. *Essays and Lectures*. New York: Library of America, 1983. 611-761.
- Fabian, Ann. "In Retrospect: Back to *Virgin Land*." *Reviews in American History* 24.3 (Sep 1996): 542-553.
- Feidelson, Charles. *Symbolism and American Literature*. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1953.
- Fiedler, Leslie. "The Fate of the Novel." Rev. of *The Mote and the Beam*, by Percy Winner; *A Flask for the Journey*, by F. L. Green; *Other Voices, Other Rooms*, by Truman Capote; *The City and the Pillar*, by Gore Vidal; *Raintree County*, by Ross Lockridge; *The Circus in the Attic*, by Robert Penn Warren; *The Middle of the Journey*, by Lionel Trilling; and *The Victim*, by Saul Bellow. *The Kenyon Review* 10.3 (Summer 1948): 519-527.
- . "Literature as an Institution." *What Was Literature?: Class Culture and Mass Society*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1982. 57-63.
- . *Love and Death in the American Novel*. 1960. Champaign, IL: Dalkey Archive, 1997.
- . "On the Road; or the Adventures of Karl Shapiro." Rev. of *Poems of a Jew*, by Shapiro. *Poetry* 96.3 (Jun 1960): 171-178.
- . *The Stranger in Shakespeare*. New York: Stein and Day, 1972.
- . "The War Against the Academy." *Wisconsin Studies in Contemporary Literature* 5.1: Scholars, Critics, Writers & the Campus (Winter/Spring 1964): 5-17.
- . *What Was Literature?: Class Culture and Mass Society*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1982.
- Fisher, Philip. *Still the New World: American Literature in a Culture of Creative Destruction*. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1999.

- Folsom, Ed. "The House that Matthiessen Built." *Iowa Review* 20.3 (Fall 1990): 162-180.
- French, Patrick. *The World Is What It Is: The Authorized Biography of V. S. Naipaul*. London: Picador, 2008.
- Giles, Paul. *Virtual Americas: Transnational Fictions and the Transatlantic Imaginary*. Durham: Duke UP, 2002.
- Giles, Paul, and Richard J. Ellis. "Editorial: Transnational American Studies — for what? A partial stocktaking." *Comparative American Studies* 6.1 (Mar 2008): 3-4.
- Graff, Gerald. *Professing Literature: An Institutional History*. 1987. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1989.
- Guillory, John. "Canonical and Non-Canonical: A Critique of the Current Debate." *ELH* 54.3 (Autumn 1987): 483-527.
- . "Canon, Syllabus, List: A Note on the Pedagogic Imaginary." *Transition* 52 (1991): 36-54.
- . *Cultural Capital: The Problem of Literary Canon Formation*. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1993.
- Harris, Charles B. Introduction. *Love and Death in the American Novel*, by Leslie Fiedler. Champaign, IL: Dalkey Archive, 2003. v-xii.
- Hawthorne, Nathaniel. "The New Adam and Eve." 1843. *Mosses from an Old Manse*. 1846. *Project Gutenberg*. Web. 6 Sep 2003. 18 Mar 2012.
<<http://www.gutenberg.org/files/9227/9227-h/9227-h.htm>>.
- Hench, John B. *Books as Weapons: Propaganda, Publishing, and the Battle for Global Markets in the Era of World War II*. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 2010.
- Hill, Robert A. "Literary Executor's Afterword." *American Civilization*. By C. L. R. James. Ed. Anna Grimshaw & Keith Hart. Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1993. 293-366.
- Hyde, Louis, ed. *Rat & the Devil: Journal Letters of F.O. Matthiessen and Russell Cheney*. 1978. Boston: Alyson Publications, 1988.
- James, C. L. R. *American Civilization*. Ed. Anna Grimshaw & Keith Hart. Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1993.
- . *Beyond a Boundary*. 1963. London: Yellow Jersey, 2005.
- . *Special Delivery: The Letters of C. L. R. James to Constance Webb, 1939-1948*. Ed. Anna Grimshaw. Oxford: Blackwell, 1996.
- James, Louis. *The Islands in Between: Essays on West Indian Literature*. London: Oxford UP, 1968.

- Kazin, Alfred. *On Native Grounds: An Interpretation of Modern American Prose Literature*. 1942. New York: Harvest, 1970.
- Kelly, R. Gordon. "Literature and the Historian." *American Quarterly* 26.2 (May 1974): 141-159.
- King, Bruce. *Derek Walcott: A Caribbean Life*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2000.
- Kuklick, Bruce. "Myth and Symbol in American Studies." *American Quarterly* 24.4 (Oct 1972): 435-450.
- Lamming, George. "From George Lamming." Email to Timothy Henningsen. 2 Feb 2011 & 3 Feb 2011.
- . "Interview with George Lamming." *Kas-Kas: Interviews with Three Caribbean Writers in Texas*. Eds. Ian Munro & Reinhard Sander. Austin: African and Afro-American Research Institute, 1972. 4-21.
- . *The Pleasures of Exile*. 1960. Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P, 1992.
- . "The Sovereignty of the Imagination: An Interview with George Lamming." By David Scott. *Small Axe* 12 (Sep 2002): 72-200.
- Lavezzo, Kathy, and Harilaos Stecopoulos. "Leslie Fiedler's Medieval America." *American Literary History* 22.4 (Winter 2010): 867-887.
- Lawrence, D. H. *Studies in Classic American Literature*. 1923. New York: Penguin/Heinemann, 1990.
- Levin, Harry. *The Power of Blackness: Hawthorne, Poe, Melville*. 1958. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1964.
- Lewis, R. W. B. *The American Adam: Innocence, Tragedy and Tradition in the Nineteenth Century*. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1955.
- . "Contemporary American Literature." *Contemporary Literary Scholarship: A Critical Review*. Ed. Lewis Leary. New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1958. 201-215.
- . "Eccentrics' Pilgrimage." Rev. of *A Shower of Summer Days*, by May Sarion; *The Old Man and the Sea*, by Ernest Hemingway; *Invisible Man*, by Ralph Ellison; *A Length of Rope*, by Monroe Engel; and *Wise Blood*, by Flannery O'Connor. *The Hudson Review* 6.1 (Spring 1953): 144-150.
- Lewis, W. Arthur. "The Agony of the Eight." 1965. *The Aftermath of Sovereignty: West Indian Perspectives*. Eds. David Lowenthal and Lambros Comitas. Garden City, NY: Anchor, 1973. 215-236.

- Lipsitz, George. *American Studies in a Moment of Danger*. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 2001.
- . "Listening to Learn and Learning to Listen: Popular Culture, Cultural Theory, and American Studies." *American Quarterly* 42.4 (Dec 1990): 615-636.
- Lowenthal, David, ed. *The West Indies Federation: Perspectives on a New Nation*. New York: Columbia UP, 1961.
- Lowenthal, David, and Lambros Comitas, eds. *The Aftermath of Sovereignty: West Indian Perspectives*. Garden City, NY: Anchor, 1973.
- Marx, Leo. "The Machine in the Garden." *The New England Quarterly* 29.1 (Mar 1956): 27-42.
- . *The Machine in the Garden: Technology and the Pastoral Ideal in America*. 1964. London: Oxford UP, 1976.
- . "On Recovering the 'Ur' Theory of American Studies." *American Literary History* 17.1 (Spring 2005): 118-134.
- . "The Pilot and the Passenger: Landscape Conventions and the Style of *Huckleberry Finn*." *American Literature* 28.2 (May 1956): 129-146.
- . "Shakespeare's American Fable." *The Massachusetts Review* 2.1 (Autumn 1960): 40-71.
- . "Two Kingdoms of Force." *The Massachusetts Review* 1.1 (Fall 1959): 62-95.
- Marx, Leo, Bernard Bowron, and Arnold Rose. "Literature and Covert Culture." *American Quarterly* 9.4 (Winter 1957): 377-386.
- Matthiessen, F. O. *American Renaissance: Art and Expression in the Age of Emerson and Whitman*. 1941. London: Oxford UP, 1968.
- Melville, Herman. *Pierre; or, The Ambiguities*. 1852. New York: Library of America, 1984. 1-421.
- . *White-Jacket; or, The World in a Man-of-War*. 1850. New York: Modern Library, 2002.
- Morris, Mervyn. "Making West Indian Literature." *Making West Indian Literature*. Kingston: Ian Randle, 2005. 1-17.
- Naipaul, V. S. "New York with Norman Mailer." 1969. *The Writer and the World: Essays*. Ed. Pankaj Mishra. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2002. 315-333.
- Noble, David W. *Death of a Nation: American Culture and the End of Exceptionalism*. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 2002.
- . *The Eternal Adam and the New World Garden: The Central Myth in the American Novel Since 1830*. New York: George Braziller, 1968.

- Nord, David Paul, Joan Shelley Rubin, and Michael Schudson, eds. *A History of the Book in America, Volume 5: The Enduring Book, Print Culture in Postwar America*. Chapel Hill: U of North Carolina P, 2009.
- “Overview.” *The University of the West Indies*. 15 Jun 2011. Web.
<uwi.edu/aboutuwi/overview.aspx>.
- Parrington, Vernon L. *Main Currents in American Thought, Vols. I-III*. 1927. Web.
<<http://xroads.virginia.edu/~hyper/Parrington/vol1/header1.html>>.
- Pease, Donald E. “National Identities, Postmodern Artifacts, and Postnational Narratives.” *boundary 2* 19.1 (Spring 1992): 1-13.
- . “New Americanists: Revisionist Interventions into the Canon.” *boundary 2* 17.1 (Spring 1990): 1-37.
- Pease, Donald E., and Robyn Wiegman. “Futures.” *The Futures of American Studies*. Ed. Pease and Wiegman. Durham: Duke UP, 2002. 1-44.
- Ramchand, Kenneth. Introduction. *West Indian Narrative: An Introductory Anthology*. Ed. Ramchand. 1966. London: Nelson, 1970. 1-5.
- . *The West Indian Novel and its Background*. New York: Barnes & Noble, 1970.
- . “‘The West Indian Novel and its Background’ — Thirty Years Later.” *ARIEL: A Review of International English Literature* 31.1/2 (Jan-Apr 2000): 351-373.
- Ramchand, Kenneth, ed. *West Indian Narrative: An Introductory Anthology*. 1966. London: Nelson, 1970.
- Rampersad, Arnold. *Ralph Ellison: A Biography*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2007.
- Reising, Russell J. *The Unusable Past: Theory and the Study of American Literature*. New York: Methuen, 1986.
- Reynolds, David S. *Beneath the American Renaissance: The Subversive Imagination in the Age of Emerson and Melville*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1988.
- Rosenberg, Leah Reade. *Nationalism and the Formation of Caribbean Literature*. Palgrave: New York, 2007.
- Rosengarten, Frank. *Urbane Revolutionary: C. L. R. James and the Struggle for a New Society*. Jackson: U of Mississippi P, 2008.
- Salkey, Andrew, ed. *Stories from the Caribbean: An Anthology*. London: Elek, 1965.
- . *West Indian Stories*. 1960. London: Faber and Faber, 1973.

- Scott, David. *Refashioning Futures: Criticism after Postcoloniality*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 1999.
- Smith, Dinitia. "American Culture's Debt to Gay Sons of Harvard." *The New York Times*. 29 May 2003. Web. 31 May 2011. <<http://www.nytimes.com/2003/05/29/arts/american-culture-s-debt-to-gay-sons-of-harvard.html>>.
- Smith, Henry Nash. "American Renaissance." *Monthly Review* 2.6 (Oct 1950): 223-228.
- . *Virgin Land: The American West as Symbol and Myth*. 1950. New York: Vintage, 1970.
- Springer, Hugh W. "Federation in the Caribbean: An Attempt That Failed." 1962. *The Aftermath of Sovereignty: West Indian Perspectives*. Eds. David Lowenthal and Lambros Comitas. Garden City, NY: Anchor, 1973. 189-214.
- Teres, Harvey. "The Critical Climate." *A History of the Book in America, Volume 5: The Enduring Book, Print Culture in Postwar America*. Eds. David Paul Nord, Joan Shelley Rubin, & Michael Schudson. Chapel Hill: U of North Carolina P, 2009. 233-245.
- Thieme, John. "'A Future They Must Learn': Transforming Power Relations in *Natives of My Person*." *The Locations of George Lamming*. Ed. Bill Schwarz. Oxford: Macmillan, 2007. 132-150.
- Tompkins, Jane. *Sensational Designs: The Cultural Work of American Fiction, 1790-1860*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1985.
- Trilling, Lionel. *The Liberal Imagination: Essays on Literature and Society*. 1950. Garden City, NY: 1953.
- . "Manners, Morals, and the Novel." 1947. *The Kenyon Review* 10.1 (Winter 1948): 11-27.
- Twain, Mark. *Letters from the Earth: Uncensored Writings by Mark Twain*. 1938. Ed. Bernard DeVoto. New York: HarperPerennial, 1991.
- Umberger, Daryl. "Myth and Symbol." *Encyclopedia of American Studies*. 3rd vol. New York: Grolier, 2001. 180-184.
- Vaughan, Alden T. "Shakespeare's Indian: The Americanization of Caliban." *Shakespeare Quarterly* 39.2 (Summer 1988): 137-153.
- Walcott, Derek. "New World." 1976. *Collected Poems: 1948-1984*. New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1999.
- . "What the Twilight Says." 1970. *What the Twilight Says: Essays*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1999. 3-35.
- Weisbuch, Robert. *Atlantic Double-Cross: American Literature and British Influence in the Age of Emerson*. 1986. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1989.

Wendell, Barrett. *A Literary History of America*. 1900. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1901. Web. <books.google.com/books?id=oN1FxdP07TcC>.

Whitman, Walt. "Children of Adam." 1881. *Leaves of Grass and Other Writings*. Ed. Michael Moon. New York: W. W. Norton, 2002. 78-96.

---. "Notes and Fragments Left By Walt Whitman." *The Complete Prose Works of Walt Whitman*. Vol. VI. Ed. Richard Bucke. New York: Knickerbocker/G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1902. Web. <books.google.com/ebooks?id=2AUPAQAAAMAJ>.

Wise, Gene. "'Paradigm Dramas' in American Studies: A Cultural and Institutional History of the Movement." *American Quarterly* 31.3 (1979): 293-337.

Worcester, Kent. *C. L. R. James: A Political Biography*. New York: SUNY, 1996.

Wynter, Sylvia. "Afterword: 'Beyond Miranda's Meanings: Un/silencing the 'Demonic Ground' of Caliban's 'Woman'.'" *Out of the Kumbla: Caribbean Women and Literature*. Ed. Carole Boyce Davies and Elaine Savory Fido. Trenton: Africa World, 1990. 355-372.

CHAPTER 5

BUILDING OUR OWN PEQUOD*The Ethos of Idiom in American and Anglophone Caribbean Literature*

Who are you indeed who would talk or sing to America?
 Have you studied out the land, its idioms and men? (293).

Walt Whitman's "By Blue Ontario's Shore"

I am American
 I am Whitman
 Marti Cudjoe
 A whole continent
 Como No? (23).

John Anthony La Rose's "An American"

In Earl Lovelace's short story "Joebell and America," the self-titled Trinidadian braggart meticulously plans an emigration to America, for it is a place he claims to know well. Joebell gloats:

I grow up on John Wayne and Gary Cooper...I know the Dodgers and Phillies, the Redskins and the Dallas Cowboys, Green Bay Packers and the Vikings. I know Walt Frazier and Doctor J, and Bill Russell and Wilt Chamberlain. Really, in truth, I know America so much, I feel American. Is just that I aint born there (123).

Of course, readers will interpret this declaration as Lovelace's playful tongue-in-cheek jab at Joebell's naïve understanding of America and its concomitant pop culture. Joebell's resource is

the television, which allows him to presume that the United States is a country “where everybody have a motor car and you could ski on snow and where it have seventy-five channels of colour television that never sign off and you could sit down and watch for days, all the boxing and wrestling and basketball, right there as it happening” (111). Joebell’s generic rendition of U.S. culture is probably acquired through what George Lamming has ominously dubbed the “tidal wave of capitalist consumerism,” where American culture “spreads itself like a plague everywhere, capturing the simplest appetite with the fastest foods and nameless fripperies the advertising industry instructs us are essential needs” (Introduction xlv-xlvi). Joebell’s appetite is undoubtedly ripe for this influence; he yearns for big cars and notoriety, and brags about knowing the names of famed celebrities like James Stewart and Aretha “Franklyn.” Yet despite the wry poking-fun that Lovelace employs throughout this story – of Trinidadian stereotypes and of America’s superficial, television-obsessed culture – the undercurrent of it all exposes a curious transnational association. Joebell, a Trinidadian, claims to be an American because he *feels* it. As Lovelace writes, Joebell “grow up in America right there in Trinidad” (121).

While Lovelace’s tale provides readers with a humorous but sympathetic account of male vulnerability (not to mention a somewhat damning condemnation of modern capitalist culture and its global ripple effects), it also suggests that there might just be something to the outlandish notion that Joebell grew up in America, *in Trinidad*. *Feeling* American despite not *being* American certainly has curious tenets; yet if one applies political sociologist Seymour Martin Lipset’s notion that *being* American is not a matter of birthplace, but rather an “ideological commitment” (31) then Joebell’s attachment to American culture – even if inherited through the television – might be somewhat legitimate. Lovelace’s story was published in 1988, long after the Caribbean boom years which have thus far been the main focus of this dissertation; however,

I cite “Joebell and America” because it too participates in the “making of America” idea which proves so central to the era in which Lovelace grew up. Like fellow Caribbean writers who witnessed the permeation of American culture into their region beginning in the 1940s, Lovelace’s literature would inevitably interrogate this exchange.

Lovelace grew up amidst the American occupation of the British Caribbean islands during World War II. Born in Trinidad in 1935, he would attend primary school in Scarborough, Tobago during the War, moving back to Trinidad in the late-1940s where he would complete secondary education and earn his Cambridge School Certificate (Aiyejina). While the War had run its course by the time Lovelace returned to Trinidad, the Americans were still heavily entrenched at Chaguaramas and Cumuto, and would remain so for another decade and a half.¹³² Like many of Lovelace’s contemporaries, the American military occupation would instigate for him a certain intrigue with American culture. Lovelace was an avid reader as a child, and despite attending colonial school he admits he developed an affinity for American authors – particularly Faulkner – and preferred them to their English counterparts. Lovelace has said that British writers “didn’t have as much action for *me* as the American writers” (“Conversation” 158), and that preference can be discerned in “Joebell and America,” a vernacular satire written in the vein of Mark Twain.

¹³² For a summary of the U.S. military withdrawal in Trinidad – which was often quite contentious – see Eric Williams’ “The Road to Independence” chapter in *History of the People of Trinidad and Tobago* (1962) along with Neptune’s “Coda” in *Caliban and the Yankees* (2007). Though Neptune writes that the “Yankees had effectively gone home” after 1947 (191), they remained in control of the naval base at Chaguaramas, and were reluctant to allow for a Trinidadian reacquisition of the property, which was being considered as a potential site for a Federation capital. Lovelace would inevitably be witness to this. Furthermore, Lovelace’s migration from Tobago to Trinidad arises the issue in regards to the “flow” of American ideas and products between those united islands (which were paired under British rule in 1889). Essentially, the cultural, political and economic flows between Trinidad and Tobago remain in question. The Americans occupied areas throughout Trinidad (Chaguaramas, Cumuto, Carlsen Field, Balandra, and Irois), but were *not* on Tobago. Some historians, like Gordon K. Lewis, have suggest that the islands were rather fluid with one another, citing post-independent Trinidad’s contentious spending upon its “island ward” of Tobago (155). Alternatively, Jan Rogozinski argues that the islands “have little in common,” citing the oil-rich Trinidad which contrasts the independent farmers of Tobago (336).

The story itself describes Joebell's meticulous scheme to emigrate from Trinidad to America by duping the immigration officials who determine his passage into the United States. Set sometime between 1977 and 1981,¹³³ Joebell is the clichéd essence of masculine rebellion. He gambles, he brags, he flirts, he fights, he talks and walks with a swagger inherited from the likes of Jack Palance's cold-blooded character in the Hollywood western classic, *Shane*. The story's narrator confirms Joebell's brash characteristics, stating, "Since he leave school his best friend is Trouble and wherever Trouble is, right there is Joebell" (114). The story begins sometime after Joebell has already determined that he must leave Trinidad – for he has seen "too much hell" (111) – and the only country big enough to contain his bombastic personality is the United States of America. The action that follows traces his vigilant – not to mention illegal – preparations for going there. Despite all his callous swagger, Joebell realizes this will be no small task.

Joebell's preparations are made under the assumption that the television has provided him with enough 'broadcasted cultivation' to fool immigration officials into believing that he is an actual American citizen (and not, rather, a drifter with a criminal record from Trinidad). Much of the story thus traces Joebell's preparations for dressing the part. Using a thousand dollars he has won playing an infamous card game,¹³⁴ he is able to secure a counterfeit passport that touts a very 'Americanish' alias: Mr. James Armstrong Brady. Joebell purchases a new brown suit and accessorizes it with leather boots and a cowboy hat. He shaves his beard and cuts his hair in the "GI trim," a sign intended to mark his involvement in the Vietnam War as part of the one

¹³³ we know this because Joebell often reads the sports section of the newspapers and on one or more occasions would note that "Muhammed boxing today, or Sugar" (117). Of course, this refers to Muhammad Ali and Sugar Ray Leonard, whose professional fighting careers only overlapped during these years (Leonard debuted professionally on February 5, 1977; Ali's last fight was held on December 11, 1981). In fact, for one brief period in 1979, both acclaimed fighters held boxing titles.

¹³⁴ Wappie is a highly popular card game played throughout Trinidad; based on luck, the stakes are often quite high, and disputes related to the game have resulted in robbery and even murder. See newspaper articles by Y. Baboolal A. Simon, and E. Williams, and also "'Wappie' players shot and robbed."

hundredth and twenty-fifth infantry regiment from Alabama, trained and educated in North Carolina (fabricated, of course). Joebell will attempt to enter the United States via Puerto Rico, where he is told airport security officials wouldn't be as "fussy" as those in Trinidad. He arrives carrying a camera over his shoulder and a cigar in his mouth, and is brisk with confidence, for he "know what he is doing" (121). With his biographical fabrications and phony façade in check, Joebell's final hurdle is simply to "talk Yankee" to the immigration men. It is a linguistic talent Joebell feels he excels at; Lovelace writes:

Joebell smile, because if is one gift he have it is to talk languages, not Spanish and French and Italian and such, but he could talk English and American and Grenadian and Jamaican; and of all of them the one he love best is American. If that is the only problem, well, Joebell in America already (112).

Once again, the humor supplied by Joebell's ignorance veils the rhetorical *topoi*¹³⁵ at play here. What might it mean for Joebell, a Trinidadian, to "talk Yankee"? One can easily imagine Joebell tweaking his dialect to sound relatively convincing as a southern U.S. veteran of the Vietnam War. But it would seem that Lovelace is implying that there is more than just simplistic accent adjustment at work here, and it begs we unpack this transnational lingo.

This chapter will thus explore the seemingly absurd concept of 'speaking American,' and how it relates to the literature of the Anglophone Caribbean. Joebell's linguistic predilection to "talk Yankee" curiously aligns to George Lamming's transnational contention in *The Pleasures of Exile*, that "the West Indian novel, particularly in the aspect of *idiom*, cannot be understood unless you take a good look at the American nineteenth century, a good look at Melville, Whitman, and Mark Twain" (29, my emphasis). Both Lamming and Joebell, as unlike as both figures might seem to be, participate in a rhetoric of identification with U.S. culture, and while

¹³⁵ *Topoi*, the plural version of the Greek *topos*, is understood by scholars of rhetoric as "places" or "topics." As George Kennedy writes, the word tends to signify the various energies, strategies, and routes that a rhetorical argument or claim might exhibit (7, 225).

their reasons for this identification differ, both are drawn to the U.S. under the auspices of language and culture making. Borrowing from Maurice Charland's notion of constitutive rhetoric, I argue how both Lamming and Joebell – through idiom – are interpellated by the American “language” in attempts to assert their own identities, and ultimately, their own cultures.

While the previous chapter of this dissertation interrogates the institutional forces which proposed and authorized the establishment of literary studies in both the U.S. and Caribbean, this chapter will differ in that the focus is upon the rhetorical aspects of those appeals. Leo Marx's “vernacular tradition,” as it were, plays a significant role here, serving as a legitimate bridge by which to compare the American literary tendencies of the nineteenth century with George Lamming's generation of Anglophone Caribbean writers. While Marx's concept has been more or less relegated to critical antiquity, by unpacking George Lamming's “aspect of idiom,” it can be seen how both concepts share a cultural *ethos*. This is not to revive Marx's deficient notion (we'll address those deficiencies throughout), but rather to argue how its nation-based premise aligns with contemporary conceptions of constitutive rhetoric, a domain which is said to include “all language activity that goes into the constitution of actual human cultures and communities” (White 308).

The notion of language is of course incredibly nuanced when considering Caribbean history; but in the 1950s, Anglophone Caribbean writers deliberately sought to develop and assert a literary idiom unique from their European pedagogues, and this process has manifold similarities with the nationalistic tendencies found in the works of Melville, Twain, and Whitman. While literary critics have unpacked the constructivist and nationalistic inclinations of Lamming's *The Pleasures of Exile*, very few have done so under his pro-American leanings.

“We are pro-Whitman and pro-Melville and pro-Mark Twain,” Lamming writes, “but we would like to build our own Pequod” (153). This chapter thus looks to understand Lamming and his fellow generation of Caribbean writers within a new literary framework. By critiquing the constitutive rhetoric which informs America’s literary penchants for “making,” it will be seen how this relationship between language and culture informed Anglophone Caribbean writers as they attempt to develop and assert their own literary idiom. Ultimately, this shared linguistic *ethos* allows for a new trajectory with which to assess this highly seminal era in Anglophone Caribbean literary history.

Joebell arrives at the airport security desk in Puerto Rico boldly prepared to “talk Yankee” to the immigration officers. While he would seem on the precipice of an American passage, Joebell’s supposed expertise in speaking in the American idiom ultimately proves to be his undoing. The immigration officials at the airport find Joebell to be somewhat suspicious (the picture in his counterfeit passport frankly looks nothing like him), and they thereby detain him for questioning. But Joebell’s plot is so well conceived and executed that officials can find no justifiable reason to deny his passage into the United States. After a stressful series of questions – all of which Joebell passes with flying colors – the officials are close to giving up. Finally, one official tells Joebell to recite the alphabet. “The question too easy,” Joebell thinks, “Too easy like a calm blue sea” (123). As he annunciates each letter with precision, he begins to imagine himself in America already, daydreaming of popular figures like Sammy Davis Junior and Nina Simone. But Joebell’s migratory hopes are unraveled when he utters the final letter of the alphabet under its Commonwealth English annunciation, “zed.” As soon as that sound leaves his mouth, he is caught by the crafty official’s trap: Joebell’s West Indianness is identified, and thus

his American pilgrimage is denied. The story ends as Joebell is taken away by the authorities, imagining what could have been.

For a story which stands as the only Lovelace work to find its way to the so-called big-screen,¹³⁶ it has thus far been somewhat of an insignificant blip on the Lovelace literary radar. The majority of the story is written in Trinidadian vernacular, showcasing a literary talent of Lovelace's which has been well-noted in criticism. Catherine A. John, for example, argues that Lovelace is unparalleled in "his capacity to capture the cultural logic of Trinidadian creole" (100), and "Joebell and America" is but a masterly example of this. Yet despite some of the recent critical gravitations toward Lovelace's writing,¹³⁷ "Joebell and America" typically receives little more than passing mention.¹³⁸ John offers one of the most thorough examinations of the story in *Clear Word and Third Sight*, a text that considers the African diasporic consciousness in Black Caribbean writing. John is mainly concerned with how race and culture in the Caribbean respond to British colonialism and American capitalism, the latter of which is on display in the story about Joebell's transient hopes. John writes that the idea of America "produces an endless stream of entertainment and luxuries," but also offers itself as a place where Joebell can pursue a new identity (103). John argues that Joebell's search for that identity typifies a collective Pan-African "coming-to-consciousness" and thereby participates in the

¹³⁶ Lovelace's daughter, Asha, co-wrote and directed a short film version of the story in 2004. A short clip starring Brian Green as Joebell can be seen on YouTube at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tXxcC9lQnp4>.

¹³⁷ The past decade has been an especially fruitful one for Lovelace scholars. In 2005 the St. Augustine campus at UWI hosted a conference called "Lovelace @ 70," of which many of the academic papers were subsequently published in a special issue of *Anthurium: A Caribbean Studies Journal* in the fall of 2006. Both were then followed by Bill Schwarz's (ed.) collection of essays, *Caribbean Literature After Independence: The Case of Earl Lovelace* (2008).

¹³⁸ In the collection of essays edited by Schwarz, "Joebell" is critiqued only by King. James Procter includes a referential footnote on "Joebell," writing that the protagonist is an exaggerated version of Naipaul's Bogart: "Joebell is a mimic man completely immersed in a North American culture of film and television" (144n). The lack of criticism, it would seem, contradicts the story's popularity in the reprint realm. "Joebell and America" can be found in anthologies such as Robert L. Ross' (ed.) *Colonial and Postcolonial Fiction: An Anthology* (1999), Elizabeth J. Stieg's (ed.) *Fields of Vision: Readings about Culture, Race, and Ethnicity* (2001), and Dohra Ahmad's (ed.) *Rotten English: A Literary Anthology* (2007).

Black folk heroic tradition (a genre which pursues self-affirmation and culture-building amidst forces which tend to oppose them). John suggests that Joebell's seemingly thuggish behavior is thus a "kind of communal exoneration," an attempt to assert power in a system which has silenced his own voice (along with that of his larger Black Trinidadian community). Put more simply, the story is an example of cultural resistance represented through "internal power and communal balance" (18).

Shalini Puri reads "Joebell and America" in much different contexts. Puri argues that critical understandings of (masculine) resistance in Caribbean studies occlude and devalue the (more feminine) resource of respectability, and suggests that Joebell's "identification and admiration" of American culture stems from this privileging of "risk, recklessness, and impetuosity, gambling against the odds, rising to the challenge, and spectacular scale" (30). Jennifer Rahim reads "Joebell and America" as but a microcosm of Lovelace's entire canon; the story explores "immigration and its ambivalent play between the leave-taking spurred by the quest for self-improvement or 'betterment,' and the leave-taking that is an escape from the responsibility of meaningfully contributing towards the building of community and country" (8). And Edgardo the ties that bind language, power and truth as described by Ashcroft, *et al.*, in *The Empire Writes Back* (308).

Perhaps the most complete analysis of Joebell's adventure comes from Nicole King, who writes that the short stories throughout Lovelace's *A Brief Conversion* (the collection which includes "Joebell and America") evoke the "lived realities of Independence which exist outside the fanfare of political rhetoric," and are "chiefly concerned with precisely these legacies as they are experienced by the working population of the new nation" (114). King suggests that by the end of "Joebell and America," the self-titled protagonist can be seen as "speaking for a sovereign

Trinidad of the imagination as he casts about for the proper idiom in which to express himself” (123); due to Joebell’s autonomous blending of cultures, that expression is calypsonian and thus uniquely Trinidadian. King argues that although Joebell ultimately fails in his American infiltration, his greatest power in these contexts is this amalgamated *voice*, for it is through this way of speaking by which he “acquires a sense of his own style” (126).

While I do not wish to repudiate any of these keen analyses, I feel that each misses a larger transnational point that Lovelace is trying to relay. While the U.S. is cast as a threat to certain Caribbean purities in this story – a hovering, “neo-colonialist entity,” writes King (124) – America, or at least the *idea* of it, also affords certain cultural lures for a spectator like Joebell. Much like the Caribbean’s post-World War II generation, Joebell inevitably gravitates towards many of those American frequencies. What becomes central to Lovelace’s story, however, is how Joebell’s usage of language both authorizes those draws, and inevitably affords him a new or alternative means of asserting his own subjectivity. As King writes, the “prerogative which Lovelace’s characters assert for themselves – to play with their modes of self-expression – is a defining attribute of the post-Independence author” (126). Ultimately, it is Joebell’s rhetorical gravitation towards the American idiom – with all of its attendant cultural components – which suggests a new pathway with which to interrogate the literature of the Anglophone Caribbean. For example, when King refers to Joebell’s vast catalog of dialects – Grenadian and Jamaican and *American* – it calls to mind Lamming’s curious proclamation in *The Pleasures of Exile*. King notes that Lovelace’s story closes with Joebell seeking “the proper *idiom*” in which to express himself; Lamming, of course, would assert that Anglophone Caribbean literature cannot be understood without recognizing the “aspect of idiom” it shares with the likes of Melville,

Twain, and Whitman. How then, might this notion of “idiom” help clarify Caribbean gravitations to American literature, culture, and most importantly, *language*?

Certainly, one could make the argument that language is the central focus of George Lamming’s landmark text. While *The Pleasures of Exile* is concerned with the comprehensive effects of the colonial process, language is said to provide a means of navigating colonialism’s precarious ramifications. Sandra Pouchet Paquet summarizes this idea in the forward to the text’s 1992 edition; in it, she writes, “Language is an ambiguous space that can fertilize and extend the resources of human vision beyond the colonizing process. Though intended as a prison of service and measure of superiority, Language is created anew in the Caribbean” (xvi). Those familiar with the literature of the Anglophone Caribbean are most certainly used to this argument. As in Lamming’s own text, the majority of discussions which regard the literature and language of the Anglophone Caribbean ostensibly begin with that infamous relationship between Shakespeare’s *Tempest* duo, Prospero and Caliban, and the latter’s damning declaration that the only benefit to learning English from his master was the ability to curse.¹³⁹ Caliban’s damnation has since been fashioned into a metaphor for the longstanding control with which societies bent on colonizing other regions would assert their power. In *Caliban’s Voice: The Transformation of English in Post-Colonial Literatures*, Bill Ashcroft notes that the English language served as a cultural hegemony with which colonizers could assert their power over others; language ultimately imposes a way of being (3).¹⁴⁰ Thus, while the mid-twentieth century decolonization movements began to dawn, the Caribbean writers who grew up within

¹³⁹ The passage, as quoted in the introduction to this dissertation, reads, “You taught me language, and my profit on’t is, I know how to curse. The red plague rid you for learning me your language!” (26-27).

¹⁴⁰ It should be kept in mind throughout this chapter that in nearly all references to Prospero and Caliban, they are seen as metaphors – emblems – for a (once) contemporary condition throughout the Caribbean. As Lamming asserts in the early pages of *The Pleasures of Exile*, “I see *The Tempest* against the background of England’s experiment in colonisation...*The Tempest* was also prophetic of a political future which is our present” (13).

that colonial hegemony were forced to reconcile their linguistic inheritance, and adapt the language suitable for their own writerly use. As has been argued by postcolonial critics for decades, language appropriation acts as a way of “seizing” language and “re-placing it in a discourse fully adapted to the colonized place” (Ashcroft, *et. al.* 37).

While the consideration of language throughout *The Pleasures of Exile* also begins with that tenuous Prospero/Caliban relation, Lamming takes it to an unorthodox place. In the eighth chapter of *Pleasures*, titled “Ishmael at Home” (a nod towards Herman Melville’s *Moby-Dick* narrator¹⁴¹), Lamming considers America and its unique relation to the Caribbean. The chapter operates as a manifesto that reaffirms Ashcroft’s argument above; how, for centuries, Shakespeare’s Prospero, as the emblematic European colonial master, has maintained control of the Anglophone Caribbean and its island subjects (‘Calibans’) through the constitutive potential of word. Lamming writes that Prospero has used “that weapon of language, interpreting [it] as his executive arrangement,” arbitrarily constructing laws under a rhetoric meant to benefit him while simultaneously repressing Caliban (156). Lamming states that throughout colonial history it is language in this constitutive sense which has allowed Prospero to “climb to his throne” and dictate the day-to-day lives of his subjects (156-157).¹⁴²

Under this delineation, Lamming’s summary of the language situation in the Caribbean is not all that different from what scholars of rhetoric have come to call *constitutive rhetoric*. The

¹⁴¹ Lamming sees Melville’s Ishmael as a Caribbean C. L. R. James, writing, “James has been a Caribbean Columbus in reverse; and even though he may now be safely anchored in his original harbour he is none the less a living example of Ishmael. He didn’t go whaling it’s true, but he has always gone in search of those whose labour is a consistent rebuke to the monolithic authority of Moby Dick on land. He is Ishmael for the simple reason that he has never been, either by work education, a renegade and a castaway. His heart has always been with those; but it is one of the paradoxes of desire that he never started there. Nor is it likely that he will ever end there” (153).

¹⁴² For more on the relation of law and rhetoric, see the work of American law professor James Boyd White, particularly, “Constituting a Culture of Argument: The Possibilities of American Law” in *When Words Lose their Meaning* (1984). White writes that law is “literally and deliberately constitutive: it creates roles and relations and places and occasions on which one may speak; it gives to the parties a set of things that they may say, and it prohibits them from saying other things. It makes a real social world in a way that a work of literature does not” (271). White’s work is often seen alongside of Charland’s as pioneering early formulations of constitutive rhetoric.

phrase is still somewhat young in age, having been termed in the late-1980s by Maurice Charland, who used it to describe and analyze the binding forces of the sovereignty movement in Quebec.¹⁴³ Yet the idea behind the concept dates back to the days of the Sophists, and specifically the oratory of Gorgias, who argued that utterances effectively shape our material worlds along with our ability to understand and navigate through them (Charland 616-617). Charland essentially complicates this notion to include the political aspects of Althusser's theory of interpellation by suggesting that a group or an audience at which a certain rhetorical utterance is directed is thereby constituted. Charland summarizes this in writing that constitutive rhetoric "constructs political subjects through effects of identification" (617) long before the classical understanding of *rhetoric as persuasion* can take place¹⁴⁴; in other words, constitutive rhetoric pre-situates an audience by generating the conditions of possibility that can structure the identity of those for whom the persuasion is intended to address (Jasinski 107). Charland writes that, as a genre, constitutive rhetoric "simultaneously presumes and asserts a fundamental collective identity for its audience, offers a narrative that demonstrates that identity...[and] arises as a means to collectivization, usually in the face of a threat that is itself presented as alien or other" (616).¹⁴⁵

While Prospero would come to "constitute" the reality of Caliban through a similar means (one might cite the master/slave narrative here¹⁴⁶), this rhetorical dynamic would change as the Anglophone Caribbean islands approached national independence in the mid-twentieth

¹⁴³ For more on this movement, see Charland's "Constitutive Rhetoric: The Case of the *Peuple Québécois*" (1987).

¹⁴⁴ On the heels of Charland's piece, James Jasinski notes an upsurge in contemporary scholarship on constitutive rhetoric, citing examples which apprehend, for example, the AIDS community, or the people of Palestine. In essence, Jasinski writes that these studies collectively exhibit that "the constitutive function of rhetoric is beginning to receive the attention it would appear to deserve" (107).

¹⁴⁵ For the antecedents of this notion, Charland suggests reading Edwin Black's "The Second Persona" (1970) and Michael C. McGee's "In Search of 'The People': A Rhetorical Alternative" (1975), which considers the rhetoric appeals which lead to collectivization, following which that collective can become a "reservoir of power that can defend or challenge legitimate authority" (617).

¹⁴⁶ See Hegel's master/slave dialectic in *The Phenomenology of Spirit*.

century. Corollary opportunities would allow Lamming to write that “the language of modern politics is no longer Prospero’s exclusive vocabulary. It is Caliban’s as well; and [he] is at liberty to choose the meaning of this moment” (158).¹⁴⁷ While most writers and critics (a la Ashcroft and Paquet) have taken this “moment” to discuss the various modes of appropriation by which the Caribbean writer reconfigures Prospero’s language to assert their own Caribbean cultural identity, Lamming – while doing this as well – first makes that curious correlation with the nineteenth century American triumvirate of Melville, Whitman, and Twain. This move signals a unique relation between U.S. and Caribbean literatures that scholars have yet to work out. While this dissertation has thus far been concerned with the various causes and effects of those relations, it is time to address the rhetorical nature of this transnational link. If constitutive rhetoric is seen as participating in the construction of an audience or group – which Lamming’s text most certainly does (more on this idea throughout) – by interrogating the so-called “aspect of idiom” alongside this rhetorical process, it becomes apparent that our critical understandings of *The Pleasures of Exile* may need to be re-conceptualized.

If we are to consider Charland’s notion of audience creation, it requires we contextualize this within mid-twentieth century Caribbean contexts. Throughout *Pleasures*, Lamming recognizes the fundamental *lack* of a concerted audience of Caribbean readers. “The West Indian of average opportunity and intelligence,” Lamming writes, “has not yet been converted to reading as a civilised activity, an activity which justifies itself in the exercise of his mind” (42). While a Caribbean readership had grown gradually along with the emerging prevalence of local newspapers, reading “seriously,” Lamming suggests, was still mainly reserved for those

¹⁴⁷ The significance Lamming places upon *language* throughout the text can be plainly discerned in the many instances in which the word is capitalized; but, there are also plenty of instances in which it is not. A quick survey of these instances reveals no discernible pattern, but would provides someone with what might be an interesting study in the semiotics of *Pleasures*.

expecting to take colonial school examinations. As the second chapter of this dissertation touches upon, these conditions created somewhat of a dilemma for the emergent Caribbean novelist. “For whom, then, do we write?” Lamming wonders in *Pleasures*.

Throughout the 1950s, the immediate audience for the Caribbean novelist was, of course, almost exclusively a British one. Lamming admits as much, stating that “the West Indian writer does not write for [West Indians]; nor does he write for himself. He writes always for the foreign reader” (43). J. Dillon Brown remarks that the “circuits of capital, criticism, and publishing” more or less necessitated this (670); and whereas most critics like to see Lamming’s literature as establishing a Caribbean readership, Brown contends that because Lamming’s work was inevitably and always “addressed to a foreign (English) reader,” his texts should thus be apprehended as such (669-670, 673-677). Brown’s argument opposes the majority of criticism which contemplates Lamming’s audience. As previously mentioned, Lamming’s view of the ontological effects of language throughout *The Pleasures of Exile* has generally motivated critics to see it as a sort of usurpation (especially when rendered in that Prospero/Caliban dynamic). Thus, while Lamming’s *buying* audience was English, his *future* audience would be Caribbean. Curdella Forbes writes that *Pleasures* is an “an ur-narrative of relationality in which Lamming crafts an entire ideology of Caribbean linguistic identity through the pages of Shakespeare’s *Tempest*” (235); that Lamming has a propensity to see language as “constituting the human condition,” both historically and ontologically (149), and Lamming’s work thus emphasizes the importance of naming, which certify his characters as Caribbean progenitors (159). Paquet suggests that Lamming’s language “inscribe[s] a narrative of new beginnings” (“Serial Art” 104); Nadi Edwards writes that *Pleasures* “constitute[s] one of the most powerful postcolonial interventions in the construction of genealogies of [Caribbean] cultural and literary nationalisms”

(60); Carolyn T. Brown argues that “Lamming questions how, without accepting Prospero’s exploitation, Caliban can use the “gift” of consciousness to achieve a new Eden” (42).

If any of these analyses share something (and this is how prevailing readings of *Pleasures* generally go), it is that Lamming uses the language of Prospero to create something anew. I do not refute this viewpoint; in fact, I tend to agree with it. But what the majority of these readings neglect is what I feel is a salient step within this creative process, and it can be found in Lamming’s linguistic nod toward his American literary predecessors. If critics are to apprehend Lamming’s texts – particularly *The Pleasures of Exile* – as touting a rhetorical making for the Caribbean, I believe it requires we consider this “aspect of idiom” phrase. An analysis of the usage of the word “idiom” and its relation to America’s literature only helps supports this argument.

Idiom, as a literary term in its own right, is somewhat misappropriated and often misunderstood. The term is used quite frequently in literary criticism, but rarely under circumstances which recognize the nuanced complexity that its definition holds. As the introduction to this dissertation points out, writers often use the term as a general reference to linguistic sound (like a dialect) and/or a literary writing style. A writer may refer to the idiom of a particular individual, perhaps like Huck Finn; Leo Marx, for example, argues that the many virtues in Twain’s classic text stem from “having the western boy tell his own story in his own idiom” (“Pilot” 129). Or the term can also describe a writer’s composition style; Melville’s “heightened language” throughout *Moby-Dick*, writes Kris Lackey, is penned in “an idiom that is Carlylean, Shakespearean, and biblical” (142). Alternatively, the term is also used when describing to the communicative tendencies of a group. Marx writes that, on the national scale, writers like Twain, Thoreau, Hemingway, and Frost each write in a “distinctively American

idiom” (*Machine* 132). Paul Giles, in remarking how American studies has developed since Marx’s era, writes how the “tropes of myth and typology that supported American studies in its earliest days have [since] been superseded by the newer idioms of borders and hybridity” (525).

Lamming’s sense of idiom certainly relates to these usages, especially when one considers the frequency with which both American and Anglophone Caribbean writers have written in regional vernaculars. In one of the earliest ruminations on ‘idiomaticity’ as a legitimate aspect of linguistics, Logan Pearsall Smith writes that idiom is sometimes employed “to describe the *form* of speech peculiar to a people or nation” (67, my emphasis). In this sense, one can assume Lamming cites idiom for the colloquial nature – the spoken, dialectical *form* – in which many of the early Anglophone Caribbean texts are written. Citing writers like Reid, Mittelholzer, Selvon, Mais, Salkey, and Carew, Lamming argues throughout *The Pleasures of Exile* that the West Indian novel is concerned with the life and language of the West Indian peasant, a subject matter that “had traditionally been ignored” (38-39). These writers thus sought to farm the various vernaculars which formed Caribbean speech. While the tendency of identifying and documenting the colloquial speech habits peculiar to this group becomes the literary motive for these writers, Lamming recognizes an irony in this. In *Pleasures*, he asks:

why is it that [these writers’] work is shot through and through with the urgency of peasant life? And how has it come about that their colonial education should not have made them pursue the general ambitions of non-provincial writers. How is it that they have not to play at being the Eliots and Henry Jameses of the West Indies? Instead, they move nearer to Mark Twain (38).

This ‘movement’ towards Twain is obvious in a vernacular sense, for Twain is well-known as having elevated idiom and slang in American literature “to the multicultural polyphony that is its birthright and special strength” (Fishkin 5). Like Twain’s texts in America, Caribbean novels such as Reid’s *New Day*, Selvon’s *A Brighter Sun*, and Lamming’s *In the Castle of My Skin*, all make attempts to navigate the plethora of linguistic intricacy which constitutes the spoken

language of local communities. The written result is something far different than what might be called ‘proper English’; it is what Kamau Brathwaite has identified as “the process of using English in a different way from the ‘norm’...English in a new sense” (*History* 5).¹⁴⁸ Roger Mais’ *The Hills Were Joyful Together*, for example, experiments with a handful of Kingston idioms, one of which can be witnessed in this premonitory found near the end of the novel: “The livin’ clouds o’ witness come to de sky...de moon, brudda, is a shim-sham eena prickly-yaller tree...den you tu’n yuh eye look behin’ you, nuttin’...an’ nutt’n befo’ you jus’ de same...de livin’ clouds o’ witness come to de sky bim-by, brudda” (253).¹⁴⁹

This strategy of writing regional voices into texts has a long history in literature. The novels of Dickens and Scott, for example – and countless more as far back as Dante and Chaucer – also experiment with written versions of colloquial language; which is merely another way of saying that Lamming’s use of ‘idiom’ as a bridge between the literatures of the Caribbean and the nineteenth century U.S. goes far deeper than a shared desire to simply explore colloquial vernaculars.¹⁵⁰

With this in mind, it helps to consider Smith’s ancillary definition of ‘idiom.’ Smith writes that idiom, or *an* idiom, can also be considered one of those “forms of expression, or

¹⁴⁸ It is worth mentioning that Brathwaite has often recognized the American influences upon Caribbean writing, suggesting that “most, if not all, West Indian writers are under the influence of the Lawrence-Faulkner-Hemingway tradition of folk-talk and rhythmic prose” (“Roots” 52). Brathwaite has also cited the likes of Whitman, Eliot, and Hughes (and even Miles Davis) as influencing the Caribbean development of their own poetic voice. For more, see *History of the Voice* (1984) and “Jazz and the West Indian Novel” (1967/1968).

¹⁴⁹ Some readers might prefer to call Mais’s language here a form of creole. In fact, Jonathan Arac has argued that “American vernacular” might be better suited under the creole nomination as well. Arac writes that this “terminological shift” would “place less weight on distinguishing the culture of the United States from the cultures of Britain and Europe and more on relating, both as similar and as different, the cultures of the United States to those of other areas once held as colonies of Britain and Europe” (“Whitman” 50-51). There are two reasons I have generally avoided using the term “creole” in this chapter: (1) it has numerous classifications throughout the Caribbean, and thus poses somewhat of a predicament when discussing it in extra-local contexts (for more, see *Exploring the Boundaries of Caribbean Creole Languages*, eds. Hazel Simmons-McDonald and Ian Robertson), and (2) for the purposes of congruency, I have generally defaulted to the more generalized term “idiom,” especially given Lamming’s usage of it.

¹⁵⁰ Dohra Ahmad provides a nice synopsis of the “stunningly unanticipated ways in which English has changed as it grew into a global language” (16) in her introduction to *Rotten English: A Literary Anthology* (2007).

grammatical construction, or of phrasing, which are peculiar to a language, and approved by its usage, although the meanings they convey are often different from their grammatical or logical signification” (67). Speakers of the English language have heard hundreds if not thousands of these odd expressions. When someone is told to “break a leg,” *per se*, it isn’t meant *literally*. The same can be said for other quirky yet common phrases like “knock em dead,” “spill the beans,” “beat around the bush,” or, (pardon my French): “shoot the shit.” All of these idioms have meanings *far, far* different than their literal succession of words convey. In this sense, idioms can often be the basis for interesting, yet precarious, cultural snafus. Take the saying “break a leg,” for example. While the phrase has evolved into a rather commonly known idiom, at one point in time it was *created by* and *reserved for* a specific culture. A relatively short time ago those outside of theater culture likely wouldn’t have known that to say “good luck” to someone before taking stage was, in fact, bad luck (like a jinx); hence, the seemingly oxymoronic employment of a negative blessing was creatively used and appropriated to mean something quite the opposite. “Break a leg” was thus a particular phraseology unique to the culture of the theater, their own sort of language which revealed (to the insiders who knew its non-literal meaning) insight into the dynamic that constituted that cultural world.¹⁵¹

Lamming’s teacher and mentor Frank Collymore in fact captured many idioms local to his own region in a text called *Notes for a Glossary of Words and Phrases of Barbadian Dialect*. Collymore registers entries like “cool out,” which he defines as “To sit at one’s ease, especially on a verandah, enjoying the breeze, or else doing nothing in particular, idling” (23). Other examples include “blue-duppy,” which is known among local cricketers as “a bruise or black and blue on the hand or wrist cause by a blow from a cricket ball” (15); or “screel,” which is also

¹⁵¹ A large plethora of texts attempt to trace this specific phrase’s etymology. The *American Heritage Dictionary of Idioms* (ed. Christine Ammer, 1997), states that the exact origin of this phrase is unclear, though conjectures that the ironic usage in connection with luck in all likelihood has German roots (76).

employed in Lamming's *In the Castle of My Skin*,¹⁵² can describe the piercing sound of a whistle but is also "applicable to the high pitched screeching of children" (52). Collymore's text is filled with similar versions of Barbadian-based appropriations of English rendered in a new idiom.

Idiom dictionaries like Collymore's offer decipherability for those outside of the respective culture or community. Language scholar Murat H. Roberts can thereby write that idioms reveal "the attitude of mind common to all members of a linguistic community and inherent in all their thinking" (291). Thus, in merging the work of Smith with Roberts, it can be stated that idioms belie logic (*logos*) but convey characteristics or character (*ethos*) of a community. To understand how the phrase "break a leg" works is no doubt a logical challenge to those cultural outsiders; simultaneously, it is a tie that binds the members already accepted into that linguistic community. Uttering the phrase to another member of the community asserts one's membership within that community. And the meta-language (English, in this case) is no skeleton key for understanding these peculiar phrases. Roberts adds that even closely related versions of the same language, like British and American English, for example, usually exhibit vast differences of idiom; as such, a speaker of either is no insider to the other culture's phraseology (300). To know the idiom is thus to know something about that particular community or culture.

Given this delineation of idiom, how might George Lamming – Barbadian by birth and British colonial by education – gain access to the culture codes enmeshed in America's nineteenth century literature? Furthermore, how might one's capacity to understand the West Indian novel be reliant upon the aspect of idiom in the works of Melville, Twain, and Whitman?

¹⁵² The passage, which begins Chapter 5, reads, "At the same hour every morning the whistle screeled shot up like an alarm through the rumbling of cart wheels. The whistle was a small metal instrument with a curved mouthpiece that fitted evenly under the lips, and a sunken throat carved open on one side. It contained a pea-shaped ball which, breath-driven, flew frantically from side to side and seemed to throttle the screeled of the whistle" (88).

What is the transnational bond here? Leo Marx's notion of the "vernacular tradition" in American literature helps to clarify some of the draw with which Lamming felt toward the literary idiom of that American trio of writers. Throughout the 1950s, Marx was a part of that myth-and-symbol school which is the focus of the previous chapter; his works helped to constitute and establish American literature as an institutional staple. Written in 1958, "The Vernacular Tradition in American Literature: Walt Whitman and Mark Twain" could very well have provided Lamming with the means to decipher this American idiom. Looking to discern "what *is* different, after all, about American literature," Marx sought to identify the specifically American aspects of U.S. literature. Concerning himself with the expressive customs of nineteenth century U.S. texts, Marx argues that it wouldn't be until the late 1800s whereby writers working within the U.S. could assert significant distinction from their British forbearers. Citing Whitman and Twain, Marx writes that their uniqueness lay in that they identified an American *voice*. Marx writes:

Walt Whitman and Mark Twain...establish, once and for all, the literary usefulness of the native *idiom*. With it they fashioned a vernacular mode or, if you will, a national style. This style marks a major difference between English and American literature (3-4, my emphasis).

Not to revisit the content of the previous chapter, but the flaws in this passage are readily apparent. Jonathan Arac has taken Marx to task for his unilateral view of the U.S. "vernacular." Arguing that Marx and his contemporaries participated in the "hypercanonization" of certain U.S. texts – the "nationalization of literary narrative that defines exemplary national values in works that do not propose them" (*Huckleberry Finn As Idol and Target* 154) – Arac faults Marx for emphasizing the nation whereas a writer like Twain (especially in *Huckleberry Finn*) was

clearly emphasizing the local (160-164).¹⁵³ Furthermore, Arac suggests that Marx's definition of "vernacular" is unstable; that while it establishes a set of bounds positing "America versus the Old World," it cannot account for the competing varieties of vernacular *within* the U.S. (161). In essence, contemporary critics have more or less swept Marx's piece under the rug of essentialism.

However still, for all of Marx's oversimplifications, the binary architecture of his argument offers a commonplace which would most certainly appeal to the likes of Lamming, who was busy penning *The Pleasures of Exile* (and had just finished visiting the U.S. for the first time), when Marx's piece was published. Marx was obviously swayed by the grandiose appeals of the previous century which urged Americans to divorce themselves from European, and particularly British, influences. This assertive rhetoric can be found in droves throughout the literary era with which Marx concerns himself. Emerson is oft seen as among the first to make this declarative divorce from European hegemony. The "American Scholar" speech, as noted in this dissertation's introduction, urges for American "act[s] of creation" (57) in the face of a "long apprenticeship to the learning of other lands" (53). Citing this sustained dependence, Melville writes that Americans must begin to "duly recognize the meritorious writers that are our own" ("Hawthorne" 57). And Whitman's *Leaves of Grass*, as Harold Bloom has noted, perhaps affords this campaign the most sustained and successful example of "the drive among American intellectuals to create or discover works of art free of European influence and heritage" (144). In sum, as Robert Weisbuch notes, these examples help to exhibit the "moral urgency...in the castigation of British influence" throughout the American nineteenth century, while simultaneously "nominating somethings to fill imagined [national] absences" (4, ix-x). Given

¹⁵³ Arac suggests this can be discerned in the "explanatory" which proceeds *Huckleberry Finn*; Twain writes in that disclaimer: "In this book a number of dialects are used, to wit: the Missouri negro dialect; the extremest form of the backwoods Southwestern dialect; the ordinary 'Pike County' dialect; and four modified varieties of this last."

the trajectory of Marx's criticism, he was obviously influenced by these nineteenth century assertive claims.

But it is also noteworthy that Marx, when writing about Twain and Whitman, cites the "literary usefulness of the native idiom" at a time in which Lamming had just become conscious of the "immense importance of that nineteenth-century literature" ("Sovereignty" 134). It would seem quite possible that Lamming's "aspect" was informed by Marx, especially as it relates to culture. Marx insisted that the "core of the American vernacular" was not "simply a style" distinct from European predecessors, but a "style with a politics in view" (8). Marx would write that American vernacular literature is a "vehicle for the affirmation of an egalitarian faith," it "sweeps aside received notions of class and status" which are "inherited forms" from Europe (8). Relying heavily on the literature of Twain and Whitman, Marx writes that the tradition they initiated has working class roots, it "bears many marks of its plebian origin" (15) and touts an "unremitting anti-intellectualism" (17). It defies and ignores "the constraints and oppression identified with the European past" (17). Sieglinde Lemke provides a nice summary of the "idiomatic colloquialness" and "salient lyricism" which informed Marx's assertion of this so-called tradition:

it is tacitly agreed upon that vernacular literature is a literature with a politics in view, as Marx puts it. It opposes racial and other forms of discrimination. It embodies class struggle, rejecting elitism for egalitarianism, which to Marx means valorizing the 'common man' over more learned or sophisticated classes. Vernacular literature has also been said to represent the people of the lower classes, but unlike most proletarian literature, it is never propagandistic (31).

This plebian focus appeals to Lamming's project throughout *Pleasures*. As cited above, Lamming observes that his generation of Anglophone Caribbean writers "looked in and down at what had traditionally been ignored," that their works are "shot through and through with the urgency of peasant life" (38-39). Lamming cites writers like Sam Selvon and Vic Reid who

exhibit the “rhythms” of this peasant culture; their “prose is, really, the people’s speech,” Lamming writes, “the organic music of the earth” (45).

Like Marx, Lamming has been accused of essentialism given his unilateral apprehension of this West Indian “peasant.” Suggesting that the concept of a “peasant literature” is far too linear to take seriously, Susheila Nasta has criticized Lamming’s notion for being “too all-embracing in relation to West Indian literature as a whole,” and notes that Lamming and the writers he touts were actually of middle-class origin (8). But Lamming had anticipated these retorts which would accuse him of “chauvinistic” hypocrisy. He readily admits in *Pleasures* that the education of he and his fellow generation of writers is “more or less middle-class Western culture, and particularly English culture” (38). In bridging the gap with peasant culture, Lamming cites the unique “historic novelty” of the Caribbean situation that his generation was forced to confront; that because there was no “previous tradition to drawn upon,” they are the “earliest pioneers,” almost like pseudo-anthropologists (38). He argues:

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. It is the West Indian novel that has restored the West Indian peasant to his true and original status of personality (39).

As such, despite the shortcomings of Lamming’s articulation of this “peasant” culture, ultimately, that culture was to be asserted as the answer to the “old problem” which Marx had identified earlier in America. Noting a lack of national literary distinction, Marx sought to modulate that by noting the focus which Twain and Whitman place upon the common American’s way of talking. Through these inquiries, Marx writes that “the American subject was brought up closer than it ever had been before. The device was old, but the particular persona was new...[it] is the product of a new sort of culture, and appropriately enough, he speaks a new language” (6).

Because the literary claims of Marx and Lamming are deployed in a rhetoric of newness and rendered in national contexts, Charland's notion of "constitutive rhetoric" becomes quite useful here.¹⁵⁴ Charland's work insists that "peoples are rhetorically constituted" (135); that in the contemplation of a people or a nation, those bodies become real "only through rhetoric" (137). In a protracted delineation of the concept's agency, Charland adds:

What is significant in constitutive rhetoric is that it positions the reader towards political, social, and economic action in the material world and it is in this positioning that its ideological character becomes significant. For the purpose of analysis, this positioning of subjects as historical actors can be understood as a two-step process. First, audience members must be successfully interpellated; not all constitutive rhetorics succeed. Second, the tautological logic of constitutive rhetoric must necessitate action in the material world; constitutive rhetoric must require that its embodied subjects act freely in the social world to affirm their subject position (141).

Under this rubric the aforementioned rhetorical claims made by Emerson, Melville, and Whitman, put Marx in the position of a reader; Marx is interpellated as an audience member by those appeals which promote the notion that Americans are (or must be) unique from the British. And Marx, having been persuaded by the idiom through which this rhetorical call for action is deployed, thus reformulates those arguments and subsequently constitutes his own audience – which likely includes Lamming – when pronouncing the uniqueness of this so-called "vernacular tradition."

This example shows how autonomy plays an interesting role in constitutive rhetoric: the *audience*, according to some interpreters of Charland's notion, has none. As Katja Thieme writes, "In contrast to persuasion, constitutive rhetoric illuminates how audiences are created in the moment of utterance and interpellated with the unspoken force of ideology" (49). Like Althusser's theory of interpellation, the interpellated have no autonomy; Thieme adds that "Charland criticizes the idea that audiences are free to chose, free to be persuaded" (42). Distinct

¹⁵⁴ In fact, Charland's notion relates quite fittingly with Benedict Anderson's notion of *Imagined Communities*.

from the classical forms of rhetoric which situate a speaker, his or her argument, and a self-determining audience, Thieme understands Charland's notion to include "no room for persuasion"; once the speaker's utterance is put forth, the audience is inevitably constituted by that rhetoric (42). But if that rhetoric itself includes characteristics of social or institutional change, as communication and rhetoric scholar Thomas Rosteck points out, the audience does, in fact, possess a certain autonomy. Rosteck argues that in a rhetor's appeal for audience action, the "implied subjects" are invited to "follow the logic of his construction of them and their situation," and inevitably "become what they are interpellated as...capable of creating social and institutional change" (127). In other words, if the audience is asked to effect some sort of change, their autonomy as subjects is inherently granted by that rhetoric.¹⁵⁵

That braggart protagonist, Joebell, helps clarify audience constitution. All questions of autonomy aside, Joebell is clearly drawn to – or interpellated by – the rhetoric of American pop culture as it is broadcasted through Trinidadian televisions. Watching the likes of Frank Sinatra and Wilt Chamberlain, Joebell is captivated by the images he sees on screen; and the rhetoric extended by the television – in whatever form it takes, visual or verbal or both – has thereby constituted Joebell as a recipient viewer. But the message Joebell receives – and his interpretation of it – ultimately persuades him into believing that he himself can be some sort of pseudo-American; "I feel American," he states, "Is just that I aint born there" (123). It would seem that Joebell is afforded the opportunity to assert himself as an American, and he does so in speaking "Yankee." There is a curious link here. Joebell's reception of American culture – and

¹⁵⁵ It should be noted here that Charland, in fact, settles this dispute quite simply when stating: "The freedom of the [audience]...is but an illusion...because the [rhetor's] narrative is a structure of understanding that produces totalizing interpretations, the subject is constrained to *follow through*, to act so as to maintain the narrative's consistency. A narrative, once written [or spoken], offers a logic of meaningful totality." As such, the subjects or recipients of that narrative "must follow the logic of the narrative. They must be true to the motives though which the narrative constitutes them" (141).

its rhetoric – comes with a certain attachment, for he discerns capabilities for *making*. Lovelace writes:

Joebell believe the whole world is a hustle. He believe everybody running some game, putting on some show and the only thing that separate people is that some have power and others don't have none, that who in in and who out out, and that is exactly what Joebell kick against, because Joebell have himself down as a hero too (119).

Thus, it is within this “game” – this “hustle” – that Joebell feels he can construct an identity which is intended to allow him a means of asserting the power he cites here. Whether this feeling stems from the fact that he is interpellated by American television’s constitutive rhetoric, or that the rhetoric itself affords Joebell a certain creative prowess, the fact of the matter is Joebell witnesses the link between talking and *becoming*. Joebell feels he can *make* himself a hero. Lovelace recurrently repeats that last sentence throughout the story: “Joebell have himself down as a hero” (112, 113, 119). Clearly, Joebell’s high perception of himself comes from the various traits he has hand-picked from the Hollywood-like characters he sees on screen. Joebell has hopes of “getting on like an American” (124); when he dons his American wardrobe he becomes the part, and he “walk with a swagger and he puff his cigar like he already *home* in the United States of America” (119, my emphasis). Joebell’s real assertion of an Americanness, however, comes through language; he “believe that one of the main marks of a real American” is one who “let his voice be heard” (120). This is what Joebell “admire most about Americans...they going to open their mouth and talk for their rights” (121). In other words, to Joebell, Americans ultimately *come to be* through language, and when Joebell “talk Yankee,” he *makes* himself a Yankee.

American culture has a long and unique (and lucrative, frankly) history with respect to *making*. Whether one cites the original Pilgrims who settled the Plymouth Colony, the long lines of immigrants who have come to “make it in America,” or even the U.S. industrial revolution,

there is a rhetoric attached to American culture as one in which various things – communities, identities, products – can be *made*. In the case of the Caribbean, it is not just the television through which this notion gets dispersed. As the first four chapters of this dissertation lay out, the means through which Caribbean individuals were exposed to U.S. culture – and its attendant rhetorics of making – have been no less than varied, and that introductory process would snowball throughout the 1940s and 1950s. During and immediately following the War, there was the initial lure of a new culture and its material by-products brought by (or for) American soldiers: Hollywood, fashion, literature, comic books, even chewing gum. The soldiers also brought with them to the Caribbean a new lingo, and a certain bravado which proved appealing to individuals enmeshed in a strict, colonial society. Due to this wartime relation, the possibility of visiting America, or working there, becomes more and more of a reality for many Caribbean individuals; as witnessed in the early novels of George Lamming, characters like Trumper and Chiki would go to the U.S., returning home with new experiences and outlooks. As Lamming writes in *In the Castle of My Skin*, “Most people who went to America in such circumstances usually came back changed. They had not only acquired a new idiom but their whole concept of the way life should be lived was altered” (229). It was also during this era which witnessed the institutional gains involving the American studies field, whose body of scholars touted the ‘uniqueness’ of American culture and the attendant American-made literary texts. As the previous chapter of this dissertation delineates, Lamming, C. L. R. James, and would-be critics like Kenneth Ramchand keenly watched how this discipline was essentially made.

But above all of these draws – or perhaps latent within them – is that seemingly powerful rhetorical notion which we can trace in both Lamming’s “aspect” and also in that of Joebell: the idea that “America” could be *made* and shaped by individuals, and analogous to this, individuals

could also *make themselves* in America. It is thus not all that surprising that Lamming discerns America as a cathedral, built by the likes of its writers: “We don’t mind worshipping in that kind of cathedral,” he writes, “for there is a possibility—indeed, more than a possibility—that we will introduce some new psalms” (153-154). Even Jamaica Kincaid, Lamming’s junior by over twenty years, was witness to this notion; describing her creative development as a novelist, she states:

I think the major thing for me was that I came to America; and not England, or Canada; and that it was not required of me to behave in some way. *When you are in America you can invent yourself.* I was able to figure out a *voice* for myself that had nothing to do with where I went to school, or with what I was born to, or where I came from. That I came from a colony was of no interest to Americans. That I came from people who were peasants, poor people, was of no interest to anyone: only what I had to say. Nothing about me was important: only what I could do right now (139, my emphasis).

Kincaid’s commentary here reifies the attendant notions of making which are inherent to the rhetorics of America. Even C. L. R. James was personally witness to this: from the imperialistic conquests of the American market, to his fascination with Hollywood, *making* was central to the culture he fell so madly in love with, yet despised for its unremitting greed.¹⁵⁶

How, then, did this notion of *making* become so implicit to American literature and culture? While a comprehensive answer to that question requires a space unavailable given the contexts of this dissertation, certain scholars have been able to identify some of the rhetoric through which the notion is dispersed. Historian and sociologist Claude S. Fischer traces its seeds through a vast rhetoric of self-inspection and character improvement which dates back to the early Puritan era. In *Made in America: A Social History of American Culture and Character*,

¹⁵⁶ In the early 1940s, James writes: “Today, in American imperialism, the *commodity* has reached its most grandiose historical manifestation. All peoples are entangled in the net of the world market” (“American People”). Later, in *American Civilization*, he would argue how self-making and commodity-making would be the seminal conflict of the modern era: “Liberty, freedom, pursuit of happiness, free individuality had an actuality and a meaning in America which they had nowhere else...The essential conflict is between these ideals, hopes, aspirations, needs, which are still the essential part of the tradition, and the economic and social realities of present-day America” (31).

Fischer argues that the primacy which Americans place on “making” and “self” stem from Puritan culture; the Puritans were “self-inspection enthusiasts who dissected their behavior...for signs of salvation and damnation,” writes Fischer (198-199). He notes that Ben Franklin, whose autobiographical writings can be seen as stemming from this line of descent, espoused self-making through “self-analysis and self-betterment” (199). Citing Franklin, Robert F. Sayre makes the contention that before American literature and poetry would develop into its own national genre, Americans wrote diaries and autobiographies, exploration narratives and travelers’ accounts, all of which are inevitably infused with first-person vernacular and forms.¹⁵⁷

Sayre thus suggests that the autobiography genre “may be the preeminent kind of American expression” (147), and is inseparable from the many forms of making in American culture.

Describing this link, he writes:

One could compare American autobiography to American architecture, especially domestic architecture...the special virtue of autobiography is that it has been a form in which so many builders have compiled records of their work. It describes their hundreds of careers and achievements and also their unifying achievement, their character, which collectively composes the national character. Their need to write and record has been as urgent, in some cases, as their need to build (148).

The rhetoric of the early American autobiography genre and its fusions with “making” is clearly discernible in the literature which followed, and is especially fueled by the wildly successful self-help and advice books of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.¹⁵⁸ The

¹⁵⁷ Sayre specifically cites William Bradford’s *Of Plymouth Plantation* and John Winthrop’s *Journal* (146).

¹⁵⁸ On one hand, I can personally attest to the seeming effectiveness of such texts, or at least my ancestors can; my Danish great-grandfather purchased many self-help texts upon his immigration to America to ease his transition into the culture. Then again, there are plenty of other motives behind the publication of such texts, from the accruing of readers who will *pay* to read them, to more subliminal ones, as Micki McGee writes in *Self-Help, Inc.: Makeover Culture in American Life*: “The idea of individual success and self-invention, epitomized in figures such as Benjamin Franklin, Andrew Carnegie, and Bill Gates serves to cajole and encourage American workers...[it] comforts and consoles us” (13). McGee’s text is not only highly critical of “self-help” culture, but it offers a nice history of its evolution, from Franklin’s model, to Emerson’s notion of “Self-Reliance” and Horatio Alger’s “morality tales,” and how these ideals and examples of individual success eventually gave way to the “forces of industrialization” (31). For a vast bibliography on nineteenth century “Self-Help and Self-Improvement” related texts, see the Library of Congress’ “The Nineteenth Century in Print” website available at:

autobiographical genre and its attendant literature focusing upon the self – typified by Franklin’s account – was, or would become, writes Sayre, “a version of national epic” (157). Sayre is careful not to assert that American autobiographies are different from those written in other nations or regions; but he cites the genre’s prevalence in the nation’s fledgling years as a means of identifying a central medium – an idiom, perhaps – which much of the nation’s subsequent literature would cultivate. In fact, toward the end of Whitman’s life, he would tell his biographer, Horace Traubel¹⁵⁹, that “I feel myself that the American is being made but is not made: much of him is yet in the state of dough: the loaf is not yet given shape. He will come—our American” (201).

In the 1950s and 60s, when writings like Whitman’s were heralded as “quintessentially American” (Bloom 144), this rhetoric of making had an especially powerful force behind it. As previous chapters of this dissertation point out, the War and certain institutional gains expedited the momentum for pushing a distinctly American *ethos* and ideology, and it would be sentiments much like those relayed by Whitman here which would be touted by American studies critics as evidence of America’s literary ‘arrival.’¹⁶⁰ In essence, this idea of “making” one’s self, one’s literature, or one’s nation – asserted through a distinct constitutive idiom – became a latent trait

<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/ndlpcoop/moahtml/mncspself.html> (ironically, the texts listed here are made digitally available by the University of Michigan’s *Making of America* project, which is discussed below).

¹⁵⁹ Traubel, who has been described as Whitman’s “confidant and disciple” (Folsom 740), would serve as one of Whitman’s literary executors following his death, and is best known for a nine-volume biography which traces Whitman’s twilight years. For more on Traubel and his writings on, and relationship with, Whitman, see *With Walt Whitman in Camden* along with Ed Folsom’s entry in *Walt Whitman: An Encyclopedia* (eds. LeMaster and Kummings).

¹⁶⁰ Matthiessen, you’ll remember, opens *American Renaissance* by noting “America’s way of *producing* a renaissance, by coming to its first maturity and affirming its rightful heritage in the whole expanse of art and culture” (vii, my emphasis).

in many U.S. writings, and inevitably provides those pre-post-colonial societies¹⁶¹ an example by which to contemplate their own means for doing the same.

Thus, by apprehending this constitutive tendency at a time in which the Caribbean colonies sought their independence from European control, it is no wonder that this American-centric rhetoric of making proves appealing to the Caribbean writer. Lamming's trip to the U.S. on the Guggenheim reveals his utter fascination with the way in which Americans made their culture. Citing New York City's massive architecture, Lamming writes:

my attention had been captured by this relation to nature, this example of human power and energy which would transform simple stone into such formidable monuments. This architecture was not only new, it was an essential ingredient of a wholly New World; and since the Caribbean was only next door, this World was, in a sense, mine (188).

Referring to the speed with which Americans would build (and rebuild), Lamming witnesses a "rhythm of impermanence which seemed to impose a surface of energy on everything...Everything was invention," he observes. Following this trip, and after his introductory encounters with America's nineteenth century literature, Lamming would necessarily assert that phrase for his own Caribbean: "we would like to *build* our own Pequod" (153, my emphasis).

While the force behind American "making" asserted much of its currency in the literature of the nineteenth century (and subsequent mid-twentieth century interpretations of that literature), the notion still has rhetorical agency, as witnessed in the collaborative digitization project between Cornell University and the University of Michigan. Launched in 1995 and titled "The Making of America," the project is described as an "endeavor to preserve and make accessible through digital technology a significant body of primary sources related to

¹⁶¹ Again, this is a contextual reference, coined by Ella Shohat, to a specific moment in the decolonization process. For more on the applicability of the term, see page 28, fn 17 in the first chapter.

development of the U.S. infrastructure” (“The Making of America”). Funded by The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, the libraries for both universities have undertaken the project of preserving texts in “American social history from the antebellum period through reconstruction.” Currently, the “MOA collection” includes over 1.5 million scans, which represent approximately 5,000 volumes of primary source materials (“About the Project”).¹⁶²

While the project doesn’t specify exactly why “The Making of America” was chosen for its working title, it is quite easy to see why. Querying that phrase returns many documents which contain various usages of the saying, merely revealing the rhetorical commonplace – and force – of the notion. For example, celebrating the centennial of the statehood of Illinois, writer H. L. Eckenrode would call upon the phrase in describing the state’s vast agricultural resources and their importance to the nation. Speaking before the Illinois State Historical Society, Eckenrode contends:

It was part of Illinois and the Middle West to give the world a fresh and rich civilization...a civilization which has vastly enlarged the prospect of man’s material welfare...It is this largeness of life which the Middle West has added to the *making of America*. The Middle West is not a land of pettiness and smallness, of inertia and hesitation. It is a country of broad-minded men and women—of people who go forward, who are not afraid of the untried, who look towards better things in the future because the present is so rich and full (36-37, my emphasis).

In fact, in 1966, the BBC began airing a 10-part television program with that title – “The Making of America” – and their chief consultant for the project was none other than Marcus Cunliffe (he who somewhat infamously introduced George Lamming to American literature; see the previous chapter for further context). Cunliffe, along with other Americanists working in England, published a supplemental text to the television documentary, and in the text’s introduction, Cunliffe proceeds with the same sort of haughtiness which can be found in his

¹⁶² For more details on this collaboration, see “The Making of America” websites at Cornell (<http://digital.library.cornell.edu/m/moa/>) and Michigan (<http://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/moagrp/>).

aforementioned works; he writes, “Even today you can find Europeans who, on the mention of American history, retort that the United States *has* no history” (“General Introduction” 4). Seemingly somewhat complacent with this reproach, Cunliffe surmises that this supposed historical lack may stem from issues related to language. “To break away from England was...difficult,” he writes, “There was no native American language to fall back upon: the United States had to stay with the English language, though in time it evolved its own rhythms and vocabulary” (“Birth of a Nation” 6). Unlike his American studies counterparts working within the U.S. – Marx to name but one – Cunliffe gives short shrift to the significance the so-called American idiom.

Despite Cunliffe’s habit of devaluing American appropriations of the English language,¹⁶³ the “making of America” has always been closely linked with a uniquely American way of talking. A somewhat antiquated text on language and American culture – taken from that “Making of America” collection – asserts this linkage quite nicely. In the Preface to *Americanisms; the English of the New World* (1872), Maximilian Schele de Vere, then a professor of modern languages at the University of Virginia, cites the curious and well-noted story of William L. Marcy. When serving as the United States Secretary of State under President Franklin Pierce, Marcy started somewhat of a fracas upon issuing a document to the various American diplomats and consular agents working throughout the globe, requiring them to make “all communications to [Marcy’s] department in the American Language” (3, qtd. in Schele de Vere). Schele de Vere notes the egregious and somewhat baffling response this letter received, for “as yet,” he humorously retorts, “there is no American Language.” While Schele de Vere goes on to suggest that Americans are “far too busy” with the task “of creating a New World, to find time for studying grammar and making words,” he keenly realizes the agency implicit in

¹⁶³ See the previous chapter of this dissertation for more of such examples.

Marcy's directive. In a longish concession to Marcy's seemingly ridiculous request, Schele de Vere writes:

It is only now and then, when the old tools cannot do the new work required of them, that we cast them aside and invent a better one...As [the] English [language] itself is omnivorous, and this great [American] continent has opened its doors wide to many millions of men of other races, we have, besides, freely admitted the useful foreign word with the foreign immigrant...Hence we still speak English, but we *talk American*. The native of the New World may, in dress and appearance, in culture and refinement, pass unnoticed in European society, but no sooner does he open his lips, than his intonation, choice of words, and structure of sentence, betray his foreign birth. The difference is, in reality, very slight, but it is characteristic, and as there is no better key to the habits and temper of a people, than the study of its watchwords and nicknames, its likes and dislikes of terms and phrases, we have endeavored to collect enough of these peculiarities to furnish an idea of *the way we talk* (3-4, my emphasis).

Language, Schele de Vere adds here, is “always a faithful mirror of the life of a people” (4). The other examples cited throughout this chapter – whether it's Joebell, Twain, Marx, or Lamming – discern their own cultures through this constitutive way of talking, through an *ethos* of idiom.

The notion of making and its inherent relation to language is of utmost importance in *The Pleasures of Exile*. Lamming cites three historical events which have decisively shaped his British Caribbean; the first two are obvious: the region's discovery by Europeans, and the abolition of slavery. The third, however, is somewhat curious: “The third important event in our history is the discovery of the novel by West Indians,” he writes (37). While the ‘discovery’ of book-writing may seem somewhat trifling next to the events of 1492 and 1833, it is no less seminal in Lamming's mind. “In the Caribbean we have a glorious opportunity of *making* some valid and permanent contribution to man's life in this century,” he writes, and the “novelists have helped” to get this started (50, my emphasis); the novel, as it developed during those boom years, would ultimately offer the region “a way of investigating and projecting the inner experiences of the West Indian Community” (37). The generation of writers to which Lamming refers throughout *Pleasures* was surely aware of this. For example, C. L. R. James saw this

constitutive dimension at play in the poetry Walcott, who is said to have “learnt that he has to master a poetic language which is the creation of men who are using their own language in their own country” (*Party Politics* 174). Naipaul, citing Arthur Miller’s contention that a newspaper is a nation’s way of talking to itself, suggests that when language “develops into the private language of a particular society,” the result is “new discoveries...And with each new discovery the society’s image of itself becomes more fixed and the society looks further inward” (“Jasmine” 30). And Lamming himself has said – in countless variations – that “the mark of cultural sovereignty” is the “free definition and articulation of the collective self, whatever the rigor of external constraints” (*Conversations III* 48).

In sum, the Caribbean writer of the 1950s era was highly conscious of the need to articulate local idioms in an effort to assert their culture. And yet, as Lamming noted above in regards to Caribbean readership, it was, when he wrote *Pleasures*, still in its embryonic stages: “The creation of this reading public whose elements already exist,” he writes, “is a job which remains to be done” (*Pleasures* 42). But by speaking *of* that audience – even if it had yet to fully assemble – Lamming and his brethren writers necessarily constitute that Caribbean culture.¹⁶⁴ “In the telling of the story of a [“people”],” Charland reminds us, “a [“people”] comes to be” (140). Thus, through the verbal tendencies of local dialects and vernacular, through a medium which a culture can claim as its own “way of talking” (*Pleasures* 229), Lamming and his fellow generation of Anglophone Caribbean writers essentially *construct the audience upon which their work is based*.

¹⁶⁴ “brethren,” of course, is a gendered term; yet it is an appropriate moniker in such contexts, especially given Lamming’s focus in *Pleasures* upon *male* writers. While this necessarily allows us to question Lamming’s occlusion of women writers (as Natasha Barnes has written, “the exclusions of a cadre of male cultural writers...have made invisible the cultural work of women” (13)), I use the term here in correspondence with Lamming.

While the dimension of constitutive rhetoric might inform such a statement, this is not necessarily new to critical understandings of this Caribbean literary era. In fact, the idea behind Caribbean cultural constitutions, done so through literature, has been levied by many critics of Lamming's work. J. Dillon Brown, for example, suggests that Lamming's approach to literature can be seen as a "pointed invitation to consider Caribbean people as intelligent, conscious shapers of language, and hence as thinking beings in their own right" (682). This constructivist reading of language in *The Pleasures of Exile* is generally accepted, by myself included, throughout Lamming criticism. Yet as Alison Donnell has pointed out, the tendency to see Lamming's generation of writers as spurning a "spontaneous literary genesis" has had the blinding effect of "obscuring earlier configurations, idioms and traditions" of Caribbean writing (35).

In all likelihood, this neglectful tendency is a consequence of the Prospero/Caliban dynamic. Many of the critiques like Brown's apprehend Lamming's *Pleasures* primarily under this essentialist rubric. Master/slave, past/future, Old World/New World. Birth/death. Brown writes, "Caliban must order (command) Prospero's attention by ordering (narrating) a new form of history, with the issue of language firmly at the center of the effort" (682). But to apply Donnell's argument to the thesis of this chapter, one might make the case that the Prospero/Caliban relation has clouded some of the other turns to which Lamming makes before that so-called "spontaneous literary genesis" can form. If this metaphorical Caliban is to "christen Language afresh" (119), it is no wonder Lamming petitions his readers to heed the idiom of Melville, Twain, and Whitman; exemplars whom were enmeshed in a similar process within their own region, also under the forces of Prospero's long-time hegemony of language. If language is said to be central to the so-called command Brown cites above, the constitutive

nature of rhetoric in such contexts necessitates acknowledgement of Lamming's "aspect" and its associations with American literary making. As Leo Marx writes in "The Vernacular Tradition" in 1958, "To establish his identity the American is impelled to defy tradition" (9). That statement is a near facsimile to the words C. L. R. James writes in the preface to *Beyond a Boundary* a mere five years later: "To establish his own identity, Caliban, after three centuries, must himself pioneer into regions Caesar never knew." To substitute Charland's Québécois for Lamming's West Indian: "In the telling of a Caribbean people, a Caribbean people comes to be."

Daphne Morris, who wrote the introduction to the Heinemann edition of Roger Mais's *The Hills Were Joyful Together*, seems to acknowledge Lamming's "turn" in *Pleasures*; she writes:

The necessity of creating his own idiom is, perhaps, the chief problem the pioneer writer has to grapple with. In search of idiom it is almost inevitable that he should first turn to models in other literary traditions available to him. But such models can only prove inadequate as they were developed to express a different cultural reality...Language, it must be remembered, is constantly changing as the experiences of a people change (xviii).

Indeed, while the American "models" that Lamming turned to most certainly proved to be inadequate (for Lamming never returns to the subject of American literature following *Pleasures*), the very fact that those American writers were once consulted calls into question the spontaneity of Caliban's so-called Caribbean genesis. In fact, Morris goes on to note that the "idiomatic expressions" in certain Caribbean novels may now seem dated, particularly because they were infused with imported 'Americanisms' which "entered the [Caribbean] language stream through migration and such secondary channels as film" (xviii). A worthwhile contention, yet as I hope this dissertation shows, the arcs and flows of those streams have yet to be fully charted.

Ultimately, what I am arguing for throughout this chapter is a critical reorientation of Lamming's landmark text. Furthermore, this entire dissertation is an appeal to see other Anglophone Caribbean texts within the "New World" *ethos* that their writers so often aligned with. For too long Anglophone Caribbean writing, as it emerged following World War II, has been conceived of within strictly Caribbean, postcolonial, and Shakespearean contexts; critics rarely consider its American antecedents (and even, in the case of Lamming, his Africanist musings in *Pleasures* have yet to receive the due attention they command). While Lamming's epic collection of essays is understood as a figurative declaration of Caribbean literary and linguistic independence, subsequent analyses neglect the idiomatic making which Lamming discerns in American culture and texts. Thus, by situating Lamming's writing within the genre of constitutive rhetoric, the case can be made that Lamming ultimately *creates* an audience of West Indian readers, and the medium, the idiom, through which that creation gets proposed has trace seeds in the literary culture of America. Of course, Lamming ultimately asserts his own idiom, but in making the case that the West Indian novel "cannot be understood unless you take a good look at the American nineteenth century," it seems time to heed and unpack this highly unique transnational link.

In *The Dialectics of Our America*, José David Saldívar recognizes the long but neglected exchange with which Latin America has mounted in regards to continental North America. Saldívar's work is emblematic of the goals of the New American Studies. Since Carolyn Porter's famed call for a remapping of the American literary niche (1991), magnificent developments have been made in this hemispheric arena. As Porter tediously shows, "both the historical and geographical frames once dictated by the national, and nationalist, narrative of the US are collapsing" (468). In Caribbean contexts, legendary Cubans like José Martí and Roberto

Fernández Retamar are given new perspective as contributing to the field of American studies; academic critics like Saldívar and J. Michael Dash can find interdisciplinary premises concerning a “pan-American literary history” (Saldívar xi) within a New World “hemispheric identity” (x) when considering inter-American ruminations. These are but only a few examples of the shifting plane of the ‘New’ American Studies field. In sum, John Muthyala might put the entire movement best when he notes that the concept of ‘America’ has since been ‘reworlded’ (“Reworlding America”).

But this reworlding of America has yet to fully commence with regards to Anglophone Caribbean literature. The long dialectic with American culture that Caribbean writers have pursued is still somewhat dismissed. And yet, as this dissertation attempts to show, that dialectic has been potent for quite some time. Citing the “growing shift” in Caribbean literary culture in the 1970s, Lamming tells Ian Munro and Reinhard Sander that the “phase of the journey to London is really over” (“Interview” 17). Increasingly, Lamming continues, “the cultural exchange is going to be between the Caribbean and New York and other American cities, North and South.” Sylvia Wynter’s inter-American travels can attest to this; eschewing the strict categories of the past, Wynter proclaims that “I am a Jamaican, a West Indian, an American. I write not to fulfill a category, fill an order, supply a consumer, but to attempt to define what is this thing to be—a Jamaican, a West Indian, an American. I believe this definition is the beginning of awareness” (413 qtd. in L. Brown).¹⁶⁵ Wilson Harris, fascinated by the works of Herman Melville in particular, argues that “American creative literature has displayed a wonderful energy and sprit, which speak well for the potentialities of a new world” (9-10). Apprehending the jazz roots of the West Indian novel in the late 1960s, Kamau Brathwaite writes

¹⁶⁵ Originally taken from “We must learn to sit down and talk about a little culture: Reflections on West Indian writing and criticism.” Part I. *Jamaica Journal* 2.4 (1968): 23-32.

that “The West Indian writer is just beginning to enter his own cultural New Orleans” (“Jazz” 63).

And of all these associative claims, an unfinished project by Derek Walcott might summarize these sentiments best. Throughout the 1970s Walcott was preoccupied with a long prose project which he had tentatively dubbed ‘American, without America.’ The text was to be partly autobiographical, and would consider the dilemma facing West Indians trying to attain their own cultural identity, while also retaining it in the face of the inevitable “growing shift” toward America that Lamming cites above.¹⁶⁶ Furthermore, Walcott’s project would shun the culturally exclusive focus which many post-colonial critiques had exercised in regards to Caribbean literature. Arguing that the region’s art is more than just “Caliban answering back, cursing Prospero in Prospero’s language,” Walcott intended to argue that “new literatures must be more than corrections of the old...What is needed is a greater compassion that crosses divides and hierarchies...descriptions of the world through art which make you see your world better” (King 351). Walcott would witness many of these opportunities within the vast cultural stream that the U.S. afforded his Caribbean. Clarifying the premise that America would have in this text, Walcott states:

The influence of [America] is not basically aggressive. Even if there is negative evidence politically, the America the people love and believe in is an America that is fairly well realized in terms of the individual. Now this is not to be blind to the realities of ghettos, racial prejudice, anti-semitism, rich or monolithic capitalism. I’m talking about a place where there is a sense of equality...[as such], you’re bound to be influenced psychologically into becoming some kind of American (“An Interview” 62-63).

Walcott’s analysis here is reminiscent of Lamming’s throughout *Pleasures* and Martí’s in “Nuestra América.” As pointed out in the introduction to this dissertation, there are two

¹⁶⁶ For more on this unfinished project, see Bruce King’s *Derek Walcott: A Caribbean Life* (2000) and Walcott’s 1977 interview with Edward Hirsch.

competing versions of America at play here; there's the "America of the Mason Dixon line," the hegemonic imperial state asserting itself "in the guise of freedom and self-defence," but there's also that "different America," Lamming would write, a country which "started in a womb of promise...as an alternative to the old and privileged Prospero" (*Pleasures* 152). Ultimately, the opportunities afforded by the latter version have proven to be of great interest to Caribbean writers, and the more one explores this alternative, Walcott adds, an inevitable sense of cultural yearning emerges. Citing the freedom of self-expression in the U.S., Walcott hopes his Caribbean can begin to emulate this uniquely American *ethos*; "The more you go back and forth," he states, "the more you see things [in America] that you wish were true where you come from" (63).

Walcott's turn toward America, in this sense, seems to epitomize the arguments I have made throughout this dissertation. Like Joebell, all of these Caribbean writers welcome the incipient opportunities to be afforded by the cultural matrix which is a transnational America, discerned under its penchants for cultural making. This *ethos* is evidenced when Trinidadian-born poet and publisher John Anthony La Rose lyrically proclaims he is simultaneously José Martí and Walt Whitman. Walcott and La Rose are, in a strange way, not so different from Joebell, who can call himself an American despite not having been born there, nonetheless ever having visited. For Joebell has received a version of America that, as bloated and ridiculous as his television-saturated rendition may be, reveals the rhetorical tenor of idiom, and how that inevitably lends itself to the making of culture. It is time these shared literary energies between the U.S. and Caribbean be recognized and critiqued. To repeat La Rose's poem in full,

I am American
I am Whitman
Marti Cudjoe
A whole continent
Como No? (23).

Indeed, Mr. La Rose, why not?

CHAPTER 5 CITED LITERATURE

- “About the Project: The MOA Collection.” *Cornell University Library*. Making of America. 2012. Web. 1 Mar 2012. <http://ebooks.library.cornell.edu/m/moa/moa_collection.html>.
- Ahmad, Dohra. Introduction. “This Is Ma Trooth.” *Rotten English: A Literary Anthology*. Ed Ahmad. New York: W. W. Norton, 2007. 15-32.
- Aiyejina, Funso, ed. “Earl Lovelace: A Chronology.” 2003. *Anthurium: A Caribbean Studies Journal* 4.2 (Fall 2006): n. pag. Web. 2 Mar. 2012. <http://anthurium.miami.edu/volume_4/issue_2/aiyejina-chronology.html>.
- Ammer, Christine, ed. *The American Heritage Dictionary of Idioms*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1997.
- Arac, Jonathan. *Huckleberry Finn As Idol and Target: The Functions of Criticism in Our Time*. Madison: U of Wisconsin P, 1997.
- . “Whitman and the Problems of Vernacular.” *Breaking Bounds: Whitman and American Cultural Studies*. Eds. Betsy Erkkila & Jay Grossman. Oxford: Oxford U P, 1996. 44-61.
- Ashcroft, Bill. *Caliban’s Voice: The Transformation of English in Post-Colonial Literatures*. London: Routledge, 2009.
- Ashcroft, Bill, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin. *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures*. 1989. London: Routledge, 2002.
- Baboolal, Yvonne. “Wappie, crime ruining Brian Lara’s birthplace.” *The Trinidad Guardian*. 30 Nov. 2008. Web. 2 Mar. 2012. <<http://legacy.guardian.co.tt/archives/2008-12-01/news4.html>>.
- Barnes, Natasha. *Cultural Conundrums: Gender, Race, Nation, and the Making of Caribbean Cultural Politics*. Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P, 2006.
- Black, Edwin. “The Second Persona.” *The Quarterly Journal of Speech* LVI.2 (Apr 1970): 109-119.
- Bloom, Harold. *Bloom’s Classic Critical Views: Walt Whitman*. New York: Infobase, 2008.
- Brathwaite, Kamau. *History of the Voice: The Development of Nation Language in Anglophone Caribbean Poetry*. New Beacon: London, 1984.
- . “Jazz and the West Indian Novel.” 1967/1968. *Roots*. Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P, 1993. 55-110.
- . “Roots.” 1963. *Roots*. Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P, 1993. 28-54.

- Brown, Carolyn T. "The Myth of the Fall and the Dawning of Consciousness in George Lamming's 'In the Castle of My Skin'." *World Literature Today* 57.1 (Winter 1983): 38-43.
- Brown, J. Dillon. "Exile and Cunning: The Tactical Difficulties of George Lamming." *Contemporary Literature* XLVII.4 (2006): 669-694.
- Brown, Lloyd W. "West Indian Literature: Road to a 'New World' Sensibility." *Journal of Black Studies* 7.4 (June 1977): 411-436.
- Charland, Maurice. "Constitutive Rhetoric." *Encyclopedia of Rhetoric*. Ed. Thomas O. Sloane. Oxford: Oxford U P, 2001. 616-619.
- . "Constitutive Rhetoric: The Case of the *Peuple Québécois*." *The Quarterly Journal of Speech* 73.2 (May 1987): 133-150.
- Collymore, Frank A. *Notes for a Glossary of Words and Phrases of Barbadian Dialect*. Bridgetown, Barbados: Advocate Company, 1955.
- Cunliffe, Marcus. "The Birth of a Nation." *The Making of America*. London: British Broadcasting Corporation, 1968. 6-7.
- . "General Introduction." *The Making of America*. London: British Broadcasting Corporation, 1968. 4-5.
- Dash, J. Michael. *The Other America: Caribbean Literature in a New World Context*. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1998.
- Donnell, Alison. *Twentieth-Century Caribbean Literature: Critical Moments in Anglophone Literary History*. London: Routledge, 2006.
- Eckenrode, H. J. "Virginia in the Making of Illinois." *Transaction of the Illinois State Historical Society for the Year 1918: The Centennial Meeting of the Society, April 17-18, 1918, and of the Nineteenth Annual Meeting of the Society, Springfield, Illinois, May 15, 1918*. Volume 24. Springfield: Illinois State Journal Co., 1919.
- Edwards, Nadi. "George Lamming's Literary Nationalism: Language between *The Tempest* and the Tonelle." *Small Axe* 11 (Mar 2002): 59-76.
- Emerson, Ralph Waldo. "The American Scholar." 1837. *Essays & Lectures*. Ed. Joel Porte. New York: Library of America, 1983. 51-71.
- Fischer, Claude S. *Made in America: A Social History of American Culture and Character*. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 2010.
- Fishkin, Shelley Fisher. *Was Huck Black?: Mark Twain and African-American Voices*. Oxford: Oxford U P, 1993.

- Folsom, Ed. "Traubel, Horace L. (1958-1919)." *Walt Whitman: An Encyclopedia*. Eds. J.R. LeMaster and Donald D. Kummings. Garland: New York, 1998. 740-742.
- Forbes, Curdella. *From Nation to Diaspora: Samuel Selvon, George Lamming and the Cultural Performance of Gender*. Kingston: U of the West Indies P, 2005.
- Giles, Paul. "Virtual Americas: The Internationalization of American Studies and the Ideology of Exchange." *American Quarterly* 50.3 (1998): 523-547.
- Harris, Wilson. "Art & Criticism." *Tradition, the Writer & Society: Critical Essays*. London: New Beacon, 1967. 7-12.
- Hegel, G. W. F. *Phenomenology of Spirit*. 1807. Trans. A. V. Miller. Oxford: Oxford U P, 1979.
- James, C. L. R. *American Civilization*. Ed. Anna Grimshaw & Keith Hart. Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1993.
- . (as J. R. Johnson). "The American People in 'One World': An Essay in Dialectical Materialism." *New International* (July 1944): 225-230. Web. 27 Sep 2011.
<<http://www.marxists.org/archive/james-clr/works/1944/07/one-world.htm>>.
- . *Party Politics in the West Indies*. San Juan: Trinidad: Vedic Enterprises, 1962.
- Jasinski, James. *Sourcebook on Rhetoric: Key Concepts in Contemporary Rhetorical Studies*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2001.
- John, Catherine A. *Clear Word and Third Sight: Folk Groundings and Diasporic Consciousness in African Caribbean Writing*. Durham: Duke U P, 2003.
- Kennedy, George A. *Comparative Rhetoric: An Historical and Cross-Cultural Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford U P, 1998.
- Kincaid, Jamaica. "Jamaica Kincaid: From Antigua to America." Interview with Frank Birbalsingh. 1991. *Frontiers of Caribbean Literature in English*. Ed. Birbalsingh. New York: St. Martin's, 1996. 138-151.
- King, Bruce. *Derek Walcott: A Caribbean Life*. Oxford: Oxford U P, 2000.
- King, Nicole. "Performance and Tradition in Earl Lovelace's *A Brief Conversion*: The Drama of the Everyday." *Caribbean Literature After Independence: The Case of Earl Lovelace*. Ed. Bill Schwarz. London: Institute for the Study of the Americas, 2008. 111-129.
- La Rose, Anthony. "An American." *Foundations: A Book of Poems*. London: New Beacon, 1966. 23-24.
- Lackey, Kris. "The Fatuous Light of the Senses: Melville, Carlyle, and Marilynne Robinson's *Housekeeping*." *In-Roads of Language: Essays in English Studies*. Eds. Ignasi i Navarro

- Ferrando and Nieves Alberola Crespo. Castelló de la Plana, Spain: Universitat Jaume I, 2006. 139-147.
- Lamming, George. *Conversations III: Sovereignty of the Imagination; Language and the Politics of Ethnicity*. Philipsburg: St. Martin, 2009.
- . "Interview with George Lamming." *Kas-Kas: Interviews with Three Caribbean Writers in Texas*. Eds. Ian Munro & Reinhard Sander. Austin: African and Afro-American Research Institute, 1972. 4-21.
- . Introduction. *In the Castle of My Skin*. By Lamming. 1983. Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P, 1991. xxxv-xlvi.
- . *In the Castle of My Skin*. 1953. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1954.
- . *The Pleasures of Exile*. 1960. Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P, 1992.
- . "The Sovereignty of the Imagination: An Interview with George Lamming." By David Scott. *Small Axe* 12 (Sep 2002): 72-200.
- Lemke, Sieglinde. *The Vernacular Matters of American Literature*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009.
- Lewis, Gordon K. *The Growth of the Modern West Indies*. 1968. New York: Modern Reader, 1969.
- Lipset, Seymour Martin. *American Exceptionalism: A Double-Edged Sword*. New York: W. W. Norton, 1996.
- Lovelace, Earl. "Conversation with Earl Lovelace." 1980. *New World Adams: Conversations with Contemporary West Indian Writers*. Ed. Daryl Cumber Dance. 1992. Leeds, England: Peepal Tree, 2008. 155-168.
- . "Joebell and America." *A Brief Conversion and Other Stories*. Oxford: Heinemann, 1988.
- Mais, Roger. *The Hills Were Joyful Together*. 1953. London: Heinemann, 1987.
- "The Making of America." *Cornell University Library*. Making of America. 2012. Web. 1 Mar 2012. <<http://ebooks.library.cornell.edu/m/moa/>>.
- Marx, Leo. *The Machine in the Garden: Technology and the Pastoral Ideal in America*. 1964. London: Oxford UP, 1976.
- . "The Pilot and the Passenger: Landscape Conventions and the Style of Huckleberry Finn." *American Literature* 28.2 (May 1956): 129-146.
- . "The Vernacular Tradition in American Literature: Walt Whitman and Mark Twain." 1958. *The Pilot and the Passenger: Essays on Literature, Technology, and Culture in the United States*. Oxford: Oxford U P, 1988. 3-17.

- Matthiessen, F. O. *American Renaissance: Art and Expression in the Age of Emerson and Whitman*. 1941. London: Oxford UP, 1968.
- McGee, Michael C. "In Search of 'The People': A Rhetorical Alternative." *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 61.3 (Oct 1975): 235-249.
- McGee, Micki. *Self-Help, Inc.: Makeover Culture in American Life*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2005.
- Melville, Herman. "Hawthorne and His Mosses." 1850. *Tales, Poems, and Other Writings*. New York: Modern Library, 2002. 47-62.
- Morris, Daphne. Introduction. *The Hills Were Joyful Together*. By Roger Mais. London: Heinemann, 1987: iii-xxi.
- Muthyala, John. "Reworlding America: The Globalization of American Studies." *Cultural Critique* 47 (Winter 2001): 91-119.
- Naipaul, V. S. "Jasmine." 1964. *The Overcrowded Barracoon and Other Articles*. 1972. Middlesex, England: Penguin, 1984. 24-31.
- Nasta, Susheila. Introduction. *Critical Perspectives on Sam Selvon*. Ed. Nasta. Boulder: Three Continents, 1988. 1-14.
- Neptune, Harvey R. *Caliban and the Yankees: Trinidad and the United States Occupation*. Chapel Hill: U of North Carolina P, 2007.
- Paquet, Sandra Pouchet. Foreword. *The Pleasures of Exile*. By George Lamming. Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P, 1992. vii-xxvii.
- . "The Serial Art of George Lamming: Myth and Archive." *Shibboleths: A Journal of Comparative Theory* 2.2 (2008): 96-106.
- , Edgardo. "Talking Your Way In: Language and Performance in Earl Lovelace's 'Joebell and America'." *La Torre* 10.36-37 (Apr-Sep 2005): 301-308.
- Porter, Carolyn. "What We Know That We Don't Know: Remapping American Literary Studies." *American Literary History* 6.3 (Autumn 1994): 467-526.
- Puri, Shalini. "Beyond Resistance: Notes Toward a New Caribbean Cultural Studies." *Small Axe* 14.7.2 (Sep. 2003): 23-38.
- Rahim, Jennifer. "The Nation/A World/A Place to be Human: Earl Lovelace and the Task of 'Rescuing the Future'." *Anthurium: A Caribbean Studies Journal* 4.2 (Fall 2006). Web. <http://anthurium.miami.edu/volume_4/issue_2/rahim-thenation.html>.
- Roberts, Murat H. "The Science of Idiom: A Method of Inquiry into the Cognitive Design." *PMLA* 59.1 (Mar 1944): 291-306.

- Rogozinski, Jan. *A Brief History of the Caribbean: From the Arawak and Carib to the Present*. 1999. New York: Plume, 2000.
- Ross, Robert L., ed. *Colonial and Postcolonial Fiction: An Anthology*. New York: Garland, 1999.
- Rosteck, Thomas. "Giving Voice to a Movement: Mills's 'Letter to the New Left' and the Potential of History." *Active Voices: Composing a Rhetoric for Social Movements*. Sharon McKenzie Stevens and Patricia M. Malesh, eds. Albany: SUNY, 2009. 115-130.
- Saldívar, José David. *The Dialectics of Our America: Genealogy, Cultural Critique, and Literary History*. Durham: Duke U P, 1991.
- Sayre, Robert F. "Autobiography and the Making of America." *Autobiography: Essays Theoretical and Critical*. Ed. James Olney. Princeton, NJ: Princeton U P, 1980. 146-168.
- Schele De Vere, Maximilian. *Americanisms; The English of the New World*. New York: Charles Scribner, 1872.
- Schwarz, Bill, ed. *Caribbean Literature After Independence: The Case of Earl Lovelace*. London: Institute for the Study of the Americas, 2008.
- Shakespeare, William. *The Tempest: A Case Study in Critical Controversy*. Eds. Gerald Graff and James Phelan. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2000.
- Shohat, Ella. "Notes on the 'Post-Colonial'." *Social Text* 31/32 (1992): 99-113.
- Simmons-McDonald, Hazel and Ian Robertson, eds. *Exploring the Boundaries of Caribbean Creole Languages*. Kingston: U of West Indies P, 2006.
- Simon, Akile. "Youth shot dead at friend's wake." *Trinidad Express Newspapers*. 5 Aug. 2010. Web. 2 Mar. 2012. <<http://www.trinidadexpress.com/news/100002734.html>>.
- Smith, Logan Pearsall. *Words and Idioms: Studies in the English Language*. 1925. London: Constable & Company, 1948.
- Stieg, Elizabeth J., ed. *Fields of Vision: Readings about Culture, Race, and Ethnicity*. Toronto: Prentice Hall, 2001.
- Thieme, Katja. "Constitutive Rhetoric as an Aspect of Audience Design: The Public Texts of Canadian Suffragists." *Written Communication* 27.1 (Jan 2010): 36-56.
- Traubel, Horace. *With Walt Whitman in Camden (March 28—July 14, 1888)*. New York: D. Appleton, 1908.
- Twain, Mark. *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. 1884. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1912.

Walcott, Derek. "An Interview with Derek Walcott." By Edward Hirsch. 1977. *Conversations with Derek Walcott*. Ed. William Baer. Jackson: U P of Mississippi, 1996. 50-63.

"'Wappie' players shot and robbed." *Trinidad and Tobago Newsday*. 5 May 2008. Web. 1 Mar. 2012. <<http://www.newsday.co.tt/news/0,78304.html>>.

White, James Boyd. *When Words Lose Their Meaning: Constitutions and Reconstitutions of Language, Character, and Community*. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1984.

Whitman, Walt. "By Blue Ontario's Shore." 1881. *Leaves of Grass and Other Writings*. Ed. Michael Moon. New York: W. W. Norton, 2002. 286-299.

Williams, Elizabeth. "Tobago men die in knife fight after 'wappie'." *Trinidad Express Newspapers*. 4 Sep. 2010. Web. 2 Mar. 2012.
<http://www.trinidadexpress.com/news/Tobago_men_die_in_knife_fight_after_wappie-102238059.html>.

Williams, Eric. *History of the People of Trinidad and Tobago*. 1962. New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1964.

VITA

NAME: Timothy A. Henningsen

EDUCATION: B.S., English, The University of Wisconsin-Madison, December 1999
M.A., English, The University of Illinois at Chicago, May 2005

PUBLICATIONS: Henningsen, Timothy. "The Caribbean Conundrum: The Restrictive Liberation of Language, Rhetoric, and Idiom in Anglophone Caribbean Literature." *Rhetoric: Concord and Controversy*. Eds. Antonio de Velasco and Melody Lehn. Long Grove, IL: Waveland, 2012. 225-232.

Henningsen, Timothy, Diane Chin, Ann Feldman, Caroline Gottschalk-Druschke, Tom Moss, Nadya Pittendrigh, and Stephanie Turner Reich. "A Hybrid Genre Supports Hybrid Roles in Community-University Collaboration." *Going Public: What Writing Programs Learn from Engagement*. Eds. Shirley K. Rose and Irwin Weiser. Logan: Utah State U P, 2010. 85-109.

PRESENTATIONS: "The Caribbean Conundrum: The Restrictive Liberation of Language, Rhetoric, and Idiom in Anglophone Caribbean Literature." The Rhetoric Society of America, May 28th, 2010 in Minneapolis, MN.

"Ideological Idiom: Democratic Rhetoric in 19th Century American and 20th Century Caribbean Literature." Research Network with Cara Finnegan (Associate Professor of Communication; The University of Illinois). The Rhetoric Society of America. May 29th, 2010 in Minneapolis, MN.

"Does the rhetoric of democracy have a place in service-learning and civic engagement programs?" Roundtable: "Interrogating Rhetorics of Civic Engagement." The Rhetoric Society of America, May 25th, 2008 in Seattle, WA.

"Book Jacket Art at the End of Empire." Invited presentation with Professor Nancy Cirillo, English Department at the University of Illinois at Chicago, Spring 2005.

| | |
|------------------------------|--|
| ACADEMIC EMPLOYMENT: | <p>Instructor and Curriculum Developer (2006-2008) Chicago Civic Leadership Certificate Program University of Illinois at Chicago Courses taught: English 160: Academic Writing I “Writing in Academic & Public Contexts” English 161: Academic Writing II “Interrogating Neoliberalism: From Partner Research to Academic Argument”</p> |
| | <p>Teaching Assistant (2005-2008) Department of English University of Illinois at Chicago Courses taught: English 105: English & American Fiction “Questioning American ‘Exceptionalism’” English 161: Composition II “Research, Writing, and the American Dream” English 160: Composition I “Writing in the Real World” English 161: Composition II “Writing About Civic Engagement”</p> |
| | <p>Tutor (2005) Writing Center University of Illinois at Chicago</p> |
| | <p>Research Assistant (2004-2005) Special Collections, Richard J. Daley Library University of Illinois at Chicago</p> |
| | <p>Graduate Assistant (2003-2004) Office of International Services University of Illinois at Chicago</p> |
| PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS: | <p>Modern Language Association Rhetoric Society of America</p> |