"Rise up this morning
Smiled with rising sun
Three little birds pitch by my doorstep
Singing sweet songs of melodies pure and true
Saying
This is my message to you"

Bob Marley, "Three Little Birds"

"See the morning sun
On the hillside
Not living good, yeah, travel wide"

Bob Marley, "Soul Rebel"

University of Alberta

Imagining Resistance and Solidarity in the Neoliberal Age
of U.S. Imperialism, Black Feminism, and Caribbean Diaspora

by

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Dedication

I dedicate this work to Yvonne, Lisa, and Dennis

You are my mother, my sister, and my brother

You have taught me the art of struggle and the necessity of love

You are my Three Little Birds

Abstract

This dissertation analyzes representational problems of black resistance and solidarity in the neoliberal age. Focusing on transnational black female protagonists in works by Paule Marshall, Jamaica Kincaid, and Michelle Cliff, I consider how they are imagined to resist and assist U.S.-Caribbean relations of trade, labour, and development. The primary texts in this study include: Paule Marshall's *The Chosen Place, the Timeless People* (1969) and *Daughters* (1991); Jamaica Kincaid's *A Small Place* (1988), *My Brother* (1997), as well as her collaboration with Stephanie Black in the documentary film *Life + Debt* (2001); and Michelle Cliff's *No Telephone to Heaven* (1989) and *Free Enterprise: A Novel of Mary Ellen Pleasant* (1993; 2004).

Developing theories of the *neoliberal condition* and the *neoliberal medium*, I explore overlooked struggles within the organizational cultures of black resistance and solidarity. The *condition* appears as a bio-political and geo-economic calculation in these texts, whereby the imagined labour value of the racialized black woman is formulated according to her paradoxically exploitable capacity for socioeconomic responsibility and disposability. The *medium* is conceptualized as the imprecise reproducibility of neoliberal life in black communities in the U.S. and the English Caribbean. These theories address the replication of neoliberal social relations within cultures of resistance. The celebration of black women as over-burdened agents of development resonates with an over-determined construction of black women as endowed with exceptional, enterprising capacities for critique and resistance. Prioritizing an

analysis of the contemporary uses of feminist and anti-racist theory, I argue that we must challenge literary and cultural analysis when it obscures the destructive effects of neoliberalism through celebratory readings of black women's agency and resistance.

The interdisciplinary methodology assumed in this dissertation draws upon critical neoliberal studies, histories of women and development discourses, and black feminist intersectional analysis. To conclude this project, I examine early issues of *CAFRA News*, produced by the Caribbean Association for Feminist Research and Action, and consider the formation of anti-neoliberal counter-publics to suggest possibilities for critical social care informed by principles of unconditional dissent and forgiveness.

Acknowledgements

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Introduction

Vital Signs: Black Feminist Agency and Resistance in the Age of Neoliberalism

> Genuine U.S. commitment to improve the status of women should impel
> Washington to withhold support and legitimacy from U.N. activities that
> make genuine social concerns hostage to such political agendas as the
> destruction of Israel or attacks on the West and the free enterprise system.
>> Greerson G. McMullen and Charles M. Lichenstein, "A U.S.
>> Policy for the U.N. Conference on Women," (9).

> '[A]gency' is now cited in development discourse almost exclusively in the
> context of strategies for survival rather than transformation, and in the
> context of the individual, rather than the collective. These approaches are
> consistent with, and indeed have contributed to, the elaboration of
> neoliberal models of development based on the further intensification of
> the labour of women in low-income households as a buffer against the
> ravages of economic reforms.
>> Kaplana Wilson, "'Race', Gender and Neoliberalism: changing
>> visual representations in development," (318).

These epigraphs speak to the insidious, hegemonic condition upheld by political leaders who function as state managers to promote ideologies of free enterprise, deregulation, privatization, austerity, and corporate citizenship. If we relied upon the rhetoric of mainstream media, or on the political discourses of elected officials, then we might fail to consider the political and economic dimensions of our social relations; perhaps we might even be led to believe that neoliberal capitalist development is the only imaginable way to organize life on this planet. The social work to imagine the transformative possibilities of a "postneoliberal" world is seldom discussed in mainstream and official contexts.[1] While the particularities of neoliberal discourse and policy vary across time and place, its general ideology over the past thirty years has constrained social

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[1] See the January 2009 issue of *Development Dialogue 51*, entitled "Postneolibralism- A beginning debate," for a range of analyses of post-neoliberal theory and action.

movement-building oriented towards a critique of late capitalism and its

association with racist, patriarchal legacies of colonialism, slavery, and

imperialism. The pursuit of redistributive economic justice, for those who have

inherited the debts of these legacies, is insupportable to a neoliberal agenda as is

the strategic expansion of social solidarities in service of such pursuits. Ulrich

Brand and Nicola Seklar contend that in neoliberal critique there is a "risk of

confusing neoliberalism with the market and of constructing a dichotomy of 'the

market' versus 'the state'" (7). If the state can be regarded "as a condensation of

social relations," then "neoliberalism can be seen as a specific form of state

intervention" (7). The neoliberal state is thus "more repressive in social, labour

market and military policies and less interventionist in the movement of different

forms of capital" (7). Arguments for increased state regulation to resolve the

destructive effects of neoliberalism thus seem limited in an ideological age of

neoliberal hegemony; further work must be done to clarify how states regulate

social movements and deregulate economic markets, especially if we wish to

challenge the contradictory and conditional logics of freedom and equality

circulating in the global neoliberal age.[2]

In this dissertation, I argue that the increasing centrality of racialized black

women to paradoxical neoliberal discourses of agency and development requires

us to reflect carefully upon uses of feminist and anti-racist theories of resistance

as they inform a sense of empowering representations of black women. The

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[2] The regulation of social movements can occur in more or less explicit ways. For example, labour protest can be suppressed through the banning of unions, capital flight, the relocation of job sites, or via the establishment of security systems designed to reinforce worker compliance. Border control and police brutality can inhibit social movement-building, but so too can the institutionalization of social movements.

purpose here is not to plot a simple notion of agency against resistance, but rather to highlight recent discussions of the former term's association with neoliberal conditions; in this regard, I concur with Peggy Antrobus' view that "the struggle for women's agency must include engagement in struggles against sources of women's oppression that extend beyond gender" (*The Global Women's Movement* 11). Concerned with how representations of women's empowerment may become a source of women's oppression, I ask how might humanities-based studies of black female figures of resistance facilitate the reproduction of neoliberal feminist imaginaries, or generate cultural capital to help sustain neoliberal contradictions between markets and freedoms, *despite* intentions otherwise?[3]

Within the humanities, there is insufficient critical attention given to the various impacts of the late-twentieth-century neoliberal turn on creative imaginings of anti-racist, anti-patriarchal, and anti-imperial resistance. The post-colonial critique of Third World cosmopolitan writers who produce "skeptical readings of national liberation struggles from the comfort of the observation tower" (Brennan 6) should be familiar by now. While this critique necessarily informs aspects of my analysis of works by racialized women of Caribbean descent writing in the United States, I am more compelled to engage with these late-twentieth-century narratives of U.S.-Caribbean relations in terms of the recent efforts to conceptualize the neoliberal imagination (Hall, Massey, et al 2012; Benn Michaels 2005, 2006, 2011a, 2011b; Slaughter 2007; Rolph-Trouillot

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[3] Throughout this dissertation, I work to sustain a critical distance between literature and literary criticism to promote new openings for close reading and interpretive debate. Literary criticism often has its own ideological agenda in the context of academic market trends and culture industries. Over-reliance upon popular analytical tendencies can inhibit the potential to generate innovative reading practices.

2003; Kumar 1999; 2003). I thus characterize selected works by authors Paule Marshall, Jamaica Kincaid and Michelle Cliff as creative inquiries into a neoliberal era in which popular imaginings of race, gender, sex, class, region and nation are reshaped to disorient our sense of the grounds upon which resistance and struggle for social transformation should occur. Although they do not specifically invoke the term neoliberalism, Marshall, Kincaid, and Cliff provide critical imaginings of a neoliberal condition emerging from international relations of trade, labour, and development to call into question the meaning of equality and freedom during the post-Civil rights and post-colonial phases of U.S. and English Caribbean social life.

In my analysis, these works are simultaneously creative, theoretical, political and philosophical; although I draw upon interdisciplinary research to contextualize the social and economic issues arising from imaginative works, I do not treat the works themselves as purely aesthetic or purely documentary. I take seriously Carole Boyce Davies' insistence that "the critique of imperialism in its many forms has to be redesigned and refined. A feminism that sees the other only as a subject of research and not as a creator of meaning, or that cannot make the fine class distinctions or take the kind of political risks that earlier generations took, would have little relevance" (*Left of Marx* 24). While researching for this project, I have attempted to remain conscious of criticism that exists concerning the tendencies of scholars to treat black women's writing as sociological; similarly, I am wary of the ways in which black women's writing can be dismissed as non-theoretical. Such dichotomies are suggestive of the disciplinary

constraints and imaginative limitations that surround literary and cultural studies.[4]

Joseph Slaughter's analysis of the relationship between human rights discourses and "the world novel" is useful to my study of an imagined neoliberal condition produced in the context of U.S.-Caribbean relations, for he questions the narrative processes of plotting social consent for state discourses by imaginative means (135). Focusing on the "social function" of the contemporary post-colonial *Bildungsroman,* he argues that "the genre of demarginalization tends to emerge as a particularly vital form when the terms, mechanics, and scope of the rights franchise are under contest"; yet, "the social work of the *Bildungsroman* also brings up for public review both the egalitarian imaginary and the practical terms of the people's constitution. In this regard, the genre tends both to shadow the historical condition of the public sphere and the state to foreshadow their reform" (135). While only some works in this study contain features of the *Bildungsroman*,[5] I would argue that Marshall, Kincaid, and Cliff cannot entirely avoid performing the ideological social work that Slaughter describes. Although their imaginings of the neoliberal condition involve a critique of state practices,

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[4] In "Being the 'Subjected Subject of Discourse,'" Barbara Christian is critical of feminist scholarship that reproduces notions of "simplistic unity," in their analysis of women of color, by "imitat[ing] that which had occurred in the scholarship of race relations and class relations, most of which ignored gender, not to mention the celebrated studies in bourgeois scholarship which ignored, altogether discounted, intersections of race, class, and gender as 'intellectual' concerns. By imitating the very systems that opposed it, in fact shut it out, feminist scholarship undercut itself and did not have the depth and complexity it could have [...]" (179). She adds that feminist scholars who embrace "complex inquiries" to produce more "transformative scholarship" could "release some of the energy women of color scholars have had to expend by having to constantly 'correct' the norm [...]. Even more important, perhaps we might be able to focus on developing new ideas that emanate out of our specific contexts--ideas that might benefit all of us--a focus we might have been able to pursue years ago if we did not have to protect the advance in thought we had already made" (180).

[5] In Chapter Three, I indicate how the *Bildungsroman* pertains to the work of Jamaica Kincaid. In Chapter Four, I suggest how the serial portrayal of Michelle Cliff's protagonist Clare Savage has been considered in this context.

they can also stimulate a reader's desire for the reform of state processes

associated with human rights experience and acquisition. Alternatively, their

works also convey significant skepticism regarding any social appeal to the

nation-state; in particular, they take issue with cultural industrial work that

"automates democracy" (Slaughter 120) not only to restore credibility to the

governing ideologies of an imagined public sphere, but to profit from the

imagination of it.

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Focusing on the respective works of Paule Marshall, Jamaica Kincaid, and

Michelle Cliff, I consider how transnational, black-identified female protagonists

are imagined to function as resisters and agents of late- twentieth-century

neoliberal capitalism.[6] I am particularly interested in how they endure neoliberal

conditions not only by critiquing them but also by entering into alignments with

neoliberal culture and development agendas. For the purposes of this project, I

conceptualize a specific neoliberal condition that gives rise to the paradoxical

configuration of labour value as it is racialized and feminized. I consider how in

literature this labour value can be calculated according to degrees of association

with the bio-politics of disposability *and* responsibility. By tracking variations in

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[6] The protagonists I study can be distinguished from other characters in their narrative worlds, particularly insofar as they demonstrate a special capacity to convey a critical historical consciousness of links between slavery, colonialism and more contemporary forms of imperialism. They are often genealogically linked to real or imaginary black female predecessors known or thought to have engaged in acts of militant resistance as fugitive slaves or maroon warriors. The relevance of historical and imaginative recoveries of black women's resistance need not be undermined by my analysis, nor should the inspirational value of these traditions for contemporary struggles be underestimated. See Angela Davis' "Reflections on the Black Woman's Role in the Community of Slaves" for an early critical perspective concerning the relevance of recovering histories of black women's resistance. See also Lucille Mathurin Mair, Barbara Bush, and Olive Senior.

the literary representation of neoliberal conditions, we may become better

prepared to challenge literary analysis that obscures the socially destructive

effects of neoliberalism through a celebratory reading of black women's agency

and resistance in the neoliberal age. As Virginia Vargas contends, "[r]esistance to

the forces of globalization and the elaboration of new pathways and perspectives

are informed by a novel conceptualization of the body, one that identifies it as a

political site affected by those very global forces. Proof is in the stigmas the body

endures and the rights it struggles to attain" (323). She adds, "it is the body as a

political site that can be seen as an actively emerging absence, having failed to be

recognized in previous interpretive frameworks, in spite of the numerous signs of

existence" (323). A range of critics have argued that neoliberal discourse and

policy thrives upon contradiction and ambiguity (Harvey, Hall, Hale, Ferguson,

Wilson, Brand and Sekler, Benn Michaels, Melamed, Goldberg); it is thus vital to

read not only for signs of agency and resistance in narratives of the neoliberal era,

but also for reconfigured conditions of subalternity that allow for the selective

rendering of labouring figures as representative of and/or responsible for more

heterogeneous subaltern constituencies.[7] Transnational black female protagonists

are often praised by literary critics as figures who provide the most significant

critique of their societies; yet, the singular rendering of their critical capacity

discursively reproduces conditions of social exclusion and imaginatively

[7] See Carole Boyce Davies' "Beyond Unicentricity: Transcultural Black Presences" for its work "to challenge the imaginative to pursue other paradigms that move away from the logic of center/periphery, single origins, one-centeredness" (96). Exploring features of "unicentricity" in both *Eurocentric* and *Afrocentric* discourses, she rethinks transnational politics and Diaspora "as a series of relational spheres that can [...] identify how people are interrelated beyond the 'centricity' logic" (105).

overburdens black women by associating them with exceptional capacities for social responsibility.[8]

The literary and cultural studies research I undertake in this project intervenes upon two tendencies evident within the increasingly interdisciplinary field of neoliberal criticism. On the one hand, there are neoliberal critics who emphasize homogenizing narratives of class struggle and thus fail to seriously engage with the significant research and theory generated by intersectional analyses of race, class, gender, sex, age, education, citizen status, language, accent, geography (and so on). This critical disengagement not only devalues intersectional methodologies that have been developed by black feminists since at least the nineteenth century, but it threatens to legitimize the post-racial, post-feminist and, indeed, post-intersectional dimensions of neoliberal ideology. A singular emphasis on class exploitation thus does little to confront the neoliberal conflation of free economic markets with human social freedoms because it obscures genealogies of capitalist development as influenced by racist and patriarchal ideologies. Yet, the limitations of intersectional theory must also be addressed, for while it serves to disrupt unitary conceptions of class, gender, or race identification, it "necessitates further investigations [...] as an approach to conducting empirical research" (Hancock 64). Scholars in the social sciences have thus called for the development of more practical applications for intersectional

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[8] Barbara Christian states, "Often I find that women of color are represented in scholarship by Afro-American women, as if Chicanas, Asian Americans, or Native American women, not to mention women living outside this country, did not have their own specific contexts. If we are to move beyond a stultifying and false unity toward a more accurate, rich inquiry into the worlds of women, and therefore to new ideas about how liberations might come about, we will have to do more than acknowledge or cite differences; we may have to see the intersections of our many differences as central to the quality of our work" (180).

methodology to support more nuanced social analyses (Nash 2008; Hancock

2007; Zack 2005; McCall 2005).[9]

Intersectional theories can be especially problematic when mobilized to

advance the ideological priorities of a selective political constituency. Jennifer C.

Nash finds that, "[f]or intersectional theorists, marginalized subjects have an

epistemic advantage, a particular perspective that scholars should consider, if not

adapt, when crafting a normative vision of a just society" (3); yet, she argues that

"[i]ntersectionality's reliance on black women as the basis for its claims to

complex subjectivity renders black women prototypical intersectional subjects

whose experiences of marginality are imagined to provide a *theoretical value-*

added" (8). Nash's critique of this dominant intersectional effect prompts the

question of how neoliberal ideologies might capitalize upon intersectional theory

to promote a particular view of women as central to development. How, for

example, might a woman-focused development paradigm promote a "value-

added" model to establish a prototypical category of gender ideology that can be

projected into mainstream representations of the so-called developing world?

Such questions need at least provisional answers to stimulate more effective

strategies for the disruption of a neoliberal project that is now capitalizing on the

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[9] Nikol G. Alexander-Floyd critiques tendencies in social science research to appropriate intersectional "discursive strategies that (re)marginalize black women and other women of color" (3). She finds "the conflation of the ideational and ideographic dimensions of intersectionality and its de-historicized renderings has fomented growing concern about its problematic uses" (4). Thus the "post-black" scholarship of Ange-Marie Hancock and Leslie McCall reinforces "universalizing tendenc[ies] and [...] bait-and-switch rhetorical strategies" (8). In general, I concur with Alexander-Floyd's definition of intersectionality "as the commitment to centering research and analysis on the lived experiences of women of color for the purpose of making visible and addressing their marginalization as well as an ethos of challenging business as usual in mainstream disciplines' habits of knowledge production" (9); however, I seek to address specific representational problems that arise from the centralization of black women in theories and politics of intersectionality.

"cultural rights activism" of indigenous movements and other constituents comprising a global poor majority (Hale 12).

Literary representations of black women's agency and resistance may be read as part of a negotiated literary-cultural response to late twentieth century social hostility expressed towards Caribbean and African American women. According to Eudine Barriteau, "[a]t the end of the twentieth century, commentators often typecast Caribbean women as the witches of medieval Europe" (45). In her estimation, they are made to seem "responsible for the destruction of families (but not crops yet), high rates of divorce, male economic and social marginalization, and the comparatively poor performance of boys and men at every educational level. Newspaper articles and editorials warn of the damage being done to boys by being raised in female-headed households, attending co-educational schools and being taught primarily by female teachers" (45-46). Such backlash against Caribbean women may be compared with that expressed against African American women in the years following the dissemination of Daniel Patrick Moynihan's 1965 report entitled "The Negro Family: The Case for National Action." This report "helped to naturalize the idea of the emasculated black man and the castrating black matriarch," but it also promoted the view that "black poverty" was related to the "the lack of nuclear families in black communities" (Crawford 190). Following the report's release, President Lyndon Johnson "added a critique of what he viewed as African Americans' inability to address their own failures" (190). These pronouncements provide context for the various stereotypes generated to portray black women—

especially single black mothers—as paradoxically the responsible and

irresponsible socio-economic caretakers of black communities. In response, one

should take time to historically review who has been empowered to define

racialized and feminized notions of failure in the first place; furthermore, one

might ask how perceptions of success regarding economic status, political power,

and the reproduction of social life are linked through racialized capitalist ideology

in a neoliberal era. The question of how to generate productive but not debilitating

critique of the social failure to sustain solidarity and enact effective resistance to

capitalist exploitation is, in my estimation, a pressing one. Focusing on

transnational, black female protagonists, I suggest ways in which they may be

read, from a critical literary-cultural perspective, as typologically "intersectional"

agents configured in relation to a neoliberal condition emerging from U.S.-

Caribbean trade and labour relations whereby the responsibilities of public and

private life become intimately entangled.[10]

      Keeping in mind comparisons between Caribbean and African American

women on the basis of patriarchal and racial social hostility, we should also

attempt to acknowledge ways in which the living conditions of black women in

the Caribbean may differ from the experiences of those living in the United

States. Not only has "the relationship between the United States and the

Caribbean always been one-sided," insofar as the United States has consistently

"undermin[ed] governments [in the region] that put a priority on the well-being of

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[10] I share the view with critics such as Barriteau who contends that "[i]n asking how the Caribbean state relates to women, not only do we need an understanding of the different arenas of the public, but we need to recognize the fictional nature of the public/private divide, question the purposes that divide serves, and expose how the issues of the public and private in fact cross-cross and transcend each sphere continuously" (35).

the poor majority,"[11] but "[t]he majority of Caribbean people are poor" (Antrobus et al 3). Furthermore, "Caribbean economies, shaped by colonizing powers, remain highly dependent on international markets. Countries in the region that try to follow a more autonomous course find themselves in conflict with the United States. Washington's policy has been to bind the region more closely to the U.S. economy as a source of cheap labor and a market for cheap goods" (3). While there may be patterns of experience to be identified between African American women and black Caribbean women living the neoliberal condition, it is important to not conflate them as well as to address the potential asymmetrical effects of domestic versus foreign practices of U.S. neoliberalism;[12] we might also consider not only how African Americans but black Caribbean women, located within U.S. Empire, are integrated into U.S. imperialist projects abroad.

Black Caribbean and African American women's literature may perform

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[11] Antrobus, et al cite U.S. interventions in Cuba, Haiti, and the Dominican Republic and argue that "Cold War ideology only reinforced the view that governments not beholden to the United States, especially progressive ones, are threats" (3). We might also consider U.S. intervention in Grenada in 1983 as an attempt to contain the expansion of regional solidarity links, between places such as Guyana, Jamaica, Trinidad and Cuba, on the basis of anti-imperialism, Black power, communism, and socialism.

[12] One critical area in which to address patterns and asymmetries between experiences of the U.S. and the Caribbean is to review the history of racialized, agricultural migrant labour in the United States. Historically, African Americans tended to fill these physically dangerous and economically insecure jobs; increasingly, since the 1930s, the workers filling these jobs are Latino and Caribbean migrants. The view of who constitutes cheap and disposable labour is still racialized, but the composition of the labour pool has shifted in the U.S. I would thus argue that the neoliberal condition, as it hinges upon bio-political degrees of disposability and responsibility, has different ramifications for workers who possess citizenship and may be privy to local legal rights, versus those who are undocumented but temporarily working in a foreign neoliberal nation-state. See works by Bowe, Bales, and Yousef for further discussions on these issues. It is worth noting that Bales insists, in several books, that "new slavery," unlike "old slavery," is premised on class rather than race exploitation. Not only does he rely upon a highly simplified model of American plantation slavery as his model for "old slavery," but he fails to consider the way that race has operated historically as a social construction for the *basis* of class exploitation. For critical portrayals in documentary film of Latino and Jamaican migrant workers in the U.S., see George Koszulinski's *Immokalee U.S.A* (2008) and Stephanie Black's *H-2 Worker* (1990). For a perspective on race, class, and inter-regional migrant labour exploitation in the context of a neoliberal Caribbean, see Annalee Davis' 2007 documentary film *On the Map.*

important ideological work to help reshape perspectives of black women living

under neoliberalism. As cultural activist work, it can help to draw attention to the

unrecognized value and range of work assumed by black women in service of

community-building and empowerment; yet, the review of such portrayals must

also be complicated by the acknowledgement of a neoliberal condition which

capitalizes on the exacerbation of black women's responsibilities to engage in

unwaged, informal, and/or invisible social, political, cultural and economic

work.[13] Could the transnational black female protagonist, as a paradoxical figure

of resistance and exploitation, be over-determined and over-burdened by literary

and cultural analysis in ways that might be comparable to the neoliberal

celebration of racialized women in terms of their developmental agency? The

additional calculation of women's labour value in neoliberal development studies

does not promise the generation of insightful intersectional analysis. Indeed,

"[s]everal factors influenced the incapacity of the WID [women in development]

focus to comprehend the complex and multi-layered realities of women in the

South" (Barriteau 79). A neoliberal value-added calculation may thus represent an

appropriative manipulation of intersectional theory and analysis if it praises the

assumption of multiple burdens by racialized women who confront ongoing

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[13] In a Caribbean context, "Rosemary Antoine concludes that it is a very difficult task to pursue the goal of securing economic, social and cultural (ECONSOC) rights for women in the work place. This is so even though there are new issues such as the increasing casualization of labor, the feminization of such labor and the exacerbated impact of these when structural adjustment measures are imposed (Antoine 1997: 587). She notes that in CARICOM countries, states have not even embarked on the first steps to secure women's rights in the work place since there exists a great paucity of legislation and constitutional references devoted to women's issues at work (587). There is the widespread belief that women are enjoying economic advantages in comparison with men juxtaposed against the documented evidence of women's continuing struggle for economic survival along with the inadequacy of existing legal mechanisms to bring relief" (Barriteau 48).

economic insecurity as well as political disempowerment.

      Living the neoliberal condition, racialized women who are economically insecure may be valued as agents of development if they demonstrate a resilient capacity to survive a naturalized life of multiple burdens. Kalpana Wilson's research finds that in "dominant development institutions, there are signs that approaches involving the 'feminisation of responsibilty' for survival will become even more significant in the period of global recession and crisis" (318-319). Yet, I contend that the neoliberal celebration of women's agency as developmental *responsibility* is not without conditionality. The underlying implication of conditionality reinforces the hegemonic qualities of a neoliberal condition, particularly insofar as it may induce practices of self-regulation and social management within those seeking approval for their responsible actions but who might otherwise be motivated to work against late capitalism in its neoliberal phase.[14] On the other hand, we should also observe ways that "Caribbean women are not simply victims of economic hardship" by acknowledging how "they and their families are devising innovative strategies for dealing with it" (61).[15]

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[14] I am focusing on the socially constraining aspects of a neoliberal condition premised on bio-political calculations of responsibility and disposability. For an alternative angle, see Carla Freeman who, in her study of contemporary, entrepreneurial class culture in Barbados, traces "the convergence of two different logics of flexibility" (252). She offers insights into the relation between the "neoliberal flexibility" of "the world's capitalist brokers" and "reputational flexibility," which she associates with "the oppositional politics of the Caribbean subaltern" (252). Her investigation of "the relation between flexibility as a facilitator of new possibilities and as a system of restraints," or as what David Harvey calls both "'opportunity'" and 'threat,'" may be useful to consider the unsettling substitutions and slippages between neoliberal culture and its oppositions (253).

[15] Strategies cited suggest: "(1) women are entering the labor force in increasing numbers, particularly as workers in export-processing industries; (2) along with men, they are engaging in a wide variety of activities in the informal sector; (3) households are diversifying their survival strategies, changing living and consumption patterns; and (4) women are joining, and even predominating in, the international migration stream, especially to the United States" (Antrobus et al 61). While it is argued that "[a]ll of these constitute important economic and social changes of

Too often, however, women are valued according to their degree of

association with the multi-faceted, often exhausting, unwaged labour

responsibilities of caring for self and others *in addition* to their paid labour

contributions. The intensification of survivalist living conditions increases

competition among women and threatens their social solidarity. Selma James

argues:

> every division among us expresses the division of labor: the quantity of
>
> work and the wages or lack of wages mapped out for each particular
>
> sector. Depending on who we are—what *combination* of sex, race, age,
>
> nation, physical dis/ability, and so on—we are pushed into one or other of
>
> these niches which seems our natural destiny rather than our job. To allow
>
> even one of these aspects of our identity to be denied by anyone is to
>
> allow them to falsify or at least obscure our social position and our
>
> workload, which they do most often to falsify and hide the power relations
>
> between us and them. ("Strangers and Sisters: Women, Race, and
>
> Immigration" 176; my emphasis)

Poverty can create conditions for competition as well as for the destruction of

one's sense of social commitment to others. In part, the neoliberal condition that I

conceptualize involves not only a bio-political calculation of responsibility and

disposability, but also what I would refer to as a *geo-economic calculation of*

social time. In this scenario, a woman living the neoliberal condition may be

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the last decade [1980-1990]" (61), it is not clear to me the extent to which these survival
strategies, however resourceful, enable progressive social transformation. This research is
published in 1990 and refers largely to the 1980s. I am interested in these historical perspectives
particularly because many of the cultural works I examine in this dissertation were published
during these decades and/or reflect upon this time in terms of the neoliberal turn.

compelled to feel that she cannot afford to locate herself politically, or that she does not have the time to be physically present at a particular place to support other women.[16] This neoliberal disorientation from the social is individualized and gendered. It may also be regionalized insofar as it affects a woman's imagination of solidarity with women in other Caribbean geo-political sites that might be in competition with the one she inhabits. In my view, the geo-economic constraints of the neoliberal condition represent a serious dilemma within organizational cultures of activism because they threaten practices of inclusive participation as well as principles of shared or rotating leadership. Solidarity requires the labour of community-building; thus, feelings of alienation and marginalization may arise for those who feel they cannot afford a social time commitment.[17]

In the neoliberal era, as women are plotted against each other and their communities, they may discredit the labour value involved in transformative social and political relations. Peggy Antrobus' depiction of neoliberal policy during the 1980s is suggestive of how neoliberal conditions may reinforce multiple and individualized social burdens upon women. Such a scenario can subsequently generate a sense of social hostility and competition among

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[16] I would like to draw attention to the fact that here I am deliberately bypassing a debate over whether or not this imagined woman possesses critical historical consciousness of her neoliberal condition. In some respects, what concerns me is that the survivalist situation of the neoliberal condition makes it difficult for one to act upon this consciousness even if one has it. I would also avoid the projection of a dichotomy that oversimplifies critical historical consciousness by presuming some to possess it while others do not.

[17] According to Paget Henry, "[t]he contemporary phase of Caribbean Marxism" faced the challenge "to assimilate feminist critiques of the notions of wage labour that have been central to this tradition of thought. These critiques have suggested that, in spite of its universal form and gender-neutral appearance, the concept has a male bias which results from the systematic underrepresentation of the economic contributions of women" (328). See the conclusion to this dissertation for discussion of the Caribbean Association for Feminist Research and Action and its struggles for solidarity and inclusive participation during the 1980s and 1990s.

Caribbean women as they are pressured to secure resources required for immediate primary social care. On a regional basis, the structural adjustment policies adopted by Caribbean governments, "to obtain IMF credit, World Bank loans, and U.S. AID funding," have resulted in "[h]igher prices for basic consumption goods," as well as "severe declines in real wages, at the same time that social welfare programs are cut back" (Antrobus et al. 11). The feminization of neoliberal exploitation seems evident in policy resulting in the reduction of "public housing, education and training programs, health services, and other social welfare programs" for, as Antrobus argues, "women bear the greatest responsibility for the care of children, the sick, and the elderly and head a large proportion of households in the Caribbean" (11). Furthermore, during the 1980s and 1990s, there was a rise in "informal sector activities [...] which for many families has become the only source of income. *The critically unstable and competitive nature of these jobs requires a type of individual aggressive hustling that hinders the development of a sense of collective struggle*" (11; emphasis mine). The geo-economic sense of constraint for women's social commitment to anti-neoliberal resistance can thus be exacerbated by the neoliberal culture of informalized labour which plots women against each other as insecure and aggressive entrepreneurs.

The post-feminist and post-racial orientation of neoliberal discourse can in some instances further promote social divisiveness among women as they become obligated as individuals to assume the unwaged responsibilities of the welfare

state;[18] the logic of neoliberal culture is to promote individualized responsibility

and not to invest in social capacity-building for a critical literacy of the points of

convergence that might unify people in struggle.[19] The neoliberal socialization of

women as celebrated, over-burdened agents of development may sometimes

resonate, in unsettling ways, with an over-determined construction of black

women as socially responsible intersectional subjects endowed with special

capacities for critique and resistance, even when all odds are against them.

Kalpana Wilson argues the consequence of just such a connection is both "the

construction of poor women in the South as *'enterprising' subjects with limitless*

capacity to 'cope'", and the concomitant invisibility of "movements which run

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[18] In the following passage, Peggy Antrobus et al suggest the alternative development potential for the Caribbean, which seemed evident by the end of the 1960s, but was thwarted, in part, by the neoliberal turn:

> New social protest movements emerged, new ideologies—ethnic, nationalist, and socialist—developed, and political turmoil resurfaced in many countries, as manifest in the 1965 revolt in the Dominican Republic, the 1970s protests by the Black Power movement in Trinidad, and the 1974 election of Michael Manley as prime minister of Jamaica on a platform of democratic socialism. The 1970s were indeed an intense period of renaissance and experimentation, of constructing new utopias, and of rethinking development policy in different terms. After its peaceful revolution in 1979, Grenada assumed a position of leadership in the search for social change in the Caribbean. While the particular mix of policy initiatives pursued during the decade varied across countries[....] [t]here was a steady expansion in the economic role of the state, a deepened commitment to and reevaluation of the role of Caribbean regionalism—leading to the formation of the Caribbean Community and Common Market (CARICOM) in the English-speaking Caribbean—and a general diversification of international relations. (5)

[19] Henry Giroux's conception of "critical" literacy is premised on the grassroots education of political and socioeconomic rights. He holds that conventional "literacy becomes an ideological vehicle through which to legitimate schooling as a site for *character development*; in this case, literacy is associated with the transmission and mastery of a unitary Western tradition based on the virtues of hard work, industry, respect for family, institutional authority, and an unquestioning respect for the nation" (2-3; my emphasis). Giroux's "emancipatory theory of literacy," by contrast, emphasizes "an alternative discourse and critical reading of how ideology, culture, and power work within late capitalist societies to limit, disorganize, and marginalize the more critical and radical everyday experiences and common-sense perceptions of individuals" (4-5). Giroux is influenced by Antonio Gramsci's conceptions of hegemony and Paolo Freire's theories of radical pedagogy.

counter to the neoliberal model" (319; my emphasis).[20] Neoliberal culture

celebrates the image of women who endlessly endure hardships but also "resolve

problems" of poverty even while they are "integrate[d] more deeply into global

circuits of capital" (319). It is not clear that this neoliberal imagining of racialized

women's capacity is attributed to all human bodies; rather, it seems that a

"combination" of bodily identifications (James "Strangers and Sisters" 176)

informs the processes of calculating labour value according to, in my analysis,

degrees of disposability and responsibility.

We might compare Wilson's insight with the following black feminist and

literary-critical portrayal of black women. Drawing on the work of African

feminist Molara Ogundipe-Leslie, Myriam J.A. Chancy asserts that her "vision for

Afro-Caribbean diasporic feminism must 'include issues around the woman's

body, her person, her immediate family, her society, her nation, her continent and

their locations within the international economic order because those realities [...]

determine African [and Afro-Caribbean] politics and impact on women'" (23).

Feminist scholarly and activist networks would do well to address these issues in

a variety of ways; however, we should discern research and action from the

cultural work of narrative as it structures an imagining of resistance around the

figure of a black woman whose bodily presence comes to signify the material

effects of colonialist and imperialist legacies, but whose voice is intended to

represent the most cutting-edge voice of critique. While Chancy's promotion of

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[20] "The instrumentalisation of poor women is perhaps epitomised by the World Bank's Gender Action Plan (2007-10) and its slogan 'Gender Equality as Smart Economics'. But this represents a much wider consensus across development institutions, including the vast majority of NGOs" (Wilson 319).

Afro-Caribbean diasporic criticism may involve anti-neoliberal black feminist

aspiration, it also places implicit pressure on the black female protagonist, in

black feminist literature, to function as a successfully resistant figure whose

formation of transnational critique suggests an exceptional capacity to build more

productive yet complex solidarities. Chancy's black female protagonist risks

becoming Wilson's "enterprising" woman of the global South insofar as this

figure is overburdened with the idealized expectation that she can account for, and

adequately represent, all of the complex conditions of black women's experience.

As a critical figure, the black female protagonist is thus imagined to be able to

resolve the problems of the collective.

These issues present the opportunity to revitalise and reorient

intersectional approaches towards a reflexive critique of their own configuration

and potential obscuration of expanding neoliberal interests. Wilson explains that

the emphasis placed on women's agency in development discourses represents a

paradigm shift towards the revision of white feminist and patriarchal tendencies to

treat women of colour in developing countries as passive victims of violence, war,

poverty, in need of Western liberation.[21] As such, the figure of the multiply

burdened, racialized woman may be all too familiar to us in the context of

historical or contemporary practices of slavery, colonialism, imperialism, war,

international development, and/or with various movements built to oppose and

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[21] As the chapters of this dissertation unfold, I point to ways in which black matrifocal traditions may also be capitalized upon through the promotion of black women as resilient, self-sacrificing figures who serve the interests of community survival. In effect, state responsibility is displaced onto black working-class women who face tremendous job insecurity and instability resulting from a neoliberal labour culture that promotes short-term and contract employment without benefits, discourages or prohibits the organization on behalf of workers' rights and benefits, and/or creates conditions for the expansion of an informal labour sector whereby precarious forms of self-employment are adopted as a result of basic needs for survival.

overcome them. Since at least the nineteenth century, black women have

produced intersectional analysis inspiring black feminists of the twentieth century

to expand the terrain upon which to challenge classificatory imaginings of

racialized women (Guy-Sheftall 1-23). Building on Nash's and Wilson's

respective critiques of intersectionality and neoliberal gender agency, I contend

that the neoliberal era creates conditions for the *continuation* of past legacies

promoting (and critiquing) the social reproduction of the multiply burdened,

racialized woman; however, the integrative neoliberal ideologies of class, race

and gender, for example, work to reshape notions of victimhood to make the life

of struggle seem responsible.[22] In this way, neoliberal discourses function to

conceal policies producing the effect of selective human disposability. The image

of Black women's resilience may thus be instrumental to neoliberal narratives

making a range of personal survival strategies seem more rational than a state or

social intervention to uplift communities.

    Black feminist theoretical and historical projects have been crucial to

counter white supremacist discourses (patriarchal and feminist) which have

stereotyped and caricatured identifications of black women, particularly in terms

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[22] Compellingly, Wilson draws connections between neoliberal conceptions of women's agency and early twentieth- century depictions of gendered virtue on the basis of work ethic: "This is not so much a new development as a rediscovery and reformulation of an earlier narrative: that of late colonial enterprises, which were based on the acute exploitation of largely female labour. Anandi Ramamurthy has demonstrated how tea advertising in the 1920s worked to provide legitimacy for the continuation of colonial rule in the context of growing demands for independence, using images of the Indian woman tea picker who was not only represented as 'alluring and sensual, but through her apparent contentment and productivity within an ordered environment symbolically affirmed the need for empire' [sic]. These images were also read in the context of discourses of the 'work ethic', individual responsibility and the 'deserving' and 'undeserving' poor, which were deployed to extract ever greater surpluses from the working class in Britain and, via missionaries in particular, from the country's colonial subjects" (323).

of their productive and reproductive labour value;[23] yet, it is necessary to review

how black feminisms can be appropriated and manipulated to reinforce neoliberal

conditions. Joanna Fax's conceptualization of "neoliberal sentimentality" (1) and

"*vulnerability discourse*" (2) is useful to my reading for the representative vital

signs of black women's resistance and agency in the neoliberal era. She argues

that, "[b]eyond invoking the private, personal, and state-sanctioned, vulnerability

discourse also elaborates a particular socio-political *public* whose relation to the

state is no longer sentimentalised as victim, but is often organised in contradictory

ways. Putting it simply, vulnerability discourse represents a particularly new

valence regarding the state's role as protector of private property" (2). In her view,

"this shift from a liberal discourse of the state as protector of *rights* to the state as

protector of *property* (albeit a discourse that abstracts this relation) [...] gives

vulnerability discourse its distinct neoliberal character" (2). Drawing on Fax's

notion of a sentimentalized neoliberal vulnerability, I would suggest that the U.S.

neoliberal state protects not a material distribution of wealth among black women,

but rather an abstract notion of the individual black woman's agency as her private

property.[24]

If it is not their dispossession for which the U.S. neoliberal state cares, but

rather their imagined sense of self-possession, then black women in this scenario

no longer need be treated as victims but celebrated as responsible agents of

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[23] This can happen in a variety of explicit and less explicit ways. For a compelling critique of white feminist fascinations with black women as mother-figures and teachers, see Ann DuCille's 1994 essay "The Occult of True Black Womanhood: Critical Demeanor and Black Feminist Studies."

[24] This scenario has sentimental appeal and historical roots in social movements such as abolition insofar as the work to secure black freedom did not result in racial equality on the basis of redistributive justice.

personal and community development; meanwhile, state responsibility for social

services to support more sustainable well-being and community development is

rendered unnecessary.[25] U.S. President Barack Obama's 2010 State of the Union

Address reinforces an American ideology of abstract self-possession to signify

even more ambiguous notions of unity and equality:

> Abroad, America's greatest strength has been its ideals. The same is true at
> home. We find unity in our incredible diversity, drawing on the promise
> enshrined in our Constitution, the notion that we're all created equal, that
> no matter who you are or what you look like, *if you abide by the law*, you
> *should* be protected by it, *if you adhere to our common values*, you *should*
> be treated no different than anyone else. (my emphasis)

The conditionality attached to this juridical rhetoric of U.S. citizen rights marks a

distinction between equality at birth, despite "incredible diversity," and the

political equality of access to socioeconomic opportunity earned by one's consent

to the "law" and "common values" of the nation-state. The outcome of this

constitutional formula is uncertain, for while one's juridical and cultural consent

should lead to state protection of the individual and her social experience of non-

discrimination, it cannot be guaranteed. It may thus be valuable to review the

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[25] Joanna Fax distinguishes her intervention from the work of Lauren Berlant accordingly: "In sum, if Berlant's politics of victimhood captures the individualising nature of liberal political discourse, then 'vulnerability politics' eschews the moment of trauma and testimony that victimhood relies upon, allowing for this newer signifier to be co-opted toward a variety of political ends. It reinforces the neutrality of the individual-state distinction and goes further to disguise how class alliances in the 'integral state' reinforce what Louis Althusser refers to as the false dichotomy of 'public' and 'private' imposed by the state. In the end, vulnerability discourse not only obscures but also renders *illegible* a structural explanation of social inequality. As it functions hegemonically, vulnerability works as a tautological device to eliminate class-based claims from popular discourse. As such, trenchant structural analysis appears not so much as a change in the conversation but rather almost never appears at all or, when it does, is dismissed as old fashioned, an element to a conversation that is not even happening" (8-9).

conditions and contingencies underlying human freedom and equality in modern

societies of free enterprise insofar as they are linked to histories of slavery.

Historian Elsa Goveia provides the following assessment of the Caribbean in the

context of her 1965 study *Slave Society in the British Leeward Islands at the end*

of the eighteenth century:

> Ever since the time of emancipation...we have been trying to combine
>
> opposite principles in our social system, but sooner or later we shall have
>
> to face the fact that we are courting defeat when we attempt to build a new
>
> heritage of freedom upon a structure of society which binds us all too
>
> closely to the old heritage of slavery. Liberty and equality are good
>
> consorts, for though their claims sometimes conflict, they rest upon a
>
> common basis which makes them reconcilable. But the most profound
>
> incompatibility necessarily results from the uneasy union which joins
>
> democracy with the accumulated remains of enslavement. (qtd. in
>
> Lamming 15)

Although Goveia is reflecting upon a different time, place, and political system,

what connects her passage with the one from Obama's speech is a legacy of

slavery and a history of contradiction between capitalism and democracy. This

contradiction will be elaborated upon in chapter one where I contextualize key

themes in critical neoliberal studies.

<p align="center">***</p>

While U.S. military and economic interventions in places such as Haiti,

Cuba, and several countries of Central and South America may be viewed as

coercive acts in the history of imperialist U.S. Cold War strategy, it seems important to not overlook the hegemonic effects of U.S. neoliberalism in the English-speaking Caribbean which has been formally defined as post-colonial. Carole Boyce Davies and Monica Jardine argue that "the United States rejects older notions of territorial acquisition in the Caribbean in favor of military and administrative coordination of an existing field of colonial and semicolonial relations" so that, in effect, "a new time frame of Western imperialisms demands a new set of imaginations to counter its persistent narratives of global appropriation" (153). They suggest that U.S. "forms of domination in the Caribbean have functioned as experiments" (154) to "keep alive a constabulary force in the region" (155). In Anthony Payne's view, "[n]o amount of appeals to the shrine of sovereignty in international law [...] could effect the removal of the marines or block the wider political purpose of the US in reasserting its power over the Caribbean. Washington simply refused to play the new post-colonial game of respecting the sovereign rights of the weak, and got away with it" (Payne 70). His contention that "U.S.-Caribbean relations over the period of the last thirty or forty years have rarely--if ever--been analysed in a thoroughly satisfying way" (69) compels me to pursue, from a literary-cultural perspective, a study of the neoliberal conditioning of black female protagonists who have intimate, transnational connections with both the United States and the English-speaking Caribbean. I consider how neoliberal trade, labour, and development are imagined in relation to scales of anti-imperialism and in the context of black struggles for resistance and solidarity. I focus on U.S.-based, black-identified writers who have

links to the English Caribbean because it allows me to consider ways in which the arguably more subtle conditions of neoliberal hegemony may be overlooked as a result of paying attention to more explicit forms of U.S. intervention; responding to the call for "a new set of imaginations" (Boyce Davies and Jardine 153), I suggest how neoliberal conditions are imagined and communicated by women of the U.S. Caribbean Diaspora who, despite cultural and geo-political differences, may identify to varying degrees with the domestic struggles of African-American women who represent an English-speaking constituency. This focus on the English-speaking Caribbean and its relation to the U.S. thus allows me to explore patterns and variations in the neoliberal dimension of black culture industries expressed in the dominant global language of English.

In this context, I find that black-identified writers of Caribbean descent working *within* the U.S. may be actors with transnational cultural significance. From the perspective of international political relations, Anthony Payne argues that "Caribbean actors based *within* the US [...] play a major part in the making of US policies towards their 'home' region" (77). While the example he provides to support his claim is based on anti-Castro Cubans living in Miami, he also notes the significance of US actors who work "on behalf of the Caribbean" (78). As of the year 2000, Payne maintains that "the Caribbean is still subject to US hegemony" (81) despite changes in the global focus of U.S. foreign interests. Yet, during the 1990s "a new type of *trans-territorial* political connection between the US and Caribbean" emerged as a combined result of "US hegemonic power over the Caribbean" and "the residual penetrability of institutions of the US state to

different forms of Caribbean influence" (81); in effect, "what is now encapsulated within contemporary US-Caribbean relations cannot any longer be conceived as mere international relations" for they have "been configured as a series of interlocking transnational and transgovernmental policy communities [...] in which different actors within the US state/society complex and within various Caribbean state/society complexes [...] engage each other in different policy arenas where there are no automatic priorities" (81-82). With this view in mind, I am compelled to consider the extent to which Paule Marshall, Jamaica Kincaid, and Michelle Cliff may be thought to write on behalf of a black female constituency imagined as Caribbean, American, and/or somewhere in-between. I explore a variety of ways in which their imaginative work can be regarded as evincing the limitations and opportunities for U.S.-Caribbean social commitment and collaboration in the neoliberal age.

I draw upon a range of primary and secondary texts to situate my research within multi-generic and interdisciplinary contexts. My general methodology is to combine close and critical reading practices while working with critical neoliberal studies, histories of women and development discourses, and black feminist intersectional analysis to inform the arguments I make throughout this project. In Chapter One, I address more specifically how neoliberal crisis and imagination pertain to these secondary areas of research and are significant to my literary and cultural analysis of black female protagonists as resisters and assisters of neoliberal projects. Concluding chapter one, I argue for more interaction between critical neoliberal studies, women and development discourses, and

intersectional theory to promote explicit confrontations with neoliberal manipulations of class, anti-racism and feminism in theory, culture, and practice.

A brief sketch of the primary texts selected for discussion in subsequent chapters is now in order. In the novels *The Chosen Place, the Timeless People* (1969) and *Daughters* (1991), my focus in Chapter Two, Paule Marshall critically portrays how patriarchal political electoral processes and neoliberal international development initiatives collude to promote tourism and profitable private foreign investment schemes in the Caribbean. Such a scenario not only exacerbates conditions of disenfranchisement for black working poor communities in the U.S. and the Caribbean, but it is enabled by the strategic social positioning of black women as transnational informants and mediators who are called upon to help facilitate processes of neoliberal development. The realization of solidarity for resistance, among those who are disenfranchised, is thus complicated by uneven processes of racialization and feminization. For the black female protagonists in Marshall's novels, racialized solidarity is unsettled because selective processes of individuation trickle down from the neoliberal development scheme into the social practices of organizing for resistance. While Marshall's portrayals ultimately work to revalue the labour and history of resistant black women, they should also cause us to review how feminist agency may be configured in relation to an emerging neoliberal condition at the same time that patriarchal organizational cultures of racialized resistance capitalize upon, but seldom credit, the labour of black female protagonists.

In Chapter Three, I focus on the essay *A Small Place* (1988) and the

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power manifested in the plantation and colony to neoliberal spatial formations, Cliff provokes questions concerning the role of culture industries to historicize resistance and activism for popular consumption. While her uses of anachronism and caricature unsettle a vision of conventional political identity formation, her depictions of political conflict and difference, especially among potential black female allies, signal the need to re-imagine present and future orientations towards social solidarity with a critical attention to how solidarity and resistance are historically produced and represented to limit political imaginations.

From different perspectives, each author pursues the question of how to re-imagine resistance and future solidarity in an era in which cultural diversity is capitalized upon by industries producing oversimplified representations of historical resistance and reinforcing the interests of neoliberal nation-states. Any imagining of resistance and solidarity is thus troubled by the neoliberal conditioning of historical freedom and agency in the development of communities. In this context, I regard Marshall, Kincaid, and Cliff as reconsidering the meaning of historical success and failure as it pertains to resistance and solidarity. Each author grapples with questions of agency and responsibility while attempting to re-imagine the orientation, scale, and limitations involved in the effort to engender solidarities which might more effectively oppose, transform, or overcome neoliberal life. As such, their works provide insight into ways in which the neoliberal era compromises both reformist and revolutionary imaginings of community development, as well as the pursuit of socioeconomic and gender justice by racialized women in the Caribbean and

the United States.

In the conclusion of this dissertation, I suggest how unconditional forms of critical social care may be imagined in the age of neoliberal debt and resistance. I draw upon an archive of *CAFRA News*, the regional activist newsletter produced by the Caribbean Association for Feminist Research and Action (*CAFRA*), as well as retrospective critique by *CAFRA* alumni, to reflect upon struggles that have occurred to advance Caribbean-based, feminist solidarity and the regional organization of resistance to U.S. imperialism as it is driven by neoliberal ideology and policy. I take a cue from Alison Donnell who argues that "a diasporic critical model has trumpeted the Caribbean as a theoretical utopia in which creolisation, hybridity, synchronicity, deterritorialization find their models but not their archives" (127). While my approach to the works of Marshall, Kincaid, and Cliff establishes a critical distance from the model of analysis alluded to by Donnell, it also ultimately acknowledges the political limitations of literary form and takes seriously the imaginative possibilities of more grassroots cultural forms and historical political struggles that *CAFRA News* enables us to examine.

Chapter One

Imagining the Cracks of Neoliberal Development

> The method of the crack is the method of the crisis: we wish to understand the wall not from its solidity but from its cracks; we wish to understand capitalism not as domination, but from the perspective of its crises, its contradictions, its weaknesses, and we want to understand how we ourselves are those contradictions. This is crisis theory, critical theory. Critical/crisis theory is the theory of our own misfitting.
> John Holloway, *Crack Capitalism*, (9).

> Women stand where many of these savage lines intersect.
> Stuart Hall, "The Neoliberal Revolution," (23).

The struggle against neoliberal capitalist development requires the collective will to unsettle a life of paradigmatic thinking. Sociologist-philosopher John Holloway draws attention to the "cracks" and "crises" of capitalism not to terrify or to immobilize, but to urge us to regard capitalist contradiction as systemic rupture and thus a revolutionary opportunity to transform human social relations. Our embodiment of capitalist contradiction signals "our own misfitting" within the system, but it does not make inevitable our fatalistic demise. In his reflections upon the neoliberal U.K., Stuart Hall states that women tend to be exposed to the most destructive effects of its policy. With these views in mind, we must review the continued relevance of intersectional social positioning to the analysis of the contradictions of neoliberal capitalism.

While a neoliberal project contains universalizing philosophical principles and economic prescriptions, it is not successfully totalitarian. Rather, neoliberal ideology secures legitimacy by encouraging paralysis in the social and political imagination of alternatives. As part of the mass cultural corollary to neoliberal economics, corporate news media thrives on the reproduction of scandal and

spectacle. Its communication technologies flatten, manipulate, and render invisible many of the historical contexts of our current events. In his critique of government public relations initiated to address the recent economic crisis in the U.K., John Clarke contends:

> the competition to name the crisis, to identify its distinctive characteristics and treat it as the ground on which to demand new things is intense. Crisis talk has been dominated by what might be best described as restorationist government approaches, however, whose primary commitments have been to re-establish the conditions for "business as usual." Despite the rhetorical flourishes (promises of a global new deal, or a new capitalism with morals), the main result has been a massive subsidy paid to failing financial institutions to ensure that the "system" is saved. Three features of this restorationist dynamic stand out for me: the nationalisation of crisis, the revival of the state, and the significance of crisis time. (49-50)

Clarke's assessment signals a narrative return to the time and space of the nation. The governmental desire to portray "the conditions for 'business as usual'" involves the rationalization of neoliberal economic imperatives and instrumentalisation in discursive forms. Clarke's view of a "competition to name the crisis" should thus remind us of the intersections between markets and narratives. We might also wonder how narratives of resistance compete for attention within a neoliberal global market economy. The trajectory of this chapter is to pursue a more preliminary question: how are critics of neoliberalism imagining and narrating crisis? In what follows, I address continuities and

variations in neoliberal critical analysis particularly insofar as it emphasizes features of economic, racial, and gender exploitation. A comparative analysis of critical orientation helps to reveal the unevenness of insight into global processes of neoliberalization. Within neoliberal criticism a thematic link frequently emerges between contradiction, crisis, and failure. In this context, I explore how neoliberal critics working within a range of disciplinary fields engage with questions of the neoliberal impact on the imagination. In doing so, I elaborate upon the particular challenges and struggles critics imagine for anti-neoliberal solidarity and resistance.

The nationalist narrative work of economic crisis management relates to Benedict Anderson's notion of an "imagined political community" (6) whereby, "regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each [nation], the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship" (33). The sociological work to procure nationalist sentiment is aided by marketed cultural productions, such as the newspaper or the realist novel (33). Despite the actual "scale and diversity of the modern nation," the national cultural narrative "gives the imagined world of the nation sociological solidity; it links together diverse acts and actors on a national stage who are entirely unaware of each other" (Bhabha 308). With Anderson in mind, I suggest that the "restorationist dynamic" (Clarke 49-50) at play in the nationalist production of economic crisis narratives works to realign the affinities of skeptical citizens with an imagined neoliberal nation-state community. Yet, this perspective does not adequately account for those who contest the platforms of political officials.

Departing from Anderson, Homi K. Bhabha offers a critique of Eurocentric temporality by making a distinction between the "pedagogical" national narrative and the "performative" response of colonial/subaltern subjects whose cultural and linguistic practices deviate from official history-making (304). Drawing from Julia Kristeva's arguments in *Women's Time*, Bhabha explains that "[t]his symbolic history of national culture is inscribed in the strange temporality of the future perfect, the effects of which are not dissimilar to [Frantz] Fanon's occult instability" (303-304). Accordingly, this situation gives rise to "a strategy of repetition that disturbs the sociological totalities within which we recognize the modernity of national culture" (304). In Bhabha's imagining, "the figure of the people emerges in the narrative ambivalence of disjunctive times and meanings. The concurrent circulation of linear, cursive, and monumental time, in the same cultural space, constitutes a new historical temporality that Kristeva identifies with psychoanalytically informed, feminist strategies of political identification" (304). Like Holloway, Bhabha works to demystify the power of official discourses to create fictions of popular consensus. However, his view of the "narrative ambivalence of disjunctive times" invokes a "double temporality" (304) and presupposes an oppositional relation between governing and governed bodies. How might this imagined dualism prevent us from exploring our "misfitting" with the narratives and discourses produced to imagine neoliberal resistance? Anti-neoliberal criticism shapes imagined constituencies and may presuppose a *fit* between resistant discourses and bodies. If, as Stuart Hall argues in the context of destructive neoliberal social and economic policy that "women stand where many

of these savage lines intersect" ("The Neoliberal Revolution" 23), then we must examine the multiple ways that neoliberal and imaginative crisis may be related. One way to do so is to explore the disciplinary routes taken to imagine the "cracks" in neoliberal development; another task is to discuss how to construct new critical intersections in research, theory, and action. We must do these things to address the failures of neoliberalism and the predatory tendencies of its discourse to selectively seize upon and manipulate histories of anti-racism and feminism. I find that neoliberalism creates post-racial and post-feminist imaginaries by assuming that anti-racism and feminism has completed its political and social work. This post-historical orientation obscures processes of racialization and feminization as well as their inextricability from class exploitation.

Methods of intersectional analysis need to be flexible but also specific so that critics can better address the sometimes subtle changes in the transnational conditions of exploitation, disenfranchisement, and dispossession. We might ask how "blackness does not just index race" but "also indexes gender, class, ethnicity, sexuality, religion, labor, nationality, transnationality, and politics" (Clarke and Thomas 9); however, in doing so, we should avoid analysis that does not clarify the contradictory or uneven procedures of a neoliberal project. This critical pursuit requires understanding both contingency and localized difference, but with due attention to the commoditized global circulation and surveillance of bodies, ideas, and imaginaries. It necessitates a consideration of the multi-directional trade in commodity culture and neoliberal ideology among

governments, corporations, and citizen-consumers. How can consumer-oriented

trade impact popular imaginings of race and gender, labour value and resistance?

Primarily, I approach these questions by addressing theorizations of imagination,

resistance, class and race within the interdisciplinary field of critical neoliberal

studies. Illuminating this criticism, I suggest how it relates to women and

development studies and may be informed by black feminist intersectional

analysis. These areas of research provide historical and theoretical context for a

subsequent analysis of creative works by Paule Marshall, Jamaica Kincaid, and

Michelle Cliff to come in Chapters Two through Four.

Critical Neoliberal Studies: Re-imagining the Crisis and Contradiction

Critical neoliberal studies, in my usage, functions as an umbrella term for

interdisciplinary research and theory that addresses the destructive effects of

neoliberalism on social life systems.[27] In these studies, it is often argued that

neoliberal policy enables the concentration of wealth by a relatively small

transnational capitalist class, while it undermines middle classes by expanding the

gap between rich and poor populations on a global scale. The neoliberal turn thus

modifies the dichotomous class relation implied between rich and poor nations

even as it proves to compromise the independence established by former colonies

following mid to late twentieth-century decolonization movements.

In various ways, cultures of debt and dependency are reinforced through

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[27] Humanities and social sciences researchers represent the critical constituency to which I refer. I consider research in the fields of cultural and literary studies, as well as geography, anthropology, political science, women and/or gender and development studies. Documentary film is also a significant source of neoliberal criticism and has popular and critical pedagogical value. Although I do not specifically engage in research concerning biodiversity or ecology, I find it vital for critical neoliberal studies to address the neoliberal impact on planetary life systems.

neoliberal trade, labour, and economic relations. The expansion of neoliberal

ideology, economic globalization, and related trade policies, has been linked to

the elections of Margaret Thatcher, in 1979, and Ronald Reagan in 1981

(Gwynne, Klak, Shaw 4), although it is important to recognize that the twentieth-

century neoliberal project has been underway since the early 1970s and has

subsequently emphasized different policy features at different times.[28] David

Harvey cites "[t]he first experiment with neoliberal state formation" as "Pinochet's

coup [in Chile] on the 'little September 11th' of 1973," which drove out "the

democratically elected government of Salvador Allende" on a socialist platform

(7). Support for this coup came not only from "US corporations, the CIA, and US

Secretary of State Henry Kissinger," but through the "training of Chilean

economists at the University of Chicago since the 1950s as part of a Cold War

programme to counteract left-wing tendencies in Latin America" (8). This

education advanced "the neoliberal theories of Milton Friedman" (8) and

facilitated policy expansion leading to "the Latin American debt crisis of 1982"

(9). Although it had destructive consequences, Harvey finds this "brutal

experiment carried out in the periphery became a model for the formulation of

policies in the centre" thus making neoliberalism "hegemonic within global

capitalism" (9).

  The critical neoliberal studies that I address explore contradictions

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[28] "In the early years [neoliberalism] mainly emphasized economic policies such as deregulation and privatization. By the late 1980s ideas of good governance and an increased role for non-government organizations (NGOs) in social service provision entered the lexicon. In the late 1990s the importance of social welfare protection, and of tapping the 'social capital' of ordinary people, became part of the agenda. As components are added to the prescription they improve on it without altering neoliberalism's fundamental commitment to opening borders for the free movement of capital" (Gywnne, Klak and Shaw 4).

flexible but more specific practices of intersectional analysis in their assessment of neoliberal conditions. Intersectional analysis that is too general, homogenizing, or ambiguous can facilitate the slippage between categories of identity and processes of identification.[30] I pursue this line of critique in this chapter to conceptualize a U.S.-led, neoliberal condition that unevenly reinforces racialized and feminized calculations of labour value premised on a logic of responsibility and disposability. Despite differences in discipline, politics, or methodology,[31] many critics argue that neoliberal logic thrives on a contradiction between discourse and policy (Harvey, Hall, Massey, Clarke, Hale, Ferguson, Wilson, Brand and Sekler, Benn Michaels, Melamed, Goldberg). As a dialectic, I find that neoliberal discourse and policy produces narratives of contradiction founded upon principles of conditionality (meanwhile, the spectre of crisis and failure haunts them). The ideological vehicle for the neoliberal narrative is fueled by the assumption of historical inevitability regarding the imagined success of vertical, trickle-down economics. Although neoliberal policy benefits a small percentage of people who represent a concentration of wealth in the world, neoliberal

characteristics. We might thus consider the relation between literary narrative and economic historiography. See especially "The Question of Narrative in Contemporary Historical Theory" and "The Politics of Historical Interpretation: Discipline and De-sublimation" in *The Content of the Form: Narrative Discourse and Historical Representation*. The latter chapter addresses how historiography disciplines imaginings of the sublime and rejects utopias. He argues that disciplinary mechanisms have consequences for radical politics.

[30] The work of Leslie McCall to compare and contrast "anticategorical," "intracategorical" and "intercategorical" approaches in intersectional analysis represents a useful intervention to review the significance and selection of methodologies to yield qualitative and quantitative social research results.

[31] Critics propose a range of tactics and strategies for more effective neoliberal critique and activism. Since the political orientation of the critic varies, it is not surprising that so too does the tendency to propose integrationist, reformist, or revolutionary approaches to neoliberal problems. Criticism varies insofar as it yields practical and/or theoretical insight. References to Keynesian, liberal, communist, socialist, Marxist, anarchist, autonomist, Feminist, anti-racist, environmentalist, and indigenous traditions are common.

ideology operates on a futuristic pretense that the globalizing effects of free

market enterprise will generally expand individual freedoms, via consumer

markets, and thus empower all consenting citizens to realize their personal rights

to self-determination. This metric is abstract and speculative; the actual social

relations constituted through neoliberal discourse and policy must be managed

and concealed.

My approach, in the following section, is to propose a set of critical

linkages between a series of texts that I find useful to my research into formations

of neoliberal and anti-neoliberal imagination. In doing so, I acknowledge the fact

that, of the works I have selected for discussion, the term "neoliberal imagination"

is only explicitly used by Walter Benn Michaels; furthermore, not all critics that I

discuss explicitly deploy the term "neoliberal" in their critique of contemporary

globalizing economic processes that impact the imagination. Nonetheless, I regard

the work outlined below as part of a growing body of critical literature forming

around questions concerning the neoliberal conditioning of the imagination and

the desire to resist it.

I begin with a discussion of anthropologist Michel-Rolph Trouillot's

critique of Western modernity as formulated through his conception of "North

Atlantic Universals." These universals, he argues, are deployed so that "the

geography of imagination and the geography of management constantly

intertwine to construct the management of the imagination" (3). In his appeal to

anthropologists to study them in relation to the wide-ranging effects of neoliberal

economic rationalization, he draws attention to the psychology of everyday

speech patterns, the aesthetics of discursive style, and the politics of social

relations:

> The analysis of the rhetoric, clichés, changes in sensibilities, and self-
>
> perceptions of individuals and communities that accompany our current
>
> global era require a preliminary assessment of the extraordinary changes
>
> that the domination of finance capital has imposed upon the majority of
>
> humanity since the 1980s. [...] [W]e need to approach the geography of
>
> imagination and geography of management as distinct yet necessary
>
> domains of our intellectual enterprise. (3)

From his perspective, the "project[ion] [of] the North Atlantic experience on a

universal scale" implies that "[w]ords such as development, progress, democracy,

and nation-state [become] exemplary members of that family that contracts or

expands according to contexts and interlocutors" (35). Both prescriptive and

seductive, "North Atlantic universals" are thought to "come to us loaded with

aesthetic and stylistic sensibilities, religious and philosophical persuasions,

cultural assumptions ranging from what it means to be a human being to the

proper relationship between humans and the natural world, ideological choices

ranging from the nature of the political to its possibilities of transformation" (35).

A study of the procedures involved in the deployment "North Atlantic Universals"

can help to historicize the ideological and aesthetic processes of a neoliberal

project attempting to naturalize its policy and discourse by relying on

rationalization and the positive association with modernity (35-36). Thus, they

pre-exist but also inform a neoliberal project seeking to achieve legitimacy by

similar means. Trouillot argues that "North Atlantic universals" tend to "evoke

rather than define" because their "transhistorical" orientation involves "hiding the

particularities of their marks and origins, including their affective load" (36). His

sense of the inherent "ambiguity" of "North Atlantic universals" (36) is relevant to

a critique of contradiction underlying the neoliberal project; thus, I argue that

ambiguity and contradiction are discursive strategies for a pro-capitalist defensive

aimed against neoliberal dissent.[32]

Trouillot considers the impact of these universals on the historical

imagination and the capacity to envision effective future alternatives to current

modes of living. He argues that we have entered into "a new regime of

historicity," or "a new relationship [...] with historical time" and "a new relation to

the future," which "fundamentally challenges the right to define utopia" (67). The

sense of "historical irreversibility" hinders our vision to actualize transformative

change (67). With this perspective of time, Trouillot finds we lose a sense of the

"mid-term future" which "is now increasingly fractured into two new parts: a

near-present that challenges our technical mastery, and an aftermath, out of real

time, that our imagination has yet to seize" (68). The limitation of historical

imagination has political and social consequence, for he finds that "the growing

grassroots movement against globalization has yet to propose a long-term future

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[32] Trouillot elaborates: "[w]e have a stronger sense of what modernity may connote when we point to the naysayers—the Taliban of Afghanistan, a native tribe in the Amazon, or whichever figure plays temporarily the good or evil face of the non-modern—than when we investigate those who praise it. The seduction and confusion are related. Dreams of a democratic future, practices and institutions of a democracy at work, or claims to join and to defend an international community is a matter of contention, as any debate of the U.N. General Assembly demonstrates. Attempts to conceptualize North Atlantic universals in the scholarly literature reveal little unanimity about their scope, let alone their denotation" (36).

that seems altogether common, desirable, and attainable" (69-70).[33] Trouillot does not project a debilitating critique of activists but rather a challenge to progressive movements to imaginatively review and reorient their organizational strategies. This work is needed at a time when neoliberalism thrives even as it fails. The issue of imagination should thus be central to ongoing debates regarding the destructive effects of the neoliberal project on social life. As a critical way to address the limitations of imagination in the context of "the new regime of historicity," I will now discuss criticism emphasizing the value of historical "conjunctural analysis" to the imaginative deconstruction of neoliberal crisis narratives.

In *The Neoliberal Crisis* (2012), Stuart Hall, Doreen Massey, John Clarke, and Michael Rustin collaborate to argue for a critical review of the ideological content of the neoliberal historical narrative. Drawing on Antonio Gramsci's theory of hegemony, Hall and Massey explore the inherent instability of neoliberal hegemonic form (57-67). Although "[e]ach crisis since the 1970s has looked different," Hall explains there appears "the same underlying features, to be connected in their general thrust and direction of travel" ("The Neoliberal Revolution" 8). He thus argues for "a *provisional* conceptual identity" because "naming neoliberalism is *politically* necessary, to give resistance content, focus and a cutting edge" (8-9). In regards to the character-types invoked in the

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[33] Compare Trouillot's assessment with that of Charles R. Hale: "[w]ith the partial exception of Fidel Castro's Cuba and the embattled *municipos autónomos* of Chiapas, oppositional political initiatives are apt to be found waging their struggles from within the neoliberal establishment. The anti-globalization movement is another exception, which still mainly serves to prove the rule: impressive intensity of political energy, prescient in its global analysis and scope, but largely disarticulated from, for example, the daily struggles of those 200 million [Latin Americans living in poverty] who seek immediate relief" (11-12).

neoliberal narrative, he finds that "[n]eoliberal discourse [has] promoted two discursive figures - the 'taxpayer' (hardworking man, over-taxed to fund the welfare 'scrounger') and the 'customer' (fortunate housewife, 'free' to exercise limited choice in the market-place, for whom the 'choice agenda' and personalised delivery were specifically designed). No-one ever thinks either could also be a citizen who needs or relies on public services" (20). In this context, neoliberal "discourse provides subjects with a 'lived imaginary relation' to their real conditions of existence. This does not mean that markets are simply manufactured fictions. [...] They are 'false' because they offer partial explanations as an account of whole processes" (20). While Hall posits the existence of a neoliberal imaginary that lacks accountability, he also opposes the strategic recourse to "economic determinism" as a way to address the problem because it overlooks the layered dimensions of neoliberal effect (57).

Stuart Hall's critical approach towards neoliberal unaccountability and imagination is to advance the historical perspective of "conjunctural analysis." In his depiction, "[a] conjuncture is a period when different social, political, economic and ideological contradictions that are at work in society and have given it a specific and distinctive shape come together, producing a crisis of some kind" ("Interpreting the Crisis" 55). He finds that "the post-war period, dominated by the welfare state, public ownership and wealth redistribution through taxation was one conjuncture," whereas "the neoliberal, market-forces era unleashed by Thatcher and Reagan was another. These are two distinct conjunctures, separated by the crisis of the 1970s" (55). Viewing how "history moves from one

conjuncture to another rather than being an evolutionary flow," can enable us to see how "the contradictions that are always at play in any historical moment are condensed, or, as Althusser said, 'fuse in a ruptural unity'. Crises are moments of potential change, but the nature of their resolution is not given" (55). Conjunctural analysis is regarded as a critical historical strategy to disrupt the universalizing tendencies of neoliberal narratives.

To different degrees, I find that Paule Marshall, Jamaica Kincaid, and Michelle Cliff signal the neoliberal crisis in their creative, critical portrayals of U.S.-Caribbean trade and labour relations. It is important to note that I read these relations both explicitly and implicitly to consider not only representations of formal, state-sanctioned, international trade and labour, but also the informal processes which involve the extraction of labour value from black female protagonists who work to sustain families and communities. In their depictions, the neoliberal crisis signals both rupture and condensation in the historical imagining of resistance to capitalist exploitation. The human site of contradiction becomes the black female protagonist who both resists and assists the project of neoliberal development as it unfolds in the context of U.S.-Caribbean trade and labour relations. Following Hall's notion that "[c]rises" signal "potential change" but do not promise to reveal "resolution" (55), I argue that none of these authors provide a certain or redemptive vision of post-neoliberal life. While aspirations for the future well-being of society may be implied, the authors struggle through their works to re-imagine resistance as it is required to overcome the politics and effects of the neoliberal era; in part, their works thus evince a critical historical

consciousness of the prior failures and manipulations of resistance movements in the context of colonialist and imperialist legacies. A conjunctural analysis of how crisis and failure intersect to impact the trajectories of resistance movements is thus central to understanding their work and its political engagement. It also provides a way to address the hegemonic effects of neoliberalism on the imagination and culture of storytelling.

Doreen Massey finds that conjunctural analysis is a way of "challenging [neoliberalism's] hegemonic stories" ("The Political Struggle" 79), the "contradictory practices in an over-arching narrative" (81), and "the very scaffolding of our imaginations" ("Ideology and Economics" 99). As another contributor to *The Neoliberal Crisis*, she explains that the increased popular skepticism regarding neoliberal economic models in August 2007 did not secure the "'end of neoliberalism'" ("The Political Struggle" 70). She argues for the need to deconstruct "the crucial founding assumption [...] that markets are natural" or "common sense" because the neoliberal project impacts "the small negotiations of the daily lives of individuals whose very imaginations have been financialised" ("Ideology and Economics" 101). New questions and ideas must circulate to undermine "the hegemonic economic imaginary: that curious sequentialism which demands that first we grow the economy and then we redistribute" (103). Returning to the notion raised earlier in this chapter that markets and narratives intersect, I would argue that it is a challenge to secure legitimacy for alternative imaginings to the neoliberal paradigm because these imaginings must compete with crisis narratives that function to disorient a popular sense of historical

struggle.

Part of the critical project of anti-neoliberalism, then, must be to debate the ideological imperatives of crisis narratives to depoliticize the social field. As John Clarke explains,

> Crises always emerge as constructed, narrated and temporalised events and times. It is impossible to arrive at an "innocent" view of crisis, since crises are always already defined and constructed as (potentially) governable events. The recent crisis emerged as the focus of governmental and political narratives that included the projected state-of-emergency time frame and the demand that "something must be done." (51)

The implication, for Clarke, is that as "crisis time [...] summons and empowers would-be managers or governors of crisis—those who can intervene to protect, defend or restore," it also prioritizes the defense of the financial system over the protection of societies (51). Clarke rightly argues that "the crisis has certainly made it possible to pose alternative questions" but with the stipulation that "these remain alternative modes of thought and questions, rather than dominate ones" (51).[34] The dominant narrative of crisis emphasizes the notion that "identity is almost entirely enfolded into the problem of public debt" and thus, in effect, "[t]hese publics—and future publics—are being summoned to pay the costs of corporate welfare (saving the system) while being told that public services on which their own welfare might depend will be retrenched again to balance the public books" (Clarke 53). With this assessment in mind, he admits that

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[34] Charles R. Hale makes a similar claim in reference the World Bank's tolerance of indigenous cultural difference.

[i]f the place of conjuncture is difficult to analyse, then its time is equally

so. These crises and contradictions have been accumulating over a much

longer period than the relatively short time-scale of deregulated

financialisation, or even the debt/consumption nexus central to the Anglo-

American model of neoliberal growth. As a result, one issue for the

analysis of the conjuncture is how different time-scales, different

temporalities, or even different rhythms, happen to coincide in the "here

and now." (46)

Given that "crisis time" occludes a more complex understanding of

historical conjuncture, the task to observe "the uneven geographical development

of neoliberalism on the world stage" seems all the more pressing for, as David

Harvey argues, the hegemony of global capitalism works to conceal the

contradictions that arise in the relation between neoliberal discourse and policy

implementation (*A Brief History* 9). Addressing administrative shifts in

government, Harvey outlines historical periods for the neoliberal project

signalling its emergence during the Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Regan years

and its hegemonic formation during the administrations of Tony Blair and Bill

Clinton. The critical thrust of Harvey's work is to provide a Marxist-oriented class

critique and theory of "accumulation by dispossession."[35] Perhaps as an effect of

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[35] Harvey explains his theory in the context of resistance movements: "On the one hand, there are movements around which I call 'expanded reproduction' in which the exploitation of wage labour and conditions defining the social wage are the central issues. On the other hand there are movements against accumulation by dispossession. These include resistance to classic forms of primitive accumulation (such as displacement of peasant populations from the land); to the brutal withdrawal of the state from all social obligations (except surveillance and policing); to practices destructive of cultures, histories, and environments; and to the 'confiscatory' deflations and inflations wrought by the contemporary forms of finance capital in alliance with the state" (203).

his macro-neoliberal focus, Harvey produces rather ambiguous imaginings of the

constituencies which he suggests are most affected by neoliberal conditions.

While he rightly refuses to invoke a "lost golden age when some fictional

category like 'the proletariat' was in motion," in his analysis, I question the extent

to which he fully avoids a "conception of class [...] as a primary [...] agent of

historical transformation" (202). In this sense, I suggest that he offers a limiting

allusion to the intersectional perspective of exploitation and resistance:

> Popular as well as elite class movements make themselves, though never
>
> under the conditions of their own choosing. *And the conditions are full of*
>
> *complexities that arise out of race, gender, and ethnic distinctions that are*
>
> *closely interwoven with class identities. The lower classes are highly*
>
> *racialized and the increasing feminization of poverty has been a notable*
>
> *feature of neoliberalization.* (202)

While Harvey confronts an ineffective "oppositional Left" that too often

subscribes to ideological and organizational purity (*Rebel Cities* 83), he sustains

an economic critique in his research because "progressives of all stripes seem to

have caved in to neoliberal thinking since it is one of the primary fictions of

neoliberalism that class is a fictional category that exists only in the imagination

of socialists and crypto-communists" (*A Brief History* 202). Acknowledging the

fact that neoliberal policy is often the most destructive to the lives of poor women

and indigenous populations (167-171),[36] he nonetheless emphasizes a descriptive

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[36] For example, Harvey's acknowledgement of race and gender seems more descriptive than investigative: "Neoliberalization has transformed the positionality of labour, of women, and of indigenous groups in the social order by emphasizing that labour is a commodity like any other. Stripped of the protective cover of lively democratic institutions and threatened with all manner of

portrait of individuation in the neoliberal calculation of labour value:

> Individuals enter the labour market as persons of character, *as individuals*
>
> *embedded in networks of social relations* and socialized in various ways,
>
> *as physical beings identifiable by certain characteristics* (such as
>
> phenotype and gender), as individuals who have accumulated various
>
> skills [...] and tastes [...], and as living beings endowed with
>
> dreams, desires, ambitions, hopes, doubts, and fears. For capitalists,
>
> however, such individuals are a mere factor of production, *though not an*
>
> *undifferentiated factor since employers require labour of certain*
>
> *qualities*, such as physical strength, skills, flexibility,docility, and the like,
>
> appropriate to certain tasks. (167-168; my emphasis)

In the passage above, Harvey signals processes of labor calculation premised on

racialization and feminization, but he does not analyze them. His subsequent

invocation of neoliberal "complexities" (202) is thus not given due analytical

context in this earlier passage.[37]

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social dislocations, a disposable workforce inevitably turns to other institutional forms through which to construct social solidarities and express a collective will. Everything from gangs and criminal cartels, narco-trafficking networks, mini-mafias and favela bosses, through community, grassroots and nongovernmental organizations, to secular cults and religious sects proliferate. These are the alternative social forms that fill the void left behind as state powers, political parties, and other institutional forms are actively dismantled or simply wither away as centres of collective endeavour and of social bonding" (171). It is striking that Harvey's depiction of "social dislocations" is rooted in a culture of labour disposability, yet it does not confront racialization and feminization as part of a bio-political and economic process of calculation. He rightly argues that "at the heart of liberal and neoliberal theory lies the necessity of constructing coherent markets for land, labour, and money, and these, Karl Polanyi pointed out, 'are obviously not commodities. . . the commodity description of labour, land, and money is entirely fictitious.' While capitalism cannot function without such fictions, it does untold damage if it fails to acknowledge the complex realities behind them" (166-167). It would be useful if he investigated the intersection between the "fiction" of "coherent markets" and "the complex realities behind them."

[37] The invocation of "complexity" as a substitute for rigorous intersectional analysis is part of the critique of appropriative and "post-black" social science research offered by Nikol G. Alexander-Floyd.

The stress I place on David Harvey is partly due to the fact that he has established himself as a leading neoliberal critic with wide-ranging interdisciplinary influence in the social sciences and humanities. According to a page promoting one of his talks on the Penn State University website, Harvey "is among the top 20 most cited authors in the humanities. He is also the world's most cited academic geographer" whose many publications have helped to facilitate "the development of modern geography as a discipline" (Penn State Humanities Forum). "[C]redited with helping resurrect social class and Marxist methods as serious methodological tools in the critique of global capitalism, particularly in its neoliberal form," Harvey should be contextualized as a thinker in terms of his influential reach as well as his limitations.

Although Harvey's economic focus can elide opportunities to provide a more specific and intersectional analysis of neoliberal conditions, I find his work to explore the limitations of paradigmatic thinking for the organizational cultures of resistance to be illuminating. In this sense, Harvey provides a more effective class conscious perspective of neoliberal effects than Walter Benn Michaels who, I argue, makes highly questionable ideological demarcations between class exploitation and race discrimination in his analysis of neoliberal culture in the field of American literary studies. In particular, Harvey considers how liberal and human rights discourses may be limiting to the cultivation of oppositional resistance in the neoliberal age (*A Brief History* 78). Not only did NGO culture become privatized and integrated into the neoliberal project by the 1980s (177), but the procedure of "[a]ccumulation by dispossession [now] entails a very

different set of practices from accumulation through the expansion of wage labour in industry and agriculture" (178). As such, the "embedded liberalism" often associated with mid-twentieth century "trade unions and working class political parties" seems inadequate as a political philosophy to address contemporary "dispossession," which he characterizes as "fragmented and particular" as well as "without appeal to universal principles" (178). If "the neoliberal regime of rights" involves the "accept[ance] that we have no alternative except to live under a regime of endless accumulation and economic growth no matter what the social, ecological, or political consequences" (181), then what is required is a revolutionary prioritization of the UN Charter of "derivative rights" including "freedoms of speech and expression, of education and economic security, rights to organize unions, and the like. Enforcing these rights would have posed a serious challenge to neoliberalism" (182). Not unlike Trouillot, Hall, Massey, or Clarke, Harvey finds that "[t]he more neoliberalism is recognized as a failed utopian rhetoric masking a successful project for the restoration of ruling-class power, the more the basis is laid for a resurgence of mass movements voicing egalitarian political demands and seeking economic justice, fair trade, and greater economic security" (203-204).

The works discussed above represent ambitious political and theoretical interventions to address the contradictory narrative features of neoliberal ideology, discourse, and policy. Working from outside the field of economics, they provide imaginative critical orientations that imply revolutionary aspiration. Earlier I noted that critics vary in their political and methodological orientations.

For instance, James Ferguson's "The Uses of Neoliberalism" (2009) represents a particularly compelling counterpoint to the works discussed as it considers from a more reformist perspective practical approaches to dealing with neoliberal policy as it impacts everyday life in African contexts. The thrust of his study is to suggest how features of policy might be appropriated and repurposed by social groups to reduce everyday circumstances of poverty. Emir Sader, in "Postneoliberalism in Latin America" (2009), offers practical insight by explicitly proposing that "a postneoliberal alternative must begin with anti-neoliberalism, which means: opposition to deregulation; opposition to financialisation; opposition to the weakening of labour relations; [and] opposition to 'free trade'" (176). As Ulrich Brand and Nicola Seklar argue, "[t]he major challenge today is to reconstruct an anti-capitalist left under conditions where many oppositional forces, including the labour movement, have been integrated into capitalist social relations" (11-12). It is important to counter-balance critical studies of macro-neoliberal processes with those emphasizing micro-neoliberal strategies adopted to negotiate everyday living conditions under neoliberalism. In the effort to deconstruct the narratives of neoliberal crisis that can be paralytic to resistance and solidarity, we thus need to be able to address a range of political ideologies and strategies circulating within a critical anti-neoliberal social field. It is crucial to attend to both spatial and temporal coordinates in the assessment of neoliberal and anti-neoliberal contradiction, crisis, and failure, and to consider how the social reproduction of disposability and responsibility is reinforced through processes of individuation to obscure intersectional experience and the critical

imagination of social care and collaboration.

Earlier, I posited that spectres of crisis and failure haunt both neoliberal and anti-neoliberal narratives. With this in mind, I will now highlight features of critical debate concerning the racial and post-racial dimensions of the neoliberal project. As such analysis attempts to account for issues of race and class in the neoliberal era, it performs ideological work that may be distinctly influential to the trajectories for an anti-neoliberal imagination.

Critical Perspectives of the Racial and Post-Racial Dimensions of Neoliberalism

Neoliberal ideology and discourse operate on a post-racial and post-feminist *pretense*. Free trade and government deregulation are made to seem instrumental to the contemporary development of a global multi-cultural society. Ideologically, neoliberal global economic integration is imagined to promote freedom of access and choice for consumers, as well as freedom of movement and self-determination for citizens. It celebrates diversity primarily by endorsing models of multi-cultural difference which help to conceal the neoliberal rendering of particular bodies as disposable and/or responsible. In a neoliberal theory of abstract individualism, anyone can be successful so long as he or she works as a responsible and productive ideological subject of free market enterprise. Neoliberal theory does not address the value of state responsibility to the social collective unless it is corporately managed or financially profitable; thus, the ideological work of neoliberal discourse is to modify and manipulate our imagining of social organization on the basis of politicized identity politics.

Several critics have contemplated the theory and analysis pertaining to

neoliberal processes of racialization and classification. In the interest of concision, I highlight only a selection of compelling studies. I consider Etienne Balibar's theory of the "immigration complex" in relation to Theo Goldberg's notion of the "raceless state"; Manning Marable's conception of the "New Racial Domain" in relation to Jodi Melamed's historicization of U.S. "neoliberal multiculturalism"; and, finally, Charles R. Hale's conception of Latin American "neoliberal multiculturalism" in relation to Walter Benn Michael's view of neoliberal "anti-racism." There are points of overlap and departure between each critical concept. The objective of this critical sketch is not to provide a comprehensive survey of race discourse in critical neoliberal studies, but to suggest how each critic produces analysis that could have distinct implications for the formation of anti-neoliberal imaginaries.

I begin with a consideration of Etienne Balibar's contributions to *Race, Nation, Class: Ambiguous Identities*. Balibar conceptualizes "neo-racism" by positing its historical relation to religious, biological, cultural, and classist forms of racism. He argues that the biological dimension of racism reappears as it is propelled through "the [perceived] insurmountability of cultural differences," or "*differential racism*" ("Is There a 'Neo-Racism'?" 21). In a cosmopolitan city such as France, he finds that the use of social technologies to track and assess immigrant populations gives way to the formation of an "immigration complex" (21). In this context, he argues, "*culture can also function like nature*" by "locking individuals and groups a priori into a geneaology" (21-22). The "traditions of Social Darwinism and eugenics" are sustained by "directly

coinciding at points with the political objectives of an aggressive neoliberalism"

(26); in effect, what is upheld is "the vital importance of cultural enclosures and

traditions for the accumulation of individual aptitudes, and, most importantly, the

'natural' bases of xenophobia and social aggression" (26). In the context of an

economic downturn, the "immigration complex" attributes to immigrants "their

presumed responsibility for [...] a whole series of different problems which makes

it possible to imagine them as so many aspects of one and the same 'problem,' of

one and the same crisis" ("Racism and Crisis" 220). The perceived relation

constructed between immigration and economic crisis thus undermines aspirations

towards working-class solidarity insofar as "the crisis conjuncture combines

within the popular classes an uncertainty (which at times leads to panic) as to the

'security' of existence and an uncertainty about collective 'identity'" (226).

Although Balibar's "neo-racism" primarily focuses on French society, it relates to

global processes of immigrant racialization and neoliberalization.[38]

     Balibar's analysis of a racist "immigration complex" in some ways

challenges the more binaristic orientation assumed by Theo Goldberg who

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[38] Annalee Davis's documentary film *On the Map* (2007) depicts a similar "immigration complex" emerging in the context of undocumented Guyanese labour migration to Barbados. In her portrayal, the migrant workers experience exploitative labour discrimination as a result of policies of the Caribbean Single Market & Economy. Compellingly, the film begins with a Caribbean raconteur who sarcastically undermines U.S. census racial classifications by describing his inherently creolized ancestry. Davis' film unfolds to reveal ways in which Caribbean neoliberal socioeconomic policies are shaped by U.S. transnational capitalist culture whereby selective processes of racialization inform the calculation of labour disposability by degrees of association with classed nation-states in the Caribbean. The use of biometrics and aptitude assessment based on professional and educational history are neoliberal procedures enabling Caribbean states to selectively (and thus unevenly) permit the free movement of Caribbean people in the region. Critics suggest how these policies are shaped in relation to U.S.-led, post-9/11 homeland security initiatives. See Peter Jordens who argues that "[w]hile the countries and institutions of the North continue to proclaim the presumed virtues of economic neoliberalism and capitalist globalization, there is a simultaneous attempt on the part of these countries to problematise the free international movement of people and to control and contain migration" (367). See Sophia Whyte-Givans for a related discussion of the Caribbean Court of Justice.

delineates "racial naturalism" and "racial historicism" as two categories for "racial theorizing" (45).[39] Not unlike Paul Gilroy, in *The Black Atlantic*, Goldberg refutes the notion that slavery was a pre-modern institution and argues that articulations of race and racism have been central to the formation of modern nation-states. However, he finds that "[r]acelessness took hold of the political imagination in modern state formation following World War II, assuming dominance at least discursively with the waning of the twentieth century" (45). While "racial naturalism" reflects belief in biological inferiority, "[r]acial historicism, by contrast, consists of a set of claims that those other than European or descended from Europeans are not inherently inferior but historically immature or less developed" (46). Goldberg regards "the formalized commitment to racelessness" as a procedure of "racial historicism" premised on developmentalism and "the modern state's self-promotion in the name of rationality and the recognition of ethno-racially heterogeneous states" (46-47). In contrast, while he makes historical demarcations between forms of racism, Balibar observes ways in which various historical racisms recombine; for Balibar, the biological dimension is sustained in contemporary racism even if it is modified.

One particularly compelling aspect of Goldberg's work pertains to his analysis of development ideology as it enables the reproduction of race and class hierarchies between and within nation-states. He argues that the "shift from biology to culture" is marked by the "insistence on rendering invisible the racial sinews of the body politic and modes of rule and regulation. As colonialism gave

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[39] See Peter Wade's "The Presence and Absence of Race" for a view of the limitations of Goldberg's approach.

way to post-colonial forms of world making and the hegemony of globalized

neoliberalism, racelessness came to represent state rationality, regarding race" (46

--47). "Racial historicism," in his analysis, is linked to the white cultural and

economic supremacy underlying the formation of contemporary international

financial and lending institutions like the World Bank and International Monetary

Fund (49) as well as "[t]hree-world theory, emerging as it did in the early 1950s"

(52). In his assessment of "[t]he claimed commitment to color-blindness in the

United States, the rhetoric of racial democracy in Brazil, and the principled policy

of nonracialism in South Africa," he finds "the relative silencing of public

analysis or serious discussion of everyday racisms" (56); furthermore, "the

framework of an ethnic pluralism identified with state multiculturalism has been

to make more difficult the drawing of causal connection between colonial legacies

and contemporary racial condition in European or settler societies" (56-57). While

Balibar emphasizes the hyper-racialization of immigrant bodies, Goldberg finds

that the "racelessness" enabled by the developmental ideology of official state

discourses is conducive to neo-liberal economic globalization "predicated on the

reduction of all to the color of money. And as a matter of historical logic, money,

as the Brazilian characterization has long had it, *whitens*. Race becomes not so

much reduced to class as rearticulated through it" (49).

Manning Marable and Jodi Melamed express similar concern regarding

issues raised by Balibar and Goldberg, but the specific orientation of their

respective analyses is to focus on the U.S. history of racial frontiers and rights

discourse. Both critics consider how related continuities and changes challenge

anti-racist resistance movements to adapt to neoliberal conditions. In doing so, they convey urgency to account for U.S. neoliberal military procedures as they serve U.S. transnational capitalism and re-map the coordinates of economic racialization in ways that we do not yet fully comprehend.

Marable specifically advances the concept of the "New Racial Domain" to refer to conditions of global apartheid managed by the U.S. military-economic-industrial complex. He draws attention to simultaneously occurring processes of racialized class exploitation in the context of domestic and foreign U.S. policy. Drawing on a 2006 UN study by the *World Institute for Development Economic Research*, he elaborates on global proportional income distribution and finds that, as of 2000, there are major wealth disparities between the top economic "1 percent of the globe's adult population" and "the bottom one-half of the planet's adult population" (6). This disparity is racialized since these "1.85 billion people, most of whom are black and brown, owned only 1.1 percent of the world's total wealth" (6). Reportedly, the document suggests disproportionate wealth between nations such that "[t]he United States, for example, comprised 4.7 percent of the world's people, but it had nearly one-third, or 32.6 percent, of global wealth" (6). Nonetheless, "[w]ithin most of the world's countries, wealth was disproportionately concentrated in the top 10 percent in each nation's population" (6). The details of this report challenge a dichotomous representation of rich versus poor nations by illuminating a neoliberal project that enables concentrations of wealth in geographical pockets throughout the world.

Although Marable contends that "the neoliberal economic model of the

United States has been now widely adopted by both developed and developing countries" (5-6), he finds that the "New Racial Domain" (NRD) marks a new phase of "racial domination inside the United States," one that differs from slavery, Jim Crow segregation, and ghetttoization or strict residential segregation" (7). He explains:

> These earlier racial formations, or exploitative racial domains, were grounded or based primarily, if not exclusively, in the political economy of U.S. capitalism. Antiracist or oppositional movements that blacks, other ethnic minorities, and white antiracists built were largely predicated on the confines or realities of domestic markets and the policies of the U.S. nation-state. Meaningful social reforms such as the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965 were debated almost entirely within the context of America's expanding, domestic economy, and influenced by Keynesian, welfare-state public policies. The political economy of America's NRD, by contrast, is driven and largely determined by forces of transnational capitalism, and the public policies of state neoliberalism. From the vantage point of the most oppressed U.S. populations, the NRD rests on an unholy trinity, or deadly triad, of structural barriers to a decent life. These oppressive structures are mass unemployment, mass incarceration, and mass disenfranchisement. Each factor directly feeds and accelerates the others, creating an ever-widening circle of social disadvantage, poverty, and civil death, touching the lives of tens of millions of people in the United States. (7)

Spectres of crisis and failure haunt Marable's portrayal insofar as he is uncertain

regarding how contemporary resistance movements should take shape in a nation-

state that seems to have fundamentally re-oriented its political economy,

undermined civil rights, and destroyed conditions for social solidarity. In this

context, we might consider the extent to which antiracist oppositions during the

civil rights era were domestic in orientation or *domesticated* as part of a state-

imposed compromise of pro-capitalist, Cold War ideology.[40] Here, we can

connect Marable's concerns with those of Goldberg who emphasizes ways in

which "racial historicism" allows for the exclusive promotion of Western and

white supremacist development ideologies.

Given Marable's invocation of the "deadly triad [...] of structural barriers

to a decent life," it is significant that Jodi Melamed invokes the prison abolition

movement in the closing of her study as representing a critical response to

neoliberal conditions of racialization. Melamed's work confronts the U.S. shift in

racial paradigms by drawing attention to a long history of "race radicalism" that

was suppressed or manipulated whenever it advanced a critique of transnational

capitalism (6). Characterizing "neoliberal multiculturalism as a still-consolidating

development of liberal race hegemony" (3), she finds that "[t]he most important

difference between racial liberalism and neoliberal multiculturalism is that the

latter appears more consistently as domination, not hegemony" (19). Because

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[40] We can consider exceptions to challenge the limitations of Marable's historical framing of U.S. transnational capitalism and resistances to it. As Carole Boyce Davies and Monica Jardine point out, the black feminist and socialist Claudia Jones wrote the essay "American Imperialism and the British West Indies" in 1958. They argue that "she is one of a few Caribbean thinkers who were at that time able to recognize the tentacles of U.S. imperialism as they extended into the Caribbean" (161). For an extensive analysis of Jones, see Boyce Davies's book *Left of Karl Marx: The Political Life of Black Communist Claudia Jones*.

"neoliberal multiculturalism," in her view, is not yet hegemonic, she sees potential

for it to be challenged. We can thus mark a subtle distinction between Melamed's

articulation of neoliberal domination and the conceptualization of neoliberal

hegemony by Hall and Massey who point to the fundamental instability that

characterizes a Gramsican view of hegemony to suggest possibilities for

confrontation and challenge.

Melamed explains that the U.S. paradigm of "racial liberalism," which

emerged from the Civil Rights era, ushered in "official anti-racism" but

undermined anti-racist movements prioritizing a critique of capitalism in support

of anti-colonial and anti-imperial struggles. "Official anti-racism" gave way to

"neoliberal multiculturalism" which she regards as "a central ideology and mode

of social organization that seeks to manage racial contradictions on a national and

international scale for U.S.-led neoliberalism" (3). "Neoliberal multiculturalism"

advances "a form of official antiracism, now often reduced to a nonracialism,

which hinders thinking about or acting against the biopolitics of global

capitalism" (3). These sometimes subtle shifts in discourse and ideology obscure

processes of racialization; thus, Melamed argues that "[w]hat has not been fully

understood about racial liberalism's cultural paradigm is that it redefines *race* as

culture only after the idea of culture in the United States has been saturated with

connotations of 'national culture' as a moral and spiritual (anticommunist) ideal"

(7). Once the U.S. multicultural agenda was nationalized and sentimentalized, it

became "key to achieving America's manifest destiny and proof of American

exceptionalism and universality" (7). The neoliberal multicultural project thus

enables "grounds for 'legitimate' exclusion of some from wealth and freedoms presumed to be commonly available to all Americans" (7); it has consequently permitted the process of "differentiating between 'healthy' African-American cultural formations (those aligned with idealized American cultural norms and nationalist sentiment) and 'pathological' ones" (8). Following Melamed, I argue that U.S. nationalist processes of racialization, in this context, are bio-political and bio-economic.

In the neoliberal era, U.S. multicultural discourse is advanced to legitimize military and economic imperatives. The evidence Melamed draws upon to support this view includes the 2002 and 2006 *National Security Strategy* documents constructed by the Bush administration in the post-9/11 age of homeland security. The documents work to establish a legitimizing framework for practices of U.S. capitalist free market expansion by relating these practices to human rights discourses. She explains:

> the [2002] document's rhetoric of "freedom" collapses freedoms of commerce ("economic freedom...a moral right...freedom to pick and choose") with social freedoms (of religion, association, etc.), transforming economic freedoms into multicultural imperatives by rhetorical transference. According to this "official" race-erased and militarized antiracism, "America's experience as a great multi-ethnic democracy" obligates the United States to secure "political and economic liberty" for "every person, in every society." (16-17)

Meanwhile, her assessment of the 2006 document is that "it relies upon a

neoliberal multicultural discourse of 'economic rights' that incorporates the rhetoric of civil rights to portray 'economic rights' as the most fundamental civil right and to advocate in absolutist manner for deregulation, privatization, regulated 'free markets,' and other neoliberal measures as the only way to guarantee economic rights" (17). One irony of this capitalization upon economic rights discourse is that the U.S. has been suppressive to both foreign and domestic racialized activist movements advancing claims to economic rights, critiques of capitalism, or demands for wealth redistribution. The *right* to assert economic rights is thus state-sanctioned and implicitly conditional upon the unquestionable and patriotic support of U.S.-led, neoliberal free enterprise.

In Melamed's assessment, the Bush administration's *National Security Strategy* profiles people (living within and outside the U.S.) who are critical of U.S. free enterprise by implying their susceptibility to terrorist affiliation (17-18). The profiles highlight religious, racial, economic, and national political differences in people to represent dissent towards an imagined consensus of U.S. democracy. While "the 2002 *National Security Strategy* attached the label *racism* to communism and fascism through a nebulous rewriting of twentieth-century history as the victory of 'freedom and equality' over 'destructive totalitarianism' and its 'militant versions of class, nation, and race,'" Melamed finds that "[i]n the 2006 *National Security Strategy*, the specter of racism returns but is now connected to those who currently oppose the administration's 'Economic Freedom Agenda'" (17). In the section on women and development, which follows this discussion of race and neoliberalism, I suggest that the strategic characterization

of racism as un-American serves to legitimize U.S. imperialism as well as to manage the transnational trajectory of social movements. The deployment of this strategy has been forming a pattern over the last thirty years of neoliberal history insofar as it attempts to define parameters for what constitutes a social, political, economic, race, or gender issue. With these issues in mind, I argue that U.S. security discourse is ultimately destructive to feminist research methodologies oriented toward the intersectional analysis of multiple structures of exploitation.

Melamed's analysis is generally useful to my effort to conceptualize a neoliberal condition hinging upon bio-political degrees of disposability and responsibility, for she argues that, "[l]ike racial liberalism, neoliberal multiculturalism overlays conventional phenotypical racial categories with new systems for ascribing privilege and stigma, intersecting flexibility into race procedures" (17). If "neoliberal multiculturalism" allows for flexibility and racial procedure to intersect, then it seems reasonable to argue for more flexible forms of anti-neoliberal, anti-racist analysis. One way in which U.S. multiculturalism can be thought to serve U.S. transnational capitalism is in how it "stigmatizes some forms of personhood seen to conflict with neoliberal subjectivity as 'monocultural' and therefore lesser. Multicultural reference sustains both sides of the new privilege/ stigma dichotomy" (18). The plot constructed to promote a managed narrative of neoliberal multiculturalism is ultimately "[d]etached from the history of racial conflict and antiracist struggle," because while "'culture'" signals "the displacement of racial reference, [it] nonetheless remains associated with ideas of 'diversity,' 'representation,' and 'fairness'" (19).

As part of her study, Melamed discusses "the late writing of W.E.B. Du Bois (dating from roughly World War II to his death in 1963)" in relation to Cedric Robinson's assessment of "race radicalism" as a "critical perspective [...] on race as a genealogy of global capitalism" (9). Addressing his reconsidered characterization of the color line in America as *the* twentieth century problem, Melamed finds Du Bois to be explicitly critical of liberal racial paradigms upholding conditions for capitalist exploitation; in particular, she explains that his promotion of "'the new abolitionism'" (11) was premised on his sense "that new configurations of capitalism necessarily incorporate new forms of racialized domination" (11-12). This critical view can be found in "a series of Du Bois's articles published from 1947 to 1949 examining the influence of U.S. capital on the African continent" to "describ[e] the situation as a 'new imperialism' and a kind of 'stream-lined slavery'" (11). Du Bois' review of the color line is significant to contemporary studies of slavery given that sociologist Kevin Bales argues that "new slavery" has nothing to do with the racism of "old slavery" and is instead solely focused on the exploitation of a global poor majority (2008; 2009). A global poor majority is not homogeneous and thus it is unlikely that current slave relations are uniformly constructed. On the other hand, if Balibar is correct in his view of how racisms can be recombined, then perhaps we should also review ways in which anti-racisms can be recombined to serve the interests of governments, corporations, activists, or other constituencies. How can anti-racist discourse shape an imagination of the disappearance of race or obscure processes of racialization? While we must attend to the persistence of racialization as a

dimension of economic exploitation, we should consider how racial discourses are modified to render racialization less intelligible.

A troubling issue that emerges for me, in Melamed's work, pertains to her understanding of Du Bois as deploying a gendered "ethic of self-sacrifice" (12) to undermine capitalist culture.[41] She explains that, "[u]ltimately, this culturally embedded ethic of self-sacrifice, which prioritizes other directedness and sacred-making behaviors over self-interest and material wealth, comes to represent a waning but abiding habit. Still present in midcentury African-American cultural formations, Du Bois sees it as a formation onto which a desire for socialism might be grafted" (12). I acknowledge the significance of Du Bois' underlying intention, as portrayed by Melamed, but what concerns me is the ease with which such an ethic may now be appropriated and repurposed to promote neoliberal agency discourse. In this situation, selectively racialized and regionalized female figures can be praised for their personal responsibility and community commitment even while they may be overburdened as that state refuses accountability for social well-being. I am thus concerned that just such an ethic of self-sacrifice can be co-opted by a neoliberal paradigm if it is not already arguably central to it. I return to this predicament in the context of the neoliberal turn in women and development discourses. First, I conclude this section on racial and post-racial neoliberalism by discussing Charles R. Hale and Walter Benn Michaels' respective notions of "neoliberal multiculturalism" and "neoliberal antiracism."

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[41] I am referring here to Melamed's discussion of "the figure of Josie" (12), who appears in Du Bois's *The Autobiography of W.E.B. Du Bois: A Soliloquy on Viewing My Life from the Last Decade of Its First Century*, published in 1968.

I follow the cue of critics who argue that neoliberal discourse can strategically promote multiculturalism while neoliberal policy selectively promotes racialization. However, I find that it is crucial to clarify the nuances of arguments that call into question the neoliberal deployment of diversity discourse because the assessment of implications varies from critic to critic. For example, Latin American studies anthropologist Charles R. Hale's notion of "neoliberal multiculturalism" seems valuable insofar as he considers state-sanctioned policies and institutionally-managed conditions of consent for the promotion of cultural difference. His argument does not foreclose the possibility that bodies may still be selectively racialized and/or feminized; yet, he addresses the more subtle processes of bodily integration into neoliberal states which is overlooked by critics focusing on signs of neoliberal coercion. As an alternative approach within the field of American literary and cultural analysis, Walter Benn Michaels conflates neoliberal diversity with a generalized anti-racist discourse to question the deployment of anti-discriminatory, racial identity politics as they serve the interest of class mobility. He contends the following:

> Liberalism [...] may have needed racism; neoliberalism doesn't—it needs antiracism. The dream of a world free of discrimination, the dream of a world where identities are respected, is as foundational to the neoliberal right as it is to the neoliberal left. Indeed, from this standpoint, the neoliberal left is nothing but a kind of police force for the neoliberal right, committed to revealing and eliminating the residual prejudices that too many actual neoliberals no doubt continue to harbor deep inside them.

("Antiracism and Neoliberalism" 297-298).

Benn Michaels provocatively challenges the common tendency to associate the neoliberal project with right-wing politics when it is supported by most elected political officials in the U.S. Benn Michaels thus positions the American political left and right on a neoliberal spectrum in which different strains of antiracism may be combined. In essence, he illuminates ways in which the political right and left may be co-constitutive. Both Hale and Benn Michaels confront significant limitations of Leftist critique and its failure to address the neoliberal manipulation of race, class, and culture. Yet, the orientation and method of their analysis have distinct implications and should be questioned as projections of anti-neoliberal imagination.

Charles R. Hale conceptualizes "neoliberal multiculturalism" to address ways in which the World Bank and the UN promote managed forms of indigenous agency in the context of Central American development. He argues that the Leftist tendency to critique the World Bank in terms of its economic coerciveness "is in need of revision" to address the subtle institutional means of encouraging a massive social "shift from protest to proposal" (18). Citing UN support for indigenous expressions of "cultural essence"(15), he claims that the World Bank has also shown support for "'development with identity': indigenous participation in all facets of project development; respect for cultural difference; and multiculturalism as a forward-looking political sensibility that the World Bank urges member states to endorse" (17). Unsurprisingly, there are a set of conditions underlying state and institutional support of indigenous culture. Hale

explains:

> in policy and ideological terms, it would be mistaken to assume that the
>
> architects of neoliberal policies need, or even prefer, a strictly individual
>
> notion of rights. Collective rights to land work just as well, as long as they
>
> meet two basic conditions: The first is that they cannot contradict the
>
> principal tenets of the long-term economic development model, which,
>
> in these [Central American] countries, is turning away from most large
>
> scale agriculture toward free-trade-zone manufacturing, financial services,
>
> commerce, tourism, and environmental management. The second
>
> condition is that they cannot cross a certain line in the gathering of
>
> political clout, which would threaten established power holders and
>
> destabilize the regime. This line, highly subjective and unstable, is often
>
> drawn at the heat of the moment by state operatives rather than Bank
>
> functionaries themselves. As long as these conditions are met, collective
>
> land rights actually help advance the neoliberal model by rationalizing
>
> land tenure, reducing the potential for chaos and conflict, and locking the
>
> community into a mindset that makes it more difficult for expansive
>
> political alternatives to emerge. (18)

In some respects, Hale yields an analysis that differs in orientation from that of

David Harvey who deploys urbanized conceptions of neoliberal enclosure and the

capitalist "accumulation" of land "by dispossession" of the people. This is not

surprising, however, if we keep in mind the critical assertion that the neoliberal

project has uneven and contradictory patterns. While a critical review of

neoliberal conditions is inevitably incomplete, it can be useful to clarify points of

overlap and difference. Unlike Balibar, who emphasizes perceptions of absolute

cultural difference as the impetus for new racism, Hale finds that a distinctive

"cultural rights" discourse by indigenous movements can be integrated into a

neoliberal agenda. He thus argues that "we must first expand our understanding of

neoliberalism itself," especially insofar as it "brings forth a new direction in social

policy, emphasizing the development of civil society and social capital, and an

approach to cultural rights that at first glance seem counterintuitive" (12). In this

context he persuasively suggests the limitations of a purely economic critique of

neoliberal ideology.

The institutional support for "the rise of cultural rights activism" is

possible Hale argues, in part, because "the emergent regime of governance

shapes, delimits, and *produces* cultural difference rather than suppressing it.

Encouraged and supported by multilateral institutions, Latin American elites have

moved from being vehement opponents to reluctant arbiters of rights grounded in

cultural difference" (12-13).[42] Hale can be read as challenging Goldberg's

potential overemphasis placed on explicit practices of white cultural supremacy

via color-blind discourses. He explains:

> the great efficacy of neoliberal multiculturalism resides in powerful actors'
>
> ability to restructure the arena of political contention, driving a wedge
>
> between cultural rights and the assertion of the control over resources

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[42] Hale's study identifies a shift in Central American race discourses away from the invocation of "*mestizaje*" as "the hegemonic idiom of nation building" based on "a privileging of the European-oriented 'mestizo' subject, as bearer of rights and source of political dynamism," towards the embrace of "new cultural rights and neoliberal political economic reforms," which he refers to as "neoliberal multiculturalism"(12).

necessary for those rights to be realized. This is not a divide between

(endorsed) individual rights and (prohibited) collective ones but a rather

retooled dichotomy between base and superstructure: a Marxist vision

returning to social movements as a nightmare. (13)

The "distinct effect of neoliberal multiculturalism" thus depends on "extending

the grid of intelligibility, defining legitimate (and deserving) subjects of rights,

and remaking racial hierarchy" (13), even as a "vehement condemnation of

'classic' racism" is deployed (20). Not unlike Melamed who discusses the merits

of "race radicalism", Hale acknowledges the significance of a "radical indigenous

imaginary" that struggles against the neoliberal integration of cultural difference

(26); however, he concludes his analysis with a challenge to "activist scholars"

failing to act in solidarity by "remaining at arm's length as indigenous movements

grapple with the painful dilemmas of neoliberal multiculturalism, offering a fully

deployed cultural critique of domestication, while waiting patiently for the truly

subversive uprising to being" (26).

      While Hale is critical of the passive role that Leftist academics play in the

politics of "neoliberal multiculturalism," Benn Michaels is hesitant to recuperate

the U.S. political Left because of its associations with antiracism. In recent

articles, interviews, and lectures, Walter Benn Michaels conceptualizes what he

refers to as "the neoliberal imagination." He finds that "in the utopian imagination

of neoliberalism, this is exactly how we would understand class difference: not as

an inequality to be eliminated but as a difference to be respected" ("Neoliberalism

and Antiracism" 299). Drawing on Lionel Trilling's view in *The Liberal*

Imagination (1950) that "liberalism's triumph was the refusal of American writers to acknowledge that class could still make a difference in any individual life," he argues that neoliberal imagination conceals structurally exploitative class difference by promoting multicultural society as an enabling fiction that links individual work ethic and responsibility to socioeconomic mobility ("Class Fictions"); in effect, antiracism in the neoliberal imagination conceals the meritocracy of capitalism. He thus makes a distinction between equality of opportunity and equality of access, where the latter implies support for economic redistribution. Notably, the school becomes a significant site for neoliberal imagining:

> Schools loom larger in the neoliberal imagination than they did in the liberal imagination because where the old liberalism was interested in mitigating the inequalities produced by the free market, neoliberalism with its complete faith in the beneficence of the free market-is interested instead in justifying them. And our schools have a crucial role to play in this. They have become our primary mechanism for convincing ourselves that poor people deserve their poverty, or, to put the point the other way around, they have become our primary mechanism for convincing rich people that we deserve our wealth. ("Class Fictions")

For Benn Michaels, the logic of the equality of opportunity promotes the image of diversity on campus but allows economic exploitation to persist. It conceals systemic inequalities that persist in the post-Jim Crow era: "It's OK if schools are technologies for producing inequality as long as they are also technologies for

justifying it" ("Class Fictions"). He contends that very few from the economic

margins actually enter elite institutions but these few are crucial to enable the

majority of economically privileged students at private schools to feel better about

themselves.

While I find aspects of Benn Michaels' arguments to be crucially

provocative, it seems that his alignment of economic injustice with *exploitation*

and racial injustice with *discrimination* is ideologically suspect insofar as it

constructs the latter as a seemingly less significant social experience disconnected

from material classification. In part, this is because Benn Michaels believes that

racial discrimination is being corrected while economic exploitation is being

exacerbated in the neoliberal age ("Neoliberalism and Antiracism" 297). His

distinction does not account for the inter-implication of economic exploitation

with racial discrimination, particularly the basis of racialized labour value in a

neoliberal era which, I argue, is calculated by bio-political degrees of

disposability and responsibility. Benn Michaels also tends to be suspicious of

black racialized sentiments towards cross-class solidarity, yet he does not address

how "racialization from below"[43] (Mullings 11) operates in relation to neoliberal

economics. His assertion that "[Americans] do not have a concept of mixed

income" (294) also seems questionable insofar as he argues that it is politically

incorrect to celebrate economic diversity. Yet the current U.S. preoccupation with

saving their middle class is suggestive of the desire to preserve the consumer class

system. Benn Michaels would likely agree with this view. However, I would add

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[43] This phrase is used to conceptualize ways in which class struggles among low income
populations can stimulate racial and ethnic antagonisms.

that as part of the preservation of the narrative of upward socio-economic mobility which seems so integral to the American Dream, there must be a reference point for class stratification and thus economic diversity. Constituents who overcome poverty--or who even persist in poverty-- are implicitly valued when they serve as evidence of the development of responsible neoliberal subjectivity. There must be a racialized poor reserve to draw upon to uphold the narrative arch of economic diversity which I argue is celebrated in the U.S. as the American Dream.

Intersectional modes of social analysis can be useful to deconstruct the various versions of the American Dream now propelled by a universalizing neoliberal ideology. A distinction should be made between the liberal social protest for state recognition and the anti-neoliberal position that builds upon traditions of anti-racism and anti-imperialism. Unlike David Harvey who suggests that the precarious conditions of the neoliberal age make the ideologies and strategies for resistance and solidarity more difficult to ascertain than those of mid-twentieth century social movements, Benn Michaels tends to foreclose distinctions that can be made between social movements. He argues:

> Race-gender-class is a false trilogy. Race and class or culture and class don't work the same way. One reason is that class is not something we think of as worthy of our respect, whereas the whole point of cultural difference is that you're supposed to respect it. Whatwe have now is a commitment to redescribing everything in our world as if it were a form of cultural difference. ("Against Identity")

In the passage above, Benn Michaels devalues the potential for intersectional analysis to account for neoliberal variations and contradictions. His unitary categorical approach to race, class, and culture thus classifies "all the civil rights movements of the last half century" as fixated on the task of solving problems of U.S. state recognition and citizenship equality ("Neoliberal Aesthetics"). Social movements pressing for equality before law thus allow for the persistence of inequality in practice. ("Neoliberal Aesthetics"). Benn Michaels could clarify his critique by constructing a more critical genealogy of paradigmatic thinking, as Melamed does, but instead he discredits the theoretical and practical variety of feminist, anti-racist, and queer research and activism by totalizing them.

While I take issue with these limitations in his work, I find his general critique of "the study of humanities in American universities" to be compelling for he regards the discipline as "a research and development laboratory for neoliberalism" ("Antiracism" 299). It is crucial that we examine neoliberal effects as reproduced within a Humanities-based, academic culture industry. Furthermore, we should interrogate the fictions produced by literary criticism to valorize resistant imaginaries while at the same time class hierarchies of academic labour are reinforced in the Humanities workplace on a daily basis. Joseph Slaughter's critique of the ideological work of the world novel to promote a human rights imaginary at a time that actual rights are violated seems relevant in this context. The ideological work of literary criticism to promote fictions of successful neoliberal resistance, even as neoliberal prevails, thus needs further study.

It may be useful for literary critics to engage with recent studies of the relation between neoliberal globalization and racism in terms of "processes of racialization" (Clarke and Thomas 1). Kamari Maxine Clarke and Deborah A. Thomas read as "ongoing transformations" the "relationships [forged] among racial ideologies, trade networks, capital mobility, and governance" (5) to discern between localized and globalized racialization but also consider how American-style racisms are ideologically exported, globally, via forms of cultural, economic, or military imperialism (7). Tracking how processes of racialization are rooted or mobilized, imported or exported, is significant for anti-colonial and anti-imperial research as well as to the re-imagining of social solidarity. Clarke and Thomas rightly identify "[t]he relative absence of detailed analyses of the particularities of contemporary racialized circulations—who travels, what travels, and how transnational alliances are tied to particular knowledge economies points to the need for historically grounded, multileveled ethnographic and critical research" (8-9). It is within this context that they argue for "the development of an analytic that makes central the relationships between institutional practices and racial ideologies, ideologies that are also simultaneously ethnicized, gendered, and sexualized in particular ways" (9). Such an approach is important to confront the post-racial, post-feminist, and post-intersectional mythologies perpetuated by neoliberal ideology and discourse as well as in literary criticism. Present and future studies of the global production of blackness must therefore also challenge the critical over-reliance upon the explanatory capacity of concepts such as of the Black Atlantic paradigm (14). Clarke and Thomas' work to "explore the

articulations between the forces of capital and cultural production known as

globalization and the processes of subject articulation known as racialization"

becomes useful to our consideration of "how these two processes constitute each

other over time, both materially and ideologically, and how they are part of a

divergent set of changes that are producing new forms, concepts, practices, and

patterns" (9).[44]

I have not yet explicitly engaged with a Caribbean-specific, neoliberal

analyses of race or racialization. This is not to imply that U.S. notions of race are

simply imported into the Caribbean as part of the hegemonic effect of

neoliberalization; however, I am interested in the multiple effects and

technologies of U.S. empire in the Caribbean which is why I must consider U.S.

racialization technologies. Still, it is also important to consider how creole

discourses are transformed and repurposed to affirm the illusion of a positive

cultural experience of globalization in the Caribbean region. What has been

concealed, in effect, are the "specific histories of Caribbean displacement,

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[44] From a social sciences perspective, Clarke and Thomas create an opening for Humanities scholars to reconsider their methods and orientation in the production of narratives and the formation of imaginaries. Alexander-Floyd has also argued that "[n]arrative production and analysis is a well-worn method for intersectionality scholars, and with good reason: it affords an opportunity to make women of color's experiences visible in complex ways, opposes the devaluation of subjectivity in research and evaluation, and provides a means of disentangling the myriad forces that work to maintain hegemonic understandings of politics and culture. Indeed, a focus on the production and assessment of narratives is a way of taking up part of the legacy of intersectionality both ideographically and ideationally by advancing its defining elements— namely, producing liberatory research centered on the lives of women of color and positively transforming dominant modes of knowledge production. Scholars across disciplines have recognized the importance of narratives [...]" (20). In the field of geography and planning, Roberts and Mahtani posit that "neoliberalism and race" are "co-constitutive" (248) to advance not a chronological conception race and neoliberalism but to theorize possibilities for "*race neoliberalism*" (250). See also Lawrence D. Berg: "Geographies of Identity I: Geography – (neo)liberalism –white supremacy" (2012).These works suggest possibilities for interdisciplinary collaboration to address processes of racialization via neoliberal discourse and the material conditions produced by that discourse and ideology.

migration and transnationalism" contained in the varying "political commitments associated with theories of creolization" (Sheller 274).[45] I address these issues in detail in the subsequent chapters focused on works by Paule Marshall, Jamaica Kincaid, and Michelle Cliff. I now turn to a discussion of the neoliberal turn as it impacts women and development discourses and black feminist intersectional analysis.

Forging Intersections: Women, Neoliberal Development, and Black Feminist Critique

The development discourse that once divided the world into three—First, Second, Third—is thought to have dominated the theory and practice of international relations from the 1950s to the 1980s (Gwynne, Klak, and Shaw 3). On the other hand, "[a] variety of sociological statistics at the macro level suggest the extent of global integration of the early twenty-first century is more like the 1910s than the 1950s," when cold and hot wars had hampered conditions for accelerated international trade (Ferree 3). There are several ways to account for these shifts in terms of their impact on women. A review of the neoliberal turn in Caribbean development will serve as my point of departure. I will then address the neoliberalization of women and development initiatives by focusing on U.S. financial and ideological imperatives to suppress the politicization of women's organizing at UN conferences. In doing so, I also address the value and limitation of black feminist intersectional analysis to deconstruct the U.S.-led, neoliberal

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[45] Sheller traces "a national project linked to decolonization in the 1960s-1970s" (274) to "a postcolonial and post-national project grounded in the Caribbean diaspora in the 1980s-1990s" (274).

management of women's agency and resistance in the context of U.S.-Caribbean

neoliberal histories of trade, labour, and development. These histories are central

to the critical imagination of resistance and solidarity expressed in the works by

Paule Marshall, Jamaica Kincaid, and Michelle Cliff explored in subsequent

chapters.

While 1898 through to the 1930s marked "the emergence of U.S.

Hegemony" in the Caribbean (Randall 70), the U.S. established itself as a "sphere

of influence" during the mid and late twentieth century. The Caribbean, in this

context, was imagined as its "backyard" or as a "U.S. lake" (Hillman 6).[46] Labour

unrest within the English Caribbean during the 1930s led to socialist-oriented

political parties and union-organizing which enabled educated men and women to

collaborate with the working poor and the unemployed to improve labour

conditions and develop better social programs. The mid-twentieth century marked

a shift from British colonial, to American neocolonial power within the

Caribbean. The postwar failure of the West Indian Federation in the British

Caribbean (1958 -1962) reflected not only political and socioeconomic disunity

among larger and smaller islands, but also "a weakened postwar Britain" who, in

feeling "anxious to curtail the costs of empire," encouraged a flawed plan

intended "to minimize the impact of decolonization on the smaller island

economies unable to survive on their own" (Randall 78).[47]

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[46] Policies such as "the Monroe Doctrine" and its "Roosevelt Corollary," William Howard Taft's "dollar diplomacy" (Randall 71), Franklin Delano Roosevelt's "Good Neighbour Policy" (73), among other direct and indirect economic and military interventions, helped facilitate its hegemonic status.

[47]This federation included Jamaica, Barbados, Trinidad, and the Windward and Leeward Islands. Randall explains that "[t]he federation was less a colonial initiative than one inspired by British officials anxious to curtail costs of empire for a weakened postwar Britain while seeking to

Cold War tensions increased focus on the Caribbean: "[t]he rupture of

diplomatic relations and the U.S.-imposed economic embargo by the Organization

of American States in 1962 heightened Cuba's isolation within the region,

ultimately leading to a greater level of dependence on Soviet aid and trade with

Eastern Bloc countries" (Randall 78-79). English Caribbean nations— such as

Guyana, Grenada, and Jamaica— were pressured to dismantle socialist-oriented

programs and politics to imply alliance with the U.S.; in short, it was struggle to

be part of a truly "Non-Aligned" movement during the Cold War years. Military

collaborations between the U.S. and Western Europe in the Caribbean were

ongoing and the English Caribbean, in particular, was considered Western-

friendly and relatively stable compared to places such as Haiti or Cuba; however,

Brian Meeks argues that "it was in the 1970s that [a] tradition of resistance

temporarily cohabited with the notion of revolution in what can be considered as

minimize the impact of decolonization on the smaller island economies unable to survive on their own. The federation was doomed to fail as an artificial creation that represented accurately neither the political will of the majority nor the historical reality of the ties among the British West Indies. Ultimately, Jamaica's physical separation from and weak economic links to the other islands led to its withdrawal. When Trinidad followed suit, the British House of Commons was left with little choice but to end the short-lived federation in 1962. The failure of the West Indies Federation presented an early indication of the obstacles to political changes that might address historical inequities in the Caribbean" (Randall 78). Consider also the formation of CARICOM which emerged from "the Treaty of Chaguaramas in 1973 [and] provided the institutional framework within which the project of regional integration evolved. The CARICOM project was the creation of a common market with associated common institutions in areas of health, education, justice, transportation, disaster preparedness and other areas of functional cooperation" (Levitt xii). Bishop and Payne argue that Federation and subsequent attempts towards regional organization have failed, in part, because of the factionalist political leadership and the residual nationalist tendencies of individual islands. Regional economic organization among English-speaking islands exists via Caricom but this organization is pressured to accommodate neo-liberalism. To achieve global recognition, the region must, in their view, work for substantial political and social unification. Paule Marshall seems to also endorse an image of black community development extending beyond the economic and the national. She admits, "Perhaps it's an impossible dream, but I long for the day when the islands of the Caribbean—English, French, Spanish, Dutch—will come together in some kind of federation or European-style political and economic entity. It's the only way I believe they will be able to come out from under the shadow of Big Brother to the north, be able to achieve real strength and thus be taken seriously in the councils of the world" (qtd. in Dance 100).

the most important decade in the twentieth century history of the Caribbean

peoples" (*Narratives* 156). As he explains, "[u]ntil the early seventies, Cuba had

remained a pariah, particularly in the Anglophone Caribbean, but on the basis of

booming sugar prices, windfalls from the resale of Soviet oil and visionary social

policies, it had emerged, despite the continued question marks concerning

democratic procedure, as, at minimum, a rough facsimile of what Utopia might

look like" (156-157). Subsequently, democratic socialism was supported through

the 1974 election of Michael Manley as Prime Minister, in Jamaica, and "the

radicalization of Caribbean political economy" was becoming evident as a result

of "socialist oriented revolutions in Grenada and Nicaragua" (Barriteau 4). Thus,

during the 1980s and 1990s, "the United States changed its foreign policy in the

region" (Barriteau 4) and reasserted its hemispheric, hegemonic status, staging

military presences and invasions, proxy wars, and imposing various pressures on

the region to participate in neoliberal economic integration.[48] In part, the ultimate

retreat of the Caribbean Left, in the English Caribbean, can be attributed not only

to the failure to establish indigenous and context-specific applications of Marxist

ideology (Meeks 162-164), but also to the region's increasing economic

indebtedness to the U.S. through the Caribbean Basin Economic Recovery Act

(1983) and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID),

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[48] Brian Meeks explains that during this period, bloody political infighting in the Caribbean helped to create conditions for "the US invasion [of Grenada in 1983] and the symbolic reassertion of its hemispheric hegemony for the first time since the Vietnam War. Then, in 1990 the Sandinista government, faced with a relentless and economically devastating war with the US-backed Contras, lost the national elections, though remaining the single largest party [in government]. Finally, after 1989 and the rapid collapse of Eastern Europe and then the Soviet Union, Cuba, no longer buoyed by its umbilical connection to the USSR, faced with continuing boycott from the United States, and mired in catastrophic economic depression, survived, but diminished as either model or hope" (*Narratives* 157-158).

organizations which "pressed for an expanded role for the private sector and a reduction in governments' involvement in the economies" (Barriteau 3-4).[49]

Multilateral financial institutions responded to global economic crisis, during the 1970s, with plans for "economic deregulation, financialization, and privatization" (Scott 2). Free market and trade ideologies dominated as "'Third World nations were encouraged to take out loans from foreign governments, private banks, and international institutions'" (2). Third world debt mounted and the debt crisis of 1982 resulted in the coerced acceptance of Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPS) in many developing countries, whereby World Bank or IMF loans became contingent upon a formulaic strategy involving the "devaluation of currency; an orientation on exports and foreign capital investment; liberalization of financial markets; and cuts in government spending, subsidies, and wages" (2). Reportedly, "in 1986 the capital outflow from the Caribbean ($653 million) exceeded the external inflow ($556 million); that is, the region paid creditors in the advanced countries almost $100 million more in interest payments than it received in new resources" (Antrobus et. al 44). In some respects, this credit-debt system of dependency was exacerbated by the fact that "IMF stabilization programs were consistently associated with a decline in the wage share; that is, they resulted in a redistribution of income from labor to capital" (42). Despite its programmatic failures to facilitate long-term development or to resolve debt crisis, "the IMF has maintained its basic recipe for solving balance of payments difficulties over three decades" (41).

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[49] There are multiple complicated interpretations of the retreat of the Caribbean Left. See *New Caribbean Thought: A Reader* (ed., Meeks and Lindahl) for a concise, although male-dominated, range of perspectives (2001).

85

Historically, development ideology underwent a paradigmatic shift with

the neoliberal creation of the pro-U.S. Caribbean Basin Initiative in 1983.[50] The

Nassau Understanding of 1984 came to represent the "commitment" of

CARICOM countries "to pursue policies of structural adjustment" as established

by the IMF to stabilize economies: "[a]ccording to the Nassau Understanding,

structural adjustment 'is an integral part of the development process' and

represents a conscious shift to a new development path to accelerate

development'" (Antrobus et al 44, 45). As Peggy Antrobus explains,

> the Nassau Understanding is strangely silent with respect to the issue of
>
> *how* development can take place if it is based on low wages and a structure
>
> of production which is divorced from that of consumption. Moreover,
>
> while calling for the compliance of all social groups in meeting the
>
> objectives of structural adjustment, most governments in the region have
>
> done little to enhance the participation of all sectors in Caribbean society
>
> in designing and implementing policies that will so drastically affect their
>
> futures. (46)

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[50] According to the U.S. Department of Commerce, International Trade Administration, "The Caribbean Basin Initiative (CBI) is a broad program to promote economic development through private sector initiative in Central American and Caribbean countries. A major goal of the CBI is to expand foreign and domestic investment in nontraditional sectors, thereby diversifying CBI country economies and expanding their exports. The Caribbean Basin Economic Recovery Act of 1983 (CBERA) (amended in 1990) and the Caribbean Basin Trade Partnership Act of 2000 (CBTPA), collectively known as CBI, provides customs duty-free entry to the United States on a permanent basis for a broad range of products from CBI beneficiary countries. The most recent piece of CBI legislation, the CBTPA, provides beneficiary countries certain trade benefits similar to Mexico's under the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA)" (1). Alison Donnell, from a different position, characterizes the CBI as "the Reagan Administration's US-Caribbean Trade Partnership Act of 1983 that was designed to reverse the possibility of communist expansion in the region (exemplified by the New Jewel movement in Grenada and the Soviet-Cuban pact). Enforcing the model of the market-place as the basis for democracy, it is now accepted that the CBI was a failure in economic terms and led to the collapse of the Jamaican economy in the 1980s" (98). Her view emerges from a reading of Olive Senior's poem "Caribbean Basin Initiative" included in *Gardening in the Tropics*.

According to Helen Scott, the Caribbean Basin Initiative "replaced economic *aid* with a policy of *trade* benefits and investment incentives. The rhetoric of free trade was belied by terms and regulations that benefited foreign corporations," especially "'U.S. manufacturers'" (2; my emphasis). The shift from "aid" to "trade" altered views of national development as free trade, foreign investment, and the privatization of public lands, services, and resources was endorsed.

During the middle of the twentieth century, Western aid-based development strategies presupposed that "poverty in developing nations was due to a lack of capital" and, therefore, direct aid seemed the appropriate measure to create a "productive base" in order to stimulate "large-scale agriculture and manufacturing projects" (Sparr 4). A "free-market oriented" economic model, with "less government intervention," became the preferred response, however, and, by the 1990s, wealth creation was emphasized over redistribution, under the assumption that "[t]he poor will benefit in a trickle-down fashion once long-term growth begins" (1, 5). Feminist critics of neoliberal structural adjustment programs highlight their severe negative impacts upon the most vulnerable populations. As Merle Hodge attests, "[t]he women's movement in the Caribbean has sought to draw attention to the fact that structural adjustment is having the most drastic effect on women" ("We Kind of Family" 484). I would add that the Americanized neoliberal paradigm stemming from key documents like the Washington Consensus has failed to account for differences of history, culture, scale, or population, by advocating prescriptive neoliberal policies for developing nations.

The United Nations followed its 1961 launch of the first Decade of

Development with the UN Decade for Women (1976-1985).[51] The Decade's

World Conferences on Women took place in Mexico City (1975), Copenhagen

(1980), and Nairobi (1985). Peg Snyder provides the following account of the

formation of the women and development movement:

> [i]n the 1960s and 1970s, four factors interfaced to create the concept of
>
> the movement "women and development" that soon was flourishing: first,
>
> the multiplication of the numbers of newly independent UN member
>
> states, which made poverty a priority; second, the search for alternative
>
> development models to the modernization theory that had proved
>
> unsuccessful; third, mounting evidence, produced mostly by researchers,
>
> that women are central to their nation's economic life; and, fourth, the
>
> reemergence of the women's movement in industrial countries that led to
>
> pressure on Western governments to include women in the foreign
>
> assistance [...]. (26)

Given the international scale of women's organization and interaction at this time,

it was (and continues to be) difficult to establish consensus regarding a view of

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[51] In *Human Rights Inc,: The World Novel, Narrative Form, and International Law*,
Joseph Slaughter highlights key dates to consider the UN's discursive formation of
developmentalism. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) was created in 1948, the
immediate post-World War II era, the same year that the World Bank provided a definition of
what constitutes "poor countries" (fn 12 367). In 1966, The International Covenant on Civil and
Political Rights (ICCPR) and the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights
(IESCR) were created to offer specificity and to supplement the UDHR. The 1960s marked a
significant period from which a dominant discourse of development emerged. The United
Nation's first Development Decade began on Dec 19, 1961 and subsequent key decades include
the 1970s and the 1980s. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) was instituted in
1960s as was the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples
(DGICCP) (Slaughter 218). Slaughter explains that this period "ends the modern era of high
colonialism" (16). Curiously, it was not until 1986 that a Declaration of the Right to Development
was announced (221).

the relationship between women and developmental experience, ideology and policy agenda. Competing notions of women's agency were debated alongside proposals to institutionalize services and or provide development assistance. During the 1970s "'national machineries'" were created to promote "the advancement of women," but the "approaches shared a major weakness: they did not seek to change the structure of the world economy so that its wealth would be more equitable *between* nations as well as *within* them" (Snyder 31). Snyder explains that "[d]evising a strategy to transform the global economy was left to the developing countries, called the Group of 77, in the UN General Assembly, which created a New International Economic Order (NIEO) proposal that was finally adopted in 1974" (31). Thus, "the Decade for Women, 1976-1985, [came to be regarded] as an institution-building decade" (32). At the same time, a neoliberal paradigm for development was also emerging. Subsequently, "[t]he 1980s were widely labeled as 'the lost decade'" in which "international financial institutions" began to dominate development policy by emphasizing credit conditionality for developing countries while "the UN development cooperation organizations--which focused on human well-being--lost voice" (35).

It should be noted that analysis of the impetus to organize women's and feminist movements ranges in orientation. Myra Marx Ferree argues for a distinction between "feminism and women's movements" (5), finding that the latter reference exemplifies a gendered female "*constituency*" focused on "social change" (6), whereas the former is for her more directly linked to "activism" whereby "[f]eminism is a *goal*, a target for social change, a purpose informing

activism, not a constituency or a strategy" (6). In this sense, "[f]eminist activists

and activism typically are embedded in organizations and institutions with

multiple goals" (7). While Ferree's distinction can be debated, it is useful to the

consideration of the UN organization of conferences around women and

development. Not only were there national, cultural, religious, economic,

political, educational, and other basic differences to contend with, in terms of

conference participation, but there were also theoretical, practical and ideological

struggles regarding the goals for women and development. To be sure, feminisms

can and do circulate within and/or interact with women's movements but they are

not necessarily directly aligned in political trajectory or socioeconomic

orientation. Ferree provides the following perspective:

> The *intersectionality* of social movements characterizes them and how
>
> they position themselves in the transnational arena in which they operate.
>
> Intersectionality means that privilege and oppression, and movements to
>
> defend and combat these relations, are not in fact singular. No one has a
>
> gender but not a race, a nationality but not a gender, an education but not
>
> an age. The location of people and groups within relations of production,
>
> reproduction, and representation (relations that are organized worldwide in
>
> terms of gender inequality) is inherently multiple. These multiple social
>
> locations are often--not, as is often assumed, atypically--contradictory.
>
> Organizations as well as individuals hold multiple positions in regard to
>
> social relations and power and injustice, and typically enjoy privilege on
>
> some dimensions even while they struggle with oppression on another.

This multiplicity and the contradictions to which it gives rise are rarely

acknowledged theoretically. (10)

Feree's view that "multiple social locations" yield differential power relations is

particularly useful to my analysis of black female protagonists, in the following

chapters, for while the portrayal of their experiences of the neoliberal condition

can be related, they cannot be equated since distinct dynamics of power and

subordination are at play. While I generally concur with Feree, I argue that

intersectionality as an analytic approach has been more politically controversial

than she grants, especially in the context of UN conferences on women and

development, as well as those on racism, where the interests of powerful nation-

states and international financial institutions have influence on agendas.

Keeping in mind the view that "multiple social locations" give rise to

differential relations of power and subordination (Ferree 10), I would suggest that

the UN conferences facilitated tense transnational feminist debate and cross-

institutional networking (Snyder 32-35; Langley 49-56; Tripp 61-64);[52] yet, they

enabled Third World or Global South feminists to stage critical institutional

presences to challenge the homogenizing tendencies of Western, white feminist

gender ideologies (Basu 18; Tripp 61-64). It is within this context that I sketch

some cited limitations of UN-based feminist organizing as it supported dominant

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[52] Winston E. Langley argues that "a strategy of global collaboration among women is the only means that promises rapid and effective relief for them as a group and for humankind as a whole" (28). He explains that, prior to the UN Decade for Women, there were "regional and global human rights instruments" formulated, such as "the Convention on the Political Rights of Women (1953) and the 1967 Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (DEDAW). By 1979 the Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) emerged" (28). "Collectively," he finds that the conventions "deal somewhat comprehensively with certain categories of rights—civil and political as well as economic, social, and cultural." (28-29)

feminist agendas and NGO workers to opportunistically capitalize upon women and development research initiatives.

The UN's First World Conference on Women, in 1975, reportedly prioritized nationally-formulated initiatives for the advancement of women. According to the UN website, this conference "led to the establishment of the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW) and the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), which served as an institutional framework for research, training and operational activities in the area of women and development" (ECLAC). The second conference identified "a disparity between women's guaranteed rights and their capacity to exercise them" and focused on the promotion of "equal access" to "education," "employment opportunities," and "adequate healthcare services" (ECLAC). The third conference, in Nairobi (1985), was "mandated to seek new ways of overcoming obstacles for achieving the objectives of the Decade: equality, development and peace" (ECLAC). At this conference, "[t]hree basic categories were established to measure the progress achieved" including "constitutional and legal measures," "equality in social participation," and "equality in political participation and decision-making" (ECLAC). Carole Boyce Davies suggests that "'international feminism [...] gained credence at the Nairobi Women's Conference'" because it "'divorce[d] it[self] from a Western/European or American context and instead addresse[d] women's struggles globally'" (qtd. in Chancy 22). Yet, criticism surrounds these conferences. For concision, I address criticism surrounding the Nairobi and Beijing conferences.

In several respects, the critical assessment of the United Nations Decade for Women (1975-1985) has been negative. Stephanie Athey reports the findings of economists:

> [t]his decade was by actual measures a period of regression in women's status; many attribute this to the fact that the central role of poor women's labor in national economies (and therefore in economic development) remained hidden. Planning goals did not target problems or needs as poor women themselves analyzed and articulated them. New goals were set in 1985 in Nairobi, and the 1994 *Survey on the Role of Women in Development* assessed two decades of international planning on the status of women. The survey noted progress made in many regions toward improving women's legal status and girls' and women's access to education and training. However, it was noted as well that in spite of these positive changes, there had not been corresponding positive changes "in women's incomes, living conditions, and participation in decision making." These failures were rearticulated in Beijing. (10)[53]

More recently, Christine Ahn and Anasuya Sengupta have found that progress has been limited in terms of achieving "the Platform for Action (PFA), a document that lays out clear targets to achieve gender equality" developed during the 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing. For instance, there is still "very limited state accountability to the commitments made in Beijing" for improving

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[53] In the conclusion to this dissertation, I discuss aspirations for the Beijing Conference (and subsequent criticism) as reflected in the Caribbean Association for Feminist Research and Action (CAFRA) newsletters.

women's reproductive health, increasing their participation and leadership in peace-making and securing their economic rights. They contend that "[a]s the global women's movement presses the United Nations and national governments to recognize commitments they made in Beijing and elsewhere, women must be vigilant about how they're deployed in the service of militarism and neoliberalism" (Ahn and Sengupta).

The failure to meet goals for women and development thus persists in the aftermath of the UN Decade for Women. This predicament raises questions about the professionalization of social struggles as enabled through the promotion of expertise cultures and the expansion of research and development initiatives dependent upon private funding, donation and/or investment (Smith 2007; Andaiye 2004, 2002; Antrobus 2000; Ford Smith 1997; James 1986, 1985). While research and activism focused on gender justice or anti-racism includes academic and grassroots orientations, the sustainable development of such projects is threatened by the economic insecurities of a neoliberal era that celebrates multicultural difference as a commodity, but refuses to explicitly confront capitalist development as it re-enforces the racialization and feminization of disposable labour, privatises basic human necessities such as food and water, and destroys the biodiversity of the planet. The neoliberal condition not only puts the health and safety of all life at risk, but it undermines critical questions of accountability for these risks.

Within the context of the rise of women and development discourses, Selma James identifies the expansion of "the race relations industry" and "gender

relations industry" ("Strangers and Sisters" 185). In "The UN Decade for Women:

An Offer We Couldn't Refuse" she elaborates the following critique:

> The Decade's themes—"Equality, Development, Peace"—reflected the
>
> usual UN *ménage à trois*. "Equality" reflected the U.S. self-image as the
>
> land of equal opportunity. It also verbalized the aspirations of its powerful
>
> career feminist lobby [...]. "Peace" was shorthand for the image the
>
> Soviets promote, according to which women have no problems internal to
>
> that society, only those imposed by external enemies [...]. Symbolically
>
> sandwiched between these two was "Development," which summed up the
>
> aspirations of Third World governments.
>
> The consensus on themes for the Decade, like much else in power
>
> politics, could only be achieved by imprecision. For example, to whom
>
> are the poorest of the Third World's women to be equal? Third World
>
> men? (191)

The 1980s represents a period in which Cold War politics coincided with

emerging neoliberal paradigms for social organization and international economic

development. We should keep this in mind as we consider how the Nairobi

Conference was censored and managed. According to James, it was "illegal in

Kenya to criticize the government," so "[t]o minimize the impact of thousands of

women from all over the world on the police State of Kenya, the campus swarmed

with police armed not only with hand weapons but machine guns. Even

workshops were not out of bounds to armed men. Report after report of Nairobi,

verbal and written, has omitted this" (198). She is also critical of how the

academic presence at the conference effectively downplayed the participation of

local women and created conditions for professional networking. Tendencies

towards liberal social management created obstacles for transformative social

solidarity. In James' account, "[t]here were also a wide presence of the social

planning and welfare industries, such as migrant and refugee services, planned

parenthood, adult education. Workshops were now multicultural [...]. But though

the Decade had made it impossible for metropolitan professional women to

exclude Third World women from academic and service industries, little else had

changed the view from the bottom" (198-199). In a footnote to this article, James

mentions that a document entitled "A U.S. Policy for the U.N. Conference on

Women" was produced by "[t]he Heritage Foundation, a CIA think tank" and

"fairly widely circulated before Nairobi. Keep politics out of women's affairs, it

said" (fn. 6; 195). I will now discuss this document in detail, for it illuminates

several features of a U.S. neoliberal agenda.

"A U.S. Policy on the UN Conference on Women" (1985) is written by

policy consultant Greerson G. McMullen and senior fellow Charles M.

Lichenstein. Compellingly, it illuminates U.S. imperatives to depoliticize

international women's movements as well as to manage feminist organization and

research. The authors work to establish the "legitimate agenda" of the conference

by arguing that "[t]he U.S. [...] should draw an unequivocal line against

politicization" (1). Legitimate participant countries are considered to be "like-

minded" to the U.S. and "in support of a serious, businesslike approach to real and

urgent problems" (1). Notably, the document begins by discrediting the "typical

U.N. agenda of political issues such as 'the elimination of Zionism' and providing assistance 'to Palestinian women'" (1). The "main purposes" of these meetings, according to the authors, are to assemble "experts" together to address issues of mutual interest among "U.N. member states," as well as "to amass a common, reliable data base" and "to formulate a program of action" (1-2). As such, the authors cite political divisiveness as the reason for the failure of prior conferences; in particular, they condemn participation "by extremists (with strong sideline support by the Soviet Union) against Israel, South Africa, the U.S., and the West generally, and the free enterprise system" (2). They find these political stances have little to do with issues of "discrimination against women" (2)

McMullen and Lichenstein sketch a brief history of the U.S. position taken at U.N. conferences on women and write: "[t]he Mexico City delegates went on to adapt a 'Declaration on the Equality of Women and Their Contribution to Development and Peace.' Here the U.S. drew the line and voted no" (3). The context provided for U.S. opposition in this case pertains to the "unacceptable political statements" made in the document to associate "Zionism with racism" (3). The Declaration was rejected for its alignment of "'international peace and cooperation'" with "'the elimination of colonialism, and neo-colonialism, foreign occupation, Zionism, apartheid, racial discrimination in all of its forms as well as the recognition of the dignity of all peoples and their rights to self determination'" (3). The authors argue that "[w]hat this has to do with discrimination against women is unclear" (3). In general, the U.S. policy document finds a pattern of UN convention design that is "anti-Western and anti-Israel [in] tone" (4). The authors

outline "the most troubling parts of the 1980 action program," developed in Copenhagen, to reiterate earlier critiques of anti-American political extremism. They also take issue with the seeming UN conference program of action to support for revolutionary activity to end South African apartheid (4) as well as for "the so-called New International Economic Order (NIEO), which calls for the wholesale transfer of technology and wealth from the development nations of the West to the Third World 'as a matter of social justice'" (5). Overall, the U.S. Policy expresses a persistent intention to depoliticize women's issues and frame them solely in terms of gender discrimination. With this historical context in mind, it seems unsurprising that of the "189 countries [to] have signed CEDAW [the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women]", the U.S. is conspicuously absent (Ahn and Sengupta).

The final feature of U.S. Policy that I wish to illuminate pertains to the political management of women's organization via financial and military influence. McMullen and Lichenstein express concern over "the proposed agenda for the Nairobi Conference," especially insofar as it supports the work of prior conferences and creates conditions "to allow discussion of just about any issue, thus offering carte blanche for the extremists" (7). As part of a discursive strategy to discredit the conference, the authors infer that conference organizers drew upon unreliable sources for the documentation of women's issues and concerns (7-8). The NGO Forum is condemned for being "dominated by their most extremist and anti-American members," and the authors identify Nita Barrow of Barbados, "[t]he 'Convenor' of Forum 1985," as supporting an "anti-Reagan resolution" at a

Havana meeting (8). Remarkably, the authors claim that "[t]he predominant U.S. interest in the U.N. Decade for Women is to advance the role and status of women in societies around the world. The U.S. has no hidden agendas for Nairobi" (9); yet, they conclude the document by proposing "steps the U.S. can take to influence the outcome of the 1985 Nairobi Conference" (11). It is suggested that the U.S. might "1) offer to reimburse the Kenyan government for the costs of the NGO Forum 1985; 2) threaten to withhold its 25 percent share of the regular conference budget; and 3) offer to make up the anticipated short-fall of some $500, 000 in the special trust fund for the Nairobi Conference" (11). In short, the authors insist: "[t]here should be no U.S. hesitation about using its financial leverage, nor any apologies about monitoring the use of funds provided by U.S. taxpayers to assure an effective, productive outcome for the Conference. Involved directly are matters affecting the U.S. national interest and America's genuine desire to advance and improve the role and status of women worldwide" (11). It is difficult not to imagine the possibility that the U.S. may have helped to finance the well-armed police presence noted by Selma James at the conference ("The UN Decade" 198).

I suggested earlier that intersectional analysis may be regarded as politically controversial and thus be socially contested within the context of UN-sponsored conferences. To illustrate this point, I would suggest that the 1985 "U.S. Policy for the U.N. Conference on Women" provides neoliberal historical context for Maylei Blackwell and Nadine Naber's conference report of the 2001 UN World Conference against Racism which took place in Durban.[54] Their

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[54] For context, it should be noted that "The UN General Assembly first designated 1971

critical review suggests a belated and partial acceptance of intersectional analysis in the context of the UN-sponsored event. Blackwell and Naber have the objective to consider the implications of this conference for "transnational feminist practices." The NGO Forum in Durban has significance in this context as it "attracted between 8,000-10,000 delegates from nations all over the world, the majority of whom were women" (238). The Forum was organized in such as way to include and expand upon issues condemned in the 1985 U.S. Policy document: "[t]he conference dealt with themes such as colonialism, hate crimes and violence, ethnic cleansing, migration/refugees, slavery and slave trade, poverty and social exclusion, institutional racism, anti-Semitism, caste-based discrimination, gender, sexual orientation, youth, foreign occupation, environmental racism, religious intolerance, reparations, labor, trafficking, and globalization" (238). Such themes should not be contained by an oversimplified anti-discrimination paradigm for they require a conversation of how structures of exploitations intersect and multiply.

Notably, Blackwell and Naber cite U.S. resistance to the efforts to link slavery, racism, and economic injustice (238), as well as a tendency to reject the association of racist discourses with Zionism. They explain:

> U.S. threats to boycott the WCAR bordered on censorship in that they
>
> prevented some issues being broached and certain languages being used,
>
> as illustrated by the efforts to undermine any attempt to define slavery as a

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as the International Year of Action to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination, and prior to Durban, two UN World Conferences against Racism were held in Geneva in 1978 and 1983. The U.S. boycotted both of them" (Blackwell and Naber 238).

crime against humanity or to name Zionism as a form of racism. In this

way, the U.S. shunned the global anti-racist movement as well as the rest

of the world's governments. The U.S. governmental delegation did walk

out on the fifth day of the UN World Conference Against Racism. (239).

In this context, the authors argue that "at the core of the WCAR was a discursive

struggle, or a struggle of representation and the power to define which has been a

central feature of colonial domination and legitimization throughout history"

(239). The official U.S. position thus continues to be focused on the promotion of

a depoliticized, post-intersectional view of race and gender. Class exploitation is

thus further mystified.

Intersectional approaches to issues such as race and poverty were received

with some degree of belated acceptance. For example, Durban represented "the

first UN-sponsored conference against racism to include 'related intolerance,' or

the ways that racism intersects with poverty, gender discrimination, and

homophobia" (240). While Blackwell and Naber argue that this "framework

opened up spaces for new alliances and more complex analyses in the struggle

against racism," they also suggest that "it was often critiqued by conservatives as

a strategy for watering down the anti-racism agenda, and panels and workshops

organized around gender were often marginalized in the larger debates on race"

(241). Keeping in mind the "U.S. Policy for the U.N. Conference on Women,"

published in 1985, I argue that this report on the 2001 UN World Conference

against Racism reaffirms a U.S. imperative to promote a neoliberal national

agenda that treats race and gender issues as separate categories for analysis. It is

troubling that the U.S. government continues to defend Zionism by threatening to boycott conferences and conference documents that propose "a condemnation of Israel's systematic violations of Palestinian rights" when these violations are aligned with racism (243). The multiple structures of exploitation faced by Palestinian women are not calculated or valued by the U.S. government in this context. Blackwell and Naber report that "[o]n a panel on intersectionality and globalization, Palestinian women explained the impact of Israeli occupation on the fragmentation of Palestinian women's movements" (244); meanwhile, "[o]n a panel about U.S. women of color, Arab American women argued that Zionism is the Forgotten-'ism' among U.S. feminist movements" (244). Notably, Blackwell and Nader confirm the persistence of the professionalization of UN conferences to the detriment of popular participation (246). Nonetheless, they imagine that "[t]he WCAR may also mark a growing trend toward the formation of alternative transnational counterpublics with their own constituencies, actors, agendas, and 'logics.'" (246). It is within this context that I would like to conclude this chapter by reflecting upon the relevance of black feminist intersectional analysis to address neoliberal crisis in the context of women and development issues.

Although black (proto-)feminist intersectional analysis can be traced back to the nineteenth century, it was revitalised at crucial periods throughout the twentieth century.[55] In the U.S., black feminist lawyer and activist Kimberlé

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[55] For a range of examples that provide context for this point see Brown, "What Has Happened Here": The Politics of Difference in Women's History and Feminist Politics"; Taylor, "Making Waves: The Theory and Practice of Black Feminism" and "'Negro Women Are Great Thinkers as Well as Doers': Amy Jacques-Garvey and Community Feminism, 1924-1927"; for a specific discussion of the connections between nineteenth and twentieth century black feminist thought in the U.S., see Guy-Sheftall's introduction to *Words of Fire: An Anthology of African-American Feminist Thought*. Several primary documents are included in the anthology to portray

Crenshaw theorizes "representational intersectionality" in the context of "antirape and antiracist agendas" (1282). Her intervention seeks to address ways in which "the reproduction of racial and gender hierarchy in the United States" are re-scribed in law and "in the popular culture's construction of images of women of color" (1282-1283). She emphasizes the significance of intersectionality to address the often obscured conditions of living for women of colour:

> The concept of political intersectionality highlights the fact that women of color are situated within at least two subordinated groups that frequently pursue conflicting political agendas. The need to split one's political energies between two sometimes opposing groups is a dimension of intersectional disempowerment that men of color and white women seldom confront. Indeed, their specific raced *and* gendered experiences, although intersectional, often define as well as confine the interests of the entire group. (1251-1252)

While the intersectional view of black women outlined by Crenshaw may destabilize unitary categories of identity, it can also situate black women within an intersectional predicament that exacerbates their burdens of responsibility and thus confuses their resistance with their agency in the neoliberal era. In this sense,

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the tradition of intersectional analysis. For global perspectives of black feminist intersectional analysis, see the collection *Black Women Speak Out on Identity, Race and Development* and Alexander and Mohanty, *Feminist Genealogies, Colonialist Legacies, Democratic Futures.* See Sandoval, "U.S. Third World Feminism: The Theory and Method of Oppositional Consciousness in the Postmodern World" for a critique of hegemonic feminisms and an analysis of U.S. Third World feminist theory and practice. Cohen, Griffin and Joy James each cite the Combahee River Collective as exemplary of a radical black feminist tradition focusing on interlocking oppressions. Drawing on Benita Roth, Margo Natalie Crawford suggests that "1960s and 1970s black feminists often insisted that once black women were liberated, everyone would be liberated.[...] This legacy of intersectional feminist theory—of analyzing and organizing against interlocking oppressions— would come to have a profound impact on feminist theory as a whole'" (186-187).

I concur with Nash's view that "[i]n its emphasis on black women's experiences of subjectivity and oppression, intersectional theory has obscured the question of *whether* all identities are intersectional or whether only multiply marginalized subjects have an intersectional identity" (9). This insight helps us to consider ways in which the theoretical dominance of black feminist analysis, in particular areas of research focused on marginalized identities, may re-inscribe classificatory hierarchies among those subaltern constituents living under the neoliberal condition.[56] Yet, we must also keep in mind ways in which neoliberal states racialize and feminize disposable labour but produce post-racial, post-feminist, and post-colonial social imaginaries through the selective rehearsal of liberal human rights and formal independence discourses.

Kalpana Wilson's analysis of race, gender, and neoliberal development is crucial for those of us who participate in post-colonial, gender, and race studies because it raises the difficult question of our complicity in the reproduction of celebratory images of women's resistance as resilience and how this can be transformed into gendered agency discourses according to the logic of neoliberalism. Wilson helps us understand that feminist critiques may be turned against themselves through a neoliberal optic that supports a positive representational regime of women in the context of development. While gendered notions of entrepreneurial agency and efficiency are emphasized in a neoliberal

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[56] Nash is critical of Crenshaw's view of the analytic value of intersectional analysis insofar as it "'denote[s]," in her estimation, "'the various ways in which race and gender interact to shape the multiple dimensions of Black women's ... experiences'" (9). Nash's contention that "intersectionality recycles black feminism without demonstrating what new tools it brings to black feminism to help it fashion a more complex theory of identity" (9) is, in this sense, too hasty a critique, for Crenshaw proposes to address not only the "strategic silences of antiracism and feminism" (1254), but to consider internal conflicts and struggles within conventional identity politics (1298-1299).

development discourse, Wilson argues that "[w]hat is rarely acknowledged [...] is

that these well documented gender disparities in the use of income and resources

stem from specific patriarchal structures, institutions and ideologies, notably the

gendered divisions of labour and responsibility, and the various constructions of

'good' mothers/daughters/daughter-in-law as those who 'make sacrifices' for their

families" (318). She notes the irony that "it is often precisely those gendered

inequalities which make women 'more efficient' neoliberal subjects" (318). With

respect to the NGO imaginary of women's resistance in civil society, she provides

the following assessment of the positive imaging of "'Southern Women'" initiative

in the 1989 "Practical Guidelines adopted by the General Assembly of European

NGOs in its Code of Conduct on Images and Messages Relating to the Third

World": "[a]s we have seen, contemporary 'positive' visual representations of

women in the South produced by development institutions are rooted in a notion

of 'agency' consistent with—and necessary for—neoliberal capitalism. These

'new' constructions contribute to, rather than subvert, racialised regimes of

representation" (328).

     To bridge a seeming contextual gap between the criticism of black

feminist intersectional analysis and neoliberal entrepreneurial agency, I find it

relevant to address the social relevance of matrifocal "mothering" as a tradition

emerging from West Africa but upheld by several communities within the African

Diaspora (Wilenz xxiv). As "cultural transmission," this tradition involves

teaching and storytelling, the upholding of oral culture and communal values, and

it "includes not merely the biological mother but co-mothers, grandmothers,

aunts, older sisters, community women" (xxiv). In an African-American context,

mother figures have been integral to "the socialization of children as well as the

passing on of heritage to the community" (xxxi). Broadly, these mothering

practices reinforce the significance of networks of social responsibility over the

privatized intimacy of strictly biological relationships.

Merle Hodge explains that, in the Caribbean context, "a family has meant

a network of people, not just two parents and their children," although she does

note the increasing tendency to favour "the isolated nuclear family" ("We Kind of

Family" 473). The capitalist underpinnings of the nuclear family can be

contrasted with the more socialist features of this African-inspired network given

that, in Hodge's definition, "a family network is an organization of people that

provides for its member's material needs (food, clothing and shelter), and their

emotional needs (approval, acceptance, solidarity and warmth), and socializes the

young" (476). Sexual union, land ownership, and household responsibility can be

alternatively configured to adapt to changing circumstances (474-477) whereas, in

the standard Western narrative, legally-contracted, heterosexual coupling and

upward mobility is the privileged status quo. Much can be learned from the

resourceful, grassroots organization of supportive networks and communities.

For example, Hodge suggests the significance of Caribbean *macommeres* who, as

"women friends" (478), share a "revolving-savings scheme" (485), "give each

other emotional support, and help each other with child care" (474). For

"hundreds of Caribbean women traders who move vegetables and other

merchandise up and down the region," the security of "networks of family and

friends to ensure that their children receive uninterrupted care while they travel to carry out their work" is necessary (478).

It is crucial, however, to resist romanticizing or naturalizing these notable traditions of black women's community-building, particularly given that "[t]here was never a time in Caribbean society when women did not go to work" (Hodge 474).[57] In some respects, flexible family networks, initially emerging from a West African cultural tradition, can also be read as part of a basic "New World" strategy of surviving exploitative living conditions. Furthermore, the problematic implications of valorizing black and Caribbean women's selfless contributions to community-building cannot be underestimated given the neoliberal dismantling of public services and programs. Poverty is increasingly feminized as women carry the burden of social welfare once provided by the state (Ford-Smith; Byron and Thorburn; Barriteau; Sparr). Caribbean "[f]eminist activist groups and researchers in the region have extensively documented the structural insecurity for many women that results from poverty, underdevelopment, and the gendered divisions of labour" (Byron and Thorburn 217).[58] We should thus be deterred from celebrating female sacrifice as a residually "African" cultural practice when it reinforces racialized gender inequality by imposing upon women total responsibility for the community. Given these careful assessments, it remains problematic to recuperate matrifocal configurations of community-building, for

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[57]Hodge refers to histories of New World slavery and Indian indentured servitude in relation to contemporary work.

[58] While a relatively "significant proportion of educated professional women" exists in the Caribbean, the formation of structural adjustment programmes and global re-divisions of cheap and gendered labour, during the 1980s and 1990s, reinforced the "economic insecurity" of all women (Byron and Thorburn 217).

even while it seems a socialist enterprise worthy of recovery it is also easily assimilated as a survival practice for a neoliberal age. Yet, it is difficult to discount Patricia Hill Collins' conception of "community other mothers and political activism" insofar as it involves "a more generalized ethic of caring and personal responsibility among African-American women" (205). This "ethics of caring" extends beyond the U.S. in Peggy Antrobus' portrayal of "women in the Caribbean" as facing "the quadruple burden of gender, race, class and imperialism" ("Women in the Caribbean" 53). She notes that "[i]n a global economic system where size becomes a factor for competitiveness, the island-states of the Caribbean are at a distinct disadvantage. Our survival cannot therefore depend on 'being competitive'" (59). It is in this context that she argues for the assertion of "the values of our identity as a community of Black women" and the forging of "links between Black communities, including those in the diaspora" (59).

In the effort to account for distinctions between black women's experience in the Caribbean and the United States, Carol Boyce Davies advances a theory and practice of "critical relationality." In her view, "[t]he need for complicating black feminisms assures an interruption of monolithic assumptions of any discourse, such as specific definition, of what feminism or what Black feminism, or Third World feminism itself can be" (*Black Women* 56). In practice, "[t]his kind of critical relationality asserts the specificity of the other, but works together and from each in a generalized purpose of resistance to domination" (56). Importantly, she argues that "critical relationality is not interruptive or a series of

interruptions (as in Marxism/feminism or race/class or gender/ethnicity

formulations), nor does it embrace the hierarchy embedded in subalternization.

Rather, it argues for the synchronic, multiply articulate discourses, which operate

braid-like or web-like as a series of strands are woven" (56). While critical

theories can expand the imaginative possibilities for social solidarity, it is also

important to recognize practical conflicts and contexts for struggle.

In an effort to conceptualize transnational dimensions of feminist

intersectionality, Chela Sandoval advocates for U.S. Third World Feminism.

While she offers a systematic critique of "hegemonic feminisms" emerging from

Euro-American "'equal rights,' 'revolutionary,' 'supremacist,' and 'separatist'"

formations (12), she privileges the "differential consciousness" of U.S. Third

World Feminism as the "grounds for alliance with other decolonizing movements

for emancipation" (4). She contends, "[h]egemonic feminism appears incapable of

making the connections between its own expressions of resistance and opposition

and the expressions of consciousness in opposition enacted amongst other racial,

ethnic, cultural, or gender liberation movements" (11). With this assumption in

mind, "U.S. feminists of color," as she argues, have tended not to subscribe to the

ideological or strategic purity of hegemonic forms and instead remained mobile

(13-14). In this context, U.S. Third World Feminism is associated with guerilla

tactics of insurgency to portray "the activity of weaving 'between and among'

oppositional ideologies" in the conscious effort "to disclose the distinctions

among them" (14). This practice, in her view, allows for a "processual

topography" and the creation of "a *tactical subjectivity* with the capacity to

recenter depending upon the kinds of oppression to be confronted" (14). This feminist approach becomes part of the survival skills that women of colour adopt.[59] Significant to the conception of U.S. Third World Feminism is the emphasis placed on tactics rather than on strategies, for the former "permits the practitioner to choose tactical positions, that is, to self-consciously break and reform ties to ideology, activities which are imperative for the psychological and political practices that permit the achievement of coalition across differences" (15). Thus, Sandoval envisions the "praxis" of U.S. Third World feminism to embrace intersectional thinking through the "'philosophical reordering' referred to by [Barbara] Christian [which] is imaginable only through a new theory and method of oppositional consciousness"(16). This feminist praxis is regarded as necessary to the initiation of "a new paradigm for understanding oppositional activity in general" (16).

Sandoval's characterization of U.S. Third World Feminism represents a potentially valuable contribution to discussions concerning the formation of an anti-neoliberal imaginary; however, I find it also important to note that her depiction reinforces a redemptive and somewhat totalizing depiction of feminist potentiality premised on the imagined intersection between U.S. women of color and Third World women. In this context, it is important to consider Mallika Dutt's argument that "U.S. women of all races [have not only] continuously *underestimated* the vigor of feminisms throughout the world, but they have also aligned their work with Western economic assumptions and policy agendas that

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[59] Sandoval cites Cherrie Moraga who "defines U.S. third world feminist 'guerilla warfare' as a way of life: 'Our strategy is how we cope.'" (15). She also references Audre Lorde's work to conceptualize feminist difference in relation to political creativity.

other world feminisms are struggling against" (Athey 8- 9). Furthermore, the

politics adopted by women of colour, in the U.S. and elsewhere, are

heterogeneous and it would be idealistic to portray U.S. Third Feminism as

though there were consensus regarding its theory as it is put into practice. In a

related context, I would also argue that there is debate regarding the extent to

which post-colonial literatures written by women critically engage with anti-

imperial and economic dimensions of development in the neoliberal age. Given

this lack of consensus, it is useful to reflect upon the relation between the

neoliberal and Humanities-based imaginings of development and resistance.

Vincent Tucker argues that development studies has neglected the study of

cultural imperialism by focusing on politics and economics; in essence, he argues

for the deconstruction of development studies as ideology and mythology and for

the examination of alternative forms of modernity and development. In Tucker's

estimation, development

> is part of an imperial process whereby other peoples are appropriated and
>
> turned into objects. It is an essential part of the process whereby the
>
> 'developed' countries manage,control and even create the Third World
>
> economically, politically, sociologically and culturally. It is a process
>
> whereby the lives of some peoples, their plans, their hopes, their
>
> imaginations, are shaped by others who frequently share neither their
>
> lifestyles, nor their hopes nor their values. The real nature of this process
>
> is disguised by a discourse that portrays development as a necessary and
>
> desirable process, as human destiny itself. The economic, social and

political transformations of the Third World are inseparable from the

production and reproduction of meanings, symbols and knowledge, that is,

cultural reproduction. (1-2)

Tucker's critical perspective may be aligned with that of Joseph Slaughter who

studies "the world novel" in relation to human rights discourses. He finds that

UN-based declarations tend to signify the move towards a fuller articulation of the

relation between development, modernization, and rights recognition, a move

which began in the 1960s and 1970s but which seems especially evident by the

1980s. In his view, the Declaration of the Right to Development is "a tropological

vehicle of incorporation whose tenor is legal personality (both for persons within

states and for peoples at the international level). In other words, enactment of the

right to self-determination conveys international personality, and its figurative

work traces the developmental trajectory of the human personality toward its

expression in international citizen-subjectivity" (221). He claims that "self-

determination becomes a facet of and a factor in the human rights plot of human

personality development as both a precondition and a consummation of

development" (221). If rights discourse is so firmly entrenched within an

institutionalized liberal framework that the neoliberal project has capitalized on

and modified, then how is resistance to be re-imagined?

In Selwyn Cudjoe's formulation, Caribbean resistance is political, cultural,

and socioeconomic, as well as passive or active;[60] nonetheless, he argues that "the

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[60] Caribbean "[p]olitical resistance has usually been defined as active or passive, with active resistance involving open revolts and rebellions and with passive resistance including suicide, voluntary abortion, poisoning masters and sabotaging crops" (Cudjoe *Resistance* 19). "*Cultural resistance* […] emanates from the beliefs, mores, or indigenous ways of life and is

goals are always the same: 'to oppose the concept of servile labor,' and to reject 'compulsory Christianization [and] the imposition of European customs and values'" (*Resistance* 19-20). The reiteration of "resistance," as the reaction by the oppressed against a dominant power, elides attention to problems between overlooked constituencies and, furthermore, it threatens to reinforce the hegemonic status of a cosmopolitan centre.[61] As Susan Koshy argues, "the preoccupation with European colonial hegemony has led to a striking neglect of alternative cartographies of exchange and contact, or of non-European comparative frameworks for understanding inequality and social conflict, especially in the present" (110). As a result, she contends that we have become ill-equipped to provide a "sustained comparative analysis of the differential failures and successes of decolonization, the contemporary linkages between various sectors of the former Third World […], or of the complex politics of issues like human rights, trade regulations, biotechnology, intellectual property rights, consumerism, and human trafficking" (110).

Retrospectively, Cudjoe's dichotomy represents what Koshy regards as the "conceptual limitations" of "ethnic, postcolonial, and area studies" (109), but, in

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expressed in religion or the arts" while "*socioeconomic resistance*" involves "withholding labor" and other acts of passive resistance (19). "*[P]olitical resistance*," as active, "emanates from an ideological framework in which the goal of the enslaved people is to control their destiny—be it full independence or some other form of government—and may be expressed in revolts, rebellions or revolutions" (19). Cudjoe's 1980 study focuses on Caribbean men. See his 1990 edited collection on Caribbean women's literary traditions.

[61] See Lionnet and Mih or Koshy's theory of "minor transnationalism" for a study of relations between minorities; see Puri or Sheller for critiques of the homogenizing effects of creole discourses; see Gikandi, Brennan or Kaplan for critiques of post-colonial cosmopolitanism; see Donnell or Baksh-Sodeen for critiques of the Afrocentric focus of Caribbean studies; see Boyce Davies for a critique of hyphenated identities—especially African-American—that elide the Caribbean and other ancestries/locales by reinforcing the dominance of Africa and America. The critical contexts and theories vary in orientation but, collectively, provide incentive to continue the project of dismantling centre-periphery dichotomies by investigating nuanced forms of power and struggle.

my view, globalization theory is also limited when it underestimates the persistent

power of nation-states and nation-state alliances as forged through global cultural,

economic, and military regimes. The consolidation of national identity and racial

affiliation continues to facilitate local and transnational imbalances of power,

although Susan Koshy rightly asserts that "geopolitical realignments, global

capital movements, and population transfers are creating new local and

transnational communities" (110). While her call for attention to how "emergent

formations" pose "opposition to global capitalism" (110) is pertinent, I maintain

that the global cultural imagery of black feminist solidarity must be interrogated

for how it enables neoliberal ideologies to mask contemporary racisms through

the perpetuation of post-racial and post-cultural imaginaries, or for how they

commoditize and depoliticize racial affiliations by flattening the history of their

relations to capitalize on fleeting moments of racial sentimentality.[62] I concur

with Paul Gilroy's recent call to "understand the weak and fading patterns of

resistance or struggle that are being articulated in that market, that moral

economy" that arises from the increasingly "individual acts of symbolic redress

… [for] the chronic injuries of racialised hierarchy" (*Darker* 21). One of the

many concerning implications, arising from the processes noted above, is the

assumption that black resistance should be unconditionally celebrated in studies

of literary and cultural production. As Gilroy notes, "it is an unsubversive will to

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[62] Barack Obama's election to U.S. presidency is an instance in which various culture industries were able to capitalize on sentimental views of racial *and* inter-racial solidarity. The subsequent expressions of distrust regarding Obama's birthplace and citizenship, political and religious affiliation, and academic credentials are, in my estimation, disturbing but important indicators of the necessity to popularize critical race studies for the wide-spread promotion of anti-racist education. See Tim Wise for elaboration on these issues (2010).

triumph in the game of consumerism and thereby to make consumer citizenship and brand identities eclipse the merely political forms of belonging promoted by government institutions" (21). I find that as "consumer citizenship" pervades the North American university, it is increasingly necessary to interrogate the processes by which research becomes marketable and profitable. As literary and cultural critics compete for survival within the corporate university, they are required to articulate their relevance in ways that may compromise the radical possibilities for new directions in research. A second concern is the assumption that black populations—regardless of economic income or political orientation— implicitly share similar views about the mixed histories of racialized struggle. This assumption can be promoted by criticism that celebrates representations of resistance and solidarity as a literary tradition without exploring the critical value of depicting difference and dissent. The illumination of political difference and social dissent within a racialized constituency can be crucial to mark distinctions between social groups that support a neoliberal state apparatus and those who do not.

<div align="center">***</div>

To conclude this chapter, I briefly return to the notion that spectres of crisis and failure haunt both neoliberal and anti-neoliberal narratives to implicate the disciplinary orientations of literary criticism that can limit our potential imaginative engagements with the world-building that occurs through literary production. More than ten years ago, Amitava Kumar explicitly argued for the literary formation of "World Bank Literature" to replace postcolonial literature

which he found glossed over the exploitative conditions of finance capitalism.[63]
He remarks:

> Although the Western press in the recent past has been celebrating post-
> colonial fiction, especially from places like India, I have been hard-
> pressed to find amongst these writings much about the new global
> realities. Searing critiques of the semi-feudal, semi-capitalist existence in
> rural India, yes; shallow, glitzy portrayals of city life in modern India,
> well, lots of that. But, to date, I have only read one Hindi short story that
> could be described as a self-conscious critique of life under the World
> Bank-I.M.F. dictates of the past decade. Where is the literature of the New
> Economic Policy? (199)

While Kumar engages with an Indian post-colonial literary tradition, I find it significant to point out that in his third footnote he references Arif Dirlik and Terry Eagleton as critics who find "that postcolonial writing does not deal with economic issues" (203). He follows to acknowledge Ania Loomba's identification of female writers who engage with these issues albeit in less explicit ways. She argues for a clarification of critique premised on a distinction between "'postcolonial thought' or 'postcolonial theory'" (203). Kumar clarifies that, for his analysis, "postcolonial studies, as practiced in lit. crit. establishments, have been primarily literary (rather than broadly cultural, and certainly economic) in their focus and practice" (fn. 3: 203).[64] His remark does not engage with Loomba's

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[63] I cite from his 1999 article which precedes his edited collection of essays entitled *World Bank Literature* (2003).

[64] In another context, Ilan Kapoor addresses the limitations of both development and literary studies by suggesting the former is too economically deterministic in orientation while the

insight that what he calls a World Bank literature may in fact already exist in certain forms of women's writing. If Kumar is "hard-pressed to find" what he is looking for, then one must ask where and how is he looking?

Kumar's position is usefully set alongside Stephanie Athey's view that "[t]he speech and writing of women of color in particular has received the least attention in studies of resistance literatures. And yet, in many regional and historical contexts, women of color have played a central role in sustaining the culture of resistance, just as they have been central to effective, organized resistance" (6). We can see Athey's point by examining the so-called "emergence" of Caribbean women's writing. By the late 1980s, Caribbean women writers finally began to receive international scholarly attention. The First Conference of Caribbean Women Writers was held by the Black Studies Department at Wellesley College, a liberal arts college for women located in Wellesley, Massachusetts, in 1988. Over fifty women writers and their critics participated.[65]

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later focuses too much on cultural perspectives. In his analysis, both areas of study would benefit from interaction.

[65] Both Jamaica Kincaid and Michelle Cliff were involved. It is significant that most writers in attendance came from the English-speaking Caribbean given the burgeoning issue of language barrier that continues to limit the inclusiveness of regionally-focused conferences where all of the major language groups should be represented. Selwyn R. Cudjoe signals the historical relevance of the event accordingly: "This conference was the founding event of Caribbean women's writing, for though works have been written by Caribbean women writers, these writers have never come together as a group to talk about their writings and to articulate concerns that generated their literary production. This conference brought together writers from Trinidad, Grenada, Jamaica, Belize, Toronto, Calgary, London, New York, Paris, Vermont, and California; critics from West Germany, Puerto Rico, California, Leeds, Washington, Barbados, and Guyana" (1990:5). Of his edited essay collection of works that emerged from the event he explains, "This volume records their testimonies as they give voice to their experiences and join in the attempt of women throughout the world, particularly in the African diaspora, to define their being without the interference of any other agents. This conference allowed these women to talk with and about themselves and to explore areas of mutual concern" (5). The focus on the African dimension of Caribbean women's writing is evident as is the emphasis on first gatherings and the desire to promote a sense of mutuality among women. In the years following this event, questions of difference and conflict would be addressed. See Cudjoe's edited collection *Caribbean Women Writers: Essays from the First International Conference* and the archival film *Caribbean Women*

Much has been written, in subsequent years, to suggest the relevance of reading

for gendered female perspectives in Caribbean history and literature.[66] Given the

relative dominance in historical focus on the Afro-Caribbean dimension of

women's literature in the region, it has become increasingly necessary to explore

difference, diversity, and conflict within a seemingly Caribbean literary and

political imagination. Pertinent to such an exploration is the clarification of

differences of political vision and the ongoing obstacles to alliance formation

among diverse constituencies, for this groundwork is necessary to better defend

widespread, socioeconomic justice and the advance of more effective, anti-racist,

anti-neoliberal platforms.

While literary criticism, then, can shape our sense of when Caribbean

women's writing reached critical mass and what we recognize as Caribbean

women's writing, it is also the case that, as I will examine in the following three

chapters, literary criticism can impose reading practices, promote questionable

ideological agendas, and even limit our sense of narrative complexity. Unlike

Amitava Kumar's experience with Indian literature, however, I find several

critical portrayals of the neoliberal condition and subsequent considerations of its

impact on resistance movements. While there are other Caribbean women writers

who engage specifically with neoliberal conditions, I focus my analysis on Paule

Marshall, Jamaica Kincaid, and Michelle Cliff to illuminate a U.S.-Caribbean

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Writers (Banyan), written and produced by Cudjoe and Christopher Laird for Wellesley College.

[66] Scholarly methodologies range to address questions of gender in Caribbean literature. Sometimes exclusive attention has been given to feminist or masculinist traditions based on the gender of the author, for example, while other work has suggested links between male and female writers, despite gender difference. Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, research interventions were made, in both the U.S. and the Caribbean, to address significant absences of scholarship focused on African American and Caribbean women's writing.

nexus for the critical relational conceptualization of how bio-political responsibility and disposability can constrain local and transnational geo-economic social commitments while perpetuating a dominant, English language, global black culture industry. The objective for me is not simply to celebrate these writers or their texts, but to explore, in detail, the contradictions, crises, and failures that haunt their works even as they persist in the imaginative endeavour to critique the neoliberal narrative of history.

Black women have become paradoxically archetypal figures of both exploitation and resistance. Although Cheryl A. Wall rightly contends that cultural and historical "complexities mitigate against the formation of a unitary [African-American] identity" (6), I argue that a generalized depiction of *black women* living in the U.S. too often stands in for a range of disenfranchised populations. One way to account for this phenomenon is to consider the scope of claims made on behalf Black feminist criticism. Although black cultural studies contains Afrocentric and black bias that can influence black feminist criticism, the latter's critical tradition simultaneously aspires to be anti-foundational yet widely applicable to people facing oppression. I draw upon Black feminist critical methods to analyze interlocking oppressions in literary and cultural representation, but I also consider implications for the centralization of black women—black Caribbean women with U.S. affiliations in particular—to racialized feminist imaginings of resistance and solidarity. This approach enables me to explore under-examined distinctions between authors in this study as well as to trouble feminist tendencies to treat black women as ideal spokespeople,

theorizers, and organizers of resistance and solidarity. I ask how this situation

may lend itself to the production of dominant subaltern narratives, but strive to

also consider how the authors portray neoliberal crisis to create an opening for

more creative experimentation in the development of anti-neoliberal imaginaries.

Chapter Two

"'All o' we is one'"?
Neoliberal Mediums for Solidarity and Resistance
in Paule Marshall's *The Chosen Place, the Timeless People* and *Daughters*

> [O]ne of the questions I'm always putting to myself is, how do I as a woman—a black woman—and a writer continue to function and to grow in a society that almost daily assaults my sense of self?
>> Paule Marshall, "An Interview with Paule Marshall," (qtd. in Dance 99).

> The Caribbean woman—or some carefully chosen examples of Caribbean womanhood—can bask in the warm glow of the very centrality of her marginality. She is of great interest to post-colonial scholarship because she is marginal. She can be brought in for analysis and then (hopefully) put back.
>> Lizabeth Paravisini-Gebert, "Women Against the Grain," (161-162).

How can we read black female protagonists as resisting and assisting a late twentieth century neoliberal project? How can a critical imagination of the neoliberal living conditions of black women help to illuminate problems of solidarity in narratives of racialized, socioeconomic struggle? In this chapter, I explore these questions by focusing on black female protagonists in two of Paule Marshall's novels which depict neoliberal phases in U.S.-Caribbean trade, labour, and development. In *The Chosen Place, the Timeless People* (1969) and *Daughters* (1991), Marshall's black female protagonists are transnational figures who cultivate multiple affiliations with people of the Caribbean and the U.S. They are central to black community-building as they sustain grassroots commitments but also facilitate hemispheric networks for resisting U.S. neoliberalism. Yet, Marshall's black female protagonists are implicated in patriarchal political electoral processes and neoliberal international development initiatives colluding

to promote tourism and profitable private foreign investment. Such scenarios

exacerbate conditions of disenfranchisement for black working poor communities

in the U.S. and the Caribbean, but also rely upon black women to serve as

transnational informants and mediators to facilitate neoliberal project

development. The call for solidarity and alliance by the disenfranchised is evident

in the phrase "all o' we is one."[67] While this phrase is invoked in both of

Marshall's novels, it becomes clear that, practically speaking, solidarity is

complicated by uneven processes of racialization and feminization as they occur

within and across specific geographies. I conceptualize the geographies portrayed

as neoliberal mediums engendering conditions for the political disorientation of

social solidarities. For the black female protagonists of Marshall's novels,

collective, racialized solidarity is constrained because selective processes of

individuation trickle down from the neoliberal development scheme into the

social practices of organizing for resistance. While Marshall's portrayals are

ultimately intended to revalue the historical labour of resistant black women, they

should cause us to review how agency is configured in relation to an emerging

neoliberal bio-political condition, whereby black feminized labour value is

calculated by degrees of responsibility and disposability, at the same time that

patriarchal organizational cultures of racialized resistance capitalize upon, but

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[67] Coser links Marshall's use of the phrase to Mighty Sparrow's 1958 song "We all is one" (41). The chorus of this Trinidadian calypso song links Caribbean people on a regional and hemispheric basis despite their seeming differences and flaws: "Whether you're a damn Trinidadian / *We all is one* / If they say you're a smart Barbadian / We all is one / Get away from me you greedy Grenadian / We all is one / I don't care if you're a bad Jamaican / We all is one / Let us join together and love one another / We all is one / If you born New York and your parents West Indian / We all is one" (qtd. in Rohlehr 273). Gordon Rohlehr explains that this song was one of several created to celebrate the 1958 West Indian Federation "inaugurated at the beginning of the eight-week Carnival season" (272).

seldom credit, black women.

In her consideration of black Caribbean women's historical marginalization, Myriam J.A. Chancy argues that "[r]eclamation can *only* occur effectively when we take stock of the ways in which we, as Black women, have been able to lay claim to a language of our own making and place ourselves at the center of that discourse in ways that have forced our excluders to take notice" (7; my emphasis). Although Chancy insists that reclamation "is not invoked in the form of nostalgia for the home country but in the form of a centering in the self, in the Black female body recovered through women's language, relationships to one another, and through women's writing and words" (5), it seems that the process necessitates authenticating acts to establish recognition for "*the* Black female body" (my emphasis). Asking the question, "[h]ow do we reclaim ourselves, our home islands, without a firm presence in the very circles that keep us perpetually on their peripheries, looking in" (7), Chancy imagines black women's liberation as a collective reaction against an external oppressor. She subscribes to the notion that "[w]holeness can only be achieved by rediscovering the ways in which Black women have been able to overcome adversity transhistorically" (22), finding "true" Carol Boyce Davies' view that "'if we take any feminist issue and run it up the scale to its most radical possibility, its most clarifying illustration will be the experience of Black women'" (Davies qtd. in Chancy 8). In effect, a particular, racialized woman is imagined as quintessentially oppressed *and* resistant, the reconstituted content that should comprise an achieved form of "wholeness."

What is to be imagined of women who do not achieve, or even aspire

towards, this paradoxically idealized significance? What is to be imagined of women who are alienated from or discredited by their communities and thus fail to establish popular consensual grounds for recognition? What are the conditions and implications of failed solidarity? Drawing upon reconstructed histories of slave and maroon revolt, Paule Marshall seeks to empower an image of black women by endowing black female protagonists with a redemptive legacy of racialized resistance that is made to seem relevant to modern black struggles; in this context, the fetishization of black women occurs through the production of a dominant subaltern historical narrative. The notion of *solidarity* is too infrequently interrogated by Marshall's literary critics whose more celebratory readings promote black American and Caribbean women as quintessential figures of resistance. I intervene in that scholarly tendency to examine how Marshall's black female protagonists are situated in relation to social and institutional conflicts that jeopardize resistance, agency, and solidarity in the representational context of the neoliberal turn. Providing the most scathing critiques of their societies, Marshall's black female protagonists cannot, in my view, affirm social solidarity with their individual acts of resistance because they are integrated into the transnational interactions of competing stakeholders invested in black community development. As Chancy argues, "[i]t remains for Black women to make the evidence of our resistance visible, but such efforts are complicated by the sexism and racism with which we are faced both in our communities and in white, mainstream feminist communities" (17). Of course, that which constitutes the "evidence" of resistance is often manipulated by dominant actors in history.

Furthermore, and perhaps more importantly, we should consider how circulating conceptions of resistance are bound up in, or can be harnessed by, neoliberal ideology and its material workings.

From the perspective of literary criticism, I find it useful to adopt an anti-redemptive reading of Marshall's black female protagonists because it aids in a deconstructive analysis of the representation of black social solidarities oriented towards resistance to Americanized neoliberal development agendas. When literary critics seek out signs of resistance to celebrate representations of racialized class struggle, they may overlook signs of conflict among those characters that, upon closer examination, vary in access to community power, participation and resources. It is valuable to examine internal difference and dissent as it builds, destroys, agitates, or propels solidarities; furthermore, it is necessary to consider how and why difference and dissent is suppressed in the organization of collective resistance for it would be a mistake to assume that achieved consensus is always a precondition for solidarity and resistance. In the context of literature, we can attend to ways in which the social reproduction of exploitation and exclusion is imagined to occur inside cultures of resistance. Thus, part of the challenge of reading Marshall's novels is to simultaneously consider her deployment of critique and aspiration in narratives of black community-building in a neoliberal age. As I suggested in the introduction to this dissertation, there are risks involved in the production of a debilitating critique of black feminist resistance or failure, yet there are also risks associated with the promotion of black feminized ideals. With these issues in mind, I explore

situations in two of Marshall's novels whereby the organization, orientation, and scale of resistance is questioned by black female protagonists. Attending to these features enables me to consider how she may be imaginatively addressing the social construction of solidarities in a neoliberal age as well as questions concerning the social aftermath of solidarity constructed on the basis of exclusion.

Although the neoliberal turn has been thought to begin in the 1970s, Marshall demonstrates early insight into the effects of an emerging neoliberal world order on black communities of the Caribbean and the U.S. Of *The Chosen Place, the Timeless People*, published in 1969, Arlene Keizer states, "Marshall is indeed theorizing late capitalism and the cultural forms and subjectivities to which it gives rise" (78). The novel "represents a history of capitalism from its mercantile phase (financed largely through the profits generated in the slave trade and through plantation labor) to its late phase" (78).[68] Characters impacted by forms of slave and free trade, forced migration and international development, "are most beaten down and used up by the multinational military-industrial-agricultural-educational complex" (84). Marshall's attention to the neoliberal effects of U.S.-funded research and development projects for racialized communities in the U.S. and the Caribbean is what makes this *Daughters* a particularly effective companion to *The Chosen Place, the Timeless People* for analysis. My comparison of these two novels is atypical because scholarly conversations have tended to exempt *Daughters* from Marshall's "progressive

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[68] Keizer's chapter is persuasive in its analysis of Marshall and revision of Frederic Jameson's problematic characterization of "Third World Novels as National Allegory"; however, I will go on to suggest how I depart from her celebratory reading of Marshall's representation of "Bournehills resistance."

thematic vision" of "*spiritual wholeness, reintegration, reclamation* and

spirituality" (Pettis 4) envisioned in the trilogy *Brown Girl, Brown Stones, The*

Chosen Place, the Timeless People, and *Praisesong for a Widow*.[69] As a follow-

up to the trilogy, *Daughters* is regarded, by Joyce Pettis, as confirming "the

spiritual journey" by bringing closure through "recovery" (1, 2). I avoid reading

for redemption in Marshall's novels to assess unsettled solidarities on a

hemispheric and transnational scale.

     In *The Chosen Place, the Timeless People* (1969) and *Daughters* (1991),

black Caribbean and black American women are treated as exploitable resources

in profit-oriented research and development initiatives in the Caribbean and the

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[69] Pettis' critical approach to these novels follows the basic thematic vision which Marshall identifies when discussing them as a trilogy in interviews. According to *The Oxford Companion to Women's Writing in the United States*, "Marshall's vision, that black people of African descent undergo self-redefinition through reclaiming their cultural integrity as a means of neutralizing the psychological trauma of racial oppression, characterizes her first three novels. *Brown Girl, Brownstones* (1959), *The Chosen Place, The Timeless People* (1969), and *Praisesong for the Widow* (1983), in fact, are considered a trilogy by the author because of their expression of her vision. *Daughters* (1991) shares a thematic relationship with the earlier novels; *Reena and Other Stories* (1983) sustains several ideas of the trilogy. *Soul Clap Hands and Sing* (1961), a collection of four novellas in which spiritually moribund men seek revitalization through women, has its own internal unity" (Davidson and Wagner-Martin 2012). Other literary critics assume approaches similar to Pettis. For example, Eric J. Sundquist refers to *The Chosen Place, the Timeless People* as "the second part of a trilogy begun with *Brown Girl, Brownstones* (1959), whose American protagonist travels to the Caribbean to discover her parents' birthplace as the source of her identity" (269). The theme of the trilogy, as Sundquist points out, is premised on Marshall's visions of the triangulation of the African Diaspora (269). His critical move is to explore how *The Chosen Place, the Timeless People* keeps a sense of "archeological time alive with messianic anticipation" (271) to portray an "intersection between African American and American Jewish histories" (270). Sundquist emphasizes themes of survival, commonality, and redemption as they arise from the erotic relationship that unfolds between the black female protagonist Merle and her temporary Jewish American lover Saul. While he argues that "their affair, when it happens, appears as a kind of supercharged coupling of the mid-twentieth-century global folkways of Africans and Jews" (270), I work to challenge the solidarity imagined between them to stress the social exploitation and exclusion of the black female protagonist by her own allies. I assume this critical orientation to highlight features of the neoliberal condition whereby racialized and feminized labour value is premised on inter-implicated calculations of disposability and responsibility. See Eugenia Collier, Silvia Pilar Castro-Borrego, Barbara Frey Waxman, Susan Rogers, among others, for examples of a traditional critical emphasis placed on Marshall's black female protagonists who are read as struggling towards spiritual and political wholeness.

United States. Used as informants and mediators to advance a range of imperialist agenda, Marshall's black female protagonists are represented as oppositional figures of resistance whose critique of the neoliberal conditioning of black communities unsettles assumptions of black solidarity. I read their acts of critique and resistance as labour that is discredited and reified by their social communities. This predicament engenders the neoliberal condition which I theorize as a calculation of black female labour value premised on degrees of responsibility and disposability.

In the epigraph at the beginning of this chapter, Lizabeth Paravisini-Gebert argues that the post-colonial critic may be implicated in what I regard as the reproduction of the neoliberal condition insofar as her work relies on "carefully chosen examples of Caribbean womanhood" (161-162). In this context, black female protagonists become useful and responsible, as objects of a conditional literary analysis, to uphold the particular ideology of the critic. What may be overlooked, in this practice of criticism whereby more contrary dimensions of the black female protagonist are selectively ignored, is the way the critic's reading reinforces the ideologies of the author or even those in circulation within the world of the novel; in this sense, the literary critic may facilitate a cultural reproduction of neoliberal conditions for black female protagonists. In this context, I attempt not to transfer onto black female protagonists a critical obligation to function, in their singularity, as ideal models of black feminist resistance.

While assertions of black collectivity can be complicated by intersectional

variables such as nation, geography, gender, sex, age, or class, Marshall's

portrayals of the potential for solidarity emphasize relational notions of racialized

black Caribbean and black American experience.[70] When in the novel *Daughters*,

the black female protagonist Ursa Bea realizes that a black inner city in the U.S.

looks much like a Third World Caribbean nation, she is "overwhelmed [...] by the

sense of her life being a series of double exposures [...] everything superimposed

on everything else. Inseparable" (332). In this chapter, I pursue this image of

"double exposure" as a figurative sign of the neoliberal medium which gives life

to the neoliberal condition. The neoliberal medium, I argue, represents the uneven

yet patterned geography of a globalizing, neoliberal project whereby destructive

socioeconomic conditions are superimposed upon similarly rendered

constituencies living in the Caribbean and the U.S. These conditions have

gendered implications. At the same time, I trouble the racialized assumption of

solidarity implied in the phrase "all o' we is one" as it is invoked in both novels

and proclaimed by Paule Marshall in an interview when she speaks about her dual

African-American and West Indian ancestry. I argue that while Marshall

implicates a U.S.-led, neoliberal project in the exacerbation of capitalist

exploitation for black constituencies on a hemispheric basis, she does not

persuasively portray, as practical or ideological given, the harmonious generation

of social solidarity for collective resistance to the neoliberal condition. While

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[70] I regard racialization as a contingent process: "African American" often signals a racialized, national identification based on birthplace. Citizenship, residency, or temporary migrant status complicates and multiplies identifications as does ancestral ties to places outside the U.S. Identifications with blackness differentiated by nation, culture, generation, language or accent from *within* the U.S. may be subsumed or alienated by "African-American" as a dominant articulation of blackness."Blackness" as racial recognition varies in relation to place, culture, histories of colonial and racial interaction, perceived skin pigmentation, linguistic and/or vernacular expression.

black female protagonists are central to Marshall's novels, they are also central to a range of ideological and political priorities for black community-building in the neoliberal age. Thus, while a transnational imagination of the neoliberal medium for black constituencies remains critically valuable to Marshall's novels, a more heterogeneous response by black characters to neoliberal conditions seems more evident than Marshall's literary critics tend to suggest. It is crucial to explore both "the creative function of difference" (Lorde "Masters Tools" 111) as well as to acknowledge the existence of "destructive alliances" ("Age, Race, Class, and Sex" 121). If, as Audre Lorde argues, it is necessary to promote "the ability of all women to identify and develop new definitions of power and new patterns of relation across difference" (123), then it may be valuable to attend to the ways in which "[t]he need for unity is often misnamed as a need for homogeneity, and a Black feminist vision mistaken for betrayal of our common interests as a people" (119). That Marshall has been openly critical of feminist movements compels me to explore the dimensions of contestation within her own imaginative work. I will thus explore ways in which she can be read to simultaneously grapple with race and gender relations under the capitalist conditions of exploitation and exclusion in the neoliberal age.

Those of Marshall's characters who are concerned about the future of progressive black community-building confront the remnants and failures of anti-colonial nationalism. However, it is her black female protagonists who ultimately strive to clarify black struggles in relation to "neoliberal globalization." According to Helen Scott,

Neoliberal globalization has economic and geopolitical motivations (strategic positioning vis-à-vis other powers; control over profits from oil refining, mineral extraction, offshore manufacturing, tourism, cheap labor); takes economic, political, and cultural forms; and is ultimately backed by the threat or reality of military force. It thus conforms to the definition of imperialism first developed at the start of the twentieth century and codified by Lenin in his *Imperialism: the Highest Stage of Capitalism*. In this view, colonialism, the conquest and direct control of other people's land, is a particular phase in the history of imperialism, which is now best understood as the globalisation of the capitalist mode of production […]. (2-3)

In Marshall's depictions, post-colonial national sovereignty is compromised by the globalization of neoliberal development via U.S.-Caribbean trade and labour relations. While the nation fails to function as a stable paradigm for popular political organization, Marshall's implicit support for a woman-centered, development initiative has its own limitations as an alternative paradigm.

In Marshall's depictions, the black female protagonist is strategically situated at the site of struggle for the agency and empowerment of impoverished and disenfranchised black communities. These fictional scenarios can be historically contextualized in relation to the expanding research initiatives to centralize women in the disciplinary field of development studies, particularly from the 1970s and into the 1990s. As noted in chapter one, the United Nations followed its 1961 launch of the first Decade of Development with the UN Decade

for Women (1976-1985). Published in 1969, *The Chosen Place, the Timeless People* emerges as a novel at the historical crossroads of a paradigm shift in which the study of the living conditions of women as a significant indicator of Third World poverty and development was increasingly valued in both institutional and popular contexts. The First, Second, and Third World Conferences on Women took place during the twenty-two year period separating the publications of *The Chosen Place* (1969) and *Daughters* (1991).[71] Thus, I argue that Marshall's novels convey women-centered aspirations which parallel-- but also trouble--UN objectives to enhance the agency of women through institution-building designed to promote their equal opportunities in productive sectors of society. In part, complications arise because the socioeconomic and development ideologies evident in these novels can be read along an historical continuum in which paradigms for international relations were shifting at the same time that neoliberal forms of trade, labour, and development were emerging.[72] With these contexts in mind, I address how Marshall's transnational black female protagonists interact with public and private stakeholders who focus on Third World research and development, in various ways, but also exploit the labour value of black women to community development initiatives. I open that

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[71] The Second World Conference took place in Copenhagen in 1980; the Third World Conference was in Nairobi in 1985; and the Fourth World Conference was in Beijing in 1995. In my conclusion, I will discuss critiques of the Beijing conference in the context of the work of the Caribbean Association for Feminist Research and Action.

[72] Factors such as the struggles for independence within former colonies, the rise and dominance of Bretton Woods institutions (the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and the World Trade Organization), the global debt crisis, and Cold War policy, contributed to geopolitical and geo-economic realignments.

discussion by providing a deconstructive analysis of the phrase "all o' we is one" to clarify the neoliberal complications of social solidarity in the novels.

All O' We Is One? Remnants of Racialized Resistance or a Neoliberal Culture Industry

Although published twenty-two years apart, both *The Chosen Place, the Timeless People* (1969) and *Daughters* (1991) invoke the phrase, "'all o' we is one.'" Marshall's autobiographical use of the phrase, in a 1991 interview (Dance 102), further indicates her personal vision of sustaining a dual affiliation of African-American and West Indian heritage. While this claim may be read to imply solidarity in the effort to expose racialized exploitation, it also risks the re-inscription of racial nostalgia and the repressive silencing of difference through the discursive manipulation of particular struggles as homogenous. In this section, I first suggest how in *The Chosen Place*, the phrase conveys the commoditization of racial pluralism and Caribbean resistance; I subsequently argue that both characters and critics of the novel offer uncritical cultural celebrations of Carnival. Next, I explore how, in *Daughters,* the phrase draws attention to the inefficacies of patriarchal, Caribbean politics, whereby initial preoccupations with anti-colonial nostalgia result in accommodation and complicity with neoliberal enterprises. Finally, I discuss how the phrase empowers Marshall's persona as a U.S.-based writer of the Caribbean Diaspora. Although she effectively disrupts what Carole Boyce Davies sees as the tendency "to identify Black women's writing primarily with the United States," her deployment of a "migratory subjectivity" (4) also facilitates "promiscuous

identification" (Bernstein 176) and the potential occlusion of distinctions between struggles. Marshall's black-affirming discourses may thus be usefully unsettled if read in relation to the gendered "production of space" (McKittrick xx) emerging from her literary representations of collective identity. Katherine McKittrick's notion that "'belonging' in and to place—whether it be a particular nation, a specific community, real/imagined Africa, homelands—is incomplete, premised on a struggle toward some kind of sociospatial liberation" (xx) is useful for considering how Marshall works to rescale the imaginative boundaries of racial experience and belonging but, in doing so, also illuminates the irreconcilable dimensions of that very struggle for solidarity.

In *The Chosen Place*, "all o' we is one" is first referenced by the black Caribbean barrister and politician, Lyle Hutson. Dorothy Clough—Hutson's white, British mistress and a regular tourist to the fictional Bourne Island— sentimentalizes the slogan in relation to the temporary, two-day "democratic spirit" of Carnival (200). She interprets its meaning for Harriet Shippen, a white American who has recently arrived in the island to support her husband's international development work. Carnival is envisioned by Clough as a life-changing experience, whereby one finds "'all sorts of people, rich and poor, black, white, and in-between, dancing together in the streets, laughing and talking to each other'" (200). In Dorothy's creolized experience, Caribbean Carnival allows for an idealized space of escape into racial plurality at a time when racist color lines promote segregation elsewhere in the world; yet, in her account, the experience does not transform her: "'[t]his isn't to say one doesn't eventually

return home and pretty much resume the old life, but it's important, I believe, to

have had the experience'" (201). Creole culture is promoted for foreigners because

it is profitable insofar as it permits temporary touristic transgressions with people

rendered racially and culturally exotic. Dorothy's valorization of this state-

sanctioned event is thus related to her reproduction of foreign social power as a

white British tourist who has sexual encounters with a black Caribbean man.[73]

The appropriation of Creole discourses to articulate the cultural

experiences of globalization has placed under erasure the "specific histories of

Caribbean displacement, migration and transnationalism" contained in the varying

"political commitments associated with theories of creolization" (Sheller 274).[74]

Mimi Sheller questions "[w]hat grounds for resistance are lost in making

creolization shorthand for cultural hybridization and the fluidity of 'global'

identities" (274) for, in her view, the Caribbean "grass-roots politics of the

subaltern, carrying with it responsibilities of remembrance and solidarity with the

most oppressed groups in society," are threatened by "the subsequent

metropolitan appropriation of the concept" (281). Sheller's analysis of

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[73] Colonialist-imperialist legacies underpin and enable Dorothy's experience; however, I would also argue that she represents an emerging "postmodern hybridity" in which "a disavowal of roots" enables the "privileged position [of] locational invisibility" (Sheller 274-275). In this sense, colonialist, imperialist, and postmodernist legacies can be read relationally to observe the persistence of white economic supremacy in global commodity culture. Notably, the Notting Hill Carnival promoted during the late 1950s and early 1960s by black feminist socialist Claudia Jones and the *West Indian Gazette* "was a popular response to the racially motivated riots and attempts at intimidating Caribbean people in Notting Hill and Nottingham [...]. The initial aggression might then be likened to the initial impetus for African-based carnivals in the Caribbean, the *cannes brulées* and emancipation origins of carnival, as distinct from the European pre-Lenten festivals" (Boyce Davies *Left of Marx* 178). Leeping this historical context in mind, Dorothy's appreciation of Caribbean carnival may signal the exotic escape from Britain into the commodification of race relations in this imagining of Carnival in a fictional Caribbean island.

[74] Sheller traces "a national project linked to decolonization in the 1960s-1970s" (274) to "a postcolonial and post-national project grounded in the Caribbean diaspora in the 1980s-1990s" (274).

"metropolitan appropriation" is persuasive but limited, for I find her sustaining a centre-periphery model that does not confront the Africanist appropriation of a discourse that purportedly characterizes the culture of an entire region.[75] If, as a result of globalized cultural discourses, we lose "the specific itineraries of migration, resistance, and conflict out of which both 'creole cultures' and Caribbean theories of creolization emerged" (Sheller 275), then a critical project of recovery should involve the review of how difference and dissent is lost in these "itineraries." The assumption of solidarity regarding a Caribbean grassroots conception of Creole experience is questionable and should reinforce the continued study of how African Caribbean and African-American histories become constitutive in a New World imagining—and blackening— of subaltern resistance.[76]

Given these contexts, I remain apprehensive of the tendency of literary critics to assume the subversive potential of Carnival, in *The Chosen Place*, which has been read as "the paradigmatic celebration" for the disenfranchised to "come into town in slaves' costumes copied from library books that described [the rebel slave] Cuffee Ned's clothes" (Coser 44). Post-colonial nation-states and critics, alike, can capitalize on forms of black cultural resistance without attending to

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[75] Sheller relies on Braithwaite's understanding of "creole culture as a complex and dynamic relation between the culture(s) of the European colonizers and of the enslaved African peoples" (280); Afrocentric dimensions persist in a Creole theory of "the recombination of diverse elements that have been loosed from previous attachments and have reattached themselves to a new place of belonging" (276). Shalini Puri's critical intervention into state and academic-sanctioned discourses of hybridity and creolization is useful in this context.

[76] Despite its Africanist underpinnings, the phrase "'All o' we is One'" may be read subversively as a folk-based intervention by disenfranchised Carnival players performing resistance to counter state agendas for Creole Carnival. However, I am more persuaded by Gikandi's contention that "[s]o long as creolization is overdetermined by colonialism and neocolonialism, it still carries the Manicheanism of the colonial situation and the violence it engenders" (*Writing in Limbo* 19).

complicated political and social history. Much of the scholarship regarding *The Chosen Place* celebrates the impoverished section of Bourne Island—named Bournehills— as the site of resistance where people operate on their own spiritual and political time (Spillers, Levecq, Pettis, Denniston, Keizer, Gikandi). Not unlike Coser who refers to Carnival as "paradigmatic," Denniston sees Bournehills as "a paradigm for all economically impoverished countries" (105). Drawing on Marshall's themes of "the struggle for human survival" and "resistance to continued exploitation," Denniston claims that she "champions the 'Little Fella' –those who are without economic and   political power but who nonetheless bolster themselves with a profound wisdom gained from the past. *These are the people who best reflect the African memory of independence and communal respect*" (105; my emphasis).

I take particular issue with Denniston's striking collapse of African and African-Caribbean histories of community-building, ritual, and resistance when Africa becomes the tribal object of Afro-Caribbean desire. Denniston empowers a black Caribbean by identifying it as "best reflecting" the history and values of Africa in the "New World." Africa and Bournehills are connected not only racially, but imaginatively, politically, and affectively; Bournehills becomes, in this reading, the perfect synecdoche for *all* developing countries. That the composite figure of resistance—the "Little Fella"—is gendered male by characters in the novel remains undisputed by Denniston. Chancy's account of the cultural distinctions regarding black racial signification seems compelling in this context given her view of the global significance of the U.S. formation of black

feminism which informs her own literary analysis:

> [...] the necessity of utilizing Black feminism as a critical frame for this
> study is affirmed by statements made by Black women and women of
> color in Britain, Canada, the United States and the Caribbean; and
> although the word "Black" may not be current in Africa, feminism is also
> affirmed in this part of the world. Although women of African descent
> in all of these geopolitical locations have shown the need for a greater
> production of Black feminist scholarship from their own points of view,
> most have referred to the catalytic role of Black feminist scholarship from
> the United States on that production. They have also, in many cases,
> adopted the methodology of U.S.-based Black feminism while
> foregrounding their own definitions and cultural/political concerns. (19)

It is unclear the extent to which the projection of desire for black resistance has a

bi-directional flow of feminist exchange, between black Caribbean and black

African populations, let alone a shared multi-directional flow of exchange within

an African Diaspora. Furthermore, the presumptive and selective association of

black populations with a Diaspora characterized as African or as Caribbean can

effect cultural transferences to marginalize geographically specific, indigenously-

articulated social and political priorities.

Nonetheless, because the neoliberal project is "hegemonic within global

capitalism" (Harvey *A Brief History* 9), it is a necessary critical pursuit to assess

the "double exposures" of a neoliberal medium enabling the superimposition of

destructive socioeconomic policies on black communities in disparate locations at

the same time that it reinforces the ideological obscuration of its project's regionalizing processes of racialization and feminization. Denniston's assumption of the critical role to assess Marshall's characters in terms of their New World African representational excellence is therefore problematic but difficult to resolve given the social significance of illuminating the destructive globalizing effects of a neoliberal project. Nonetheless, it is questionable how Denniston reinforces the cultural capital of Carnival by privileging the Bournehills' performance as the climax of resistance. She explains:

> Although Marshall does not present the Carnival celebration until Book
> Three in the novel, I *begin my discussion with this holiday* for three
> reasons. First, Carnival serves as a reference point to review the stories of
> several characters introduced in the novel. Second, the pageant enacted as
> Carnival presents, in synopsis form, the author's uncompromising
> statement about the powerful and the weak, about colonialism and
> subjugation, about confrontation and change. Third, Carnival represents
> the *central climactic episode of the novel when secrets are revealed*
> *and resolutions come about*. (99-100; my emphasis)

This literary analysis signals the problem of habitual reading practices whereby a narrative is assessed according to a conventional formula of climaxes and turning points, and analytical choices are justified through appeals to an author's apparent strategies for plot progression. The literary critic's task, in my view, is not to mirror what she sees as the author's narrative methodology, for this approach limits potential for debate and intervention. Denniston is not alone, however, in

reading Bournehills or Carnival as exemplary in its revolutionary potential

(Levecq; Spillers; Keizer). As Arlene Keizer argues

> Bournehills, not Bourne Island, is the 'chosen place'; the inhabitants of this
>
> small corner of the island are the 'timeless people.' The Bournehills people
>
> fall on the margins of the national imaginary of Bourne Island, as
>
> evidenced by the scorn directed toward their Carnival masque and the
>
> elite's disgust at Bournehills' failure to transform itself by accepting
>
> development aid. Bournehills is, in short, the internal Other to the island's
>
> national consciousness. (90).

Symbolic of revolutionary time and space, Bournehills is idealistically and

atavistically rendered. To some extent, the novel contributes to this predicament

because several characters uphold a particular nostalgia for black resistance that

leaves them unprepared to intervene in contemporary struggles. Still, it is my

contention that Bournehills should not be celebrated as the subversive "internal

Other" simply because the population refuses "development aid," for while this

refusal may signal the desire for revolution it does not mark the existence of

one.[77]

Drawing on Mikhail Bahktin, Simon Gikandi reminds us of the

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[77] Stelamaris Coser argues that "[i]n the West Indies and in all places where Carnival occurs, power and hierarchy are normally restored to the same individuals and groups—the male, the rich, the white—as soon as the feast is over; for Carnival is theater, not actual revolution. It only sings and plays games of a new order, rekindling hopes and illusions of beauty, happiness, and equality for all sexes, classes, races" (41). Arlene Keizer regards Marshall's Carnival as representing "communal reconciliation with the past" suggesting that "the image of the Cuban Revolution merges with the re-creation of Cuffee Ned's rebellion to prefigure a Bourne Island revolt in the future" (91).To her, a revolutionary, "pan-Caribbean aspect is more pronounced" (91) to include histories of Cuba, Grenada, and, more broadly, a "Third World consciousness" (92). This critical view is comparable to the perspective of the character Saul who bears witness to developmental poverty on a hemispheric basis.

contradictory processes of subversion and accommodation that enable

"conflicting versions of history [to] meet" during Carnival (*Writing in Limbo* 187-

188). However, his view that Bournehills people have "defied the logic of

neocolonialism and its investment in the future," simply by refusing to alter their

annual reenactment of slave revolt (Gikandi 189), is questionable. Not only

should the sacrificial undertones of resistance be interrogated, but so too should

the bypassing of strategy for living beyond the bare life of a Western pro-

capitalist model of (re)productive futurity. Gikandi's notion of "the repetition of

unofficial and incomplete histories" is compelling, however, if "repetition" as

"reterritorialization" empowers "the voice of the black subject in its own

categories of modernity" (189, 190). But how can a black modernity rescue a

history of slave resistance to effectively intervene upon contemporary black

neoliberal struggle? The task of literature is not to resolve historical conflict and

black aesthetics should not be bound by the demands of political realism or

material need; however, if literary tropes and aesthetics become critiques of

history and power, then their repeated invocations should be questioned in terms

of practical and ideological effect. While Carnival may allow for "collective

utterance" and the "voice [to become] a paradigm for the repressed African past in

Caribbean and Afro-American cultures" (Gikandi 191), it also signals "the

impossibility of recovering the African ideal or its idiom" (192); thus, claims to a

"founding mythology" (194) are unresolved.

In Marshall's novel *Daughters*, the phrase "all o' we one" is part of a

nostalgic anti-colonial response to an emerging neoliberal construction of the

Caribbean. Primus Mackenzie, an official African-Caribbean political

representative, writes the phrase in a letter to his future African-American wife,

Estelle, as he reflects upon the failures of Caribbean solidarity. He blames

"*colonial thinking*" for the island's backwardness and argues that if only the

population seized the entrepreneurial spirit of the U.S. then "*[t]he place would

actually begin to live up to its name*" (144). He continues,

> *And what that would mean for the rest of these little islands! We might all*
>
> *finally come together—French, Dutch, English, Spanish—all o' we one!*
>
> *so that even Big Brother would have to respect us. It's the dream that*
>
> *keeps me going, Estelle. At any rate, one thing is certain, come*
>
> *independence we're going to see to it that no one man owns a cornfield*
>
> *bigger than another man's country, we don't care what the Carnegie*
>
> *people them! say...* (144-145)

Here, the spirit of regional anti-colonial resistance is articulated in reaction to

American neocolonialism. The monopolistic tendencies of corporate agriculture

are thematically linked to colonialist legacies, yet for Primus there remains a

fundamental uncertainty about how a collective "we" or "one" should proceed at

the time of independence. While Primus sees the anti-colonial solidarity of "little

islands" as challenging their American "Big Brother," he also seems taken by the

strategy of mimicking U.S. entrepreneurialism.

Belinda Edmondson suggests that British colonial psychology reinforced

Caribbean Englishness by endorsing mimicry without granting citizenry. Under

such a model, the English Caribbean should lack the political power of

Englishness but embrace its cultural forms and accept its economic exploitation (*Making Men* 1999). Similarly, I argue, U.S.-led neoliberal strategy combines corporate and military interests to promote neoliberal economic integration. Paradoxically, non-American claims to national sovereignty are often regarded as retrograde yet the U.S. insists upon its unilateral right to protectionism during times of recession or homeland insecurity. The Caribbean must adopt neoliberal policy, to the advantage of the U.S., but not protectionism for its own security. Within the context of the novel, it seems that as government deregulation conditions development, Primus Mackenzie struggles to uphold the symbolism of the cornfield as the agricultural ground zero for regional, anti-colonial resistance.

The rise and fall of Primus Mackenzie's political career can be read in relation to Frantz Fanon's critique of anti-colonial strategy via the emergence of a national bourgeoisie in *The Wretched of the Earth*. Fanon finds dubious the politicians who "avoid the actual overthrowing of the state," by relying on the "national or tribal language" of "'We Negroes, we Arabs" because "these terms which are so profoundly ambivalent take on during the colonial epoch a sacramental signification" (68). As "the young nationalist middle class" fixates on "trade" (110), "rural" and "urban" movements are divided, and there is no attempt by nationalist parties to integrate them (116). He characterizes the "nationalist bourgeoisie" as "the Western bourgeoisie's business agent" (152-153), who invest in tourist industries to stimulate the national economy (152). Fanon accounts for class conflict stemming not only from colonialist ideology but from distinct geographies of poverty. In newly independent nations, conflict arises between

urban and rural constituencies of factory and agricultural workers, as well as between the native bourgeoisie and peasant classes, whereby the former adopts policies and ideologies of the colonial bourgeoisie to consolidate their own power and eclipse counter-revolutionary action.

Fanon's analysis is useful to read depictions of resistance in both of Marshall's novels, for both include representations of the industrial and agricultural sectors of Caribbean economies. Recourse to rural imagery to inspire folk resistance thus effects atavistic conceptualizations of complicated—if not conflicting or competing—interests. Folk forms may nostalgically relegate the imagery of resistance to an earlier phase in developmental history, where tactics and strategies may be limited, idealized, or over-determined. I argue that efforts to distinguish between agricultural and industrial social organization may help to expose the unevenness of neoliberal development as well as the limits of solidarity. Urban and rural struggles may thus call for a variety of strategies and tactics for revolt.

Notably, the black Caribbean politician Primus Mackenzie first meets his African- American wife Estelle in the context of an international research and development initiative. A member of the Deltas' Hospitality Committee in Hartford that works with the Carnegie Endowment on International Relations, Estelle interacts with men from the islands invited as "part of the endowment's policy of offering young professionals from countries that might soon be independent a chance to see America" (27). The Carnegie Institute provides "those who might one day be high-level civil servants, development planners,

government officials, even presidents and prime ministers" with a "two-week

tour" of the U.S. (27). Primus, in the same letter to Estelle, recalls the tour's

development lessons accordingly:

> *One of the farms they took us to visit was larger than the island of Nevis,*
>
> *where one of us was from. Corn everywhere we looked. Imagine, a farm*
>
> *belonging to one man that's larger than the entire country! And the*
>
> *General Motors plant we toured would make two of the town we call our*
>
> *capital. It was the same everywhere we went. Everything on a grand scale.*
>
> (144)

The U.S. Cold War strategy of the tour prompts Caribbean professionals to

admire American-style development. Domestic food security in the U.S. is

distinguished from that of a small Caribbean island, while socioeconomic

mobility is consolidated by the U.S. automobile factory that out-sizes Primus'

capital city by double.[78] Caribbean professionals are encouraged "*to take heed*

and think 'free enterprise' rather than any socialist nonsense we might have

picked up while we were away studying" (144).[79] This generation of men, who

migrated to England for a university education, are now re-educated through U.S.

models of industry and corporatism.[80]

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[78] Paul Gilroy claims that, as "*ur*-commodity," the automobile can "help to periodise capitalism as it moves into and leaves its industrial phase" (*Darker Than Blue* 30). Primus' view of auto-industrial productivity reflects a specific historical moment in American capitalism that I will contrast with his daughter Ursa Bea's visions during the 1980s.

[79] In chapter four I address the ambiguities and contradictions of American "free enterprise" as imagined by Michelle Cliff in her portrayal of 19th century black abolitionist struggles.

[80] Marshall's portrayal of the Caribbean tour in the U.S. may be related to the actual educational exchanges that took place between Chilean and U.S. economists premised on "the neoliberal theories of Milton Friedman," which David Harvey argues facilitated the policy expansion leading to "the Latin American debt crisis of 1982" (8, 9).

Primus is initially skeptical of both capitalist and socialist models of development, for he is fixated on the competitive disadvantages of Caribbean food commodities in the world market. Increasingly, Caribbean populations migrate to the U.S. only to become taxi drivers while radicals flee to Cuba and Puerto Rico. He summarizes the situation thusly: *"And the people up in Gran' Morn behaving like they're still maroons fighting the French, refusing to speak the official language; and the rest of us with this colonial thinking, acting more British than the British"* (144). Primus' assessment underestimates the ideological work of the U.S. tour to Americanize the English Caribbean; in this context, he pressures his wife Estelle to compromise her commitments to grassroots Caribbean forms of social and political organizing.

Estelle is assigned by her husband the task of wielding African-American influence at a Caribbean Planning and Development party that he hosts for foreign U.S. investors. Feeling "'[l]ike the tattooed lady at the circus,'" she complains, "'I've got the stars and stripes tattooed on me from head to toe. […] Step right up, gentlemen, an honest-to-God piece of Americana, never mind she's not the right color beneath all the red, white and blue'" (231). She is infuriated that she is forced to miss an election organizing night in the rural Morlands for a party in which a U.S. investor favours her accent by observing, "'[s]ound like you're from our part of the world'" (239). The investor informs her that Primus' plan to establish a cannery factory—to create jobs and diversify agricultural production— is impossible without improvements to ports, roads, telephones and tourism to attract and sustain foreign investment (239). Estelle is advised to "bring in the

chains. The Hiltons and Sheratons that were going up on the other islands" (239).

Corporate chains signify those chains used in bondage as it is evident that

investors are looking for "healthy concession on custom duties, taxes and the like"

and political stability, where "no coups or government takeovers" can be

guaranteed (239). The images of corporate chains and bondage chains recur in

The Chosen Place and *Daughters*. I relate this doubling to Marshall's effort to

conceptualize "double exposures" and read the chains metonymically in relation

to the production of space constituting what I call the neoliberal medium. I

elaborate further below.

The complexities of Marshall's novels encourage readers to regard the

claim "all o' we is one" with caution. Yet, in a 1991 interview, Marshall invokes it

to preclude differences between African-American and West Indian identity: "'I

don't make any distinction between African-American and West Indian. All o' we

is one as far as I'm concerned'" (qtd. in Dance 102). As "'an unabashed ancestor

worshipper,'" Marshall claims to work for "'connection and reconciliation'" in her

novels (102). The refusal to distinguish between African-American and West

Indian identifications may be read as a radical assertion of a black pan-Caribbean

or black transnational collectivity,[81] but it can promote the accumulation of

cultural and political capital enabled by discourses of hybridity or creolization.

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[81] I remain uncertain how to contextualize Marshall's work in terms of Pan-African or
pan-Caribbean sentiments; biographically, she is directly affiliated with Barbados and the United
States (specifically Brooklyn, New York). Yet, she expresses ancestral fascination with Africa in
interviews and novels. Her memoir, *The Triangular Road*, traces affiliations as "Brooklyn,"
"Barbados," and "Africa" (Raffel 189). This triangulation is interesting to compare to Alison
Donnell's critique of Paul Gilroy's Black Atlantic model which, in her view, bypasses Caribbean
commitments by focusing on the relation between Africa, the United States, and the United
Kingdom.

The seeming collectivity of "all" dissolves difference into a black melting pot; the potential non-blackness of others does not replace the whiteness which is under erasure in Marshall's formulation of Creole discourse. Rather, she invokes a hyphenated identity and racially ambiguous—but implicitly black— Caribbean one: she is African *and* American as well as a [black] West Indian. While she reserves the autobiographical right to claim these associations, whether or not she can convincingly do so for a collective is more questionable. Marshall unsettles the paradigmatic formation of nation-state identification through her claim that "all o' we is one," but this very unsettling helps to conceal the material advantages accrued through nationalist affiliation. In short, her borders of identity are liberalized and may violate the sovereignty of other identifications. Conflations of race, nation and culture—African-American and West Indian— create conditions for the oversight of material and ideological differences, particularly as she establishes her literary authority to write about the Caribbean from within the Diaspora while potentially benefitting from a politics of permanent residency in the U.S. It is difficult to overlook how such cultural capital empowers the persona of a writer to imagine and mediate the Caribbean for U.S. audiences.

     To directly apply Fanon's assertion that "[t]here is no common destiny to be shared between the national cultures of Senegal and Guinea; but there *is* a common destiny between the Senegalese and Guinean nations which are both dominated by the same French colonialism" (234) to the context of Marshall's "Caribbean" would be oversimplified and complicated. The assertion of political affiliation between African-Americans and West Indians represents a necessary

interventionist strategy to signal hemispheric opposition to histories of

enslavement and colonization that exploited black populations and in many ways

prevents or prolongs black community-building in the neoliberal phase of

capitalist development. Nonetheless, it should be asked to what extent are

African-Americans complicit with U.S. cultural and economic imperialism in the

Caribbean? What is to be gained from the African-Caribbean affiliation with

African-Americans and does affiliation have different implications for U.S.

residents versus Caribbean ones? For Fanon, there are "no two cultures which are

completely identical" (235); thus, we should question impulses "to create a black

culture" (234) that promotes "mystification" (235). Practically speaking, then,

"[i]t is around peoples' struggles that African-Negro culture takes on substance,

and not around songs, poems, or folklore" (235).

In light of Fanon's call to attend to struggle as the substance of culture, I

raise the need to attend to what struggles may be occluded by particular,

entrenched notions of resistance and a reading of alliances. Here, Alison Donnell

is persuasive in her critique of paradigmatic readings of Anglophone Caribbean

literature and the persistent critical inattention to Caribbean women's writing prior

to 1970. For Donnell "the myth of spontaneous genesis" (140), whereby the so-

called "boom" in Caribbean women's writing during the 1970s and 1980s is

believed to have no precedents, overlooks a longer-term, regionally-based, literary

genealogy and effects a flattening of distinctions between Caribbean and African-

American women's literary traditions.[82] While attention to hemispheric studies of

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[82] See Audre Lorde's "Grenada Revisited: An Interim Report," in *Sister Outsider*, for a
reflection upon ways in which the U.S. might implicate African-Americans in practices of

enslavement and resistance can allow us to re-imagine collective organization as not based solely on the violent and exclusionary historiographies contained by the paradigm of a racist, Western, patriarchal, heterosexist nation-state, we must remember that histories of race relations are far from homogenous and therefore must be contextualized in relation to difference and locality. A particular risk of aligning a black American and black Caribbean literary tradition is the exclusion of Indian Caribbean, not to mention several other diverse and/or racially mixed women, writing within the Caribbean region. Critics like Donnell are suspicious of the trope of the "doubly oppressed" Third World woman, as it also flattens distinctions and conflicts between women of varied racial, economic, and sexual orientations *within* developing nations.

Theories of diasporic black culture, such as the Black Atlantic paradigm, emerging from Paul Gilroy's 1993 *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* also come with risks. In Gilroy's case, the result is a privileging of black male writers but also a marginalization of the Caribbean in his triangulation of the Black Atlantic. Post-colonial feminist literary criticism focused on Caribbean women's writing during the 1990s also often embraced a Black Atlantic paradigm, and in doing so over-relied upon African-American literary

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militarism and imperialism (183). Lorde also suggests conditions for a relational analysis of black poverty and disenfranchisement in the Caribbean and the U.S (180). Notably, she begins her essay by suggesting her initial view of Grenada as her "'home', for it was [her] mother's birthplace and she had already defined it so for me" (176). By the end of the essay, Lorde creates critical distance in the following assertion: "Grenada is their country. I am only a relative. I must listen long and hard and ponder the implications of what I have heard, or be guilty of the same quick arrogance of the U.S. government in believing there are external solutions to Grenada's future" (189). Here, she marks an important distinction between the people and the government of the U.S., as well as between the citizens and relatives of Grenada. In this way, she keeps open the political possibility for what Carole Boyce Davies calls "critical relationality" (1994: 54-56). Refer to the last section of chapter one in this dissertation for elaboration of this term.

and feminist theory, resulting in the collapse of important distinctions between black feminisms. Donnell finds that established critics, who emerged in this moment, like Carole Boyce Davies (1994), Myriam Chancy (1997), and Belinda Edmondson (*Making Men* 1999) inadequately attended to the long tradition in women's creative and feminist writing *within* and *about* the region: "The emphasis on migration and exile as the most rewarding areas of enquiry becomes particularly problematic at the point at which it defines itself against a homeland which is both undifferentiated and undervalued" (93). Consequently, it is vital to attend to ongoing critical debates about an academic culture industry that empowers the Caribbean Diaspora to globally project images of the Caribbean without requiring an accounting of the Diaspora's privileged positioning outside of the region.[83] Writers of the Caribbean Diaspora vary in their commitment and frequency of travel to the region, but many profit by association without necessarily participating in the redistribution of discursive power to revalue contextualized knowledge and grounded experience. Indeed, there are material consequences for Caribbean-based research and publishing when the Caribbean is not considered "a site of possibility."

Imaginatively, the Caribbean has been romanticized as a site of resistance, whether nostalgic or futuristic in orientation.[84] For Belinda Edmondson (1999), "particular tropes and paradigms," such as "carnival and hybridity," are romantic

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[83] I address this issue further in chapters three and four in the context of Kincaid's construction of Caribbean false consciousness and Cliff's political self-identification with Caribbean and African-American blackness.

[84] Frederic Jameson is critical of the depoliticizing effects of Western postmodernism. He reveals his own complicity with developmental ideology insofar as he romanticizes the Third World as temporally belated and thus retaining revolutionary political potential. See Santiago Colas for a persuasive critique of Jameson and a revision in which "local postmodernities" (267) of developing regions are considered.

and produce "an essential Caribbeanness" whereby "concrete ideological-political issues are mystified into regional symbols divorced from their ideological context" and "petrified" into the predictable forms (2-3).[85] While Marshall links black Caribbean and American populations on the basis of nostalgia for the historical struggle to survive "New World" slavery, we can ask how and when these links call into question the "revolutionary engagement with political reality" (Edmondson 3). For Edmondson, "the old romanticized images of the region, initially constructed in the imperial European or American imagination, reinvent themselves in discourses that apparently come from the newly independent, decolonized Caribbean subject themselves" (6).[86] In short, reinvented romances render the Caribbean historically, politically, and creatively static.[87]

Working through these legacies, Marshall does not offer an uncomplicated, nostalgic return to Caribbean *nationalist* resistance, for both novels imply that European "nationalism was a management 'trap' within which the growing independence movements in the Caribbean were interpellated" (Boyce Davies *Black Women* 12). Her novels instead ask how to recover the

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[85] Edmondson continues, "It was almost as if key words and phrases could stand for an entire discourse: words like multiracialism, *mestizaje*, oppositionality, otherness, colonialism, neocolonialism, shipwreck, mimicry, metropole, migration. Yet in our role as Caribbean citizens we would have a whole new—and yet, it seemed, so ancient!—set of concerns, such as urban/rural divisions and inter-Caribbean rivalries, that did not necessarily involve the same axiomatic definitions of Caribbeaness evident in literary theory" ("Introduction: Caribbean Myths" 1-2).

[86] Compare Edmondson's observations with Fanon's aspirations for the native writer: "The crystallization of the national consciousness will both disrupt literary styles and themes, and also create a completely new public. While at the beginning the native intellectual used to produce his work to be read exclusively by the oppressor, whether with the intention of charming him or of denouncing him through ethnic or subjectivist means, now the native writer progressively takes on the habit of addressing his own people" (239-240).

[87] In the extremes, the Caribbean has been criticized for being inherently derivative or celebrated for being foundationally creolized (see, respectively, Naipaul and Benitez-Rojo); this dichotomy is paradoxical, but alternative and varied imaginings of creative resistance and revolution are possible.

remnants of a black anti-colonialism to revitalize black empowerment *without* reiterating idealized nationalist, patriarchal, or neoliberal, agendas. It is in this sense that I read her novels as confronting a neoliberal crisis and as searching for, without providing, an alternative vision of social solidarity and community-building. Like critics such as Boyce Davies, Marshall critiques the "'nation'" as "a male formulation" (12),[88] in which women were "left out or peripherized" or "the feminine was deployed at a symbolic level, as in 'Mother Africa' or 'Mother India'" (12). Her female characters suggest how, historically, women were "primary workers for a number of nationalist struggles" but not "empowered political figures or equal partners" (12). With these issues in mind, I will now return to Marshall's earlier novel, to excavate the racialized, classed, and gendered power dynamics of her representation of anti-colonial and anti-imperial struggle in a neoliberal age of trade, labour, and development.

The Chosen Place, the Timeless People: Struggles for Resistance at the
Neoliberal Turn

The emergent neoliberalism represented in *The Chosen Place* portrays how international development is forged in relation to the containment of radical politics and the occlusions of women's leadership in both realms. In this novel a team of white, male, American anthropologists come to the fictional Caribbean Bourne Island to generate a country profile for a U.S.-based, privately funded development organization. As they accumulate statistics and interviews to assess the island's agricultural and industrial potential, the anthropologists envision their

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[88] I prefer to describe the nation as patriarchal so as not to overlook the situation of non-dominant, marginalized men; however, I acknowledge that women tend to be more vulnerable to patriarchy.

work as distinct from the aims of foreign corporate investors who negotiate with

local politicians to exploit labour and resources for pro-American industries.

Early in his career, Saul Amron, lead Jewish-American anthropologist on the

team, complains that once "the concept of direct aid had been new and therefore

suspect" (41), but by the time he arrives in Bourne Island he observes that

"'[t]here're more agencies and money around for that kind of thing than you can

shake a stick at. It's gotten to be A-I-D in capital letters with everybody, including

the goddamn government and Henry Ford, getting into the act'" (41). His previous

experiences with "various small-scale community development projects in South

and Central America" (40) influence his dreams for Bourne Island; however, his

work is complicit with a corporate agenda because his employer, the Center for

Applied Social Research (CASR), relies upon the United Corporation of America

(Unicor) for funding. Unicor's corporate historiography includes "a merger of

most of the old businesses in Pennsylvania, including that of Harriet Shippen's

family" (37).[89] This merger establishes the West Indies as a primary market for

"cornmeal and flour, salted meat and fish, lumber, candles and cloth,"

commodities which "created the [American] state's first wealth" (37). Marshall

attends to these links between contemporary development agencies and colonial

trade networks to convey the emergence of U.S. power within the Caribbean as a

process by which dependent markets were actively established. The issue of food

insecurity becomes a headline for the widely recognized narrative of exploitation

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[89] Harriet Shippen, Saul's wife, plays a significant role in getting him this field placement. Her family inheritance and interactions on the island deserve analysis and will be discussed later in the context of women's agency, contributions, and critique.

that clearly positions the U.S. as a neo-colonial, imperial power in the Caribbean.

While the CASR has strong economic ties to colonialism, its political interest is informed by Cold War ideologies. The English Caribbean becomes a "special area of interest" because

> [t]hey were small, as yet politically stable, and their problems, though
> acute, had so far not reached the inflammatory stage. Moreover, they had
> been almost totally neglected by the big showy development projects
> undertaken by the government and the larger private foundations. And
> there was also some small measure of sentiment involved in the choice
> born of the close commercial ties with the islands in the beginning. (37)

With relatively manageable—if not containable—"problems," the English Caribbean becomes the ideal place for pro-American development. Previously colonized but perceived to lack the unpredictability and radical dissent of a Cold War Cuba or Haiti, these islands are conditioned for the continued material and psychological dependency required for U.S. interests.

The Third World status of Bourne Island discursively relegates it to an earlier phase of historical development in the "Western" imagination. When first approaching Bourne Island by plane, Saul's wife Harriet, a familial beneficiary of the Shippen merger, is unsettled by the view of Bournehills, the island's poorest district, in comparison to the wealthier areas of the island:

> It struck her as being another world altogether, one that stood in profound
> contradistinction to the pleasant reassuring green plain directly below; and
> she wondered, gazing intently out toward those scarred hills, how an

island as small as this could sustain such a dangerous division. […]

Because of the shadows Bournehills scarcely seemed a physical place to

her, but some mysterious and obscured region of the mind which ordinary

consciousness did not dare admit to light. Suddenly, for a single unnerving

moment, she had the sensation of being borne backward in time rather

than forward in space. (21)[90]

The "scarred hills" and "shadows" of Bournehills have a psychological impact on

Harriet. Not only is she haunted by her own familial complicity with colonialism,

but she fears the radical dissent that "a dangerous [island] division" could inspire.

Her Third World imaginary is fragmented by an aerial view that reveals the

uneven development of an island; despite its "small[ness]," the island fails to

regulate "a dangerous division." While the *island* as nation is "small,"

Bournehills, as *district*, is "another world altogether." The CASR's sense of

political stability within the English Caribbean may therefore be questionable.

Harriet's omniscient "gazing," from the airplane, destabilizes a structural,

world-systems articulation of dependency whereby a Western cosmopolitan

centre is demarcated from the peripheral "Rest" of the world. The power and

privilege procured through the image of a nation as a coherent "First World"

whole is part of the nationalist mythology used to conceal from outsiders the

internal unevenness of wealth and developmental growth within the nation; such a

nationalist mythology displaces dependent relations arising from the process of

consolidating First World power. Similarly, I argue that a "Third World"

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[90] This passage resembles Joseph Conrad's depiction of Marlow's Congo encounter in *Heart of Darkness*.

nationalist mythology helps to conceal the wealth of the powerful elite in places like Bourne Island, for when U.S.-based corporations actively procure dependent markets to establish hegemony, the vulnerability of the nation-state and its incapacity to sustain power through isolationism seems clear. Marshall's depiction of how one nation's empowerment is contingent upon the dependency of others translates into the microcosmic context of the nation's internal regions and cities. Harriet's view of Bournehills thus prompts my critical deconstruction of world-systems discourse to promote examination of neoliberal "double exposures" as uneven development in local contexts.

Harriet's recognition of a "dangerous division" is valuable not only to draw the reader's attention to exploitative pockets of wealth in developing nations but to upset global perceptions of the American dream as universally attainable. Harriet, later in the novel, recalls with fascination the prevalence of racialized poverty in her own American city. She sees similarities between the impoverished districts of Bourne Island and North Philadelphia, a place which she describes to her husband as "'close to being the worst slum in the world'" (48). In the U.S., Harriet is said to visit North Philadelphia to "see for [her]self how the Negroes there lived'" (48); she expresses similar interest in directly observing poverty in Bourne Island. By contrast, Saul is so committed to the international dimensions of Third World development that he struggles to sustain interest in domestic poverty and disenfranchisement in the U.S.[91] My attention to Harriet's perceptions of Bournehills reinforces the significance of a trans-local analysis of racialized,

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[91] We can compare Harriet's vision here to the "double exposures" envisioned by Ursa Bea in *Daughters*. I discuss the latter example in further detail later in the chapter.

developmental poverty. While Harriet is conditioned by Enlightenment trajectories of white cultural supremacy and colonial benevolence,[92] her perceptions encourage questions of the limitation of nationalist identification as exposed through trans-local and transnational examinations of racialized poverty. If the small Bourne Island has at least one visible, "dangerous division" then it is reasonable to suspect the presence of other divisions— and solidarities— in more discrete and perhaps less obvious contexts.

Colonial ancestry has linked Harriet to contemporary corporate development projects and informed her understanding of women's commitments. Her family history includes Susan Harbin who "had launched the family's modest wealth by her small-scale speculation in the West Indies trade" extending "between Philadelphia, the west coast of Africa, and then back across the Atlantic to the islands" (37). In other words, Marshall's understanding of trade quite deliberately includes a Caribbean the Black Atlantic paradigm occludes. Unlike the achievements of black women, Harbin's are archived and memorialized "[i]n a stained, faded ledger, still to be seen in a glass display-case at the Historical Society" (37). Her participation in colonial and slave trades is well-documented by calculations of food, humans, and other commodities (38). Haunted by this history and her present connections to pro-American corporations and militaristic enterprises, Harriet feels "guilt and horror" regarding "her complicity in the destruction planned," but will nonetheless "repeat the pattern" (458-459).

Saul's expectations of Harriet convey assumptions about the gendered

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[92] Recall, in this context, Theo Goldberg's view of "historical" racism as discussed in chapter one.

divisions of labour within Western development agendas serving patriarchal capitalism. Her unwaged secretarial work involves socializing with Caribbean women and children to gather "any information she thought might be useful to the research" (175). She is explicitly told "not to do or say anything that might be considered interfering in the work of the project" (175). When she trespasses on a Bournehills woman's home, Saul scolds her without considering the complexity of her action.

The conflict between Harriet and Gwen, this "trespass," is reduced by Saul to an informal and private misunderstanding, but I argue that he elides a cross-cultural and inter-racial assessment of conflict between women. While Gwen works long hours in a sugar cane field, Harriet regards her "innumerable children" as abandoned and without food in an "overcrowded house" (175). Harriet visits the children while Gwen is working and cooks 6 eggs that she finds in the kitchen. Marshall depicts the cooking process as stressful to Harriet who, after burning herself, "want[ed] to abandon the entire project and flee" (178). Although her omelet is "woefully plain," she is "inordinately proud of it" because "[t]here was something of a miracle about it almost; the fishes and loaves. Above all, she felt an immense relief. She had done her part, she told herself" (178). Harriet feels no long-term responsibility but still christens and credits herself for this act, while Gwen, the children's biological mother, is found wanting. Harriet expects of the children "pleased smiles [for they] would have been a small reward," but only sees "the same flat, noncommittal curiosity" (178). Rather than read the children as having emotional complexity, Harriet regards their "frightening reserve" as

characteristic of Bournehills children (178).

Clearly, Harriet's action is not an instance of "community othermothering" (Brownley 124), for she only demonstrates to the children her ability to trespass upon and dominate the space of their biological mother through the provision of single-meal food security. Saul later explains to Harriet that Gwen "'had a long-standing agreement with the Spiretown postmaster to sell him all of her eggs'" (180); in short, "'the family's weekly supply of staples'" was secured through "'a very carefully worked out arrangement of which Gwen was proud'" (180). Harriet is ridiculed for her tendency to "'take over and manage everything and everybody'" (180-181) and, when she insists that eggs are more nutritious than rice, Saul argues that people are slow to change, "'especially [in their] food habits,'" reminding her that "'[e]verybody doesn't live by your standards. Your values aren't necessarily the world's'" (181). Saul's lecture displays the obliviousness of his own complicity with Western ideologies and disregard for his own dependency on Harriet's connections for employment. Harriet is made to feel "bewildered, silent, crushed," with "her small triumph lying shattered around her" (181), while Saul triumphs in his knowledge that motherhood is not a universal experience but a culturally inflected one.

Saul's assertion that Gwen's market activities reflect economic independence requires investigation. Gwen's "informal food sales" can be related to the common West Indian women's practice of "higgling" (Houston 108).[93] Lynn Marie Houston explains that "the domestic setting of the home and

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[93] Houston draws on Olive Senior's *Working Miracles: Women's Lives in the English-Speaking Caribbean* (1991).

household […] provides contexts for practices that women can employ as strategies of empowerment" (108); in short, "'informal sources of livelihood'" frequently become "'the means women employ to survive outside the formal labor force and to supplement income'" (Senior qtd. in Houston 108). While it is important to explore viable alternatives for expressing empowerment, I maintain that the racialization and feminization of poverty in the Caribbean is sustained, in part, by neoliberal, "export-led development" (Houston 100); Gwen's economic agency thus remains vulnerable and limited both within and outside of her community. Assumptions of empowerment, solidarity, and resistance, must be continually re-evaluated in relation to the racialized and gendered "production of space" (McKittrick xx) in a neoliberal era.

The neoliberal condition pervades Harriet's calculations of labour value. She internalizes these calculations and projects her sense of labour value differentially onto her estimation of Caribbean women. Human measurement is signaled not only by degrees of responsibility and disposability, but in relation to combinations of gender, race, class, culture, and nation. Notably, Harriet is useful to Saul on the condition that she gathers information that "*the* [Bourne Island] *women would never discuss with him because he's a man*" (234). In a letter to a business friend Harriet explains of Saul, "*he says I'm threatening to become a better field researcher than he is. I needn't tell you how hard I've worked for that compliment*" (234). Harriet's informalized work is self-motivated "to secure their marriage" (179); nonetheless, she grows "*genuinely fond of Gwen*" (232), who appears to possess *"wonderful resiliency and humor*" (232-233). She is astounded

by "*how hard the women work here*" and envies Gwen's ability to balance a

"*marvelous kind of independence*" with a fierce devotion to her "*children, the*

house and her husband" (233). Gwen is characterized as "*very much a person in*

her own right, her own woman," and Harriet assumes that "*she'd be able to*

manage no matter what" (232-233).

Harriet's estimation of Gwen's capacities compares with Kaplana Wilson's

contemporary findings that World Bank and NGO culture increasingly assigns the

responsibility of entrepreneurial agency to women in developing countries to

justify the imposition of gendered microfinance arrangements of credit and debt.

Considered "better providers," these women are expected "*to be able to*

simultaneously resolve problems of poverty as well as gender inequality," as

"*'enterprising' subjects with limitless capacity to 'cope'*" (Wilson 318-319; my

emphasis). I thus argue that, in this 1969 novel, Marshall offers early literary

insight into an emerging neoliberal subjectivity constructed on the basis of

racialized and gendered developmental ideology. While Gwen is singled out as an

empowered and resilient subject, other women in the community, according to

Harriet, "*have almost no social life*" (233). Gwen's seeming empowerment is thus

striking in its singularity, for Harriet senses that "*The men at least have the*

rumshop, but the women virtually nothing" (233).

Harriet's observations illuminate particular effects of the neoliberal social

organization of racialized and gendered bodies. Her valorization of Gwen's

independence mimics Saul's corrected perception of Gwen. This revised view of

Gwen is questionable, however, given that the limited power of black patriarchy

is asserted through the symbolic space of the "rumshop." Harriet compensates for her failure to outdo Gwen, as a surrogate mother to her children, by endowing her with exceptional qualities of female independence; in effect, she displaces Gwen from a community of women who are politically segregated from patriarchal space. The respect she has for Gwen is superficial, for she declares that while Saul is "*too preoccupied with Bournehills*," now, they will both disengage with the island later when they return "*home to the life and people* [they] *know*" (235-236).[94]

Despite highlighting such obvious inequities between men and women—as well as "First World" and "Third World" women—Marshall continues to underline the centrality of women's contributions to local life, particularly in the context of food security as well as in the preservation of public land and housing. The formal recognition and integration of women's contributions remains a struggle, however. Early in *The Chosen Place* the primary black female protagonist of the novel, Merle, is identified by the all-male American development team as "'the perfect cultural broker,'" as "'somehow Bournehills,'" and as "'a whole damn research project in herself'" (118). Merle is striking in her singularity as a British-educated, local Bourne Island woman who can be regularly and reliably consulted by the male researchers on an informal basis. Saul achieves sexual intimacy with Merle and capitalizes on her critical insights

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[94] Unconsciously, however, Harriet is affected by her interactions with black women, Gwen in particular, for, in dealing with her "[m]other's tangled estate," she requests that her business advisor extend the wages of her black maid, Alberta, working in Philadelphia (236). She concludes, of Bourne Island unselfconsciously: "*I don't know what there is about it, but it seems to have a way of driving you in on yourself and forcing you to remember things you hoped you had forgotten*" *(236).*

without formally crediting her contributions as an intervention in his research. In patriarchal fashion, Saul instead values the active participation of local men in development:

> The council, composed of those men who were the unofficial leaders in
> Spiretown (notbecause of any position they held but by virtue of the
> respect and affection they enjoyed among their fellow villagers), […]
> would be fundamental, he knew, to the action phase of the project. Not
> only would the council, as he envisioned it, be directly involved in the
> planning (he would look to it, in other words, for ideas and suggestions as
> to future programs), but most important this core group of men would be
> the means by which he would be able to enlist the co-operation of the rest
> of the village. The council might well prove the first small step towards
> people in Bournehills taking charge of their own lives. (353-354)

Merle intervenes in the patriarchal, colonialist processes of development, at various stages of novel, despite this institutionalized segregation of knowledge and delineation of gendered labour value by degrees of formalization. For example, she plays a significant role in a three-way debate about competing ideologies of development for Bournehills. The politician Lyle Hutson debates with Merle and Saul about government deregulation, trade liberalization, and foreign investment through the creation of tax-free and export-processing zones (206-207).[95] Arguing for the expansion of the "tourist trade" as the way "'to get

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[95] Lyle endorses: a "'tax-free period for new businesses'" and the construction of a government-funded and virtually rent-free "'huge industrial park, so that when an investor arrived he would find a plant awaiting him.'" In conclusion, "'anyone from abroad setting up a business on Bourne Island would not only be allowed to send all his profit out of the country, but could

into the modern swing of things,'" he declares, "'[w]e want, we need more of those nice fat dollars you Americans spend so freely when you come down on holiday'" (204). By contrast, Saul and Merle argue for sustainable development and refuse trade that exacerbates food insecurity (205).

Lyle notes the dwindling of "preferential" trade agreements with England and declares that "'as far as the world goes we are an insignificant green speck in a relatively small American lake called the Caribbean'" (208). He challenges Saul's call for government regulation by questioning the very security of Caribbean political independence: "'you Americans can plant a missile-tracking station right on our backside and there's nothing we can do about it because the agreement was made long before the present government took office'" (208-209). Lyle provides context for U.S. hegemony within the Caribbean and its consolidation through political accommodation and economic dependency; in this sense, his analysis challenges romantic paradigms for revolutionary change.

Neoliberal accommodation, in both of Marshall's novels, tends to result in the rejection of socialism or left radicalism as naïve and idealistic. In this sense, Lyle accuses Saul of being a "'rabid socialist'" (207) who lacks a realistic view of the island's vulnerable economy in the world market even though Saul sees himself as "a casualty of the radicalism of [his] youth" (225). The three-way debate between Lyle, Saul, and Merle symbolizes the struggle to imagine a practical but revolutionary alternative to current development strategies. Lyle's perspective represents the perceived failure of political radicalism oriented

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repatriate his capital in full should the business fail'" (206-207).

towards alternative development paradigms. Youthful political idealism is relegated to a nostalgic past and, in Lyle's view, Merle represents the island minority "'who still cling to the hope of some impossible revolution'" (208); alternatively, Merle regards Lyle as having sacrificed his radical desire to "'really build something new'" (211). Lyle aligns radicalism with political immaturity when he tells Merle, "'[y]ou refuse to grow old […] you're still full of all that bogus youthful idealism'" (211). Her "'socialist nonsense'" is feminized as irrational "'emotionalism'" (211).[96] Merle's present contributions and future potential is undercut, despite the fact that her political and socioeconomic perspectives are informed by direct interactions with politicians and internationals, factory workers and farmers.

Although exploited and discredited by her community, Merle possesses a British university education and has functioned as a grassroots community educator. She also provides insights into the politics of Caribbean migration. Despite her aging generation's increasing compliance with pro-Western ideology, she self-consciously connects with the development of her people by redistributing the plantation land she inherits from her white father into smallholder plots for local farmers. Merle has these credentials and yet she remains an outsider to the formal processes of development and collective labour action. Nonetheless, she breaks "a long silence" in the debate declaring that her island has been sold "'to the lowest bidder'" and asks, "'who says the auction block

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[96] Several characters, including other locals, regard Merle as hysterical. Harriet, in a letter home to her advisor, characterizes her as "*so highly emotional*" and continues, "*(I never cease being amazed—and appalled I might add—at people like her who given in to their feelings so freely)*" (234).

isn't still with us?'" (209). While Lyle is critical of Bournehills for failing to capitalize on the development contracts directed towards them, Merle points out the unsuitability of past projects imposed. Merle addresses rising crime rates and the flourishing of industries not unlike those in Bermuda where "'everybody [is] bowing and scraping for the almighty dollar'" (210). In Merle's view, life is "'no different now than when they were around here selling us for thirty pounds sterling,'" if, in the end, "'the Little Fella is still bleeding his life out in the cane field'" and "'[t]he chains are still on'" (210).

The recurring imagery of corporate chains and chains of bondage, evident in both *The Chosen Place* and *Daughters*, is suggestive of Marshall's imaginative work to conceptualize "double exposure" as a neoliberal metaphor for the superimposition of destructive socioeconomic policies onto racialized and feminized communities. The Bournehills narrative offered by Merle contrasts with ones offered by critics of Marshall's novels who celebrate Carnival as a subversive reiteration of subjugated slave history. It is telling, then, that Merle challenges Lyle to "'[r]ead your history, man'" (210). This advice signals a commitment to the political and pedagogical value of contested histories, even after she has been fired by the government for promoting the Pyre Hill Slave revolt and the legend of Cuffee Ned as West Indian history to be taught to children in the classroom (229-230). Given that reenactments of the slave revolt are permitted within the context of Carnival, it seems that the Bourne Island government favours the consuming tourist over the critical citizen.[97] The illusion

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[97] Employment termination disrupts the pedagogical scene of resistance but Merle persists in the almshouse where she tells the most abject population of orphan children a series of

of political stability is established by rechanneling resistance into a time-limited

cultural event. Yet Merle finds the island's potential for solidarity is threatened by

economic disenfranchisement arising from overcrowding: "'we live practically

one on top of the other because the place is so small and yet we don't see each

other, we don't ever touch. Instead of us pulling together when we need each other

so much, it's every man for his name self'" (211).

Much scholarly criticism on the novel explores the class tensions between

the wealthy and the poor or the recuperation of cultural power. By implication, I

would argue that literary critics frequently adopt an ethnographic lens through

which to read the novel.[98] Lyle Hutson becomes the stock, local bourgeois

villain, in literary analysis, while an economically poor character like Ferguson is

read for his potential heroism. Scholarly analysis similarly tends to render

Bournehills tragic and victimized or inspirational and resistant; in either case, the

Bournehills population is an undifferentiated collective. Yet, Ferguson, a factory

worker who plays a key role in the Carnival performance of the Pyre Hill Slave

revolt, expresses serious doubt about Bournehills for he sees it as "'a nation God

has forgot'" (125). His friend Delbert anticipates that government will soon be

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Anancy tales. Merle embodies the figure of trickster as narrator and disseminates stories of
resistance outside the institutionalized space of the classroom. The scene sequence is notable for
Saul visits Merle at the almshouse immediately after Ferguson is depicted as having failed to
address a factory labour dispute through official means. Merle bypasses bureaucracy and teaches
the local history of slave revolt to children who "were storing everything she was saying against
some future use" (224).

[98] This tendency in literary critics of Marshall's novel can be read in relation to
anthropological tradition. Carla Freeman explains that much of the Caribbean is "grounded in the
plantation-based pyramidal structure in which the population was stratified along class–color
lines, with a small white elite at the apex, a layer of 'browns' occupying the middle class of
merchants, teachers, and those who would later become civil servants, and at the bottom, a
majority of poor blacks. A strong trade-union tradition together with a long-standing Marxist
scholarly tradition led much of the historical and ethnographic research to focus on the primacy of
class conflict between the two extremes of the pyramid, leaving the middle stratum less well
examined" (253).

forced to "declare the whole place a disaster area and send for the Red Cross" (126). Casting Bournehills outside of the divine order, Ferguson scripts his homeland as incapable of spiritual or economic redemption. Late capitalist modernity renders Bournehills abject and forgotten by God, yet the U.S. Red Cross can pick up where God has left off as Delbert naturalizes Third World poverty as inevitable disaster. Disaster management of the nation requires emergency U.S. foreign assistance. Saul is implicitly positioned as provider of aid when asked to recall the Red Cross as Delbert, and by extension, Bournehills become dependent.[99]

While Delbert and Ferguson charge that the national, international, and divine orders abandon Bournehills, Saul remains politically and spiritually fascinated by Bournehills, a place that gives him a feeling of "home" by way of its perceived similarity to other places he has visited in previous fieldwork. His familiarity "brought to mind other areas up and down the hemisphere where he had worked. It resembled them all, not in physical detail so much, but in something he sensed about it" (100). Historical and geopolitical distinctions blur:

> Bournehills, this place he had never seen before, was suddenly the wind-
> scoured Peruvian Andes. The highlands of Guatemala. Chile. Bolivia,
> where he had once worked briefly with the tin miners. Honduras, which
> had proved so fatal. Southern Mexico. And the spent cotton lands of the
> Southern United States through which he had travelled many times as a

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[99] Naomi Klein's concept of "disaster capitalism," where foreign industries take advantage of regions destroyed by war, economic recession, or natural disaster, has relevance here (2008). Under such circumstances, a nation requires foreign assistance, industry, and joint public-private ventures to rebuild. Haiti is a complex contemporary example of how non-government organizations and corporations compete in relief and reconstruction industries.

young graduate student on his way to do field work among the Indians of

Chiapas. It was suddenly, to his mind, every place that had been wantonly

used, it substance stripped away, and then abandoned. (100)

Saul's sense of the wide-ranging hemispheric effects of "modern" Western—and

neoliberal—development may be compared with Ursa Bea's "double exposures"

in *Daughters*, but Saul, unlike Ursa Bea, projects his "First-World" aspirations for

revolution onto developing and exoticized spaces; his search for revolutionary

potential in foreign places can be read not only as his reaction to the fact that his

radical heart has been tempered by neoliberal institutions, but also within the

context of the political and professional security that the institutions preserve for

him. Saul is aware, to some extent, of the difference between "radicalism" and a

"development scheme" (225-226); however, "[h]e soon discovers, as does the

reader, that the narrative of history can be established not by a general appeal to

an original experience but through an act of projection in which the subject

rewrites the past to reflect its own desires" (Gikandi *Writing in Limbo*178). In

numerous instances, Saul has a physiological response to island suffering.[100] He

undergoes processes of projection, transference, and internalization. As readers,

we might question how literary characters *and* critics project desires for resistance

onto unwilling subjects and spaces. Much criticism on Marshall's novels upholds

the vision Marshall herself provides in interviews. She regards Bournehills people

as "'the rebel slaves who had refused to die'" or who "'might have been the

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[100] Observing the harsh working conditions of Gwen and Delbert, as they both work in the cane-fields, it is ironic that it is Saul who feels faint. When he witnesses Ferguson's silence in the factory, he feels as though he is choking. When he confronts Merle's outrage, he feels her pain.

original Africans who survived the crossing'" (qtd. in Gikandi190-191). It remains

questionable whether or not the survival of this "crossing" enables a life beyond

the bareness of neoliberal experience. When Ferguson attempts to file a grievance

over the unsafe conditions of machinery, the Cane Vale factory becomes a

battleground to test such questions. Sir John, the English manager, is "[l]ike a

general" who, with "the tanks and mounted guns, the stacked bombs and missles,"

moved "through the aisles of machines, boilers and steaming vats" (221).

Ferguson struggles to speak, "[b]ut no sound came" and, from Saul's perspective,

"his lips were as if sewn together" (221). While he evokes "passion and force

when he declaimed upon Cuffee Ned in the rumshop at night," he becomes "a

thing of stone, a dumb effigy of himself" within the space of the factory (221). A

witness to his inefficacy, Saul feels as though he is "choking" alongside his friend

and his "anguish and helplessness [is felt] as intimately as if they were his own"

(222). Ferguson's political ideals ultimately fail to translate into action and he

later admits, disappointedly, "'Cuffee woulda done different. He would've spoke

up'" (397).

When the Cane Vale factory announces its closure to prevent smallholder

farmers' access to the machinery needed to grind their own cane, it is Merle who

first intervenes. In Marshall's depiction, "virtually the entire population of

Spiretown" was "silent" and "impassive" as they "stood outside the gate" of the

factory (385). Their collective "body and gesture" reflects the "stillness" of

"statues that had been placed on an abandoned landscape to give it the semblance

of life" (385); they have "a two-fold vision: if not only being able to see backward

in time so that, unlike most people, they had a clear memory of events long past, but, by some extraordinary prescience, forward also" (385). Marshall endows the people with a sense of futurity and yet they remain passive and "largely unaffected by what had happened" (385). Here, I argue that "a two-fold vision" relates to Marshall's later neoliberal metaphor of "double exposure" in *Daughters* and suggest that it may also imply a neoliberal crisis whereby both rupture and condensation in the historical imagining of resistance to capitalist exploitation may occur. Hall's conception of "conjunctural analysis," which I discussed in chapter one, may be useful in this context.

Marshall provides in the occupied factory scene a specifically gendered, double vision and conjunctural critique of U.S. imperialism. In the situation of the factory lockout, Merle singularly "lacked restraint" and it is assumed by others that she "would surely do or say something rash" (385). Her trespassing of the factory, to interrogate Erskine Vaughn about the shady, premature closure of the factory, creates potential for what Katherine McKittrick refers to as "subaltern spatial practices" (xxiii). McKittrick explains that "the combination of material and imagined geographies is intended to unfix black women's geographies from their 'natural' places and spaces by bringing into focus the 'sayability' of geography" (xxiii). Although Merle is "gone for close to a half hour," Saul knows that "no one in the crowd around him would dare venture past the notice posted on the gate and go to her" (387); he realizes that only those with the "status as outsider could risk it" (388). Following after Merle, Saul is confronted by her outrage with colonial and neocolonial exploitation. Saul bears witness to Merle

who is "standing in Ferguson's place on the platform above the roller pit, staring numbly down at the silent machines over the guard rail" (388). While other characters in the novel read her as hysterical,[101] I find that this doubling of Ferguson and Merle helps draw attention to a simultaneous exploitation of black female labour and undermining of black female leadership. Merle directly confronts Saul's inefficacious role in development by criticizing his "'million-dollar schemes'" and "'big projects,'" which fail to address the urgent needs of the people (389). She illuminates his ironic incapacity to fix a simple machine despite his U.S. developmental authority:

> "[y]ou don't have to play God and transform the whole place into paradise overnight. All we're asking is that you fix one little machine. That'll be enough for now. And that shouldn't be difficult for you. After all, you're from a place where the machine's next to God, where it even thinks for you, so I'm sure you know how to repair something as simple as a roller. Machines come natural to your kind." (389)

Saul's anthropological methods of "'[c]ollecting data'" and "'writing reports'" are characterized as dehumanizing to the "'poor people standing out there like they've turned to stone, afraid to set foot inside the gate when they should be overrunning this place and burning it the hell down, or better yet, taking it over and running it themselves'"" (389).

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[101] Of Merle, the population "knew the toll the outburst would exact and would have spared her the pain if possible" (*The Chosen Place* 385). Merle has a history of psychological instability that causes her to withdraw into seclusion particularly after events that can be considered to be traumatic. Hortense J. Spillers, like the characters in the novel, also reads Merle having a relationship to "motherland" that "is occasionally hysterical and self-serving" (167). In her reading, it is once Saul—a male American foreigner—matches her in "talkativeness" that they can bring each other into being, "having penetrated the core of mutual silence" (168).

Merle clearly differentiates herself here from the immobilized "'poor people,'" by trespassing on corporate property at a time when a depoliticized social public is physically restricted and no longer knows how to respond. She can also be read as alienated from or by this same community. According to McKittrick, "[a]cts of expressing and saying place are central to understanding what kinds of geographies are available to women. Because black women's geographies are bound up with practices of spatial domination, saying space and place is understood as one of the more crucial ways geography can work for women" (xxiii). The spatial politics of the factory "gate" is relevant to Merle's liberation theory, which is to be distinguished from Saul's empirical tendencies to map black populations in conventional ways that ultimately serve neoliberal development. Her earlier act of making public her privately inherited land can be read, in relation to this scene, as reflecting the intention to empower people by making sayable new geographies of social possibility. Merle's transgression of the corporate gate and her redistribution of plantation land can thus be read as contributing to the "creative acts that influence and undermine existing spatial arrangements" (McKittrick xxiii). Nonetheless, she seems alienated from a social community that does not recognize the value of her work. In this situation, Merle's acts of resistance seem to be constituted in terms of their singularity.

Merle's condemnation of modern Western development notably addresses both visible and invisible forms of violence. For example, the death of the character Vere, in an automobile race, is imagined in relation to the factory closure as a "double tragedy" (390); a nuclear attack, in which "'[e]verything and

everybody [is] blown to bits,'" is subsequently envisioned:

> "[a]ll the buildings will be there but there'll be nobody inside them.
> Empty. The cars and buses right where they were on the roads when it
> dropped but not a driver in sight. No passengers. Not even a dead body to
> be seen on the streets. The houses with the curtains at the windows like
> people are living in them but not a soul inside. Every living thing just gone
> from the face of the earth. Oh, God, the silence!" (391).

Rituals of life and death are absent in this apocalyptic scene. Buildings and vehicles are obsolete, despite their seeming indestructibility, because a living community has not been sustained.

Merle's lecture inspires Saul to assume the leadership role to organize local workers once he realizes that the Labour union official is in Washington "attending a conference of Caribbean trade unionists being held under the joint sponsorship of the largest of the American unions and the State Department" (393). Discovering that "[t]he workers in Bournehills had never been properly organized" (393), he "suddenly […] knew, in the deepest personal way, all that Merle had felt standing on the platform in the silent mill: her frustration and rage, the sense of utter powerlessness that had sent her lashing out at him" (393). Saul's political action is thus inspired by his sense of Merle's political feeling. In contrast to Saul who organizes workers, Merle is bed-ridden after her outburst. Her waning status may imply black female hysteria, but I read it instead in relation to the psychological and physical trauma of long-term, intersectional labour exploitation premised on combinations of race, class, and gender.

It is significant to note that when Saul visits Merle, after her outburst, she

is found to be "like a rag doll, its limbs all awry, on the bed and left there, and the

dead eyes" (399); while she convalesces, he absorbs the bedroom scenery as if

encountering Merle's personal and national history for the first time. The room, to

him, "expressed her" and "the struggle for coherence, the hope and desire for

reconciliation of her conflicting parts, the longing to truly accept herself" (401-

402); it also expressed "Bournehills itself," a place that "might have been selected

as the repository of the history which reached beyond it to include the hemisphere

north and south" (402). Saul's worldview frequently undercuts Merle's

significance, but Marshall implies, through his epiphany, her proximity to a slave

hero. In Merle's bedroom, Saul observes the remnants of colonial history to

realize:

> [o]nly an act on the scale of Cuffee's could redeem them. And only then
>
> would Bournehills itself, its mission fulfilled, perhaps forgo that
>
> wounding past and take on the present, the future. But it would hold out
>
> until then, resisting, defying all sorts of efforts, all the halfway
>
> measures, including his, to reclaim it; refusing to settle for anything less
>
> than what Cuffee had demanded in his time. (402)

Cuffee Ned's mythological significance to the region has been reckoned with by

literary critics who speculate over his historical and geographic origins.[102] Saul

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[102] For Pettis, "Cuffee's revolt, affirmed by written, official accounts […], is balanced by its transformation into the regions of myth" (54). Related to "Toussaint L'Ouverture's rebellion in Haiti" and "revolts in Barbados," he represents "the conversion of history into myth," in Marshall's novel, so as to generate "the community's attempt at sociocultural assertion and self-empowerment" (54). Cuffee is also linked to "the Berbice Rebellion led in 1765 by Cofee (Kofi-Akan), now a national hero in Guyana" (Denniston 101) and the "'idea of subversion […]rehearsed in various New World historical narratives—Haiti's Touissant L'Ouverture and Nat Turner and

finds that "in spite of all the difficulties the canes were being hauled, and perhaps for the first time since that time long ago when Bournehills, under Cuffee, had been a nation and its people a People, one could almost sense something of that same spirit moving in the district again" (405). Although Saul has partially absorbed the critical perspective of Merle, he only indirectly credits her labour by invoking the sentimental figure of the male slave hero. Her role in the history of resistance to an emerging neoliberal order is thus de-historicized and de-contextualized as a one-dimensional figure is superimposed onto her own in his whitened, Western, patriarchal imagination. Merle, in this context, becomes the neoliberal medium and, very problematically, the site of struggle for a historical form of racialized resistance that seems to lose credibility in a current context.

By the novel's end, the relationship between Saul and Merle conveys mutual respect and the potential for an inter-racial, transnational coalition to form in support of local participation in Caribbean development. Saul reviews his professional methodologies to consider the value of "setting up a program to recruit and train young social scientists from overseas—those in my specialty—to work in their own countries" (467). Although he has learned that the best strategy is "to have people from the country itself carry out their own development programs whenever possible" because "[o]utsiders just complicate the picture" (467), he fails to ask how women can be formally included. He also remains oblivious to his own U.S. cultural supremacy in his assumption of authority to train locals. Residual within Saul's supposedly enlightened view of development

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Denmark Vesey of the southern United States share the same heroic constellation'" (Spillers qtd. in Denniston 101).

is the assumption that technological expertise originates from the developed

nation to be imported as knowledge transfer to developing nations. His sense that

nationals could "carry out *their own* development programs" (my emphasis) is

flawed because the "program" is U.S.-directed. Although Lyle wrongly

accommodates pro-Western interests, he is aware of complex obstacles to

Caribbean sovereignty that Saul is not. Saul's colonialist worldview should thus

be displaced through local debate between the various Lyles and the Merles of the

Caribbean.

In the end, Merle's decision to visit her ancestral Africa, in search of her

estranged husband and child, is not one that dismisses the Caribbean as a site of

possibility. Merle imagines the trip to be restorative but she does not romanticize

the space, for she knows that Africans "have more than their share of problems"

(468). Merle remains committed to her "home" (468)—Bournehills—and she

pledges to return because "'[w]hatever little I can do that will matter must be done

here'" (468). Following Merle's lead, yet again, Saul claims his intention to return

to the U.S. to "'take a stand, do something toward shaking up that system,'" for the

only way he can acquire meaning in the U.S. is to get politically involved (468).

Merle reconfirms her commitment to the Caribbean when, in response to Saul, she

rejects the U.S. as a geopolitical possibility for herself: "'they treat the black

people, the very ones who made the country rich […]so badly; [it is] a place

where […]'you read the newspaper sometime back how they bombed a church

killing four children, four little girls now the age of my daughter; and where,

every time you look around, they're warring against some poor, half-hungry

country somewhere in the world'" (469). While it is Harriet's view of the

"dangerous division" (21) of Bourne Island that introduces us to the world of *The*

Chosen Place, The Timeless People, it is Merle who assesses U.S. policy as

continuing to facilitate global white supremacy and violence.

Daughters and the "Double Exposures" of Neoliberal Blackness

While Marshall explores the neoliberal transition from "aid" to "trade"

relations in *The Chosen Place, the Timeless People* (1969), it is in her 1991 novel,

Daughters, that she emphasizes the detrimental, material effects of the ideological

shift to neoliberal policy on black Caribbean and African-American

communities.[103] In particular, the novel elaborates upon the effects of a

neoliberal, 'trickle down" economics consolidated by U.S. president Ronald

Regan to promote the whitening gentrification of cities through the increasing

disenfranchisement of the black urban poor.

In *Daughters*, Marshall's primary black female protagonist is Ursa Bea,

the daughter of Estelle and Primus Mackenzie. A character of African American

and West Indian descent, she free-lances in New York City to conduct research

for the "huge NCRC [National Consumer Research Corporation] complex" (45).

Although Ursa Bea faces ongoing job insecurity, she chooses to quit her work

with the dubious organization that has employed her as the "'Associate Director of

Research'" in "'Special Markets'" (46) to perform surveys and to conduct data

collection for "American Leaf and Tobacco [...] to measure the effectiveness of a

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[103] *The Chosen Place* seems to be set around the time of its publication. Events unfold on the fictional, composite Caribbean Bourne Island. While black racial segregation and violence in the U.S. is discussed by characters, no scenes actually unfold there. *Daughters*, instead, involves generational flashbacks between the 1950s and 1980s. Characters also travel between the U.S. and the fictional, composite Caribbean island of Triunion.

massive advertising campaign the company had recently conduct in special

markets (45-46). She also defers graduate school dreams of researching the

history of black community-building and slave revolt to conduct social research in

the black ghettoes of Midland City, New Jersey. In reaction, Lowell Carruthers,

her occasional boyfriend, warns her of the increasing racialization of U.S.

poverty:

> "…Do you know how many niggers there are running around out here
> claiming they're free-lancing, consulting and shit? Do you? And what do
> they have to show by way of proof? Not a goddamn thing, most of them,
> but the job section of the *Times* and abologna sandwich for lunch in those
> fancy attaché cases they carry around. The Second Reconstruction is
> over, baby, haven't you heard? It's over! Don't you see where the
> country's getting ready to put some cowboy in the White House come
> November? We might find ourselves back in the cotton patch. And this is
> the time you pick to quit a perfectly good job to free-lance?" (45)

Anticipating the U.S. presidential election of Ronald Regan, Carruthers declares

the end of the Second Reconstruction, along with the long civil rights movement

and the Pan-African struggles against colonialism and Cold War policy. Black

internationalist solidarity and militancy, often characterized as socialist or

communist, threatens the Western capitalist alliance but, as Carruthers anticipates,

the neoliberal culture emerging at the time of President Regan's ascendency

would thwart this threat.

Carruthers signals not only the rollback of civil rights gains, by

referencing an uncanny black return to the "cotton patch," but he implicitly calls

into question the extent to which equal rights opportunities were ever fully

achieved. I would also conceptualize his reference to the "Second Reconstruction"

as signifying the historical repetition of racially exploitative economics as evinced

in the metaphor of "double exposure" and historically related to W.E.B. Du Bois'

theory of "double consciousness." In his book *Black Reconstruction in America*

1860-1880, Du Bois demands "Either extermination, root and branch, or absolute

equality. There can be no compromise" (qtd. in Marable, "Introduction: Black

Intellectuals" 1); however, Manning Marable explains that The Compromise of

1877 represented an "extraordinary white backlash against the victories of the

Reconstruction era" (3). This situation enabled the institutionalization of

segregationist Jim Crow policies but also "the construction of a new [black] racial

consciousness and identity" (3) which led to the 1954 Brown v. Board of

Education Supreme Court decision to outlaw racial segregation in public schools

(10). In this context, Marable argues that "[a] new 'political moment' had begun

for the Black Freedom Movement, a new phase of struggle in which the collapse

of legal segregation was now possible. What was required were new tactics:

massive, civil disobedience campaigns in the streets, economic boycotts, the

construction of 'freedom schools'" (10). Circumstances shifted in the post-Civil

Rights era, however, and African Americans became divisive in ways that

Marable explains in his 1983 study *How Capitalism Underdeveloped Black*

America:

       Under these exploitative [capitalist] conditions, what had developed

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among African Americans were two different societies: a black elite of professionals, managers, and members of the upper class who exercised relative privilege, and the black majority of workers, the unemployed, and prisoners, whose loves were destroyed by oppression. *How Capitalism* predicted the rise of the US prison industrial complex, which increased the black incarceration rate from 650,000 prisoners in 1983 to 2.1 million prisoners twenty years later. Following the lead of Angela Davis, *How Capitalism* also made a strong case for a robust black feminism as a central aspect of African American radial thought. ("Introduction: Black Intellectuals" 13)

With this brief historical sketch in mind, I find Lowell Carruthers arguing that the Second Reconstruction, enabled by the Black Freedom Movement, was eclipsed by the continuation of racialized class exploitation permitted by selective multicultural class stratifications that proved to be destructive to black anti-capitalist social solidarities in the U.S.

Following a discussion of social security policies that failed to benefit black Americans during the 1930s, Nikhil Pal Singh explains that during the 1960s and 1970s public works construction projects "bisected black neighbourhoods with freeways and tramlines and invariably destroyed more housing than they created" (8). He explains that "[t]he historical shift represented by the Reagan presidency of 1980-1988 was condensed in the fateful shift from the 1960s War on Poverty to the 1980s War on Drugs. A signal accomplishment of these years was the reinvention and renewal of discredited racial logics of the

past" (9). In effect, Carruthers' critique may convey the perspective of a Civil Rights compromise in the context of what Jodi Melamed refers to as a multicultural, neoliberal phase of U.S. transnational capitalism. While, strictly speaking, W.E.B. Du Bois' concept of "double consciousness," as relayed in his 1903 book *The Souls of Black Folk*, expressed "the hybridic reality that blacks were both people of African descent as well as Americans," it is important to keep in mind that Du Bois had Pan-African commitments and international socialist orientations (Marable 4). Furthermore, it seems significant that Manning Marable identifies Guyanese Marxist Walter Rodney's *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* as a source of inspiration for his own study of the destructive effects of capitalism on black Americans in the late twentieth century. It is thus arguable that a theory of "double consciousness" has been elaborated upon to speak not only to domestic but also to internationalist dimensions of black experience. Thus, I read Marshall's invocation of "double exposure," which I discuss further below, as a neoliberal metaphor for the late-twentieth-century phase of the U.S.-led, transnational capitalist underdevelopment of racialized and feminized communities in the U.S. and the Caribbean.

It is notable that while Carruthers' argument for Ursa Bea's continued employment with a questionable corporation is propelled by his consciousness of racialized job insecurity in the U.S., Primus Mackenzie's pressure for her to remain corporate is premised on the Caribbean neoliberal misreading of the American dream as one that is equally accessible for all. A prominent political leader in the Caribbean, Ursa Bea's father applauds her upward mobility with

"'[o]ne of the Fortune 500'" (47). In his estimation, "[t]heir profits for a month

alone are probably more than our national budget. They could buy and sell

Triunion in a minute'" (47). Her father ironically celebrates her corporate

power—one that could subsume his whole island— by encouraging her to

become "'president or vice president'" of a company based in "'a country where

the impossible is possible'" (47). Rejecting her corporate job, Ursa Bea *returns* to

Midland City for a second social research visit. During this visit, she acquires

consciousness and literacy of the urban planning initiatives promoting racial and

economic segregation for disenfranchised black communities. Examining the

city's "southeast corner," she discovers,

> the same no-man's-land of abandoned factories and warehouses and
>
> defunct railroad lines; the weed-choked vacant lots that have become
>
> garbage dumps and junkyards piled   high with cadavers of cars waiting to
>
> be compacted and recycled. Crumbling buildings and decay everywhere.
>
> And hardly a soul in sight. Hardly a truck or a car besides hers to be seen.
>
> A ghost town. And to think this had once been the industrial heart of
>
> Midland City! (273)

This image of developmental, industrial decay serves to signpost economic

stagnation and the disastrous social effects of neoliberal global capitalism.

Marshall relates a lack of population and building maintenance to unemployment,

as weeds, garbage, and broken-down cars accumulate. The industrial city is

anachronistic in an American landscape increasingly focused on the consolidation

of power through various information technologies. This wasted image signals the

global assembly-line, by marking the decline of blue collar American work and its exportability to underdeveloped countries where labour is frequently unregulated.

This image of the American city is generationally distinct from the productive one her father views as a young Caribbean professional while on a guided tour of the U.S. The South Ward is paradoxically a Third World ghetto in Ursa Bea's mind's eye:

> Triunion! Triunion all over again! While she was still in high school, the P[lanning] and D[evelopment] Board had completely rebuilt the road between the airport and town, turning it into a highway for the benefit of the tourists and the would-be money people, with a section that bypassed Armory Hill altogether, and that had cost a fortune. Where am I? Which place? What country? Is there no escaping that island? (292)

The neoliberal medium, encapsulated by the figure of the island, seems globally inescapable and hegemonic. Marshall illuminates the tension between material immobility and the desire for escape, by depicting Ursa Bea's disorientation within neoliberal geography. Notably, as "*ur*-commodity," the automobile can "help to periodise capitalism as it moves into and leaves its industrial phase" (Gilroy *Darker Than Blue* 30). In both passages above, Marshall sets in ironic counterpoint the symbolic capital of individual car possession and the waning employment opportunities of the U.S.-based automobile industry. In the first passage, Ursa Bea sees "[h]ardly a truck or a car besides hers" but also notes the defunct railroad system that may have once facilitated public transportation or trade within the manufacturing industry (273). Yet the "highway," in the second

passage, promotes the private life of cars in both the U.S. and Triunion.

Significantly, Ursa Bea subverts the intended purpose of the highway by choosing

to drive *into*—rather than away from or around— the disenfranchised space of the

southeast corner. The highway does not re-route her itinerary yet she feels lost in

her search for grassroots social organizing within the black ghetto. As a car-

owner, she is complicit with "the would-be money people" (292) and displaced by

the socioeconomics of this blackened space. That abandoned streets mirror

abandoned factories to suggest a possible population shift away from the area as a

result of the lack of employment. The empty streets also indicate an apparent lack

of collective bodily presence willing to organize labour protest over economic and

labour insecurities. The selective presence of cars, in the ghetto, signifies the

failure of the car as a vehicle for the upward mobility it is believed to index.

Reviewing this imagery of a neoliberal landscape can help us to better

understand how cars, as Gilroy argues, "politicize and moralise everyday life in

unprecedented configurations" (*Darker Than Blue* 30). Gilroy explains that

"conspicuous consumption" became more prominent in black communities in the

U.S. through the creation and expansion of black-focused markets (9); in effect,

"two contrasting opportunities to demonstrate [black] freedom, one political the

other commercial became entangled" (Gilroy 9). Given the "histories of racial

terror, brutal confinement, and coerced labour," it seems that "the pleasures of

auto-autonomy" became an appealing "means of escape, transcendence, and,

perhaps fleetingly, also of resistance" (20).[104] Such insights support my critical

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[104] Given the current global petroleum crisis, Gilroy identifies the need to address the
current "neocolonial ambitions and resurgent imperial domination" of the U.S. and to therefore

impetus to reassess not only relational blackness, in the neoliberal context of economic and cultural capital, but also in the context of gendered expressions of space and freedom for the organization of anti-neoliberal imaginaries and resistances. Through Ursa Bea's visions, Marshall conveys how highways, in both the U.S. and Triunion, are constructed to re-route citizens away from ghettos but towards areas of commercial interest. Opportunities for non-corporate, grassroots culture and community organizing are decimated in a landscape reconfigured for neoliberal enterprise. Gilroy focuses on the questionable ways that car culture facilitates black masculine empowerment, but his broader point seems to be that commodity-fetishism reinforces racialized, neoliberal violence against the most vulnerable populations.

Given both Gilroy's insights and Marshall's attention to neoliberal urban planning initiatives, I argue that the images of the automobile, the factory, and the highway, in both *The Chosen Place* and *Daughters*, illuminate crises within the progressive narratives of industrial and neoliberal capitalism. As these images become raced and gendered by uneven association with white modernity and black masculinity, they signal a neoliberal conditioning of black female protagonists who struggle to provide a critique of capitalism. The life and death of Vere, in *The Chosen Place*, is a telling case. Vere is an African-Caribbean, agricultural migrant who returns to Bourne Island after concluding seasonal work within the U.S. Using his earnings to rebuild a car for the island's upcoming

also trouble previous global alignments assumed between disenfranchised peoples (*Darker Than Blue* 15). In this context, he sees "serious implications for any approach which would align the struggles of U.S. blacks against racial hierarchy with wider movements to decolonize the world and to set it on a more sustainable and equitable economic path" (15).

Whitsunday race, he achieves a questionable sense of masculine empowerment through that act of rebuilding this car; subsequently, he abuses his former girlfriend, the mother of his child, and dies during the race when his car malfunctions.[105] Vere's "driving while black," to draw upon the notorious phrase reiterated by Gilroy (*Darker Than Blue* 29), represents not only an "antagonist relationship between the country and the city" (29) of First and Third Worlds, but also the dramatic acceleration of a capitalist black male enterprise, enabled through a Third World reliance upon outmoded automobile parts imported from the U.S. and Germany. The car signifies a dying form of patriarchal Third World development, premised upon a recombinant white modernity and black masculinity. The implied resistance posed to capitalism is one resulting in a car crash.

By contrast, Merle "stands as an objective correlative for Bourne Island as a whole" and is found "driv[ing] an ex-colonial car" (Macpherson 79). "[D]eliberately misused," the figure of the car signifies not only "the Caribbean island's historical past," but also "the colonial powers' treatment of the island" (79). Although "[c]ars belonged first to the city," Gilroy suggests that "all the environments that they entered and changed were reconstituted around their devastating presence" (29). I read Marshall, in both novels, as re-routing black responses to capitalist neoliberal enterprise, by first aligning scenes of accommodation *and* failed resistance with black, hyper-masculinity and then by

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[105] Vere's violence against his former girlfriend is complicated by the fact that his child with her is dead, by this scene, presumably as a result of the former girlfriend's neglect and life as a prostitute.

associating limited opposition with black feminist perspectives of community

development. She emphasizes, instead, a black feminist perspective of political

collaboration and partnership. In the case of *The Chosen Place*, the collaboration

between Merle and Saul continues to have political potential while Cuffee Ned

can be read, in this context, as a more ambiguous figure of the individualized,

mythic slave hero who inspires but does not necessarily mobilize the modern

Bournehills population. In *Daughters*, the potential range of political

collaborations possible is more thoroughly explored. Estelle and Ursa Bea work

together on an intergenerational and transnational basis to challenge the neoliberal

conditions imposed upon black communities. The final political project they

undertake explicitly rejects the patriarchal head of their nuclear family to support

a younger Caribbean husband and wife whose electoral political campaign

forthrightly supports the poorest communities in Triunion. Given these contexts, I

read Marshall as emphasizing a black feminist perspective of social relations to

reject the individualization of social responsibility and the exploitation of black

women's labour in the patriarchal, neoliberal capitalist contexts of the U.S. and

Caribbean.

Attending to the distinctions between African-Caribbean and African-

American labour and resistance has important social and political value,[106] but I

also insist upon careful attention to how the imagery of capitalist consumption is

[106] While *Daughters* provides a more critically nuanced representation of the diversity of African- Caribbean and African-American life, *The Chosen Place* only alludes to black life in the U.S., for no scene ever unfolds there. Nonetheless, the migrant labour scheme of which Vere is a part, implicitly positions him *not* as a black American but as a temporary Third World worker. Vere's status in the U.S. may be better compared with migrants from other developing countries contracted for racialized migrant labour. Stelamaris Coser's assumption that "the fate of the working class and the black race" is "the same in Bournehills and the United States" is premised on the shared history of slavery but seems to me hasty and flawed (55).

universalized to promote neoliberal, black male empowerment while undercutting the social, economic, and political well-being—as well as the creative diversity—of a larger black community. As Gilroy argues, the freedom narrative deployed to promote car consumerism threatens citizenship because "it is associated with a privatization that confiscates the possibility of collective experience, synchronized suffering, and acting in concert" (22). "[T]he automobile" thus "becomes the instrument of segregation and privatization, not an aid to their overcoming" (22). Black commodity culture may be thoroughly reassessed in relation to geopolitical space, given Gilroy's contention that we have arrived at

> the historic turning point where blackness can easily become less an index
> of hurt, resistance, or solidarity in the face of persistent and systematic
> inequality, than one more faintly exotic lifestyle 'option' conferred by the
> multicultural alchemy of heavily branded commodities and the presealed,
> 'ethnic' identities that apparently match them in a world where
> globalization is, to all intents and purposes, a process of (North)
> Americanisation. (25)

With these assessments in mind, I propose a rethinking of how "blackness" may function as part of the complicated hemispheric cultural flows of commodity exchange. An "exotic lifestyle 'option'" may have bi-directional flexibility, insofar as Caribbean blackness may be construed to induce African-American desires varying from those cultivated in African-Caribbean consumers of African-American culture; yet, the underlying potential of these differences at play in the spatial imaginings of black liberation and resistance seems underexplored. I thus

argue for the relevance of disjunctive, bi-directional flows to unsettle not only presupposed sedimentary attachments, but also the promotion of undifferentiated, hemispheric blackness and the unconditional cultural celebration of black resistance.

Marshall's snapshots of neoliberalism nonetheless expose what I also regard as the pervasiveness of racialized and feminized poverty, as well as the specific exploitation of black female labour, both in the Caribbean and the U.S., resulting from privatizations of social services, concentrations of wealth, and devaluations of grassroots political organizing. The seemingly outdated term "Third World" may signify a history of generational debt accrued through racialized and feminized geopolitical spaces.[107] Ursa Bea's consciousness of this predicament is articulated through a series of "double exposures" (332):

> How she'd been overwhelmed—being back in Midland City again—by
> the sense of her life being a series of double exposures. Everything—
> elections, roads, the South Ward, Armory Hill, the PM, the Do-Nothings,
> Sandy Lawson, the white people—them! still running things in both
> places—everything superimposed on everything else. Inseparable.
> Inescapable. The same things repeated everywhere she turned. (332)

Within the photographic lexicon, "double exposure" refers to a deliberate or accidental aesthetic outcome in which two images are superimposed onto a single

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[107] Wise's comparative analysis of generational poverty, among "white" and "black" populations in the U.S., is useful here. With a longer historical view of racialized, economic exploitation in mind, he explains that "black families are far more vulnerable that their white counterparts to economic downturns, in that they do not have reserve assets with which to pad their economic situation in case of a layoff" (*Colorblind* 70).

photographic medium. The inseparability and inescapability characterizing the "double exposures," in the passage above, illuminates the historical entanglements of economics, race, gender, geography, and psychology. That this doubling repeats "everywhere [Ursa Bea] turned" (332) implies entrapment and the imprecise reproducibility of what I call the "neoliberal medium" required for the racialization and feminization of poverty. On a hemispheric scale, black communities may share some experiential similarities but divergence and disorientation is also evident: Ursa Bea's entire life is like "a series of double exposures" (332) in which her African-Caribbean and African-American pasts and presents overlap but also diverge. Although physically limited to a single time and place, she envisions a time-space collapse in which the South Ward and Triunion are superimposed.

The question of how black communities organize social solidarities to transform the neoliberal medium remains subject to debate. Marshall implies limitations to the notion of collective black politics when she introduces conflicting gender politics of space. In *Daughters*, the political fallout between Mae Ryland and Sandy Lawson results from competing ideologies of development regarding the increasingly disenfranchised South Ward and the upwardly mobile Midland City. Mae, the "Coalition Lady" (287) who transforms her deceased husband's barbershop into "the headquarters for just about every grass-roots organization in the [South] Ward" (286), helps to elect Sandy as mayor of Midland City by exercising her influence in the "packed auditorium, hall, community center, church, or wherever" (275). As mayor, Sandy focuses on

the "revitalization of downtown" (291), while Mae serves as community Liaison of the South Ward. Their fallout reveals a political difference of scale and commitment: she supports "the South Ward's campaign" of black coalitional politics (279), while he invests in a "big-money, fat-cat, party-run campaign" with "slick, high-tech TV and radio" (279).

The South Ward valorizes "Mother Ryland" (281), while Sandy works for a "six-lane expressway" (282) to facilitate traffic flow downtown for "'white folks in the suburbs'" (283). With the goal of putting the city "on the map," he feels justified in routing the expressway "'through part of the Ward'" (282). Mae foresees the exacerbation of black socioeconomic poverty, as a result, but Sandy regards Mae's political strategy as flawed because it seems limited: "'she only thought about the Ward [...] and everybody was to think that way too'" (283). Bureaucratic compromise is necessary, to him, when "'you're dealing with an entire city'" (283). Sandy represents the failure of neoliberal accountability for disenfranchised communities left to devise informal strategies for survival. The flawed logic of trickle-down economics becomes clear, for while the South Ward is forgotten, Midland City achieves little recognition except as a site of neoliberal accommodation.

Sandy's colonialist ideology, domesticated in the South Ward, is forthrightly imperialist when he refers to the Caribbean. Recalling a recent vacation to St. Martin, he describes the island as "'no bigger than a minute'" for it "'even makes Midland city look big'" (278). Implicitly, Sandy's U.S.-based, black male power dominates over the disempowered and feminized, Third World

Caribbean. Yet, his views are ironically in line with those of Primus Mackenzie who revels in the notion that a U.S. company could "buy and sell Triunion in a minute" (47). For Marshall, it seems, the neoliberal, black male imagination reproduces Caribbean space as an object of U.S. speculation and commodity exchange for a global capitalist system. The aligned politics of Sandy and Primus can be read as another "double exposure" in Marshall's novel, for it reveals the ideological work underlying the neoliberal superimposition of a limited vision of uneven capitalist development within and between the U.S. and the Caribbean.

Sandy clearly diverges from Ursa Bea in his preference of urban route and itinerary. He shows no racial or political solidarity with the people of St. Martin because, preferring the all-inclusive resort where "'[y]ou don't even have to step out the gate,'" and confessing that "'I didn't want to go anywhere, talk to anyone [….]. I just wanted to turn the world off. Which is exactly what I did'" (278). The people of St. Martin are gated from the tourist community not unlike the people of the South Ward are ghettoized from Midland City. Sandy flattens the historical space of St. Martin into "'a minute,'" whereas Ursa Bea sees Triunion and the South Ward within the time-space continuum of neoliberal "double exposures." Unsurprisingly, Ursa Bea turns to Mae Ryland for insights into black community-building, for not only has she served as "their chief informant on the earlier study, as well as her personal guide, mentor, adviser, teacher, taskmaster and friend" (274), but she has a reliable grassroots understanding of the black struggles for community development. Unlike Sandy, or her father, Ursa Bea participates in acts of re-reading and consultation with other black women. Through this

approach she acquires a multi-dimensional perspective of the neoliberal impact on

racialized and feminized poor communities and expands her sense of what I

would refer to as "neoliberal literacy."[108]

If Marshall's *The Chosen Place* calls for the increased attention to

women's exploitation in histories of development and activism, then *Daughters*

responds by foregrounding the necessity of transforming the dominant

disciplinary paradigms imagined to determine the constitution and pedagogical

transmission of history. Notably, it is Ursa Bea's mother, Estelle, who takes the

initiative to provide political education for her daughter by sending her to the U.S.

to train in the civil rights movement. Estelle does this after having already re-

educated herself as a result of realizing her paucity of knowledge of the

Caribbean. That her own knowledge of the Caribbean was limited to "travel

posters" (29) suggests that her formal African-American educational upbringing

failed to expand her consciousness of the region's struggles; thus, self-education

was necessary. Drawn to a book about Triunion, she confesses to Primus, "'I

couldn't put down the book when I started reading about it. To have bandied back

all the slave revolts! […] I love the woman who was one of the leaders. Her

story…It was a real education for me'" (29). Estelle's sense of political passion

and social commitment is inherited from a family of teachers and social workers

(29); thus, her tour through the Triunion countryside to win the hearts, minds, and

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[108] When Ursa Bea reluctantly returns to Triunion to publicly endorse Primus' political campaign, she confronts an "all-too-familiar scene" of "pitch-roofed houses" and "[f]aces in every black streaming past" (351).The donkey cart, "still to be seen," is "not about to move out of the way for anything, not even a big motorcar from the States" (351). She finds "everything unchanged except that there is more of the same," and, closing her eyes, sees "[t]he South Ward" and "[t]he double exposure beginning again" (315).

votes of the disenfranchised, is done not because she has learned to support her husband but rather his politics.

When Primus' political work conflicts with Estelle's, so does their mutual sense of solidarity. Estelle, like Mae, is committed to empowering local political and social development which, for her, is based in Triunion; nonetheless, Estelle also attends to the international dimensions of black struggle. In a letter home to her parents, written when Ursa Bea is a child, Estelle compares racialized poverty in Triunion and the U.S.:

> But I've really come to see things here and in the States in pretty much the same light. There's the same work to be done. I drive past Armory Hill, the big slum we have here, and I could be driving through all the Harlems in the States. And just as we're finally a moverin' up there, *the Movement*! I keep telling myself that maybe […] we'll start a moverin' down here and won't run and hide the next time the navy shows up on our doorstep. I know, Daddy, I can hear you now: the woman's an eternal optimist. And so I am. So I am. Love Estelle. (224)

It is evident that Ursa Bea inherits her capacity for double vision from her mother who reads black histories of exploitation, struggle, and resistance, as part of a hemispheric pattern. Inspired by the successful outcomes of the U.S.-based, Black Freedom Movement, she strives to develop like-minded strategies and outcomes for Triunion. Yet, in the same letter, Estelle expresses a desire to return "'home'" for the March on Washington (223). She also longs for direct involvement in "'desegregating those rest rooms between Washington and Tennessee'" and to be

"'in Alabama with Grady right now, right this minute working on the voter registration drive'" (223). That she "'sounds like a broken record in every letter'" (223) implies her sense that black political movements of the U.S. and Triunion may also be divergent. She remains inspired by the U.S.-based gains but seems wary of the compromises underway in the Caribbean.

In an attempt to hold a hemispheric vision of the black movement, Estelle maps current U.S. political and socioeconomic transformations with futuristic anticipation:

> no more back of the bus, no more bushes, no more you can't eat or sleep here even if you do have the money. All of that finally at an end. I can't get over it. Black folks—no more Negroes or 'cullud'—finally moving, a-moverin', the Movement, I love it! I'm going to send Ursa-Bea to take my place at the barricades as soon as she's old enough. Nobody here knows it, but I've already got her in training. (223)

Estelle plans to send her daughter to the front-lines of the U.S. black movement in order to gain activist strategies acquired through the direct experience of political transformation. Estelle, instead, remains in Triunion to critically observe how the new Planning and Development board promotes a "'joint public and private setup'" to allow it to "'operate independent of the government'" (222). By the end of the novel, her skepticism of the emerging neoliberal regime is confirmed as is her critical view of its intention to "'transform the economy, bring in new business, put people to work, put Triunion on the map'" (222).

Estelle offers an important critique of capitalist enterprises, in Triunion,

but she is less capable of addressing the "domestic colonization" (Hathaway 135) that reemerges *after* a period of black civil rights gains. Thus, it takes U.S.-based characters, like Lowell or Mae, to develop a more precise "geopolitical literacy" (Friedman) regarding the black neoliberal accommodations made by people like Sandy in the U.S. Their proximity enables the creation of a local knowledge base to which Estelle cannot possibly contribute. Resistance to the neoliberal turn must thus be mobilized, at least in part, by a local knowledge base informed by the particular contradictions of experience underway within a given neoliberal medium. Yet, Ursa Bea, by contrast, is designated as having the exceptional ability to translate circumstances of both African-Caribbean and African-American struggles; she is empowered by her relative mobility to travel between the U.S. and Caribbean and to thereby sustain her biological and affective attachments to each space. This mobility is problematic insofar as it empowers a U.S.-based, black female protagonist to achieve transnational critical consciousness and neoliberal literacy while other characters do not seemingly as a result of their greater restriction of movement. In *The Chosen Place,* Vere, as a migrant worker, is not represented as having the same capacity for critical insight. As critical readers, then, we must attend to the ways in which the figure of the transnational black female protagonist is imaginatively endowed with an exceptional critical consciousness facilitated by unconventional forms of classed mobility. The daughter of an established Caribbean politician, Ursa Bea is afforded privileges that a male Caribbean migrant labourer will likely never possess. If we celebrate Ursa Bea as black female character who is resistant to

capitalist exploitation because, in part, she possesses critical consciousness, then we must also attend to the material conditions that have contributed to her elevated social positioning.

The attachments formed between various interest groups in *Daughters* have political, economic, and cultural implications for black gender empowerment. Marshall's frequent reference to the phenomenon of joint public-private ventures, in both novels, marks the increasing ambiguity of neoliberal policies for development. Furthermore, it reflects uncertainty regarding responsibility for the well-being of public communities. Policies of aid and trade may co-exist, but as distinct phases in development ideology, they reflect different assumptions about growth and development. Emphasis on free trade reinforces "the eroding sovereignty of the nation-state" subsequently "reflected in the changing spatialities and reterritorializations induced by capital" (Koshy 109). As sovereignty and protectionism are rendered selectively retrograde by the U.S.-led, neoliberal imperative of free market expansion,[109] joint public-private ventures increase the government's complicity with corporate enterprise. To who does the public turn for protection, in this scenario, and how can it oppose the seeming inevitability of the neoliberal world order?

Marshall's characters in *The Chosen Place* and *Daughters* frequently resort to "nostalgic yearning" (Houlden 254) for slave revolt, maroon organizing, and anti-colonial activism, as a primary response to the emergence of

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[109] Powerful countries like the U.S. mobilize the sovereign right to unilateral action and draw on discourses of protectionism. Consider, for example, President Bill Clinton's demand for the termination of preferential trade agreements between the English Caribbean and Great Britain, in the interest of liberalizing market expansion, or President Barack Obama's U.S. trade and labour protectionism invoked in his 2010 State of the Union address.

neoliberalism. My assertion that such responses are limited in their potential to intervene upon contemporary struggles is reinforced by Marshall's increasing attention to black feminist theory and practice in her novels. Her deployment of a politics of "community othermothering" (Brownley 122) represents a gender-specific intervention regarding contemporary black struggles against capitalism. While a significant contingency of Caribbean feminist scholars and activists work within the Caribbean region, "feminist" identifications have not always been readily embraced because of their very problematic associations with white, Western female empowerment; furthermore, homophobic assumptions have also been made about dominant Western feminism's anti-patriarchal agenda. In a 1982 interview, Marshall argues that "'the feminist movement, in many instances, doesn't apply to Black women, to the Black community, because Black women have always had another kind of experience, and another kind of life'" (Brownley 34). While she avoids the explicit adoption of a feminist political agenda, I maintain that she is oriented towards a black women-centered movement to address the destructive capitalist effects on black community development on a hemispheric scale. A significant intervention for her becomes to address ways in which, in the neoliberal era, "the geography of imagination and the geography of management constantly intertwine to construct the management of the imagination" (Trouillot 3).

In a 1992 interview Marshall attests to the lack of historical awareness regarding "'the role women played in the resistance'" (qtd. in Graulich and Sisco 136). Her novels thus become a vehicle through which to address this problem.

Marshall admits that her representation of Congo Jane, in *Daughters*, "is based largely on Nanny of the Maroons, one of the great slave heroines of the West Indies," and she attests to the knowledge she has gained about "the relationship of the bondsmen and women" from research (qtd. in Graulich and Sisco 136). She has learned that, under slavery, a "great sense of cooperation, closeness, and equality [emerged] between black men and women" and that a sense of shared struggle created "a greater ability to resist together" (136). Marshall also acknowledges Angela Davis' work on black slave communities as influential to her in both an interview and in *Daughters* when Ursa Bea cites Davis as an inspirational source for her own research. Thus, part of Marshall's strategy for historical recovery is to formally integrate the political and academic contributions of black women into her process of re-imagining black women's resistance in the neoliberal era.[110]

It can be argued that black feminist practices are at work in Marshall's novels even though Marshall may not personally embrace a feminist identification. It is important for literary critics to be able to make such a critical distinction rather than to resort to the author's proclaimed political orientation and have it dominate their analysis of the author's novels. The discourses of identity that are mobilized in service of a politics of recognition can seldom articulate the complex dynamics at play in the varied and uneven processes of identification experienced in the material circumstances of everyday life.[111] Marshall's refusal

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[110] Marshall also notes the influence of Lucille Mair's research on black female resistance.

[111] Similarly, it should not be assumed that one's rejection of an explicit Marxist identification represents a lack of critical focus on class exploitation and struggle. It is important

to identify with feminism as it has been formally articulated in mainstream contexts should not be equated with her lack of focus on the bio-political and geo-economic conditions imagined to be experienced by black women in the context of the neoliberal turn. Feminist practices can range from "the everyday acts that constitute our identities and relational communities" to "collective action in groups, networks, and movements constituted around feminist visions of social transformation," to "theory, pedagogy, and textual creativity in the scholarly and writing practices of feminists engaged in the production of knowledge" (Mohanty 5). While Marshall prioritizes black feminist research orientations, she nonetheless invokes a composite signification of blackness to create a universalizing metaphor for broader struggles and resistances. In particular, she has linked "'cultural revolution'" with "'political revolution'" to create a "'positive self-image'" of black empowerment based on the "'black aesthetic'" (qtd. in Ogundipe-Leslie 35). Yet, of *The Chosen Place*, Marshall believes that "[r]eaders spend an awful lot of time trying to identify the place rather than seeing its larger meaning; the fact that it makes a statement about what is happening in the Third World in general" (33). Her substitutive logic thus imaginatively empowers a racialized black constituency to lead the narrative of resistance in what she envisions as a "Third World novel" (33).[112]

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to allow critics, writers, artists, and activists to have room for imaginative political maneuver so that political orientations and the language we use to articulate them can be continuously revitalized and reworked. We should not be required to limit our political imaginings to the historical discourses that precede them.

[112] I am building on Audre Lorde's critique of identity politics in "Women Redefining Difference: Age, Race, Sex, Class." When Lorde argues that "tolerance is the grossest reformism"

<center>***</center>

Marshall's wide-ranging commitments point to the vast challenges of organizing or representing global anti-colonial, anti-imperial, and anti-neoliberal movements. As a participant in the U.S. Civil Rights Movement, she has self-consciously aligned herself with the "'revolutionary struggle of the darker peoples'" in support of "'the decline and eclipse of America and the West'" (qtd in Brownley 29). Black empowerment does not necessarily disavow multiple commitments to transformative, international change, and can, in fact, be inflamed by just such commitments; yet, it should be asked what conditions create a dominant racial imaginary of struggle, resistance or redemption, and how does prioritizing the *blackness* of struggle become useful or risky, given the imperatives of larger constituencies?[113]

Marshall addresses some limits to racial solidarity by offering gendered contexts for urban and rural planning, job loss and creation, elite and grassroots activism. In seeking to observe institutional violence she also identifies problems with "filial dependence" (Hathaway 126) among transnational family units and she compares the "'domestic colonization'" (135) of the inner-city U.S.A with

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she means that strategies of inclusion which fail to acknowledge difference as the source of productive agitation for creative transformation ultimately contain revolutionary impulses by assimilating difference. Lorde critiques assumptions underlying identity politics; however, one limitation of this short article is that while the sex and gender difference of the black community is interrogated, the issue of differentiated blackness, as marked by class, nation, culture, or accent, is not considered.

[113] I acknowledge that invocations of black empowerment during the 1970s frequently implied the inclusion of all people of colour struggling against white supremacy, imperialism, and colonialism; however, the assumption that non-white identified constituencies could be subsumed by a discourse of blackness remains problematic.

neo-colonial, island outposts.[114] While Marshall's fiction explores the black

feminization of poverty and the exclusion of women in community leadership and

decision-making, [115] it can also be read as "Afrocentric," in its emphasis on

"African ideals and behavior" (Pettis 19-20).[116] To be sure, her political priority is

to recall "what was positive and inspiring about our experience in the

hemisphere—our will to survive and to overcome" (qtd. in Dance 100); thus, her

invocation of maroon figures Congo Jane and Will Cudjoe as "[c]oleaders,

coconspirators, consorts, lovers, friends" (*Daughters* 15) can be read as a tactic

for unsettling the gendered dynamics of labour power and community space to

reconstitute a vision of black solidarity that expands an understanding of resistant

partnerships premised on shared responsibility, leadership, and decision-making.

Daughters portrays the specific strategies for this expanded conception, in the

aftermath of the Black Freedom Movement, which the *The Chosen Place* can only

begin to imagine.

Ursa Bea's impulse to formalize the story of maroon resistance, which she

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[114] Reading *The Chosen Place* Coser argues that "[f]ull of their own contradictions and flaws, 'the people' must often share the guilt and the wrongs of history with those in power. Group rivalry and individual selfishness delay or eliminate unified, effective action" (51).

[115] Her creative attention to these issues is significant, given that "the discipline of International Relations (IR)," emerging during the Cold War, "has only been subject to feminist inquiry since the late 1980s and attests to the extreme dominance of men in the field" (Byron and Thorburn 211). From another perspective, "at present Caribbean feminist scholarship announces itself more directly in the disciplines of history, education and sociology than in literary criticism" (Donnell 147).

[116] My characterization in some ways challenges Scott's assertion that Caribbean literature "more obviously than other regional literatures is multifaceted and plural, drawing on and synthesizing multiple influences— from Amerindian, African, European, Asian traditions— to produce something unique. Concepts such as transnationalism, hybridity, nomadism, syncretism, creolization continue to be central to critical exploration of Caribbean culture." (Scott 11). Baksh-Sodeen finds that dominant representations of the Caribbean—historically, literarily, and otherwise— have been Afrocentric. I am interested in how this Afrocentricity facilitates imagined and real allegiances with African-American responses to slavery and colonialisms, past and present.

learns as a child in Triunion, into a senior paper at a U.S. university, represents

one political intervention to transform historical paradigms of history that have

limited conceptions of value premised on the shared labours of community love

and resistance. Ursa Bea proposes that

> *A neglected area in the study of the New World slave communities has*
>
> *been the general nature of gender roles and relationships. This paper*
>
> *examines the relatively egalitarian,mutually supportive relations that*
>
> *existed between the bondmen and women and their significance for and*
>
> *contribution to the various forms of resistance to enslavement in the*
>
> *United States and Caribbean.* (*Daughters* 11)

That this approach is rejected by Ursa Bea's white, American male supervisor on

the basis of questionable sources and methodology echoes the refusal of historians

to draw on slave narratives as reliable historical documents until the 1970s; in this

sense, Marshall grants validity to black voices in the context of a social structure

that has disenfranchised African Americans in wide-ranging ways. It should also

cause us to interrogate the disciplinary politics of area studies as they may

function to conceal long histories of international collaboration oriented towards

capitalist critique and the resistance to slavery, colonialism, and imperialism. The

passage should also stimulate questions about the international divisions of

academic labour and the U.S. management of sites for intellectual production.

Marshall's novels evince what Carole Boyce Davies refers to as a "variety

of geographical and literary constituencies […] peculiar to the migration that is

fundamental to African experience" (*Black Women* 4). While this approach

reflects "consciousness of expansiveness and the dialogics of movement and community" (4), I also see it as also enabling tropes of blackness to dominate popular imaginings of racial struggle in the U.S. and the Caribbean. Yet, the Caribbean "becomes the dispossessed centre from which literal and intellectual trajectories take their point of departure but make no return" (Donnell 127). If the Caribbean is theoretically valorized as Creole, then why does blackness dominate as its projection and how is this dominance associated with African-American literary imperatives? Such questions require ongoing debate, but, as a starting point, I urge for a reassessment of the political stakes in promoting unitary narratives of racialized resistance within a global culture industry that also seems to capitalize on the myth that our contemporary experience is—or should be—post-racial-- cultural, and-- feminist.

The title *Daughters* implies the displacement of the centrality of the black matriarch, but emphasizes the potential for horizontal networks of black female political collaboration. This collaboration remains biologically familial, however. Notably, Ursa Bea ultimately refuses to deny the credibility of her sources and method, "[t]he slave narrative and oral histories, the old plantation records, Aptheker, [or] the Angela Davis article" (12).[117] Instead, she struggles to carry the project forward but in the context of her affiliations with grassroots research and action focused on black communities. Her mother Estelle then recruits Ursa Bea to help her to expose Primus' questionable neoliberal political campaign. After discovering his plans to betray the public by selling Government Lands to

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[117] Brownley identifies *the* Davis article as "Reflections on the Black Woman's Role in the Community of Slaves" (fn 13, 210).

corporate enterprises for his material interests, the women obtain evidence of his

intentions and provide it to an opposition party led by a young political couple

who support the interests of the disenfranchised regions of Triunion. In this regard

the novel, as Marshall suggests, conveys the struggle for "true autonomy" (qtd. in

Dance 97) against the "emotional dependency" on one's father (103). Yet, it is

through Estelle's turn to her daughter that her own work to create a local

marketplace for agricultural women, to preserve the public dimension of

Government Lands, to promote a local Arts Council, and to ensure her daughter's

black political education is validated. Unlike her husband, Estelle observes how

"national culture," in a developing nation, "becomes a set of automatic habits,

some traditions of dress, and a few broken-down institutions" (Fanon 238). As

Fanon explains, "[l]ittle movement can be discerned in such remnants of culture;

there is no creativity and no overflowing of life" (238).[118]

  Nostalgic depictions of blackness, perhaps like those of whiteness, have

"romanticized an equally glorious, though this time black, heritage celebrating the

purported values of the lost, African homeland" (Houlden 254). While Marshall

remains "preoccupied with [...] the need to celebrate black experience" (qtd. in

Ogundipe-Leslie 39), it is valuable to observe how, as Brownley does,

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[118] Rather than compete with the women involved in her husband's love life, she creates opportunities for her daughter to learn from their various "activities in the home, in politics and in business" (123). Brownley argues: "To Estelle, representing an uneasy synthesis between U.S. and West Indian cultures, and to Celestine, who stands for the island tradition as well as the female familial line through her ties with the PM's mother, Ursa adds Astral, who offers a modern recension of the economic autonomy traditional among African and Afro-Caribbean women.[...] The three women can be seen as positive reinscriptions of three of the negative stereotypes that [Patricia Hill] Collins includes among 'controlling images' of black women: the Mammy (Celestine), the Matriarch (Estelle), and the Jezebel (Astral). The extent to which each parodies the applicable stereotype highlights the inadequacies of the negative images" (123).

"[i]deological purity can possess a certain nobility, but in everyday political life it seldom has been an entirely satisfactory substitute for constructive political action" (103). Marshall argues that "we have to go back and re-create that past so that we can use the lessons from that to aid us in the present struggle" (qtd. in Ogundipe-Leslie 39), but I contend that as communities change shape, claims to solidarity must be reassessed. I thus find it significant to consider how a neoliberal paradigm "sanctions and legitimates a divide whereby dominant nationalisms are perceived as normal and desirable and subaltern nationalisms as pathological and repugnant" (Radakrishnan 101). "We are the world," for Radhakrishnan, is a "pathetic tautology" (94), for "the third world would be utterly naïve to entrust its destiny to a process of globalization that makes mincemeat of its nationalized sovereignty" (101). Rather than "commit the third world to a politics of rabid nationalism," Radhakrishnan thus finds it more productive to attend to the "determinate politics" that are "built into the indeterminacy of globalization" (101). We must aim to expand our sense of the neoliberal medium, its constitution of labour value, and its disorientating effects upon our capacity for the intersectional analysis and organization of struggle, solidarity, and resistance. In chapter three, I consider these issues in the context of Jamaica Kincaid's critical imagination of the transnational neoliberal labours she assumes in the effort to sustain Caribbean families and communities.

Chapter Three

Of Machetes, Machines, Medicine, and Milk:
Jamaica Kincaid and the Afterlives of Debt and Death in Small Places[119]

> Today we might be even further away from sovereignty than we were in
> the colonial era. Our already weak self-image continues to be undermined
> in an even more subtle way than before and this paralyzes us, allows us to
> be manipulated and makes us less capable of taking our destiny into our
> own hands.
>> Merle Hodge, "Challenges of the Struggle for Sovereignty:
>> Changing the World versus Writing Stories," (205).

> What we are dealing with in this new technology of power is not exactly
> society (or at least not the social body, as defined by jurists), nor is it the
> individual-as-body. It is a new body, a multiple body, a body with so
> many heads that, while they might not be an infinite number, cannot
> necessarily be counted. Biopolitics deals with the population, with the
> population as political problem, as a problem that is at once scientific and
> political, as a biological problem and as power's problem.
>> Michel Foucault, "Society Must Be Defended," (245).

> Behind the long, strife-ridden process that leads to the recognition of
> rights and formal liberties stands once again the body of the sacred man
> with his double sovereign, his life that cannot be sacrificed yet may,
> nevertheless, be killed.
>> Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*,
>> (10).

In this dissertation, I have been advancing the argument that neoliberal

states unevenly distribute a set of bio-political processes across a transnational

neoliberal geography inhabited by populations who are racialized, feminized, and

classed in specific ways. The contradictions of a lived neoliberal condition require

us to assess the variation of bio-political experience endured by intersectional

subjects. Subjected to the "technology of power" (Foucault 242), black women, I

argue, are valued according to a calculated neoliberal imagining of labour

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[119] A version of this chapter has been published as an article entitled "Of Machete and
Machines: Accounting for *Life + Debt* in *A Small Place*" in *MaComère: The Journal of the
Association of Caribbean Women Writers and Scholars* 12.1 (Spring 2010): 45-65.

capacity premised on disposability and responsibility. These calculations are made not only by states, but by markets, families, and communities. To varying degrees, the black female is integrated into the hegemonic neoliberal socioeconomic order as a disposable and responsible subject; in part, the variation of integration is reflective of the fact that neoliberal hegemony is unstable and subject to crisis (Hall and Massey 57-67). At this conjuncture the relationship and difference between neoliberal agency and resistance can become ambiguous.

I have insisted that although black female protagonists may be referred to categorically on the basis of their intersectional identification with significations of race and gender, we must nonetheless observe, within this imagined group, differences of social, political and physical orientation in relation to the unevenness of the experience of the neoliberal condition. The multicultural, Creole, or post-racist pretensions of neoliberal discourse obscure the bio-political processes through which particular subjects become multiply burdened, feminized, racialized, and classed. Neoliberal discourse can transform such subjects into objects of praise, rationality, and responsibility. These disposable figures are re-imagined as responsible neoliberal subjects in the neoliberal imagination. In this way, black women may be regarded as paradoxically exploited yet agential subjects in the neoliberal imaginary. Neoliberal agency, then, can be misread as a sign of resistance when, in fact, the characteristics constituting the imagination of black women's resistance can be manipulated by neoliberal ideology. Consequently, literary critics should closely observe the neoliberal conditioning of resistance as it is imagined in narrative form. With this

argument in mind, I would like to address key concepts raised in the epigraphs beginning this chapter, in order to suggest how we might read Jamaica Kincaid's self-portrayals as a black female protagonist in relation to the neoliberal condition that I have conceptualized.

Collectively, the epigraphs above suggest the theoretical and practical ambiguity of, as well as the variety of signification possible for, concepts of sovereignty, liberty, and rights. They call us to consider the structural imbalances of power and subjection within, between, and across post-colonial and independent modern nation-states. Merle Hodge, Michel Foucault, and Giorgio Agamben signal, but do not resolve, the complex dimensions of sovereign power as they may refer to the self-determination of ex-colonial societies or to the state management of human destiny by way of controlling the life and death processes of human populations.

The view of the modern Caribbean, offered by Merle Hodge just over twenty years ago, reflects a set of ongoing concerns shared by many Caribbean writers. Conceptually, questions of Caribbean sovereignty are regional in orientation and extend beyond the imagining of national independence in the creative and political writings of Caribbean writers across generations. Yet, as many writers consider the impact of colonialist legacies on struggles for sovereignty, they do not share a consensus regarding the critique or the action required to achieve regional autonomy or solidarity.[120] Upon first glance, Hodge's

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[120] For example, Jamaica Kincaid has publicly acknowledged what she regards as differences of political vision between herself and Merle Hodge as well as between herself and V.S. Naipaul. While I address this issue, the chapter's focus will be on the conflict within Kincaid's own political vision as it unfolds through a specific constellation of literary and film

invocation of sovereignty would seem to express desire for the social acquisition of the democratic principles of the nation-state's rights to self-determination; however, she acknowledges the fact that colonialist power continues to shape the self-perceptions and actions of Caribbean populations that lack the sense of collective dignity and solidarity necessary to transform their social and political relations.

Michel Foucault provides us with an image of a "new technology of power" used to calculate and institutionalize processes for the social management of populations. Significantly, "[t]he right of sovereignty was the right to take life or let live. And then this new right is established: the right make live and let die" (241). Foucault's description of nineteenth-century sovereignty in the West combines the rights and technologies, old and new, capitalized upon by the sovereign state through practices of bio-power. It is useful to recall, here, Ulrich Brand and Nicola Seklar's contention that in neoliberal critique there is a "risk of confusing neoliberalism with the market and of constructing a dichotomy of 'the market' versus 'the state'" (7). If the state can be regarded "as a condensation of social relations," then "neoliberalism can be seen as a specific form of state

engagements. I find it useful to distinguish between anti-colonial writings explicitly devoted to the historical project of decolonization from those produced, in its aftermath, as part of a critique of prior anti-colonialism or the post-colonial, neoliberal historical period. Barbara Harlow's *Resistance Literature* represents an established earlier study of resistance literature produced in the service of anti-colonial action. Unlike her, I do not read the literature, in my study, as directly engaged in an anti-colonial or even necessarily an anti-neoliberal movement. Rather, I consider how the work critically and imaginatively reflects upon prior resistance movements to conceptualize Caribbean struggles in relation to a neoliberal turn. The works of Paule Marshall, Jamaica Kincaid, and Michelle Cliff express, to varying degrees, retrospective critique of resistance movements, but also a frustrated desire to imagine how the Caribbean might more effectively put into crisis the hegemony of neoliberal globalization. Located in the U.S., these authors are problematic mediators of Caribbean politics and everyday reality as they provide a political imagination of the Caribbean for American audiences.

intervention" which enables the state to be "more repressive in social, labour market and military policies, and less interventionist in the movement of different forms of capital" (7). As such, I argue that the state capacity to "take life or let live" or to "'make' live and 'let' die" (Foucault 241) is fundamentally linked to market forces as a domestic neoliberal intervention that manages and restrains the social in the interest of liberating the flow of capital. In the neoliberal context of late capitalism, sovereignty has often implied the conditional unilateral right to invoke protectionist discourses and policies during times of domestic debt and job insecurity. This unilateral right is not universal and may even contradict free market principles; that it is a right that continues to be assumed by the United States, but which is selectively prohibitive for other nation-states, is a testament to the continuing global hegemonic influence of this nation even when it faces significant social crisis and economic insecurity.

Finally, Giorgio Agamben illuminates the conditionality underlying biological and political life as it is constructed by modern power through the creation of states of exception. The sacred life of the human exception is founded upon "the double exclusion into which [this life] is taken and the violence to which [this life] finds [itself] exposed. This violence [...] is classifiable neither as sacrifice nor as homicide, neither as the execution of a condemnation to death nor a sacrilege" (82-83). Although the foundation for Agamben's analysis of sovereign modern nation-states is initially premised on limit situations articulated as states of exception, he finds that "[t]he political sphere of sovereignty was [...] constituted though a double exclusion" and thus "*the sovereign sphere is the*

sphere in which it is permitted to kill without committing homicide and without

celebrating a sacrifice, and sacred life--that is, life that may be killed but not

sacrificed--is life that has been captured in this sphere" (83). Agamben thus

offers a way to imagine "a sphere of human action" that captures "life" so it "may

be killed" without achieving the signification of murder or sacrifice. This

particular condition of death is crucial for a consideration of the ambiguous, and

sometimes slow and difficult to discern, neoliberal, bio-political conditions for

living and dying.

In this chapter, I am interested in how Caribbean conditions for living and

dying in the neoliberal phase of capitalist development are imagined by Jamaica

Kincaid in a selection of her works. While Foucault and Agamben are distinct in

their focus on bio-political conditions, particularly insofar as the former

emphasizes the relation between institutionalized bio-political technologies and

the conditioning of populations to internalize disciplinary procedures for social

action, while the latter is interested in the transformation of exceptions into rules,

I find that both theorists are useful to assess the paradoxical neoliberal condition

whereby a particularized form of human labour value can be calculated by

degrees of disposability and responsibility. Thus, I continue to explore how the

neoliberal condition hinges upon a test of the human biological capacity to be

worn down but also to endure exploitation, disenfranchisement, and

dispossession. If bio-power is a feature of the modern nation-state, then one must

review implications for the anti-colonial expression of desire for sovereignty.

From a critical neoliberal perspective, we might thus re-imagine Hodge's view of

the colonialist "weak self-image" that "paralyzes" the people of the Caribbean

(205), thereby preventing them from assuming control over how they live, relate,

imagine, create, develop, or even die.

While Jamaica Kincaid may share with Merle Hodge significant

skepticism regarding the security of Caribbean sovereignty in the post-colonial,

neoliberal period, her particular historical relation to the region, as someone who

has spent most of her life living abroad, has not only distinctively shaped her

seeming political, economic, racial, and cultural investments, but also the ways

she imagines the Antiguan capacity for resistance and the transformation of its

neoliberal reality.[121] She has provoked audiences, world-wide, with unapologetic

critiques of colonial violence and its contemporary manifestations in Caribbean

politics, economics, culture, healthcare, and ecology, yet she has spent most of

her life in the United States. At the age of sixteen, she left her native Antigua and

moved to New York City to become an au pair and to remit funds in support of

her family, who continued to live in the Caribbean. She went on to become a

regular contributor to the *New Yorker* magazine and a successful career writer of

both fiction and non-fiction. Writing autobiographically, Jamaica Kincaid

configures herself as a black female protagonist who experiences, to different

degrees of intensification, the neoliberal condition at different times in her life. I

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[121] Merle Hodge is well-established in the Caribbean as a writer, teacher, and socialist activist. Her political commitments to social and economic justice in the Caribbean are evident in her writing and in her early work with the New Jewel Movement, in Grenada, and in her work with grassroots women's organizations in Trinidad. Her internationalist visions of a liberated Caribbean can be contrasted with Kincaid's anti-immigrant sentiments expressed towards Syrians of Antigua in *A Small Place*. The relation between regional migration and anti-immigrant sentiment is a current subject for debate in the Caribbean and continues to require extensive research.

find as a distinctive feature of her writing that she simultaneously represents herself as a multiply burdened daughter of a transnational Caribbean family unit as well as an exceptional figure whose critical distance, established by her professionalized U.S. location, empowers her to identify the false consciousness she perceives of the Caribbean majority living in the region.

As this chapter unfolds, I clarify how Kincaid's "multiple social locations" produce "contradictory" effects arising from intersectional subjectivity (Feree 10) in the context of the neoliberal condition. I explore the issue, raised by Myra Marx Feree in the introduction to this dissertation, that "[o]rganizations as well as individuals hold multiple positions in regard to social relations and power and injustice, and typically enjoy privilege on some dimensions even while they struggle with oppression on another" (10). In this sense, I examine how Kincaid portrays herself as a black Caribbean woman held responsible for the particular burdens of caring for life and death in the Caribbean, yet I also consider how she renders Caribbean populations irresponsible and disposable. Her rendering of these populations is incorporated into her own portrayal of the complex interrelation between neoliberal agency and resistance. Kincaid illuminates her intersectional complexity by portraying her "multiple social locations" (Feree 10); in doing so, she draws attention to the various roles she plays as she negotiates competing familial, institutional, and corporate interests. The portrayal of her multiplicity might thus be read in relation to Foucault's characterization of the new technology of bio-power whereby life constitutes "a new body, a multiple body, a body with so many heads that, while they might not be an infinite number,

cannot necessarily be counted" (244). In this context, I argue that Kincaid simultaneously rejects and embraces the neoliberal condition as she illuminates the uneven ways in which her own responsibility and disposability is calculated in relation to other Antiguans.

The major thematic crisis in Kincaid's work, as I will discuss in this chapter, pertains to failures of economic accounting and historical accountability. She concretizes this crisis through portrayals of the acquisition (and sometimes merger) of credit and debt. However, credit and debt are both concrete and metaphorical, in her usage, for she assumes credit for her capacity to generate critical historical consciousness as it has been afforded by her career in the U.S. In doing so, she emphasizes a Caribbean incapacity to account for the history that has led to present conditions of disempowerment. Kincaid is thus distanced from, yet inextricably linked to, a paradoxical predicament of failure and success in economic accounting and historical accountability. I read this situation as one conditioned by the neoliberal phase of capitalist development insofar as it bio-politically produces "a multiple body [...], a body with so many heads that [....] cannot necessarily be counted" (Foucault 244). Nonetheless, it seems that as Kincaid strives to illuminate in her work the paradoxical and contradictory social relations of a neoliberal era, she contributes to the production of a critical neoliberal literacy for an anti-neoliberal imagination.

The autobiographical dimensions of Kincaid's work convey a complex psychology of traumatic historical experience, both public and private, and the difficulty of negotiating one's transnational family commitments. In this regard,

Kincaid's writing reveals a paradoxical predicament of upward social mobility. As a Caribbean girl, she was obligated to assume the financial burdens of her family and essentially became a migrant worker to the U.S. The gendering of economic obligation is a recurring theme from Kincaid's childhood to her adulthood, as she represents it in her writing; yet, changes in her residential location and professional status surely reconfigure the imbalances of power she represents between herself and her Antiguan family.

Migration to North America by Caribbean women workers escalated during the 1980s (Rodriquez 12, 121)[122] and continued into the 1990s during a period established as "explicitly in the era of neoliberalism and globalization" (Jordens 367).[123] As I suggested in previous chapters, feminist research in development studies has tracked ways in which the culture of neoliberalism feminizes and racializes poverty. While Kincaid's writings signal the dangers of romanticizing black female self-sacrifice for others, they also frequently reinforce an ideology of liberal individualism, whereby anyone can achieve self-determination and the freedom to pursue upward social mobility if the right

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[122] According to Rodriquez, immigration laws have tended to privilege international students and professionals over migrant workers (122). I find problematic Rodriquez's tendencies to align the sympathies of Caribbean women writers with the life experiences of migrant workers simply because they may write about them, for she tends to romanticize the female migration experience stating that "even if they are not certified citizens," they gain freedom in "the right to work, to choose a place to live, to marry or live with the man or woman of her choice, to acquire commodities, to travel, to spend her money, to seek a better job, to take advantage of educational and training opportunities, to move around. Women can claim their own space, something very difficult to do even if you are a professional and middle class in most Caribbean island societies. Women gain freedom in the private space even if in the public one they are exploited and discriminated against. It is precisely this new location, the metropolitan / modern city, that allows these changes to take place. These women are poised between modernity and postmodernity" (15).

[123] Hein de Haas argues that it is a "migration myth […] that we live in an age of unprecedented [global] migration" for "although the share of international migrants in the world population underwent a certain increase in the 1990s, there were periods of equal if not more drastic international migration over the 19th (and rest of the) 20th centuries" (1271).

initiative is taken to become educated and change their circumstances. Thus, it is

essential to make distinctions among the material histories of Caribbean women

who enter countries like the United States with varying degrees of education and

professional opportunity. The expertise of some women may be actively sought

after and their skills may thus be rendered transferable, whereas the labour of

others may be devalued and rendered disposable. Peter Jordens elaborates on the

complexity of transnational labour recruitment to suggest that "the flow of

Caribbean nationals out of the region has been aided by aggressive transnational

recruiting strategies on the part of employers in the countries of the North,

targeted in particular at Caribbean nurses, teachers and information-technology

experts" by stimulating "brain drain, growing local skills gaps, unbalanced labour

markets, and reduced competitiveness" (367). "Meanwhile," he argues, "the

emigration of people of working age and the feminization of Caribbean

emigration (Cortés Castellanos 2005) are also having an adverse effect on the

social fabric of Caribbean societies" (367). Jordens' analysis is significant to

Kincaid's representation of her valued return to the Caribbean as a skilled writer

possessing economic credit and cultural capital. Jordens finds that "overall,

transnational emigration in the current period has tended to reinforce the

traditional global hierarchy of nation-states and the historical dependence of

Caribbean countries on the North" (367). In this context, the transnational family

unit may be sustained, in part, by the migrant woman's assumption of the

responsibility to care her family in the Caribbean by labouring in the U.S. and by

returning remittances to the Caribbean.[124]

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[124] Mark Figueroa's "Migration and Remittances: Typologies and Motivations" (2009)

By and large, Kincaid is critical not only of colonialism's impact on Caribbean sovereignty, but of the local government corruption that has been complicit with the underdevelopment of educational and healthcare institutions. She is also harshly judgmental of her Antiguan family and the general population of the island for not seeming to have the capacity for political and economic self-determination, which she sees herself as successfully demonstrating. As a U.S. resident and a figure of the Caribbean Diaspora, she cannot possibly provide an accurate portrayal of everyday life in the Caribbean, even if an accurate portrayal were, itself, possible. Nonetheless, her uneasy questions about the dynamics of remittance as a socioeconomic obligation are significant as is her sense that emotional alienation combined with intellectual crisis in the Caribbean has contributed to the failure of grassroots political movements that might reconstruct a more equitable Caribbean. Thus, her focus upon the politics of the transnational Caribbean is significant not only in its relation to internationalized systems of credit, debt, and finance, but in relation to how these systems impact anti-neoliberal solidarity. Cited as "arguably the most famous and prolific Caribbean woman writing in the U.S." (Scott 55), Kincaid has achieved the questionable

provides insight into factors and conditions that motivate the desires of someone to remit funds or goods to their family, community, or to institutions in the Caribbean. He draws on three examples of typologies that have been used. The first, by Meissner, considers various categories of migrants (e.g., legal/illegal, contract labour, refugee, etc) and how circumstances of migration and status affect practices of remittance. Secondly, Walters' "multi-dimensional typology" is examined for its consideration of aging and "later-life" migrants who may or may not have union status, limited ability or disability, and varying income levels to address these needs. Lastly, Figueroa examines Hope's research on the socioeconomics of skill sets and her rejection of prior distinctions between shorter and longer term migrations and circulations (237). A pervasive practice in Caribbean culture, remittance involves the sending of funds or goods by migrant workers living abroad to the Caribbean. It is from these circumstances the nickname 'barrel children' has emerged to identify youths regularly receiving goods contained in barrels from their migrant parents working abroad. In scenarios provided by Kincaid, she seems to function as a problematic parental figure of finance and credit for her indebted family, who continue to live in the Caribbean.

position of mediator of Caribbean realities for North American audiences. In her

canonical text, *A Small Place* (1988), Kincaid parallels her critique of North

American tourism in Antigua with her own return to the newly post-colonial

nation as an adult. In doing so, she is able to construct a critique of colonialist

legacies extending from the history of transatlantic slavery to her own childhood

experience under colonial rule, and further to the contemporary Antiguan

dependence upon tourism and an unsustainable trade economy. Education and

literacy become politicized concepts for Kincaid as she intimately connects them

to the contingencies of agency and accountability in the Caribbean.

Twelve years ago, Kincaid adapted portions of *A Small Place* to serve as

voice-over narration for Stephanie Black's 2001 film *Life + Debt.* Kincaid's first-

person account of the colonialist legacies of Antigua provided, at Black's request,

a narrative frame for the polyphonic documentary of neoliberal experience in

Jamaica. Very little critical analysis of this collaboration exists, although both text

and film have achieved acclaim for their respective post-colonial and anti-

globalization critiques.[125]

In the following sections of this chapter, I will first address the absence of

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[125] See my article, "Of Machetes and Machines: Accounting for *Life + Debt* in *A Small Place*" for the only research intervention of which I am aware. Kincaid's connection to the film is noted, on occasion, but substantial analysis has not followed. For example, Helen Scott limits her attention to the collaboration by providing the following comment: "*A Small Place* displays very clearly the dialectical patterns and national specificity characteristic of the broader body of Caribbean women's literature. The fact that Kincaid was able to adapt the text to provide the commentary for Stephanie Black's documentary about neoliberalism in Jamaica, *Life + Debt*, indicates the extent to which the main concerns are regional rather than national" (61). As my analysis indicates, there are risks in assuming easy translatability; rather, it is more productive to directly address the substantial differences between the text and film alongside the productive possibilities of collaboration. See *Potomitan: Haitian Women, Pillars of the Global Economy* (Tèt Ansanm Productions, 2009) for another documentary collaboration between film directors Renée Bergan and Mark Schuller and the U.S.-based, Haitian writer, Edwidge Danticat. Danticat's poetic narration is intercut with Haitian women's and grassroots organizers' accounts of work and activism under neoliberalism.

scholarship on their collaboration by thoroughly reassessing Kincaid's 1988

portrayal of Antiguan false consciousness through the lens of Black's 2001 film as

it articulates subaltern Jamaican experience as having pedagogical and political

value. I argue that the post-colonial disorientation Kincaid experiences when she

returns to Antigua in *A Small Place* is rearticulated, in *Life + Debt*, as the cultural

and economic uncanny of neoliberal Jamaica. In her 1988 publication, Kincaid

seems limited in her capacity to describe the everyday life experience of a

neoliberal Antigua because of her distance from the region as a U.S. resident;

however, in the film *Life + Debt*, Black portrays a growing grassroots critique of

neoliberal policy through the inclusion of first-person testimony provided by

Jamaican labourers who account for the destructive effects of neoliberalism on

everyday life and on the effort to resist such policy. It remains unclear in the film

how such critique can be oriented towards effective anti-neoliberal organization.

The oscillating discursive formation—between the post-colonial and the

neoliberal—raises questions about the translatability of cultural and economic

moments, particularly as they signal historic turning-points for collective political

identity, agency and action. Indeed, the collaboration between Kincaid and Black

may in itself be read as a cultural effect of the neoliberal crisis. It may thus be

subject to Stuart Hall's conception of conjunctural analysis. In particular, the

neoliberal crisis provides an opportunity to address the disorientation of struggles

and solidarities as it occurs as an effect of the contradiction between neoliberal

discourse and policy. It also calls for a reassessment of orientations and priorities,

scales and strategies for anti-neoliberal movements. Significantly, the potential

for Caribbean subaltern resistance is revitalized in *Life + Debt* through the Creole conveyances of workers' economic and political literacy regarding neoliberal trade and labour agreements, while Kincaid's suspicion of collective identity politics and action, in *A Small Place*, is more often predicated on theories of false consciousness and political dictatorship. While neither Kincaid nor Black offer flattering representations of the Caribbean, respect for the integrity of workers is conveyed in *Life + Debt*, whereas in *A Small Place* it seems remarkably absent.

The distinctiveness of Black's versus Kincaid's politics of representation is significant for, as Merle Hodge puts it, "the world of the story has a greater impact on our imagination than does the diffuse scenario of everyday living" ("Challenges" 206). The point here is not to suggest that Black's more empowering representation of workers is necessarily more accurate or that it should be praised for a greater authenticity. Indeed, a remarkable feature of much effective Caribbean storytelling is the way in which historical struggle, contradiction, and self-critique are consciously woven into narrative. While creative writing may be "a guerilla activity" for those Caribbean writers seeking to undermine their "occup[ation] by foreign fiction" (Hodge 206), the point is not simply to react by "idealizing Caribbean reality" (207); rather, Merle Hodge argues that "[l]iterature contributes to a people's growth by portraying them both respectfully and *critically*, not by flattering them" (206).

In the second section of this chapter, my focus will shift from *A Small Place* and *Life + Debt* to *My Brother* (1997), Kincaid's other non-fiction book depicting a return to Antigua. I suggest how Kincaid's political visions become

increasingly uncertain as her imagination of the Caribbean capacity for resistance is particularized and personalized. In this memoir, her role in the culture of remittance is entangled with the bio-politics of the island-state's healthcare system and the family household when she is obligated to purchase, on credit, medicine for her estranged brother who lives with HIV and ultimately dies from AIDs in Antigua. It is compelling, in this context, that Foucault identifies, within bio-political procedures, the creation of mechanisms to manage those who "fall out of the field of capacity, of activity" (244). As he explains, "[w]e see the introduction of more subtle rational mechanisms: insurance, individual and collective savings, safety measures, and so on" (244). Once obliged to function as a state actor and parental figure who must care for her incapacitated brother, Kincaid portrays, in this memoir, feelings of alienation and resentment towards her transnational family; yet, her own sense of subalternity is destabilized because she is temporarily a figure of sovereign power.

While the connection between *A Small Place* and *Life + Debt* is obvious yet critically understudied, some critics have noted the relevance of Kincaid's returns to Antigua as evinced through *A Small Place* and *My Brother* (Lima 2002; Brophy 2002). In this chapter, I offer new insights, not only to analyze the relation between *A Small Place* and *Life + Debt*, but to suggest how a series of productive critical connections can also be made between *Life + Debt* and *My Brother*. I read these works together to reinforce a critical perspective of the bio-political management of life as it is conditioned by a neoliberal global market economy via the selective restriction of access to food and medicine supply. I

argue that this situation facilitates profound emotional alienation and political

fragmentation to reinforce the devaluations of life and death in the region. It is in

this context that I provide a reading of Kincaid's representations of bio-political

waste and the violence of credit. The scenarios that unfold in both the film and the

memoir reveal multi-dimensional and multi-directional flows of violence that

need to be understood as interrelated in the context of life under neoliberalism.

Collectively, I read *A Small Place*, *Life + Debt*, and *My Brother* in this

chapter as part of a constellating critique of how cultures of credit and debt

seriously undermine the capacity of Caribbean societies to account for, become

accountable to, and intervene upon multi-dimensional and multi-directional

experiences of trauma and violence. While all three narratives imply the necessity

of working through, and moving past, these often immobilizing circumstances

toward more sustainable ways of Caribbean living, they also identify a global

crisis in critical thinking and education about the everyday realities of life in the

Caribbean. All of these works bring attention to the relation between

neoliberalism and "everyday life."[126] This work is essential for, as Merle Hodge

puts it, "our struggle for Caribbean liberation will include putting ourselves fully

in touch with […] everyday models of sovereignty" (1990: 208).

These works and this chapter do not insist upon the identification of a

single source of blame or accountability for such conditions; rather, the aim

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[126] I borrow this phrase from the title of Susan Braedley and Meg Luxton's edited collection of essays. They argue that neoliberalism "is a political force with which most people in the world must reckon. This relationship between a political philosophy and people's lives is at the heart of [...] an exploration of neoliberal policy and its effects on everyday life" (3). I support their view of the necessity to generate "insights into how neoliberalism works in local situations" to serve "global efforts to resist and defeat it" (20).

instead is to rethink the intimate entanglements of various contemporary traumas. In this context, I work to examine the gendered and racialized economic obligations to be fulfilled by Kincaid, yet I also trouble the limits of her critique and representation of the Caribbean given her self-articulated privilege in the U.S. As such, these narratives of suffering are rooted in material and metaphorical histories of credit and debt, success and failure, investment and divestment, and should thus complicate ways in which Caribbean living and dying is imagined. It is by reading *A Small Place*, *Life + Debt*, and *My Brother* as part of an unfolding constellation that a more expansive critique of the exploitative conditions of life and death under a neoliberal regime can be envisioned. Collectively, a major provocation underlying these works is the question of how to proceed with contemporary political agency, socially responsible economic accounting, and historical accountability, for and by those living in the neoliberal Caribbean. It is within these contexts that this chapter concludes to underscore the necessary task of evaluating how the anti-neoliberal *present* relates to prior anti-colonial strategies, now perceived as limited or failed. I also suggest the significance of evaluating the intimate yet often alienating conditions of everyday living and dying under a neoliberal regime, for too often the former conditions are enabled by the latter ones.

Accounting for Life + Debt and A Small Place

In this section, I offer an analysis of the complex dynamics between Kincaid's anti-colonial critique and her thesis of Antiguan false consciousness in *A Small Place* and compare it with Black's portrayals of grassroots critical literacy

in Jamaica.[127] Kincaid provocatively begins her account by hailing the reader-as-tourist to mobilize a subversive colonialist discourse and to reveal the performative dimensions of historical violence. So as to shift from the conditional to the declarative voice, she explains, "*If* you go to Antigua as a tourist, *this is* what you will see" (3; emphasis mine). This anti-tourist guide uses second-person narration to recreate colonialist binaries whereby the reader becomes the slave master, the colonizer, and the tourist and the illiterate Antiguan becomes the slave, the colonized, and the Hotel servant. She rhetorically reads the reader of *A Small Place* as well as the Antiguan, who is not the intended audience of her account. Dispelling myths of the ideal vacation getaway throughout the text, Kincaid ultimately concludes with an Edenic description of Antigua's natural landscape, an image that she deploys to unveil the historic roles of master and slave as *unnatural* performances. She explains that it is only "once you cease to be a master" and "[o]nce they are no longer slaves," that both can regain their humanity (81). Implicitly, she urges the reader to imagine a new role for herself in the performance of history. Yet Kincaid does not empower the Antiguan worker in the same way, even as she does, at times, strategically identify as the subaltern Antiguan when she wishes to reinforce her authority regarding the impact of colonialist legacies on the island. She declares, "you distorted or erased my history and glorified your own" (36) and states that "we, for as long as we have known you, were capital, like bales of cotton and sacks of sugar, and you were

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[127] Much of the literary criticism on *A Small Place* has focused on the rhetorical strategies Kincaid uses to render the reader complicit with legacies of slavery, colonialism, and the contemporary tourist industry in Antigua.

commanding, cruel capitalists" (37). Elsewhere, however, Kincaid implicitly

emphasizes her expatriate status by alluding to her literacy and capacity for

critical analysis. This strategy produces an international orientation towards

double consciousness enabling her partial disassociation from the local Antiguan

she is so critical of in the text (41-48).

When Kincaid returns to Antigua, she becomes the disoriented post-

colonial witness who asks the question, "Is the Antigua I see before me, self-

ruled, a worse place than it was when it was dominated by the bad-minded

English and the bad-minded things they brought with them?" (41). Kincaid

contends with colonial nostalgia at a time when the independence of her nation

seems limited to the formality of political rhetoric. While she calls attention to the

colonial violence of her childhood education, she nevertheless seems even more

troubled by the post-colonial devaluation of the knowledge symbolized by the

destitute library located "in the old run-down concrete building" (43). She

explains that "most of the books, instead of being on their nice shelves, resting

comfortably, waiting to acquaint me with all *your* greatness, are in cardboard

boxes in a room, gathering mildew, or dust, or ruin" (43). She sees no resistant

potential dwelling within the "ruin[s]" of this library; instead, she regards these

conditions as emblematic of the illiteracy of contemporary Antiguan youth (43).

Kincaid's association of illiteracy with political powerlessness and

economic dependency is compelling and problematic; this aspect of her text is

also never used in Black's documentary film, which I argue is more invested in a

portrayal of the critical consciousness of Jamaican workers. While Kincaid *hails*

the reading audience as tourist, she *represents* the *read* Antiguan as servant; both possess a false consciousness, in her text, because of limited and immobilizing worldviews.[128] In Kincaid's estimation, Antiguans are incapable of reading "their celebration of the Hotel Training School" in relation to the history of slavery; thus, their ignorance of the continued foreign domination in Antigua implies their incapacity to resist it (54). As both an insider and outsider, Kincaid assumes the authority to speak for both tourist and Antiguan.

It remains questionable the extent to which the history Kincaid performs is individual or collective. Kincaid's text makes representative claims for Antiguans, but it also possesses features of a *Bildungsroman* (MacDonald-Smythe 29-70), testifying to her personal development as a writer.[129] While her representative claims may be intended to speak for a silent Antiguan majority, I nonetheless question Antonia Macdonald-Smythe's claim that *A Small Place* is "a dynamic interaction among *plural* vantage points," which she aligns with that of the female West Indian writing tradition of assembling "testimonies of personal experience" to promote "a multi-voice discourse which reflect[s] the point of view of a previously silenced female witness" (142). I have noted that I detect double consciousness emerging in Kincaid's conflicted claims to the identity as "Antiguan citizen" and "exile." Significantly, she also rejects the status of diaspora writer, implying its complicity with American ideology (Birbalsingh 143); however, in *My Brother*, I find that Kincaid makes more explicit her

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[128] Kincaid may intend to provoke the Antiguan reader to resist the identity she claims for them; however, her uses of second person are explicitly directed at the non-Antiguan.

[129] Her first readers were subscribers to *The New Yorker*, a literary magazine that established her as writer in the United States. In general, her works are read as semi-autobiographical.

"multiple social locations" as they engender "contradictory" sentiments and uneven social relations to power (Feree 10). I therefore read Kincaid's literary portrayal of double consciousness as increasingly fragmented. It becomes evident that her inhabitation of a dual subjectivity is impossible because she represents herself as a mobile, transnational black Caribbean woman who clearly has more access to power than others who she represents as part of her Caribbean-based family; yet, it is as a Caribbean *daughter* and *sister*, that she suggests she is also obligated to assume many of the life-sustaining responsibilities that I have been identifying as associated with the racialized and feminized labour value of the neoliberal condition.[130] Of course, this power is only temporary.

Kincaid portrays situations in which the hybrid quality of double consciousness is fundamentally unsettled. Unlike Paule Marshall, who portrays the neoliberal condition through "double exposure"-- a figure of a trans-regional geography of racialization and feminization in the U.S. and Caribbean which I call the neoliberal medium--Kincaid emphasizes the Caribbean as the primary site of the neoliberal condition which she, in turn, only partially embodies as a Caribbean female migrant living in the U.S. I thus find it more persuasive to read Kincaid as she conveys internal conflict with the multiple social locations she has inherited and achieved. In *A Small Place,* Kincaid sees herself as "just one" of many "orphans" without a homeland and without a "tongue," other than the one

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[130] I will explore in further detail below the fact that her brother Devon is feminized in Kincaid's portrayal of his illness and rendered simultaneously disposable, as a dying man, and yet responsible for Kincaid's ironically self-satisfying medicinal transaction with him whereby, as she portrays it, she temporarily supplies him life-sustaining drugs. I use the word transaction (rather than intervention) to signal the fact that her temporary and commoditized act of nursing generates psychological benefits and U.S. cultural capital for herself as a sister-daughter-mother figure, and as a writer. Thus, she becomes a parental figure and the symbol of a U.S. sovereign subject empowered to "make live and let die" (Foucault 241).

that comes from "the language of the criminal" (31). Kincaid therefore signals to her reader her ability to manipulate the criminal discourse she inherits from the colonizer. In my view, Macdonald-Smythe underestimates the discursive power of the postcolonial critic who lives outside the Caribbean yet makes claims for those living within. Given these contexts, it seems unpersuasive to endow *A Small Place* with the West Indian woman's, multi-voiced, activist orientation that Macdonald-Smythe envisions; rather, the text speaks for Kincaid's clever rhetorical strategies as they effect the displacement of Antiguan subaltern resistance by her own post-colonial discourse. To be sure, Kincaid confronts the issue of Caribbean activism, in both *A Small Place* and *My Brother*, but I argue that, in doing so, she demonstrates critical distance and cultural alienation from it.

John Beverly's insights into the political tensions between individual and collective narration of Latin American testimonio are useful in this context. As an activist tool, testimonio includes the "affirmation of the individual subject […] but in connection with a group or class situation marked by marginalization, oppression, and struggle" (41). If it "loses this connection," he argues, then "it ceases to be testimonio and becomes autobiography, that is, an account of, and also a means of access to, middle-or upper-class status, a sort of documentary bildungsroman" (41). While *A Small Place* is surely not to be conflated with Latin American testimonio, I find that Macdonald-Smythe implies such an association through her characterization of Kincaid's text as an assembly of West Indian "testimonies of personal experience" to promote "a multi-voice discourse" (142). Yet, in Beverley's view, testimonio's mode of direct address asks us to recognize

"an authority that is not our own" as "part of a necessary pedagogy" (2, 24). If *A Small Place* provides what the local Antiguan cannot—that is, if it "fills a void" as Derrida says the supplement does (145)—then it is a testimonial narrative that marginalizes subaltern agency by individualizing Kincaid's.

The individualizing effects of Kincaid's writing are significant not only to Joseph Slaughter's narrative assessment of the typologies constructed for successful rights acquisition, which I discussed in chapter one, but also to the very construction of neoliberal and anti-neoliberal imagination. Thus, we should not be dismissive of the individualizing effects of her discourse in the analysis of imagined neoliberal conditions. As I have argued, one of the effects of the neoliberal imagination is to disorient our sense of the very grounds upon which to struggle against exploitation, disenfranchisement, and dispossession in this current phase of global capitalism. Social solidarity is deeply troubling to Kincaid who explores the neoliberal intensification of individualized burdens and how these burdens are unevenly distributed across and internalized by raced, gendered, and classed bodies of the Caribbean. In this context, I would qualify the claim that Kincaid's language subverts colonialist tactics that "obliterate[d] the point of view of the colonized [and] outlaw[ed] literacy" (Ferguson 89) to suggest that her discursive subversions enable a revision of her own relation to the colonizer, but also a reconfiguration of her relation to the heterogeneous population that nonetheless comes to constitute, in her discourse, a uniformly colonized Caribbean subject.[131]

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[131] In many respects, her brother Devon signifies an extreme example of Caribbean subaltern subjectivity. Kincaid's portrayal of him can be read as a textual objectification of his

The relation between language and empowerment in the Caribbean has a complicated history of politicization. As such, Kincaid's choices to write in Standard English and to refer to uses of Caribbean creole in a derogatory way have implications. "Language," George Lamming explains, "is essentially a very political tool, and the term political is used here to define the dynamics of a people's cultural evolution, and the power relations that this involves" (54). Referencing St. Lucia's constitutional prohibition of Creole in parliamentary address, he argues that it is "the politics of cultural subjugation and the transitional period of resistance to that hierarchical authority which makes a clear distinction between the language of negotiation (that is government, school, church, and so on) and language in action (the language of the market-place, the school yard, the playing field)—between let us say state language and street language" (55-56).[132] While ministers of education have disciplined colonial subjects by enforcing Standard English usage, "the subversive intervention of our novelists and poets," he contends, have played a role in "narrow[ing] the distance between what was called Standard English and the variety of nonstandard forms, which are now the occasion of much academic critical scrutiny" (56). Merle

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diseased body into a site of neoliberal struggle.

 [132] See Michel de Certeau's *The Practice of Everyday Life* for a perspective of how the organization of modern language and city space can be re-appropriated and repurposed as a "tactics of practice" (xvii) to defy rationalized procedures of modern power and surveillance. Notably, he emphasizes the empowering historical potential of singularity in his conceptualization of "Walking in the City": "their story begins on ground level, with footsteps. They are myriad, but do not compose a series. They cannot be counted because each unit has a qualitative character: a style of tactile apprehension and kinesthetic appropriation. Their swarming mass is an innumerable collection of singularities. Their intertwined paths give their shape to spaces. They weave places together. In that respect, pedestrian movements form one of these 'real systems whose existence in fact makes up the city.' They are not localized; it is rather they that spatialize" (97). Here, de Certeau imagines the incapacity of modern power to account for a tactics of walking as a form of social freedom.

Hodge adds that although Creole is discredited by authorities, it is "the main medium of communication in the Caribbean" ("Challenges" 204). As such, this language has "implications for our mental health—we speak Creole, we need Creole, we cannot function without Creole, but we hold Creole in utter contempt" (204). Attention to how Kincaid engages in an oscillating identification with Antigua affords insight into her language choices and the tense relation she posits between the individual Antiguan and a larger Caribbean society. Her desire for political solidarity with Antigua seems less evident than does her sense that Caribbean society at large lacks the fundamental self-determination necessary for true sovereignty and empowerment. She suggests that a basic lack in critical education devolves into the incapacity to articulate analysis and action. It is telling, given the views shared by Lamming and Hodge, that Kincaid would overlook the relevance of Creole as a language and tool for action.

Given Kincaid's critique of Antiguan functional and critical illiteracy in *A Small Place*, one might read her choice to publish in Standard English, rather than in Antiguan Creole, as signaling political or cultural distance from the Caribbean. Merle Collins reminds us that the "secondary orality" of "Caribbean writers living for the most part outside the region" varies according to "attachment to and from the memory of cultures which are daily being transformed in linguistic and other forms" ("Orality and Writing" 37). She argues that "in order to fully understand the poetic forms which our spirits acknowledge, we have to move outside the British traditions which have generally been in our classroom fare" (41). She contends that one's unfamiliarity with particular forms demands innovation, "a

different kind of production than the printed page," and "the research which would enable us to understand it" (41). Kincaid's U.S. location may prevent her from being able to interpret the idiomatic complexities of Antiguan communication and daily experience. Standard English, as Kincaid claims in *A Small Place*, is "the only language I have in which to speak of this crime" and yet it "is the language of the criminal who committed the crime" (32). Feeling forced to "explain and express the deed only from the criminal's point of view" (32), she speaks to the historical trauma of using Standard English as "it cannot contain the horror of the deed, the injustice of the deed, the agony, the humiliation inflicted on me" (32). The emphasis that Kincaid places on her own social reproduction of the language of the colonizer, as she learned it in the British tradition of the Antiguan colonial classroom, is suggestive of the limitations of her ability to account for the idiosyncratic experiences of the neoliberal condition in the post-colonial Caribbean that she does not regularly inhabit.

Standard and Creole English represent the opposite extremes of "a spread of variations which can more accurately be likened to a continuum" (Hodge "Caribbean Writers" 47). Various "speaking situations," according to Merle Hodge, "reflect differences in education, social class, or age, or may give other important information about speakers in the context of communication, such as self-concept, mood, attitude, relationship" (47). Kincaid's departure from Antigua at the age of seventeen may help to explain her lack of "recognition that Caribbean people have a language of their own" (49). Hodge finds "little that seems to connect her written English to a Caribbean vernacular" (50) and suggests

that "Kincaid's competence in her native language has succumbed to amnesia induced not only by the passage of time, but possibly by the deliberate distancing of her adolescent years" (52-53). Kincaid's inattention to the political valances of Creole languages suggests her orientation towards Standard English-speaking, North American readers but it also signals the limitations of her authority to portray Antiguan false consciousness as pervasive.

Kincaid's political vision differs from that of Merle Hodge's for she has been critical of Hodge's own political work to organize women at a grassroots level in Trinidad. In Kincaid's view, it is Hodge's writing rather than her practical activism that has longer-term political impact (Birlbalsingh 898). Hodge, by contrast, argues that "there is no fundamental contradiction between art and activism," and she holds that "the power of the creative word to change the world is not to be underestimated" (1990: 202). Kincaid and Hodge thus represent two distinct positions informed by their own geopolitical locations living outside and within the Caribbean, respectively. There are likely a variety of complicated factors for why Kincaid imagines greater political value in writing, but she does express a fear of assassination, if she were to return to the West Indies, and envisions the politics there as "'tribal'" (quoted in King 898). Here, Kincaid sounds not unlike V.S. Naipaul who has been infamously derogatory about the ethnic tribalisms which, in his estimation, characterize the social and political behaviours of West Indian people.

In a 1987 interview with Selwyn Cudjoe, Kincaid admits that, when she changed her name from Elaine Potter Richardson to Jamaica Kincaid, the

Caribbean "had become very remote to [her]" (400). She explains,

> It was kind of an invention: I wouldn't go home to visit that part of the
>
> world, so I decided to recreate it. "Jamaica" was symbolic of that place. I
>
> didn't come from Jamaica. I changed my name before Jamaica became
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> fashionable—at least, before I was aware of it. If I had been aware, I
>
> would probably have changed my name to "Scandinavia" or something
>
> like that, because I hate being popular. (400)

Following this claim, Kincaid explains that she "didn't know anything about West

Indian literature" prior to her arrival in the U.S. (400); instead, the English

classics were her primary sources of literary exposure.[133]

In a 1991 interview Kincaid names herself "a citizen of Antigua" and she

rejects the notion that she is a writer of the Diaspora (Birbalsingh 143), despite

the fact that she moved to the U.S. in 1965. She claims that she lives in the U.S.

because "it would be hard for [her] to live there [in the Caribbean] and work"

(143). She continues, "I made myself into a sort of an exile. It wasn't intentional.

It's one of those things I was doing, as I was doing it, and when the time came for

me to become an American citizen, I didn't. I will never become an American

citizen. So I don't consider myself a diaspora writer" (143). Kincaid posits a

relation between foreign citizenship and Diasporic identity yet she assumes that

the status of "exile" signifies a stronger connection to the homeland. Implicitly,

then, she seems to regard the political work of writing-in-exile as having greater

significance than regular interaction and engagement with people living in the

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[133] Cudjoe's interview with Kincaid took place while she was writing *A Small Place,* a time in which, according to Cudjoe, she was reading *Resistance and Caribbean Literature*, his own study of men's Caribbean literary tradition.

Caribbean whom she regards as tribal in their ethnic nationalism.

Kincaid's seeming rejection of the "Creole speaker" (King 885) is, for Jane King, akin to the ignorance of the "Creole continuum" widely studied by the 1970s (891). As Kincaid draws on the "Caribbean staples" of corruption (894), King wonders if she would do better to consider "Antiguans who go to Vermont," given how she creates "a unique position [for herself in which she is] able to understand the tourist and the Antiguan and despise both while identifying with neither" (895). King rightly demands that "[a]s a small-place person myself, I would like the evidence of a few more Antiguans, some of whom actually live there. There are at least a few who are literate, politically aware and not living in 'corruption'" (897). In this sense, King's article suggests that the greater knowledge to be gained from Kincaid's work is that which is elucidated from its autobiographical dimensions rather that its strategies to characterize Antiguan identity. Thus, it is valuable to pursue analysis of both the individualizing and socializing effects of a neoliberal condition. In Corinna McLeod's more sympathetic reading, Kincaid's "indictment of the black Antiguans who refuse to take responsibility for their nation" in *A Small Place* can be read "as a prediction that through voices like hers, Antigua will see itself as a new country able to construct itself outside of the tourists' disfiguring gaze. In short, Kincaid (re)mythologizes Antigua" (77). Her reading seems overstated, however, particularly if we compare the representations of Antiguans in *A Small Place* with those of Jamaicans in *Life + Debt*.

Stephanie Black can be read as supplying a socially-oriented critique of

neoliberal processes; although *Life + Debt* surely represents Black's own editorial

and directorial vision, it nonetheless complicates the politics of representation by

including a variety of disjunctive and corroborating testimonies.[134] It is in the film

that an anti-colonial, Pan-Caribbean consciousness is implicitly recuperated in

reaction to neoliberal trade and labour initiatives. Notably, Kincaid's uneasy

reflections upon histories of Caribbean political radicalism are left out of the film;

reassessing these sections, in light of the Kincaid and Black collaboration, enables

a more complex view of the various ways in which Caribbean resistance is and is

not historicized, imagined, revised, and rearticulated in the book and film.

In reading *A Small Place*, it is difficult to overlook Kincaid's skepticism

regarding the potential for Caribbean sovereignty or her critique of a failed

Caribbean Left. She recalls the replacement of "honest leaders [and founders] of

Antigua Trades and Labour Union" with "dishonest people," whose business

practices endorse corporate and political dictatorship (71). Political nepotism

compromises democratic electoral processes while homeland security reinforces

the interests of local political elites and private foreign investors. Kincaid exposes

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[134] Given Kincaid's biases, I agree with King when she finds Kincaid's attempt to differentiate herself from V.S. Naipaul unpersuasive. Kincaid, in this interview, regards herself as more empathetic to the Caribbean experience and less "'destructive'" than the "'racist'" Naipaul (900). Although I would not characterize her vision as unquestionably racist—since, in my view, Kincaid offers more complex articulations of subaltern experience— I do agree with King that it is "uncanny to hear the diagnosis" whereby Kincaid attempts to differentiate *A Small Place* from Naipaul's *Middle Passage* (900). The larger implication of King's critique is that Kincaid offers a depoliticized postmodern view of the subjectivity of truth (905-906); she holds Kincaid responsible for the "anger and insult and little else that [she] offers to the native Caribbean" (907). King further implies Kincaid's destructive tendencies by aligning them with Naipaul's infamous claim that "'History is built on achievement and creation; and nothing was created in the West Indies'" (902). She notes Kincaid's anti-Castro sentiments imply her political conservatism (902) and calls Kincaid "[a] writer for postmodern times," who "sometimes suggested that it is not possible to write in the Caribbean. For those of us who do, I can only reply to her that it is simply much harder to be published since we don't have magazines like the *New Yorker* ready to publish writers from fashionable minorities" (904).

the limitations of the Antiguan capacity for resistance and self-defense by

suggesting that the national army functions only as "a decoration" (72). Failed

resistance to foreign intervention in Antigua is compared to the failure of the New

Jewel Movement to defend itself against the 1983 U.S. military intervention in

Grenada. Arguing that "an army […] can only lend legitimacy to illegitimate acts"

(72), Kincaid collapses potential distinctions between Caribbean political

ideologies and movements even though, under the leadership of Maurice Bishop,

the New Jewel Movement envisioned itself as emancipating Grenada from the

imperialist and colonialist legacies redeployed through Cold War alignments.[135]

Thus, we might regard Kincaid's comparison of corrupt, pro-Western Antigua and

socialist, non-aligned Grenada as marking her suspicion about the aims of

collective identity politics and Caribbean nationalisms.[136] She subsequently links

both Grenada under Maurice Bishop and Haiti under the political violence of the

Duvalier regime to portray the substitutability of such political scenarios and her

critical perspective of the interconnection of failed resistance and political

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[135] The New Jewel Movement, despite its failure, had a socialist, non-aligned vision of nationalism predicated on participatory democracy, critical literacy, and popular education (Noguera 38-39). Prime Minister of Jamaica Michael Manley and President Fidel Castro of Cuba publicly supported the Movement and Maurice Bishop's call to socialize Grenada. The illegal U.S. military occupation of Grenada, informally supported by some Caribbean countries, and the internal corruption within the Movement are factors contributing to the assassination of Maurice Bishop. As Pedro A. Noguera cautiously acknowledges of the internal conflicts within the movement, "there can be no doubt that any state which undertakes a mass literacy campaign, is motivated largely by a desire to promote its own interests" (41).

[136] Yet, as Noguera argues, while political leadership is frequently self-interested and "related to issues of control, legitimacy and the construction of a new ideological hegemony," it "need not necessarily be in opposition to the individual and collective interests of subordinate groups" (41). With this view in mind, Kincaid may underestimate "the power of education" which, for Noguera, "lies in the fact that even when the aim of instruction is to produce conformity and passivity these outcomes are never guaranteed because individuals have the capacity to use knowledge for purposes other than what may have been intended" (41). Pointedly, Kincaid proves her own ability to use her colonial education subversively, even as she does not anticipate this ability for the average post-colonial Antiguan. Kincaid's discrediting of the Caribbean Left involves focusing on failed and flawed revolutionary insight, yet it remains unclear what orientation or scale of resistance she would provide as an alternative.

corruption.[137]

The corrupt political dictatorships of Papa and Baby Doc Duvalier, in

Haiti, serve to remind us of how Caribbean political elites inherit and perpetuate

imperialist and colonialist legacies. The Duvaliers are described as similar to the

colonizers who "murdered people," "imprisoned people," "robbed people" and

established banking systems to favor the wealthy (34). Kincaid's depiction of the

Antiguan misreading of the Duvalier regime as just another typical "event" (73) is

linked to Grenada in order to conceptualize the very notion of revolution as just

another event: Antiguans, in her view, "imagine another event, the event of

Maurice Bishop in Grenada, and they imagine that such a man will materialize in

Antigua and he'll do Maurice Bishop-like things and say Maurice Bishop-like

things and come to a Maurice Bishop-like end—death, only this time at the hands

of Americans" (73-74).[138]

Brian Meeks identifies factors pertaining to the "crisis" of 1983 which led

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[137] After Kincaid compares Antiguan insecurity to the situation in Grenada when the U.S. intervened, she links Prime Minister Bird and his sons—the "father and his two sons who have wielded power in Antigua for so many years"—to "the event of Haiti and the Duvaliers" (73).

[138] Collins explains that Bishop's New Jewel Movement adopted "a Marxist-Leninist vanguard structure" ("Are you a Bolshevik or a Menshevik?" 38) and that, by 1983, it was voted that the "joint leadership [was] to be shared by Maurice Bishop and Bernard Coard" (39). While she describes the Grenada Revolution as having a "euphoric beginning" whereby the repressive Gairy regime was overthrown with popular support (39), it ultimately failed as a result of "the party's narcissism" and perpetuation of inner factionalism (43). Bishop was assassinated and the U.S. illegally led a military intervention. Collins argues that "[t]he Grenadian people were not generally Marxist-Leninist or even knowingly capitalist in orientation. They were working out of their own critique of resistance, their perceptions of practical, personal experience" (43). In her estimation, "those attracted to the idea of a Leninist vanguard began to label all meaningful activity Leninist, and to, in practice, devalue the role of local history and practical experience, perhaps even to be attracted to Stalinist rhetoric without naming it" (44). With this critical perspective in mind, I find it significant to expand upon an anti-neoliberal imagination not to promote a particular Marxist or Leftist ideology, but to keep open for consideration a variety of experiences and responses to a set of procedures, policies, ideologies and discourses that inform a specific phase of exploitative capitalist development. Thus, while an anti-neoliberal position may be anti-capitalist, it is not necessarily so. See Collins's 1987 novel *Angel* for her fictional portrayal of Grenadian struggles for resistance and revolution.

the eclipse of Bishop's New Jewel Movement. He identifies serious economic downturn "due to the non-appearance of expected loans and grants," problems of leadership within the Leninist structure of the party, and a subsequent "'dramatic collapse' in morale and support" (*Caribbean Revolutions* 167). By March 1983, the Reagan administration in the U.S. began to accuse Grenada of collaborating with Communist Cuba in the construction of an airstrip. Prior to direct military intervention, "the U.S. and its allies were holding maneuvers in the surrounding waters, using Barbados as a staging area" (168). Such a scenario provides a Cold War context for the U.S. military management of Caribbean waters and its exacerbation of the struggles to establish regional solidarity.

In Kincaid's depiction, extreme political leadership—Left or Right— appears to change hands so regularly that it is envisioned as a spectator sport for passive Antiguans awaiting salvation. Practical Caribbean resistance, in this context, seems to lose all meaning. Meeks helps to illuminate the traumatic significance to a waning Caribbean Left of failed Caribbean resistance when he recalls the Grenada experiment led by Maurice Bishop:

> the collapse of the Grenada Revolution and the US invasion signals not only the end of a particular variety of Caribbean Marxism but the demise of an entire notion of sovereignty and nonalignment. Along with these, though far less evident, the Grenada debacle eclipsed a new, but palpably present, sense of self-confidence that had been growing among the small islands and contiguous mainland territories of the wider Caribbean. ("Introduction: On the Bump of a Revival" ix)

Referring to his own generation of late 1960s Black Power participants in the

New Jewel Movement and also in the larger Caribbean, he admits that their

visions of "a more equal and more just Caribbean" were ultimately "dashed by the

course of events in the following decade and a half" (ix). He continues:

> Grenada was the last nail in the coffin, but before that deadening seal there
>
> had been the revelation of the corrupt Burnham regime in Guyana and the
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> death by assassination of that country's first son Walter Rodney and the
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> running to ground of the [Michael] Manley government in Jamaica by a
>
> brutal, relentless process of financial, psychological and military
>
> destabilization. (ix)

Given these historical precedents, Kincaid's critique of pro-Western capitalist

development can be read as a broader critique of the legacies of Caribbean

political extremism, both Right and Left, for while the colonizer is said to have

invented "bureaucracy," the "Gross National Product" and a legal system to serve

foreign self-interest in the Caribbean, local political leaders are construed to

ultimately uphold or relent to colonialist systems of power and violence against

their own people. The racist foundations of modern western nationalism and the

dehumanizing capitalist enterprise of transforming black populations into the

commodity-form of the slave (34) continue in new forms, argues Kincaid, thereby

reducing the "modern experience" to a profoundly disturbing manifestation of

"backwardness" (16).

Kincaid briefly imagines her own revolutionary potential by asking her

reader, "Do you ever wonder why some people blow things up? I can imagine that

if my life had taken a certain turn, there would the Barclays Bank, and there I would be, both of us in ashes" (26). Her references to direct, violent action are limited but, on occasion, she does acknowledge and align herself with resistant Caribbean history (35). More often, however, Kincaid manages her responses to socioeconomic violence by deploying rhetorical questions, conditions, declarations, and critique for pedagogical effect. However, she avoids prescribing an alternative to the failed historical resistance she imagines. When she asks, "Do you ever try to understand why people like me cannot get over the past, cannot forgive and cannot forget?" (26), she represents an entire generation of Caribbean people as angry but ultimately inactive. Not unlike the figure of the North American tourist who she portrays as the reader of her text, Kincaid fails to confront how her own U.S. residency may limit her consciousness of regional grassroots activism and the complicated obstacles involved in contemporary struggles to transform present conditions. Yet, Kincaid seems aware of the psychological domestication of colonial violence within "a small place" where the "small event" is imagined as so "isolated" that people "cannot see that they might be part of a chain of something, anything" (52).[139] This inability to see the contiguities of post-colonial violence within the Caribbean frustrates Kincaid and yet she claims that "an exact account" and "a complete account of anything, anywhere, is not possible" (53). While she acknowledges the impossible accuracy

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[139] Here, the metonymic association of the "chain" pertains to political potential for social solidarity contingent upon the collective critical consciousness of the historical intersections between past and present struggles. Paule Marshall, by contrast, invokes the figure of chain to imply the interrelation between the transnational expansion of corporate capital and a history of bondage. As such, the figure of the chain has multiple and irreconcilable significations as it emerges to account for colonial and neoliberal violence.

of a colonial archive, she also condemns the general lack of "interest in the exact, or in the completeness" which, for her, "would demand a weighing, careful consideration, careful judging, careful questioning" (53-54). In her estimation, "no action in the present is an action planned with a view of its effect on the future," and when history is revealed to "the people in a small place," they are easily seduced as if they are "children being shown the secrets of a magic trick" (54).

Histories of Caribbean resistance have indeed been commodified for tourists and celebrated by locals in order to maintain a national, pro-Western, status quo. Antiguans, according to Kincaid, "speak of slavery as if it had been a pageant" (54) and therefore fail to "see a relationship between their obsession with slavery and emancipation and their celebration of the Hotel Training School (graduation ceremonies are broadcast on radio and television)" (54). Post-colonial youth are not found sitting in the colonial library, as her generation was, "like communicants at the altar, taking in, again and again, the fairy tale of how we met you, your right to do the things you did, how beautiful you were, are, and always will be" (42). Kincaid is alarmed by the possibility that the new "fairy tale" could be one based on the illusion of Antiguan freedom. Recalling a carnival event in which teenagers are found "singing pop songs" and "reciting poems they had written about slavery" (43), Kincaid traces the "rubbish" influence of North Americans on them in contrast to that of the English on her own generation (44). In her view, post-colonial youth differ in "how stupid they seemed, how unable they were to answer in a straightforward way, and in their native of tongue of

English, simple questions about themselves" (44). The postmodern collapse of history into a hyper-mediated entertainment industry marks a departure from the modern moment of Kincaid's childhood experience under British colonial rule.[140]

Kincaid's geographical and generational distance from this post-colonial society marks as nostalgic and idealistic her claims to the ability of an older Antiguan population to deconstruct the power dynamics of their colonial relation to England. Yet, Kincaid's theory of Antiguan limitations and her condemnation of news radio "personalities" for speaking as though "English […] were their sixth language" (43), are worthy of consideration in light of Brian Meeks' claims that while "a new, resident Caribbean intellectualism" flourished in the 1960s, there was a "debilitating retreat of the intellectual both from politics and the project of serious inquiry" by the 1980s ("Introduction: On the Bump of Revival" xiv). In his view, the neoliberal reordering of the world is, in part, accountable for this intellectual crisis. Kincaid thus perceives, in the post-colonial moment, a politically apathetic youth culture accepting of flattened histories of emancipation as historical fact rather than as objects of national inquiry. However, Kincaid

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[140] Despite the established differences between Kincaid and Hodge, Hodge offers a similar critique: "The colonial era came to an end and we moved into independence. Theoretically, we could not begin to build up a sense of our cultural identity. But we immediately found ourselves in a new and more vicious era of cultural penetration. Television, which is basically American television, came to Trinidad and Tobago in 1962, the year the British flag was pulled down. The same pattern can be seen all over the Caribbean—withdrawing the most obvious trapping of colonial domination and installing a Trojan horse instead" ("Challenges of the Struggle" 205). Hodge clarifies, however, her belief in the empowering potential of grassroots cultural forms such as popular theatre, although she finds that much theatre in the Caribbean "is perceived as an urban, middle-class activity. We have a duty, I think, to restore theatre to its popular roots. We must take it out of the sophisticated urban theatre building and into community centers, church halls, and school buildings around the country; we must also infiltrate the electronic media with a popular theatre grounded in Caribbean experience" (207). She also sees value in focusing on the development of Caribbean children's literature, women's writing, and the revision of school curriculum (207-208).

extends her critique of the limitations of black resistance back to the era of slavery: she explains that "in accounts of the capture and enslavement of black people almost no slave ever mentions who captured and delivered him or her to the European master. In accounts of their corrupt government, Antiguans neglect to say that in twenty years of one form of self-government or another, they have, with one five-year exception, placed in power the present government" (55-56).

Although *A Small Place* is directed towards a North American audience, it is a text which circulates within a global cultural market economy. In this sense, we might consider how Kincaid "endeavors to stir up Antigua's memories of its collective griefs, expose the violence suffered by the native population, and reveal the flaw in that population's national concepts, because what has prevented Antigua from emerging from the facsimile of a nation is its lack of national mourning" (McLeod 86). This need for "national mourning" may be related to Brian Meeks' observations about the traumatic experience of a failed Caribbean Left that resulted, in part, through the emergence of a neoliberal world order. If this is the case, then it serves little value to re-inscribe Antigua as "a non-place" if, as McLeod implies, "its failure to become England marks its failure to have any identity whatsoever" (82). What is more valuable, at this juncture, is to consider how Antigua functions within a diverse cultural, racial, linguistic, colonial and post-colonial region that struggles both for and against its recognition and legitimization as a regional voice within the global economy.

Suzanne Gauch argues that Kincaid's narrator refuses "to elaborate on an Antiguan identity for the reader" because the focus is on "the history and

implications of the tourist's look as it dominates representation of Antigua and Antiguans" (911). In effect, the Western fantasy of its own historical significance to the Caribbean is critiqued alongside Caribbean histories of internal struggle and resistance. Gauch's contention that "*A Small Place* leaves us no final representation of Antigua and its people, issuing instead what appears to be an insurmountable challenge to those who would use the essay as a starting point for a study on Antiguan, or Caribbean, identity, culture and resistance" (912) is persuasive in this context.

Kincaid's collaboration with Stephanie Black on *Life + Debt* draws attention not only to the significance of reimagining the Caribbean capacity for the critical literacy and political solidarity necessary for resistance to and transformation of neoliberal conditions, but to the importance of "national mourning" and how it must be translated into collective action for it to be politically effective to combat the neoliberalism currently at play in the region. Regional economic organization among English-speaking islands exists via CARICOM, but this limiting organization accommodates questionable trade and investment policies of neo-liberalism (Bishop and Payne 4-7). In Black's film, testimonial accounts collaborate to produce a vision of Pan-Caribbean consciousness. The film serves as a useful case study to question how worker testimony can be used to corroborate particular claims to regional experience by way of discursive supplementation. As a supplementary activity, testimonial collaborations have political and pedagogical value for a critical method of historical accountability. I elaborate upon this claim below.

In *Life + Debt*, Jamaica becomes the synecdoche for Pan-Caribbean experiences of neoliberalism. As part of her research for the film, Black read Jamaica Kincaid's account of Antigua and was "intrigued by how easily applicable it was to present-day Jamaica" (DVD director's commentary).[141] Upon request, Kincaid adapted portions of *A Small Place* to serve as a voice-over narrative for Black's filmic rendering of the Jamaican experience with the International Monetary Fund. She is said to have visited the editing room to ensure that excerpts could be synchronized with editorial cuts of the film. While the narrative collaboration is acknowledged in the director's commentary, Antigua and Jamaica are never compared in the actual film. I would argue that Antigua's erasure, as an effect of translating text from *A Small Place* to support the voice-over narrative of *Life + Debt,* reinforces the neoliberal ideology of global economic integration that renders retrograde any claims to national sovereignty, particularly for a post-colonial nation whose culture and industry is entrenched within systems of financial dependency. The inattention to Antigua and the representation of Jamaica as a pan-Caribbean synecdoche may also reinforce assumptions that neoliberal policy has equal effects throughout the Caribbean. This does a disservice to the promotion of critical regionalism and anti-neoliberal reconstruction whereby the uneven development and competitive disadvantage between bigger and smaller islands could, for example, be addressed.[142] Had

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[141] I transcribed all of Black's quotations from the DVD director's commentary unless otherwise stated.

[142] Norman Girvan's chapter, "Reinterpreting the Caribbean," is a useful reference for outlining the state of modern Caribbean economies and the related economic organizations and policies affecting them. It should be noted that larger land mass or population does not necessarily relate to greater economic prosperity. For example, Girvan explains that "[t]he three mainland states [Suriname, Guyana, and Belize] contain 55 percent of the land area but only 4 percent of the

Kincaid and Black made their collaboration more explicitly about exploring the

politics of neoliberal translation, then the discursive performance of their

identification may have achieved a more striking and strategic coalitional effect.

Black nonetheless regards her documentary investigations as having an

activist orientation. She has compared her film techniques to the work of "a

lawyer [who] may collect evidence for a case" (P.O.V. 2001) and claims to "use

film as an advocacy tool" to give a political "voice" to others (P.O.V.). She finds

it challenging "to *translate* a personal reaction to a situation, utilizing both the

facts and realities of the circumstance within a variety of cinematic approaches

that will ultimately evoke the *original sentiment* which catalyzed the project to its

viewer" (emphasis mine). Despite the collaboration with Kincaid, Black is

selective in her inclusions of the original sentiments offered by Kincaid in *A

Small Place*. Moreover, as audiovisual medium, the film produces narrative

effects distinct from those of Kincaid's written text. I will highlight some of these

distinct effects specifically in the context of Black's portrayal of the on-screen

tourist as well as her portrayal of an on-screen audience. Black's film, like *A

Small Place*, directs attention to the U.S.; the *Life + Debt* website identifies

"young audiences in the U.S." as the film's primary demographic (2). During the

writing of *A Small Place*, Kincaid similarly identifies her readers as American,

population of the subregion. In spite of their low population densities they are relatively poor. Per
capita incomes are similar to those of larger islands, though Belize is considerably richer on
average than those of the other two. Both Guyana and Suriname have an export structure that is
dominated by primary commodities –bauxite in the case of Suriname and bauxite and sugar in the
case of Guyana—and both have been negatively affected by the weakening of commodity markets
since the 1980s" (13-14). Issues of political stability, foreign investment and trade relation,
tourism, colonial history, possession of oil or natural and in-demand resources also impact
economic prosperity and development capacity to varying degrees.

"white people in the suburbs" (Cudjoe "Jamaica Kincaid" 401). If the general

audience of both text and film is presumably ignorant of foreign control over the

Caribbean as a political and socio-economic region—control established through

mechanisms of debt arising from trade and loan agreements with the IMF, World

Bank, and the Inter-American Development Bank—then sustaining the geo-

political specificity of particular claims may be relevant to sustain to illuminate as

uneven the experience of neoliberal conditions in the Caribbean.

  Life + Debt is a film which has a circular narrative insofar as it begins and

ends with local news footage of workers' riots in Jamaica. Contradictory audio

and visual elements are interlaced to disrupt the viewer's patterns of recognition

of subject matter. Black is formalistically and thematically conscientious about

the role of telecommunications in flattening the representation of Jamaican

violence and poverty. Popular news media, in her view, fail to account for the

impact of structural adjustment programs, or other neoliberal policies, on the food

and job security of the nation. In the director's commentary, she explains, "I was

interested in the passive/active television watching as a metaphor for the passive

role that is imposed in the decision-making process." She discusses her choice to

include a scene in which a television is situated on a large barrel accordingly,

"barrels are used to send goods from the United States to friends and relatives in

Jamaica. Here, and throughout the film, I was interested in using the local news

to tell the stories that are rarely reported in [the] foreign press."[143] Black may be

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[143] Kezia Page offers a compelling analysis of migrant space and subjectivity as a "Janus faced two-way gaze" (*Transnational Negotiations* 5) involving cultural, economic, generational, and psychological dimensions of remittance. She attends to the way "that the local, or the regional Caribbean, has its own complicated ways of perceiving diaspora and diaspora subjects" (6). I am

read as drawing upon strategies of Third Cinema which "can communicate an ideological position that undercuts the normative Western stance of First World films" (Aitkin and Dixon 331). In this film genre, the use of "high/low camera angles can emphasize the socio-spatial disparities of subjects" while "wide-angle shots can emphasize the communitarian context of subjects; straight-to camera dialogues can bridge the subject-viewer divide; the juxtaposition of times and spaces via dynamic editing can delineate socio-spatial contrasts between groups; and the dissonant overlay of non-synchronized English over indigenous languages can critically portray the colonial imposition of cultures" (331). Black's film begins by unleashing a disorienting montage to illuminate the effects of a neoliberal condition and "a second seizure of power that is not individualizing but, if you like, massifying, that is directed not at man-as-body but at man-as-species" (Foucault 243). The effect is sustained but complicated by the inclusion of a chain of testimonial supplements provided by workers, politicians, educators, and bureaucrats who account for experience in language ranging from Standard English to local Anglo-Creole vernaculars. At times, the accounts create the effect of corroboration, while at other times the film gives the impression of polyphonic discord and interruption.

Sergei Eisenstein's conception of film montage for the dialectical stimulation of critical consciousness in the film viewer is relevant to my analysis of Black's editorial strategies of juxtaposition, particularly as she puts them to use

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particularly interested in her consideration of "diasporan products—images, cultural texts including food, money and clothing as well as literature" as having "co-producers, facilitators and judges" (7-8), as it helps to illuminate the complexity of globalized consumption evident in Black's remittance imagery of barrels and news media.

in the opening of the film. The Eisenstein tradition of filmic montage is deployed

for the "disruption of habitual reading" (Sorensen 57) and the "re-invention of

signification" (62). It is intended to produce meaning in the space "between

images," or in the editorial cut "producing a product from parts" (64). According

to Gilles Deleuze, the first movement effected by montage involves a shift "from

'percept to the concept,'" whereas "the second movement [...] from the concept to

the affect" anticipates "the response of reception of the audience, often registering

the collision or impact of the image" (64). Montage thus "integrate[s] [...]

affective and nonlinear" (64) forms of story-telling and "introduces dynamism and

dialectical thought to the representation of the past" to stimulate the interrogation

of history and power relations (66).

It is evident that Stephanie Black's film *Life + Debt* incorporates strategies

of montage to stimulate in viewers a critical imagination of the power relations at

play in the modern history and historical representation of Jamaicans. The film

opens with a natural scene of waves crashing against the Jamaican shoreline at

sunset. The silence of this serene image is interrupted by a local Jamaican

newscast and the film cuts to footage of riots in the city. The film then cuts to a

scene of people passively watching the local news on television. The program

announces the arrival of International Monetary Fund representatives in Jamaica

who will perform a technical assessment of the island-nation's financial situation.

Next appears the archival news footage of Horst Kohler, then the Director of the

IMF, who remarks upon problems of world poverty. Ironically, he is interrupted

by a Baskin Robbins commercial celebrating its brand as a place "where the world

goes for ice cream." Here, montage works disruptively by juxtaposing the image of a bureaucrat who talks about global poverty with the image of a commercial that sells a cold dessert. The film proceeds through a cut to Mutabaruka, a well-established Jamaican musician, who begins to sing a politically conscious song as he walks through a Jamaican ghetto. The sound of helicopters mingles with his voice to create an eerie atmosphere of surveillance. The film next cuts to two Rastafari-styled men who reappear at different points in the film and discuss the relationship between biblical concepts of usury, the historic reality of slavery, and the current conditions of Jamaican debt formed in conjunction with foreign economic policies. It is only after this sequence that a sun rises, vacation music is cued, and the title credits for the film appear. The welcoming voice of a female flight attendant is heard and the reflection of a tourist is captured in the windows of the airplane. Belinda Becker, the voice who speaks on behalf of Kincaid's adapted screenplay, is finally heard: "If you come to Jamaica as a tourist, this is what you will see." Becker explains that if you visit Jamaica you will land in the nicer area of Montego Bay rather than Kingston. Recalling the sarcastic sentiments of Kincaid, Becker patronizes the tourist as the overworked employee who deserves a vacation. The black and white footage used, at various points in the film, refers the present-day to a colonial past, according to Black's commentary.[144]

Black represents the ignorance of the West regarding the everyday life and problems of the Caribbean through the narrative device of the tourist, as does

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[144] Black's monochromatic technique is used, for example, when local performers, sing "Welcome to Jamaica" as tourists depart from the plane.

Kincaid. Like *A Small Place*, the film directly implicates the film spectator in scenes depicting white, all-inclusive resort tourism in Jamaica, and uses Kincaid's narrative as partial voice-over. When on-screen tourists are given a bus tour of Jamaica, Kincaid's narrative, performed in the film by Belinda Becker, is used almost verbatim to note the poor conditions of schools and the questionable sources of food production. Notably, the voice-over, substituting Antigua for Jamaica in order to ask questions about whether or not the country is self-ruled, is intended for the film spectator and not the oblivious, on-screen tourist. Although the film spectator is hailed as tourist through the voice-over use of second person, she is also someone who bears witness to other on-screen tourists. This displacement provides an additional opportunity to resist identification, for while the film spectator is made to feel complicit in the tourism on-screen, she is more an accessory to its crime; the potential for the film spectator to reorient herself is created on the condition of her willingness to listen to and learn from the testimony provided in the film.

The filmic strategy of montage continues to be useful to the analysis of Black's work to create conditions for the critical perspective of the viewer who may be agitated to resist identification with the on-screen tourists who tend to be depicted in group formation as part of an all-inclusive resort. While Paul Virilio argues that the "mobility of the image is in stark contrast to the immobility of the viewer, in that technologies of vision, such as film-making, transform the landscape into a reservoir of signs, awaiting interpretation from a distanciated and fixed point of view," Mike Crang finds that "[o]bservation is not just optical but

haptical - a practice of grabbing hold of, reaching out, apprehending and touching'" (Aikin and Dixon 332). Aikin and Dixon draw on these perspectives to argue that "the production of film space is intimately connected to the production of other kinds of spaces, those associated with the practice of viewing. Mobility in this sense refers to a dynamic inter-relation between the viewer and the viewed" (332). From the perspective of Lacanian analysis, they find that film cuts "can be used to draw out an aspect of this particular topology, in that the screen portrays images from which the viewer apprehends the on-screen world as a reflective plane that offers a sense of 'wholeness', that is, a feeling of being complete and secure in one's identity" (332); yet, "the attenuation of other senses within the darkened interiors of theaters is an especial configuration and practice of viewing which sets up the possibility of the illusory eye/I following the camera" (332). This illusory "I," in Black's film, is reinforced for the film viewer who becomes agitated by the critical effects of montage to resist identification with the on-screen tourist to whom she bears witness.

Notably, both *A Small Place* and *Life + Debt* end by deconstructing the theatrical power of history to stimulate the potential to imagine a transformative change in social relations: "[o]f course, the whole thing is, once you cease to be a master, once you throw off your master's yoke, you are no longer human rubbish, you are just a human being, and all the things that adds up to. So, too, with the slaves. Once they are no longer slaves, once they are free, they are no longer noble and exalted; they are just human beings" (Kincaid 81). In this sense, the film expands upon Kincaid's rhetorical strategies to function as an anti-tour guide

by providing the film spectator an opportunity to critically distance herself from the externalized tourist persona but to also pedagogically reengage with the critical voice-over tour. I argue that the film medium stimulates the very sensory perceptions of the film spectator and thus it addresses the bio-political effects of a neoliberal condition in ways that are distinct from Kincaid's first-person essay.

Compellingly, *Life + Debt* can thus be read as conveying, through montage, a series of social conditions arising from the geopolitical context of a Jamaican landscape that embodies multiple dimensions of a global economy. It is useful to note here that geographers draw upon "critical spatial theory" to study filmic depictions of geography in relation to "the material conditions of lived experience and every day social practices" (Aitkin and Dixon 328). Black conveys what anthropologist Arjun Appadurai conceptualizes as "ethnoscapes," "technoscapes," "finanscapes," "mediascapes" and "ideoscapes" ("Disjuncture and Difference"), in formally disjunctive ways to expose the contradictions between neoliberal policy and discourse in the context of global labour and leisure economies. In this regard, her film can be read for its depiction of "landscape as both a work (a product of human labor the encapsulates the dreams, desires and all the injustices of the people and social systems that make it); and (2) the notion of landscape as something that does work (it acts as a social agent in the further development of a place)" (Aitkin and Dixon 330).

Towards the end of the on-screen bus tour, the camera of *Life + Debt* captures images of Jamaicans who appear to be bored, listless, or unemployed. In this scene, the voice-over draws on the passage from *A Small Place* in which

Kincaid explains why "the native does not like the tourist" (18). The voice-over, drawing from Kincaid, attests to the "overwhelming and crushing banality and boredom" of the everyday, impoverished lives of "most natives of the world," who cannot afford to "go anywhere" (Kincaid 18). Becker's commentary remains non-diegetic, insofar as it is directed at the film spectator, who watches on-screen tourists whose only tour guides are the conventional, pro-Western hotel employees making self-deprecating jokes to flatter clients. In this scenario, then, the film spectator is supplied with doubles: a subversive tour guide, embodied in the voice-over, and an on-screen, accommodating one. She is also given the potential to differentiate herself from the tourist she sees on-screen. As the voice-over concludes to describe natives who, in longing for "a tour" (18), "envy your ability to turn their banality and boredom into a source of pleasure for yourself" (19), the on-screen tour bus re-enters the hotel grounds as a black employee closes the gates of the resort.

Significant portions of *A Small Place* are lost, through omission, in *Life +Debt*. In particular, we lose Kincaid's uneasy vision of Caribbean resistance, her sense of Antiguan false consciousness, and her critique of historical accountability. False consciousness, in Black's film, is assigned not to Jamaicans or Antiguans but to U.S.-based Americans. We lose sight of how Kincaid's account, in *A Small Place*, establishes a problematically authoritative critique of Antiguan identity; furthermore, the female voice-over narrative does not help to elucidate the complexity of Kincaid's transnational role as a writer and family member of the Caribbean. As such, the film places under erasure the multiple

social locations that Kincaid herself occupies. In effect, the complex

contradictions of the neoliberal and anti-neoliberal imagination that begins to

unfold in *A Small Place*, and which Kincaid expands upon in *My Brother*, is

undermined. In the film, Kincaid's narrative only supplies a voice-over to critique

the tourist industry; it does not account for Jamaican work experience or

consciousness of neoliberal policy. Kincaid functions dually in *A Small Place* as

the representative and exceptional Antiguan who demonstrates the capacity for

the critique she sees lacking among contemporary, post-colonial Antiguans. In

Black's film, however, both workers and bureaucrats of the Jamaican agricultural

and industrial sectors, among others, critically account for their own personal

experiences through testimonial. Nonetheless, there is much to be gained by the

film which supplements and displaces the sole authority of the account in *A Small*

Place.

       Life +Debt makes explicit the political and socioeconomic consciousness

of small-scale farmers and the Kingston Free Zone garment workers who capably

critique the wage, health and safety, and trade violations they experience daily as

a result of neoliberal agreements. When Black speaks of her experience

interviewing workers, in the director's commentary, her impressions convey

respect for local perspectives as opposed to Kincaid who, in *A Small Place*,

denounces them. Not only does Black refer to on-screen workers by name, in her

commentary, but she also attests to their capacity to generate institutional critique

of the International Monetary Fund. Black explains,

       The goal of the film was really to make comprehensible to everyone what

the policies of the structural adjustment reform were and it was amazing

how farmers were able to do this so clearly and simply; yet, here, in the

United States, it's somehow perceived that these policies are beyond our

grasp to understand. The impact of devaluation, privatization, adjustment

interest rates that seem to be comprehensible to the layman although we

live in the country that has the strongest voting power in the IMF.

Whereas Kincaid questions food security in Antigua by describing in *A Small Place* that the hotel resort food is not locally grown and instead imported from Miami (14), several farmers in *Life + Debt* critically account for the complex problems of food insecurity in their vulnerable developing island. They account for the decimation of the dairy industry, the imposed reduction of tariffs which enable imported food to have a competitive advantage over local food production, and the pressure to use questionable foreign seeds and pesticides. They discuss the Lome trade agreement with England and reflect on the banana wars staged between Caribbean and Central American countries as a result of U.S. foreign interests.

Black's representation of subaltern agency is sophisticated because it does not simply provide authenticating, real-life evidence; rather, testimony combines personal experience with a critical anti-neoliberal analysis of the specific IMF policies. Holding a machete in one hand and standing in a small farmer's field, one local Jamaican man asks the crucial question, "can machete compete with machine?" The implied response is negative, for Caribbean self-reliance is discouraged by the neoliberal regime established for development. Black explains

that multiple farmers' accounts corroborated the claim that corrupt U.S. businessmen regularly exploit and dishonor agricultural trade agreements. Nonetheless, she insists that Jamaican farmers participated in the film because they wanted to forge international dialogues with small-scale U.S. farmers who are similarly affected by neoliberal policies. Black connects the testimonies of farmers with those of workers in other sectors for expansive political and pedagogical narrative effect. She explains,

> Some archeologists dig very deep in a small area while others cover a wider stretch. We chose the latter method in structuring the film to show how the different lending institutions work together towards incorporating a country into one ideological economic model. So whereas in the first section you see the impact of the international monetary fund on the farmers, through the reduction of trade barriers and control over interest rates; in the second section you see the impact of the Inter-American Development Bank on the dairy industry; in the third, the WTO's impact on the banana industry; and in the fourth, the World Bank encouraging the development of free zones. And thus you see how all these institutions come together.

While Jamaican farmers were apparently hesitant to indict multinational companies like Chiquita or Dole, for fear of the repercussions, the Free Zone workers (many of whom are depicted as female) are depicted as fearless in their critiques of Hanes and Tommy Hilfiger for encouraging anti-unionism, wage exploitation, and various job insecurities, ranging from the promotion of deskilled

labour to the easy replacement of employees. When Jamaican women protest for better wages at a Hanes Free Zone factory, they are depicted as being quickly replaced by Asian women workers who are imported to Jamaica for temporary work. This tax-free zone is intended to favour foreign corporations. Jamaican workers, reading their pay stubs, explain that they are paid in local currency and expected to pay so many local taxes that they barely take a wage home, while the imported Asian workers are paid in U.S. currency.

Black explains that "since the completion of the film, many free zones have shut down in Jamaica" because companies have relocated to places like the Dominican Republic and Haiti where workers can be more easily exploited. This situation not only reinforces the notion that international labour in the neoliberal era can be characterized by its disposability and devaluation of human life; such a scenario also causes Caribbean and other developing countries to compete for substandard jobs and, I would argue, it reinforces conditions for anti-immigrant and racist sentiment among people forced to compete for substandard jobs. Black cites Gloria, "one of the eloquent free zone ladies," whose observations "cannot be underestimated": 'it's said that the only thing worse than the failure of this massive global development experiment would be its success, but even in the best case scenario it would only be a tiny minority of people who could benefit from the system.'"

Black's technique of testimonial juxtaposition, through cinematic montage, helps to destabilize the singular authority of any given account of contemporary Jamaica and, furthermore, it illuminates the regionally-specific, historical

interpretation of neoliberalism as a necessary point of contestation. Kincaid, by contrast, implies that her narrative exceeds the limits of the typically incomplete Antiguan account by individualizing her critical capacity for historical analysis. She relies solely on her own provocative narrative strategies to create what is only the potential for contestation between herself and the imagined reader. Black, instead, creates the impression that a grassroots, Caribbean critique of neoliberalism grows despite the ignorance of film spectators. Whether or not Black's portrayal is biased or exaggerated, it nonetheless promotes the legitimacy of everyday workers and the necessity of their contribution to the critique of neoliberal policy. The film attempts to portray multiple social perspectives regarding the effects of neoliberal policy on Jamaica. In this context, it includes a sequence of testimony provided by figures of institutional authority.

Life + Debt is sympathetic to the failure of Jamaican democratic socialism, under former Prime Minister Michael Manley, and, in many ways, Manley provides the apologetic voice that attests to the traumatic experiences of a failed Caribbean Left in the context of neoliberal policy.[145] His testimonial account is intercut in the film with that of the now former First Deputy Managing Director of the IMF, Stanley Fischer, as well as that of University of West Indies (Mona) Economic Professor, Michael Witter. All three provide distinct accounts and analyses of the relationship formed between Jamaica and international financial institutions. These "official" accounts unfold in segments to produce the effect of an ongoing debate. Black interposes edited cuts of Manley's account

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[145] Black explains that "Rawlings and Aristide were both elected on non-IMF platforms but ultimately, like Manley, they felt they had no alternative" but to accommodate them.

with Fischer's to establish what she envisions as "an imaginary conversation" between them. Witter's account provides a third alternative which becomes a pedagogical perspective that intervenes upon this dichotomous political debate.

Like Fischer and Manley, Witter is portrayed as relaying his analysis to an implied interviewer in the setting of his office; however, he is also filmed as a professor who actively teaches Jamaican students in the university classroom. This particular portrayal of youth culture can be contrasted with that of Kincaid's in *A Small Place*, for it allows the viewer to imagine the political and pedagogical potential of Jamaican students who are taught about histories of slavery and debt. The filmic technique of testimonial montage thus allows for the seeming singularity of an event to have multiple interpretations in the film through the assembly of three speakers' 'testimonies.' While the on-screen tourist allows the film spectator to re-orient her identifications and alliances, the on-screen Jamaican students portrayed in the classroom establish the imagining of an indigenous audience who is pedagogically susceptible to new-found knowledge that may be transformed into local political action.

In his account, Michael Manley explains that the lending policies of the IMF are based on a "cross-conditionality" such that Jamaica must seek approval from all of its financial affiliates before funding is secured. This "cross-conditionality" is, for Manley, akin to a double noose. Stanley Fischer, by contrast, explains the situation as an institutional collaboration: "because we're working together in that country we have to make sure we're not working at cross-purposes so we will generally agree on what needs to be done." An advocate of

corporate globalization, Fischer argues that citizens of poor nations have "the right to buy things that other people have in the rest of the world," while Manley finds that "those who control [international] affairs have no interest in whether you're self sustaining." Manley describes his decision to sign a trade agreement with the IMF as "[one of the most] traumatic experiences of [his] public life."

Stanley Fischer's articulation of IMF policy in Jamaica reflects what I regard as an uncanny reconfiguration of Kincaid's own critique of Antiguan economic dependency and their incapacity for critique. He states,

> Why did we think they should reduce trade barriers? The reason is that
> Jamaica is a small country. It's not a country which could sort of thrive by
> producing only for itself. We believe very firmly that countries are only
> going to grow better if they are integrated into world economy and that
> means reducing tariffs and it means to allow its importers and its people
> access to the rest of world rather than have to rely on this little economy.

I compare Fischer's incapacitating vision of a "small country" and "a little economy" with Kincaid's declaration of the Antiguan lack of accountability:

> The people in a small place cannot give an exact account, a complete
> account, of themselves. The people in a small place cannot give an exact
> account, a complete account of events (small though they may be). This
> cannot be held against them; an exact account, a complete account, of
> anything, anywhere, is not possible. […] The people in a small place can
> have no interest in the exact, or in completeness, for that would demand a
> careful weighing, careful consideration, careful judging, careful

questioning. It would demand the invention of a silence, inside of which

these things could be done. (53-54)

Although this passage of Kincaid's is not included in *Life + Debt*, I argue that its

concerns recur, through the voice of Fischer, as the disorienting and yet uncanny

essence of neoliberal culture and economics. That the uncanny return of

adjectives such as "small" or "little" are used to minimize Jamaica's authority and

legitimacy within the global market economy is obvious. More troubling is

Fischer's theory of dependency premised on the belief that a relatively small

nation cannot—and, implicitly *should* not—autonomously account for itself

economically. Here, I draw attention to the way in which Kincaid's post-colonial

critique and Fischer's neoliberal discourse unexpectedly reinforce a theory of

dependency by representing subaltern workers as incapable of self-sufficient,

resistant critique or action. Of course, Kincaid's explicit critique of a North

American audience functions to implicate them, along with herself, in this

incapacity to account for history or economics. However, the incapacity imagined

is not imagined as equal but rather as calculated by degrees of disposability and

responsibility. Although Kincaid herself is subject to the neoliberal condition, she

emphasizes, in *A Small Place*, her ability to undermine and escape its effects. This

ability is individualized and rendered exceptional even if it is only temporary and

partial.

Together, Fischer's and Kincaid's perceived failures of economic

accounting and testimonial accountability are emphasized. In both instances, the

dominating supplement—testimonial or financial—threatens to displace the

potential for post-colonial or anti-neoliberal agency. In Sigmund Freud's formulation, the "uncanny" is akin to the "'double'" or the "Doppelganger" which threatens to imitate, duplicate, and appropriate one's "true self" (142). Frequently associated with the return of the repressed, the uncanny occurs when "one becomes co-owner of the others' knowledge, emotions, and experience" (141-2). The uncanny, among competing critiques of post-colonial dependency, may thus signal the recurrence and misappropriation of discourses that resemble colonialist power. It is unsurprising that uncanny returns emerge from testimonial narrative used to advance post-colonial and neoliberal critique. In Derrida's view, the supplement is "not equal" to its antecedent for it "adds only to replace" (*Of Grammatology* 177, 145). The supplement is a "subaltern instance" but, not unlike the uncanny, it recurs, feverishly, in unsettling ways. As Derrida suggests, "there have never been anything but supplements, substitutive significations which could only come forth in a chain of differential references" (145, 158-159). Ironically, while Kincaid adds to a Jamaican narrative, her Antiguan one loses reference. Thus, the danger and potential of the testimonial supplement is that it unsettles the politics of border. I contend that the formation of a coherent, regional opposition to neoliberal policy is necessary for transformative change to occur; thus, strictly nationalist understandings of sovereignty must be unsettled to serve an anti-neoliberal movement. However, to endow Jamaica with the cultural capital to articulate subaltern history and agency is problematic in its oversight of regional diversity and contestation.

I have suggested that Professor Michael Witter provides an account of

Jamaica in two alternating scenes whereby, in one, he speaks to an implied

interviewer while in another he addresses black Jamaican university students in a

lecture room. Collectively, the interviewer, the students, and the film spectator

become representative of the widespread educational and intellectual crisis

regarding neoliberal policy as well as the everyday life of the contemporary

Caribbean. While both Black and Kincaid pose pedagogical challenges for the

reader/film spectator, Black seems distinctive here in her attempt to depict the

active intellectual lives of Jamaicans in the university classroom, in the export

processing zone, and in the farm. I would further argue for the political

significance of including a Jamaican professor who teaches at the Mona Campus

of the University of West Indies over a non-Caribbean expert or even a Jamaican

expert living in the Diaspora. This approach does not fetishize local experience

for the benefit of North American audiences, but rather signals the potential for

anti-neoliberal intervention for and by Caribbean people well-educated to pursue

greater social and economic justice.[146]

How, in this context, might we envision radical forms of displacement—of

supplementation—as a tactic for participatory politics without eliminating

individual or geo-specific agency? Testimonial supplements can challenge

[146] The film's critique of the U.S. trade policy intervention that signalled the loss of preferential trade agreements established between the ACP (Asian, Caribbean and Pacific) countries with the UK does raise questions about whether or not *the* alternative vision of Jamaican workers is actually anti-neoliberal. It is possible that workers would be content with terms of trade so long as they benefit from preferential treatment even as others do not. I concede to the risk I take in advancing (or perhaps even in projecting) an anti-neoliberal reading of the film. However, part of the project of this dissertation is to suggest how each author –and how the contributors to *CAFRA News*—remain uncertain about what anti-neoliberal resistance and action can look like, even though they know neoliberalism must be critiqued and transformed. I suggest in the conclusion to the dissertation that *CAFRA News* is explicit in suggesting not only the difficulties of establishing consensus but even the uneasiness and tension that emerges from a more generalized convergence around these issues.

narratives that totalize subaltern experience in relation to theories of dependency;

yet, in a transnational context, they can also displace the relevance of a nation-

based account. We may regard the testimonies of Manley, Fischer, and Witter,

combined with the workers, the voice-over narrative, the individuals of the

Rastafarian community, and even those people speaking in archival news footage,

as supplements that internally agitate and propel the stories of Jamaican life under

neoliberalism offered in *Life + Debt*. The film's failure to formally contextualize

the collaboration between Kincaid and Black, however, should cause us to review

the pedagogical value of the film and to consider how it works to elicit informed

responses to post-colonial or neoliberal calls of experiential crisis. Nonetheless, I

contend that the collaboration between Kincaid and Black underscores the

significance of historicizing current uses of anti-neoliberal discourse and the

necessary task of assessing anti-neoliberal *presents* in relation to anti-colonial

pasts.[147]

In the next section, I suggest how Kincaid's political visions in *A Small

Place* are shaken by the particularities of her brother's neoliberal experience and

then consider how the bio-politics of medical dependency relate to the food

insecurity reinforced through neoliberal trade in *Life + Debt*. The violence of

everyday living and dying under neoliberalism is more fully illuminated some ten

years later in *My Brother* (1997) than in *A Small Place*, and its unexpected

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[147] Of *Life + Debt*, Stephanie Black claims in the DVD director's commentary that "there are actually five endings to the film." In her attempt to account for increasing violence and crime in Jamaica, she searches for both official and subjugated perspectives to capture a more complex representation of protest and struggle in a region still imagined as Third or Fourth Worlds. Black's representations of worker testimony involve performance, pedagogy and accountability as they draw upon memory and desire to mobilize audiences for meaningful transformation beyond the cinematic screen.

intersections with *Life + Debt* make clear the urgency of rectifying the crisis in

critical education regarding the effects of neoliberal policy in the Caribbean and

elsewhere.

Nursing Nations: Bio-political Waste and the Violence of Credit in My Brother and Life + Debt

In this section, I first explore how Kincaid exposes traumatic relationships

between suffering and credit, death and debt in her memoir *My Brother*. My

analysis suggests not only how the transnational marketplaces of medicine and

literature profit from informal emergency reactions to the failures of government

and civil society to protect and preserve human life, but also how Kincaid's

purchase on credit of medicine for her dying brother draws attention to bio-

political uncertainties regarding the constitution and narration of subaltern

experience. I suggest, by way of concluding this section, how issues raised in this

memoir have unexpected relevance to those emerging from Stephanie Black's

portrayals of the violence of food insecurity under neoliberalism. Together, the

memoir and film suggest how the social pleasures derived from personal suffering

may relate to a more widespread problem of intimacy that exacerbates the

intellectual and political crisis and its paralytic effects on anti-neoliberal action in

the Caribbean.

In *My Brother*, Kincaid becomes a surrogate nurse and practitioner of

economic remittance as she smuggles medicine across geopolitical borders for her

brother who cannot afford life-sustaining healthcare. In some regards, she

advocates on behalf of marginalized patients with this text by representing her

brother as a disenfranchised citizen rendered abject as a result of his poverty,

illness, and high-risk sexual lifestyle. Kincaid's identification of contemporary

root causes to account for healthcare crisis include the political

disenfranchisement of citizens; the lack of education regarding disease

prevention; the inaccessibility or inflated cost of medicine and treatment; and,

finally, the corporate domination and corruption of government. Broadly, she

sheds light on how economic disparities between the Caribbean and North

America continue to be cast in superficial Third and First World claims to

national development. One of the interventions of the memoir becomes to suggest

how the transnational Caribbean family can unwittingly be implicated in the

neoliberal bio-politics of the nation-state and its citizens.

Kincaid is remarkably uncritical of American healthcare in this memoir.

Instead, the U.S. stands for the place of established credit histories and chosen

families while she travels to an uncertain Antigua to serve the medical needs of

her estranged brother Devon who is dying of an AIDS-related illness.[148] She

endorses the U.S. system accordingly: "There are people who complain that a

hospital in the United States will charge six dollars for a dose of Tylenol; they

might wish to look at this way of running a hospital: bring your own medicines"

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[148] By 2011, the corruption of American healthcare, as well as its credit and finance systems, had become the subject of popular debate in the U.S. Documentary films in recent years have helped to draw attention to the material conditions of living in a neoliberal United States. Kincaid's inattention to these issues in 1997 are worthy of critical reflection then and perhaps even more so now. While this inattention may be in the interest of polarizing nations for dramatic effect, it also does a critical disservice to ignore the potential for relating uneven development and neoliberal trends in the devaluation of human life in both the U.S. and the Caribbean. As I argued in the previous chapter, part of Paule Marshall's fictional strategy of "double exposure" in *Daughters* was to create contexts for reading similarities between racialized experience in different geopolitical locations despite the past polarities established by Cold War ideology development discourses.

(34). In this statement, Kincaid implies the politics of purchasing power in the U.S., for if medicine is not affordable, then its availability only reinforces a heath culture of consumerism and an economically stratified society that places a price on human life. Implicitly, this situation is rendered more favourable than the one she encounters in Antigua insofar as it at least preserves the opportunity to access medicine on the condition that one has money or credit. Her inattention to the socioeconomic disparities internal to the U.S. thus differentiates her from the poor not only in Antigua but also within the U.S. This oversight complicates the First/Third World dichotomy as we are led to imagine what nursing the nation might, in fact, entail. Instead, she appeals to American doctors and draws from her credit card to acquire enough AZT—an effective HIV/AIDS medication—to manage her brother's illness.

Diana Davidson suggests that Kincaid's "transnational drug smuggling underscores the difference in AIDS treatment options between a rich nation and a poor nation" (127), for although the Caribbean has "the second-highest prevalence rate of HIV-infection in the world" (122), effective medicine is difficult to acquire; yet AZT "has been available in the U.S. since 1987" (126). J. Brook Bouson adds that "Kincaid, as she tries to make sense of Devon's life and also his illness in dying, at once aestheticizes and provides disturbingly blunt descriptions of his failed life and diseased body. Attempting to invest his life with a kind of narrative pattern and literary meaning, she questions whether Devon's end was prefigured by his beginning" (154-155). Not only is Kincaid invested in the U.S. and the futurity it has enabled through her escape from a developing country, but

she has a cultural stake in a fatalistic portrayal of her brother living and dying in Antigua.

Situated within the marketplaces of both medicine and literature, Kincaid profits from her drug smuggling insofar as she writes about her brother's death to extend her life-long narrative of personal redemption from Caribbean failure (Page 2011; 2006).[149] Despite the complex and uneven development of healthcare and healthcare access, in both the Caribbean and the U.S., Kincaid assigns credit to her education and literary career in the U.S. for saving her from a life of disease and debt (Kincaid 74). On the other hand, she publicly indicts her mother for withdrawing her from school and preventing her from accessing a university education (Bouson 152). In *My Brother*, Kincaid frequently suggests that literature has been the conduit through which she could imagine her own freedom. It has been through reading, and later writing, that she has secured her own future. When her mother is said to have burned her books, she is portrayed as a destructive force not only to the tools of Kincaid's education but, by extension, to "an idealized part of her identity" (Bouson 154). Given these contexts, Kincaid can be read as aligning her economic stability with a history of self-determination to establish her own access. This has been implicitly enabled by her rejection of Antiguan life and her pursuit of a literary career which, in turn, enables her to have the purchasing power that her brother and her Antiguan family lack, enabling her to smuggle medicine to him that they cannot afford. Ironically, her

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[149] Kezia Page's analyses of the politics of economic and cultural remittance, in *My Brother* and in the context of Kincaid's literary reputation, have been invaluable to my conceptualizations here.

rejection and critique of Caribbean life at first makes her seem independent and politically resistant, yet it also facilitates her own assimilation into neoliberal culture.

Kincaid shows affinity for the family she has "chosen" to reproduce in the U.S. (157), while she portrays her mother and her mother's other children as being cursed with a "contagious disease" (173). Kezia Page persuasively argues that Kincaid reproduces First and Third Worlds in a troubling discourse of development when "health" is aligned with America and its institutions while Antigua is imagined to be "populated by poor irresponsible, black people" (45). Kincaid's brother's illness thus becomes an allegory for the unstable Third World nation and her remittance aid becomes a form of metropolitan charity or sponsorship, thus enabling her to further distance herself from the fatalism of death and debt even as she makes use of financial credit that can implicitly be extended through her simultaneous advancement of literary credit.

Despite these troubling circumstances, Kincaid is insightful about the transnational complexities of Caribbean health and care, as well as the seeming social failure to effectively confront a regional HIV/AIDS epidemic. It is significant that she does not avoid a problematic representation of her own intervention. Rather, her portrayal of the self-congratulatory pleasure she feels in the moment of her calculated measurement of Devon's bodily progress, resulting from the medicine she provides, is one that most readers should find disturbing. In the passage below, however, she offers a perverse, bio-political reading of her brother, whereby her cultural capital and socioeconomic dominance is asserted

over him:

> The scale registered a one-pound gain in my brother's weight from the
>
> week before. I felt happy, I felt pleased with myself, I even felt proud of
>
> myself. I had been instrumental in this, his gaining one pound, and I knew
>
> what it meant; it meant that he was getting better, or at least that he was
>
> better than he had been before I got there, when every time he had stepped
>
> on the scale it had registered a loss. [...] He had been expected to die; no
>
> one infected with HIV and as sick as he was at that time had ever come
>
> out of Holberton Hospital alive. (47)

This pleasure taken in the management of her brother's diminishing life span seems especially perverse given the imbalances implied between physical and emotional response. Her brother's body responds to the medicine by accounting for a "one-pound gain" and yet this outcome is enough for Kincaid to see her role as sufficiently "instrumental" to sanction a reinvestment in her own life narrative. Her relevance is extended through her ability to ensure her brother's bare life.

Kincaid's implied history of stable credit, in adulthood, can be contrasted with her memories of her parents' irresponsible accounting. She recalls, in childhood, "living with the hope that money will come" (107) because her parents never knew how to account for "how much food or disease, or anything in general, would cost, the future never being now" (107). By contrast, Kincaid portrays herself as a future-conscious child who prepares for self-determination and socioeconomic security. After making such explicit correlations between financial debt, food and disease, Kincaid recalls as a child her refusal to consume

her mother's food:

> And so I stopped eating my mother's food, inspired by the acts of two of
> my three brothers, who were much younger than I (by eleven and thirteen
> years). In my case, my case of not eating the food my mother provided
> me, this act was full of something, I do not know what, but this occurred
> to me long after I was in the midst of doing it: that just as I was deciding
> not to eat my mother's food anymore, and thinking (and feeling) that
> this decision was really a decision to rid myself of a profoundly childish
> attachment to her, I was only reliving a memory, for when I was a child I
> would not eat the food my mother cooked. When I was a very small child,
> I would eat only if she chewed it first; then I must have outgrown that,
> because I remember the difficulty I had with eating was in eating anything
> she cooked at all. And so not eating food my mother cooked for me as
> a sign of distancing myself from her was a form of behavior I had used a
> long time ago, when I felt most close to and dependent on her. (118)

This rejection of maternal intimacy as a mode of self-differentiation is intimately

connected to a history of colonial dependency and to the contemporary bio-

politics of food consumption and human development in the Caribbean. With

reference to "the maternal-colonial matrix" of Kincaid's work, Laura Niesen de

Abruna identifies a consistent "correlation between the political difficulties

afflicting the island-'mother' country relationship and the problems affecting the

mother-daughter family relationships in these texts" (174). She argues that "the

characters' separation from the mother, or the 'mother' country, evoked extreme

anxiety that appears as cultural and psychic alienation. In all of Kincaid's work, it is the absence of the once-affirming mother or an affirming 'mother' country, that causes dislocation and alienation" (174). While it is true that Kincaid has struggled, in her works, with the anxiety and alienation that de Abruna notes, she is also intent upon the undoing of her apparent childhood dependencies. The mother's chewing of the food, in this passage, can be likened to an advanced stage of nursing which Kincaid clearly "must have outgrown" (Kincaid 118).

Kincaid's rejection of her mother's labour, and the resulting products of the chewing and cooking done for a growing child, relates to her desire for a self-sustaining future of adulthood. She does not want her mother to select or to prepare her food, nor does she want her to initiate any first acts of consumption. Kincaid rejects what she regards as the smothering culture of her Caribbean family and views the maternal debt that seems to accrue from this situation as linked to a failed Caribbean futurity. While the devaluation of her mother's cooking may signal Kincaid's capacity for political defiance, it also signals the undermining of the Caribbean family's survival strategies within a marketplace of local and imported foods.

The rejection of her mother's nursing can be juxtaposed against Kincaid's own surrogate nursing of her brother Devon, who is rendered as being "[un]able to carefully weigh and adjust to [...] the feasting and the famine of life" (49-50). Of course, Devon, unlike Kincaid, cannot reject his sister's provisions for his life *depends* on it. Kincaid reads his sexual promiscuity and criminal history in relation to his lack of "the traditional attachments ordinary to a man his age—

thirty-three—a wife, a companion of some kind, children, his own house [...] his

own bed" (173). The "traditional attachments" listed here are, of course, also

economic investments in a nuclear, capitalist family and a heterosexual,

reproductive future. That Kincaid is invested in "traditional attachments" that

Devon would never attain becomes clear in her vow to "never forget him because

his life is the one I did not have, the life that [...] I avoided or escaped" (176);

after her work in Antigua is done, and Devon is dead, she represents herself

"waiting for planes to transport [her] home to [her] family" in the United States

(177).

It is significant that in the moment of her departure from Antigua she also

portrays herself as having smuggled rhododendrons through the airport, plants

which she imagines will never survive in her home in Vermont. Both J. Brooks

Bouson and Sarah Brophy have each drawn attention to Kincaid's fixation on

plant life and gardening in this memoir. Bouson notes, "Devon's love of plants

and his life as a failed gardener, [are] facts that she invests with symbolic

meaning as she attempts to give narrative shape and metaphoric resonance to her

brother's life story" (155). Brophy's attention to "the motif of gardening" further

suggests Kincaid's "shame that Devon did not have a productive life" ("Angels in

Antigua" 269). She explains that while, initially, Kincaid "seeks to reframe

Devon's delinquency by imagining him as a gardener, like her, imposing a shared

identity that extends into the fantasy of an alternative, indigenous paradise" (270),

she ultimately becomes "the gardener of a strange and fecund death" when she

encounters her brother as "an extreme view of the moment of death, of the body's

becoming corporeal waste and lapsing into passivity" (273). The image of "corporeal waste," invoked by Brophy, is one I will now elaborate upon and clarify as bio-political waste in the context of the neoliberal violence of credit. This relationship I seek to conceptualize first requires context.

The complexity of Kincaid's writing clearly demands multiple readings, for while she deploys a discourse of self-determination that can be juxtaposed against the image of dependent Antiguans, she also implies the limits of her own capacity for remittance and political vision. Although Diana Davidson regards Kincaid's memoir as a retreat from HIV/AIDS activism (123), I am more inclined to suggest that her reflections upon the complex relations between social stigmatization, the violence of hyper, heterosexual masculinity, and the government failure to promote sex and health education, are a starting point for confronting neoliberal imagination and anti-neoliberal potentiality. Kincaid presents unflattering images of herself, in this memoir, alongside her unflattering images of her Antiguan family. Kincaid by no means represents herself as informed about alternative sexualities or lifestyles, nor does she provide the impression that she will take action in support of people living with HIV or AIDS. Her political action, instead, is to contemplate the "vulnerability and powerlessness" of the "poor" and "young" (32) majority of HIV/AIDS carriers, and to suggest that multiple and interlocking systems of power and subjugation need more analysis than she is qualified to give.

Kincaid ultimately confirms that Devon's complex suffering is more than she could ever relieve (164). In part, this can be attributed to her incapacity to

comprehend or fully account for the context of her brother's choices to have

unprotected sex with a Guianese girl after he is diagnosed (163), for instance, or

for his relationship with a lesbian woman who claims to have "opened up her

home" as a meeting place for the intimacy and companionship of otherwise

stigmatized homosexual men (161). Kincaid discovers, "[o]n Sundays men who

were homosexuals came to her house, a safe place to be with each other, and my

brother who had just died was often at her house, not as a spectator of homosexual

life but as a participant of homosexual life" (161). Kincaid's provision of medicine

to her brother does not seem to compare with the political safety of space that this

woman provides. Building on Lauren Berlant and Michael Warner who

conceptualize the "'queer counterpublic'" (79), Ed Chamberlain suggests that the

"inclusive domesticity" implied in this "homespace" is "an empowering refuge

from the culture's and nation-state's intolerance for queers" (81). Kincaid has no

access to this queer Caribbean "homespace" and, as such, she cannot account for

its political culture. All she could provide was her purchasing power and the

medicine that would prolong Devon's life for only a short time. Her portrayal of

the limits of her capacity to preserve and, ultimately, to represent life in Antigua,

in all of its multi-dimensional complexity, thus marks a departure from the

approach she takes in *A Small Place*, where she implies that her outsider status

enables her the distance necessary to offer effective political critique.

Part of what differentiates Kincaid's subaltern claims, in this memoir, from

those made in *A Small Place* is her increasing consciousness that subaltern

experience as an aftershock of colonized experience may not, in fact, be uniform

or homogenous. In essence, while her own subaltern experience as a Caribbean

woman living in the U.S. is certainly related to, as well as informed by, her

Antiguan upbringing and the transnational interactions she continues to have with

her family, it may have less of a referential relation to contemporary subaltern

Antiguan experiences, particularly if there is an acknowledgement that inequality

and difference persists in everyday island experience.[150] Of Devon's

marginalization Kincaid reflects,

> A great sadness overcame me, and the source of the sadness was the deep
>
> feeling I always had about him: that he had died without ever
>
> understanding or knowing, or being able to let the world in which he lived
>
> know, who he was; that who he really was—not a single sense of identity
>
> but all the complexities of who he was—he could not express fully: his
>
> fear of being laughed at, his fear of meeting with the scorn of the people
>
> he knew best were overwhelming and he could not live with all of it
>
> openly. His homosexuality is one thing, and my becoming a writer is
>
> another altogether, but this truth is not lost to me: I could not have become
>
> a writer while living among the people I knew best, I could not have
>
> become myself while living among the people I knew best […]. (162)

While it could be argued that Kincaid is reasserting her dominance over Devon

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[150] Kincaid's privileged literary status may be secondary to her Antiguan passport and the visibility of her race and gender when she crosses geopolitical borders. Thus, I concur with Michelle Ann Stephens' suggestion that U.S.-Caribbean relations be made cautiously: "the claim to an equally displaced and migratory status does not reflect the material, transnational fact that racial subjects have always been located differentially in urban and archipelagic spaces. In a sense, the metaphor breaks down by race, to the degree that race often determines *how* we inhabit the metaphoric space of the Caribbean, as metropolitan or colonial subjects" (270-271). She urges us to start the process of "interrogating our own relationship to empire and the national state" (270-271).

here, by articulating his complexity in a way that she claims he himself could not,

I am more persuaded that she is *attempting* to concede to her own limitations of

representation. There is a fundamental irony which underlies her claim that her

Antiguan family consists of "the people [she] knew best," particularly since her

departure from the island signals her journey away from her seeming knowledge

of Antiguans towards self-knowledge. Politically, she has moved away from the

social towards the individual. What she really knows best, then, is her personal

relation to her own history and not the everyday reality of any constituency of

people living in Antigua.[151] Kincaid confesses, ultimately, that she misreads "the

doubleness of [Devon's] life" when she assumed, from the outset, that his

experience was "another kind of suffering, a suffering I might be able to relieve

with medicine I had brought from the prosperous North; but I did not know then, I

only know now" (164). While she attains a greater knowledge of the complexity

of her brother's life, it is by no means complete.

Kincaid's reflections upon the bio-political relations of medicine, food,

and disease, do not of course resolve the question of how to confront the

devaluation of human life and death under neoliberalism. While there are

moments in the memoir in which she suggests her own successful escape from

neoliberal violence, there are also moments in which she seems culpable for

inflicting neoliberal violence on others, particularly through her involvement in

systems of medical, literary, and financial credit. It is through her culpability that

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[151] A similar argument is made by Jane King when she reflects upon her frustration with
feminist literary critics who promote Kincaid as feminist and accurate in her diagnoses of
contemporary Antiguan culture. One of the larger points of her argument is to suggest that
Kincaid's literature be revalued for its individualized, autobiographical dimensions and not for its
capacity for representativeness.

she ironically projects a vision of her own redemption despite the anti-redemptive thrust implied for the majority of Antiguans. This anti-redemptive aspect is most intensely captured in scenes in which death is revealed to be a corporatized and consumable event, whereby it becomes part of a profitable industry that fails to unify people in their grief or to restore dignity to the person who has died. Kincaid describes Devon's dead body accordingly: "[h]e was in a plastic bag with a zipper running the length of its front and middle, a plastic bag of good quality, a plastic bag like the ones given to customers when they buy an expensive suit at a store that carries expensive clothing" (178). She continues,

> He looked as if he had been deliberately drained of all fluids, as if his flesh
> had been liquefied and that, too, drained out. He did not look like my
> brother, he did not look like the body of my brother, but that was what he
> was all the same, my brother who had died, and all that remained of him
> was lying in a plastic bag of good quality. His hair was uncombed, his face
> was unshaven, his eyes were wide-open, and his mouth was wide open,
> too, and the open eyes and the open mouth made it seem as if he was
> looking at something in the far distance, something horrifying coming
> toward him, and that he was screaming, the sound of the scream silent
> now (but it had never been heard, I would have been told so, it had never
> been heard, this scream), and this scream seemed to have no break in it, no
> pause for the intake of breath; this scream only came out in one
> exhalation, trailing off into eternity, or just trailing off somewhere I do not
> know, or just trailing off into nothing. (179)

Devon's body is rendered as silenced and terrorized. He is a subaltern who cannot

speak and who will, therefore, never be able confirm the accuracy of Kincaid's

interpretations. He is dehumanized as an object of bio-political waste and only

partially reconfigured for public viewing. The detail of the plastic bag that wraps

his dead body provides the sense that he is a commodity within the marketplace of

death. Indeed, once Devon's eyes and mouth are "sewn shut" (181), Kincaid sees

him as "an advertisement, not like the dead at all" (181), while their mother finds

her son to be unrecognizable (181).

When Kincaid makes the claim, at the beginning of the memoir, that "in

Antigua nothing is made" (24), she might seem to echo V.S. Naipaul who

infamously argues, in *The Middle Passage*, that "history is built around

achievement and creation; and nothing was created in the West Indies" (20).

Although Naipaul's fixation on the notion that West Indians have been "living on

borrowed culture" (64) bears resemblance to the sentiments expressed by Kincaid

in *A Small Place*, it seems that ultimately, in both texts, she is less concerned with

Naipaul's questions of whether or not "West Indian writers have failed" (64) and

more compelled by the sociopolitical and economic contexts for the devaluation

of life. By the end of *A Small Place* she wonders what it would be like to have

humanity restored to slaves and their masters. The end of *My Brother* implicitly

recasts her concluding vision of *A Small Place* as too simplistic and romantic in

aspiration, for it lacks consideration of the material conditions and contingencies

which allow for the unequal experience of humanity. While her brother is never

fully dignified, neither is Kincaid, especially when she proclaims that writing has

saved her life. Indeed, she continues to live and thrive as a writer, but the question of what relations have enabled to her to do so is inextricably linked to a global market economy whereby the neoliberal reassigns value to life and death on the basis of an ideology of free market individualism.

In the final pages of the memoir, Kincaid recalls walking away from her brother's funeral service and seeing men "sitting under a tree making coffins" (193). Their seeming curiosity over the situation faced by Kincaid and her family, she guesses, is related to the public display of Devon's coffin or "their handiwork, for his coffin had been made by them" (193). Although "they make these houses for the dead that are in constant demand," she imagines their "wondering if [death] is something real, will it happen to them; if it is so certain, death" (193). This wonder at the sublimity of death seems to be an understandably human response, but Kincaid quickly diminishes this feeling by reminding her reader that "this was the end and [Devon] was lying in the coffin, the least expensive coffin in Mr. Straffee's display of coffins for adults" (195). Just as Devon's life suffering is economized through systems of debt and credit, so too is his death.

The event of the funeral becomes a profound occasion for Kincaid to reflect upon the public spectacle of death and its associated shame, pleasure, and silence. Early in the memoir, she explains that "this disease, in Antigua, produces all the prejudices in people that it produces elsewhere, and so like many other places, the people afflicted with it and their families are ashamed to make their suffering known" (30). Later, she admits to her own complicity in the spectatorship and pleasure of Devon's suffering as it becomes known to others: "I

missed him. I missed seeing him suffer. I missed feeling sorry that I could see him in his suffering, I missed seeing him in the midst of something large and hoping he would emerge from it changed for the better. I did not love him. What I felt might have been love, but I still, even now, would not call it so" (57-58). This lack of emotional and filial intimacy has a political dimension that speaks to the seeming impossibility of a transnational Caribbean solidarity aimed towards the support of sustainable regional sovereignty. Her reflection upon the observers who attend the funeral of a four year-old is exemplary:

> […] the sorrow shown by the family excites observers, evoking pity for the mourner and, ultimately, superiority, for to see someone suffer in a moment when you are not suffering, can inspire such a feeling, superiority, in a place like Antigua, with its history of subjugation, leaving in its wake humiliation and inferiority; to see someone in straits worse than your own is to feel at first pity for them and soon better than them.
>
> (187)

Kincaid's reading of Antiguan society resonates with Susan Sontag's claim that "[t]he feeling of being exempt from calamity stimulates interest in looking at painful pictures, and looking at them suggests and strengthens the feeling that one is exempt" (168). These reflections are not critiques of charity; rather, there is something much more insidious at play in a social structure that renders pain and suffering a commodity. It is thus through the act of consumption that one's sense of exemption from the ethical is confirmed and that the potential for social solidarity comes to seem limited.

Nonetheless, Kincaid attempts to grasp the seeming lack of intimacy apparent in a situation of proximity. For example, she reflects upon the simultaneity of two funerals which occur for men who have both died of an AIDS-related illness:

> His grave was not more than twenty yards away from my brother's, and their graveside ceremonies coincided; the families and friends of the two dead men did not speak to one another; the two men were buried at the margins of the cemetery, far away from the entrance, and this was so not because of the thing that had caused their death but because of something that long ago perhaps had the same social stigma as AIDS: they or their families were not members of respectable churches. (192)

Here, Kincaid reaches for a longer and deeper history of social and psychic alienation that is only further exacerbated by the stigmatization of AIDS. This alienation is bound up in colonial history and the reproduction of socioeconomic stratification and religious stratification by Antiguans themselves. The religious stratification has an implicit bio-political dimension given the context of the funeral event which ritualizes death and provides a philosophical system for conceptualizing the human afterlife. Kincaid observes no desire, on the part of her family or the other, for mutual compassion in the experience of loss. She explains, "[n]othing about their death ceremonies made communication between their families occur; not sharing the same funeral parlor, not sharing the margin of the burial ground. The other dead man's family did not say a sympathetic word to us and we did not say a sympathetic word to them" (192).

This rendering of the funeral points to the profound irony of a willful exemption from the approximation of shared suffering; further, it suggests the individualization of suffering as a root problem for the taking of collective action in support of promoting HIV/AIDS education and social services. While there are likely multiple explanations for this seeming lack of intimacy on funeral grounds, it could be argued that the individualization of human loss (or gain) is so bound up in the measurement and capitalization of suffering that each funeral party is implicitly competing with the other. Each funeral party may prefer an exemption from the suffering of the other. The experience of social exemption from loss-- and exemption from the responsibility to care for others-- may thus produce an individual *gain* of pleasure produced from a sense of social relief. Such a social situation can debilitate possibilities for solidarity. Furthermore, the apparent social stigma attached to AIDS in Antigua reinforces conditions to prevent public expressions of shared suffering. In this sense, the neoliberal condition can individualize suffering and dissolve social solidarity by elevating the general sufferer as responsible, but also by devaluing particular kinds of suffering as disposable. In *Witnessing AIDS: Writing, Testimony, and the Work of Mourning*, Sarah Brophy takes issue with Freud's rendering of mourning as necessary for the social reintegration of the individual who has lost a loved one. In her reading, Freud suggests that melancholia, and the lingering over loss that it implies, only prevents the emotional reinvestment that is necessary to facilitate productive social relations. Brophy offers a re-conceptualization to argue for the political relevance of critical melancholia, whereby the experience of loss is not ultimately

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dismissed in the interest of the surviving individual's social recovery, but rather

re-legitimized as a subject for public debate (83).[152] Such a position, in my view,

not only lends itself to a critique of the neoliberal distributions of human value

among the living and dying, but it could help to reinvigorate possibilities for

solidarity.[153]

Not surprisingly, Kincaid concludes her memoir by further complicating

the situation of her brother's death. She transitions from pondering her brother's

funeral to paying tribute to her then husband's father, William Shawn, the editor

of the *New Yorker* who facilitated the career which she perceives as having saved

her life (179-180). She confesses,

> I became a writer out of desperation, so when I first heard my brother was
>
> dying I was familiar with the act of saving myself: I would write about
>
> him. I would write about him dying. When I was young, younger than I
>
> am now, I started to write about my own life and I came to see that this act
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> saved my life. When I heard about my brother's illness and his dying, I
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> knew, instinctively, that to understand it, or to make an attempt at
>
> understanding his dying, and not to die with him, I would write about it.

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[152] Brophy explains: "[r]ecent rereadings of Freud on mourning and melancholia in light of *The Ego and the Id* have shifted the concept of melancholia away from the realm of the pathological to indicate both its status as a founding dynamic of subjectivity and its potential as a kind of critical memory. Modified from its earlier vises in psychoanalysis, the concept of melancholia can provide a precise and critically powerful way of describing this condition of response and of adumbrating the text's somewhat oblique approach to ethics, politics, and representation" (10).

[153] In 1966, the UN General Assembly approved the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. The second covenant includes "the right to a standard of living adequate to health and well-being" (Hanhimaki 2000). The separation of rights into distinct categories is questionable given the traumatic relation between physical and economic suffering in the context of healthcare. The act of elucidating connections between rights, despite their ideological separations in discourse is, for me, a necessary activism.

(195-196)

Kincaid declares, afterwards, that she will never write about her brother again just as she will never write about William Shawn again, for she has lost the person who was "the perfect reader" of life narrative (196). Here, Kincaid suggests that her brother's death extended her literary credit, whereas William Shawn's death compromises it. Unlike in *A Small Place*, where she concludes in an attempt to humanize the figures of master and slave by reducing them to their biological condition, she reinforces, in the conclusion of *My Brother*, an individualist notion of sovereignty. As Kezia Page contends, Kincaid's following question thus requires re-evaluation to clarify who is to be held accountable for the human insecurities felt within and across nation-states: "if there was no medicine available, if the people suffering did not have a sister who lived in the United States and this sister could [not] call up a doctor who would write a prescription for some medication that might be of help what would happen then?" (Kincaid 61). An additional question considered by Page is whether or not Kincaid would have a story to write about her brother if a prescription had not been written by an American doctor. The doctor's prescription and Kincaid's memoir are respectively part of medical and literary industries that may reinforce the conditions for a bio-political marketplace whereby bodies are vulnerable to sovereign powers who can influence the condition and duration of living and dying. I will now turn to reflect upon a series of critical connections between *My Brother* and *Life + Debt*, by way of conclusion and to further contextualize my reading of bio-political waste and the violence of credit.

In several respects, Stephanie Black's film suggests that death in Jamaica is bound up in the politics of increased food insecurity, the expansion of predatory privatized security systems, and the apparently booming coffin industry. While Kincaid fixates on the singularity of Devon's body as a site of neoliberal struggle and as an object of bio-political waste, Black illuminates social implications for the post-structural violence of a network of neoliberal industries. In *Life + Debt* and *My Brother*, we can find a bio-political relation between the food and medicine industries, both of which are implicated in a global neoliberal economy that reinforces conditions of debt for a Caribbean poor majority. It is in this context that these works shed light on the irregular access and uneven consumption of basic necessities, such as food and medicine. What is also valuable about reading both the film and memoir together is the fact that even though Black's vision of the Caribbean capacity for resistance differs from that offered by Kincaid in *My Brother*, they share grounds for an argument about the uncertainties of living and dying under neoliberalism.

One of the most striking scenes of *Life + Debt* which, in my view, bears an unexpected relation to the bio-politics of *My Brother* involves the portrayal of Jamaican dairy farmers who testify to the impact of the neoliberal policy of tariff reduction that enables imported powdered milk to have a competitive advantage in the island's marketplace over that of locally produced fresh milk. Jamaican farmers, according to this narrative, can no longer compete with the lower priced, foreign imports and therefore the local dairy industry is decimated. In dramatic fashion, the film portrays a farmer who opens the tap of his dairy container to let

the white liquid flow into the earth. This image of wasted milk is significant given

that the dairy industry represents to most Western societies a staple *local* industry;

furthermore, milk has been *promoted* as an essential food and source of nutrients

in the promotion of the healthy development of growing human bodies. Wasted

milk thus symbolizes not only the decimation of local industry but the devaluation

and, potentially, the death of human life.

While milk production is associated with the reproduction of mammalian

life, and bears a symbolic connection to the nursing of baby by mother, its waste

is associated with the end of reproduction. The imported powdered milk can be

read as the symbol of a paralyzing bio-politics, whereby a supposedly essential

ingredient for human consumption becomes necessarily foreign and a degraded,

powdered substitute that Jamaicans must depend upon. While Kincaid represents

herself as having the capacity to refuse the food that her mother offers her, Black's

film implies that Jamaicans cannot refuse the powdered milk because it has

unfairly monopolized the market. Kincaid's brother, similarly, cannot refuse the

AZT that Kincaid's purchasing power affords because his life becomes dependent

upon it. It is in this sense that Kincaid's remission work becomes a form of

neoliberal responsibility that is the inverse image of the neoliberal disposability of

Jamaicans created by the transnational work of market actors to impose upon

them a reconstituted and degraded basic food source.

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In conclusion, it should be noted that the political relation between

migration and remittance, as a development strategy, is the subject of debate in

studies of international political economy and elsewhere. In Eudine Barriteau's

view of the effects of Caribbean remittance, flows are multi-directional (62).

Although migration has become "an institutionalized aspect of Caribbean society"

(Barriteau 62), Nicola Phillips questions "the articulation of remittances as a core

dimension of national development strategy [for it] implies the coopting of

migrants' support for their families and communities" (25). The neoliberal context

for migration and remittance continues to be relevant to any consideration of the

sovereignty pursued in development strategies. As I have argued, neoliberal

ideology reinforces gender exploitation for "it is women who, through their labor,

replace the services that were once the responsibilities of hospitals, schools, and

community centers" (Ford-Smith 213-214). Remittances, in this context, produce

short-term, positive results on the Gross National Product of developing countries

while structures of "third world dependency" are maintained and high migration

rates erode health and education programs (Page 46). Kincaid's returns to post-

colonial Antigua in *A Small Place* and *My Brother* mark the moments of her own

temporal and spatial disorientation regarding Caribbean anti-colonial, anti-

imperial politics, past and present. She is not entirely to blame for such

disorientation which seems to be a hegemonic neoliberal effect of power. As

Brian Meeks argues, not only was "the notion of revolution" deformed by "the

rise and triumph of neoliberalism," in the 1980s, but by the mid-1990s,

"resistance seemed futile" to those who once believed in it ("Introduction: On the

Bump of Arrival" x).

　　　　The reexamination of anti-colonial and anti-imperialist legacies within the

Caribbean has political and pedagogical value. It is necessary, as Shalini Puri

argues in "Legacies Left", to address "the *mixed* legacies of radical politics" and

to "remember […] some of the best examples of democratic socialist practice" (2),

in relation to "the forms of political and cultural censorship" that emerged in

various revolutions (2). Puri argues that we regard the "particular errors, failures

and miscalculations of revolutionary projects in the region—not as part of a

narrative of disillusionment, betrayal or rejection of the Left, nor as part of a

complacent narrative of its inevitable transcendence, but as part of a project to

renew and strengthen the promise of the Left" (3). Reconsiderations of the "many

competing regionalisms of the Caribbean," as well as the "links and alliances," at

all levels, serve to cultivate possibility for "different youth cultures across the

Caribbean," according to Puri (4). Kincaid's inability to make complete sense of

the colonial and post-colonial generational distinctions she perceives in neoliberal

Antigua can be read as part of the mixed legacies of imagining Caribbean

resistance and solidarity. That she represents herself as both a reluctant and

overburdened transnational daughter and sister, as well as an empowered

Antiguan writer living in the United States, should cause us to question our hopes

and expectations for black female protagonists. Should Kincaid be made to feel

unconditionally obligated to care for her Antiguan family? Given her distance

from the region, does she have the right to project images of Caribbean false

consciousness and the lack of accountability? *A Small Place*, *Life +Debt* and *My*

Brother are suggestive of an array of contemporary issues requiring further

reflection and analysis to better grasp the impacts of neoliberal policy and its

traumatic effects on everyday experience. We might thus ask ourselves what makes a machete different from a machine, a pen different from a needle, credit different from debt, accounting different from accountability. We might also consider further why medicine and milk seem to have so much to do with the technology of bio-political power, as we strive to generate critical neoliberal literacy and to generate a lexicon for articulating resistance and agency in ways that cannot simply be captured—or contained—by literary and cinematic representations.

Chapter Four

"A body needs company":
On the Queer Lives of Lepers and the Death of Black Culture Industries in
Michelle Cliff's *Free Enterprise: A Novel of Mary Ellen Pleasant* and *No Telephone to Heaven*

> It is the logic of concentration that successively smaller enclosures will need to be created within the larger structure. The coffin is the last stage in this process.
>> Rod Edmond, *Leprosy and Empire: A Medical and Cultural History*, (189).

> For staying or dwelling involves imaginative movement.
>> Michaeline A. Crichlow, *Globalization and the Postcreole Imagination: Notes on Fleeing the Plantation*, (2).

> Our job today is to promote cross-racial communities of struggle that arise of out of common —and hopefully radical—political aspirations.
>> Angela Y. Davis, *Abolition Democracy: Beyond Empire, Prisons, and Torture*, (33).

At the fifth Annual Eric Williams Memorial Lecture held at Florida International University in 2003, Angela Y. Davis presented "Slavery and the Prison Industrial Complex," a lecture in which she discusses historical connections between racial slavery and incarceration to argue for the abolition of prison systems.[154] Although her articulation of the global struggle for freedom

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[154] As one of many whose political commitments made her a target for racial and political profiling by the U.S. government during the 1960s and 1970s, Davis was wrongly accused of crimes involving the abduction and murder of a judge, incarcerated for two years, and later acquitted in June 1972. She was fired from a teaching position at a UCLA, by order of then state governor Ronald Reagan, because of her connections with the U.S. Communist and Black Panther parties. Having grown up in Birmingham, Alabama, she has testified to the daily experience of living with white acts of terrorism against black communities. See Kelley for his assessment of the "[g]enerations [of African-Americans] who lived under mob rule" (79). Providing a sketch of police brutality, murder, and state-sanctioned violence against black populations from 1898 to 1964, he contends that "even the most liberal white sympathizers suffered from historical amnesia when it came to the history of racist violence" (79). The Jim Crow era often necessitated black militancy for self-defense. In the 2011 documentary *Black Power Mixtape 1967-1975*, when an interviewer asks a younger Davis if she approves of violence she recalls as a child hearing bombs explode outside her home and watching her father patrol the neighbourhood with guns. She defends the Panthers as misunderstood and implies the interviewer's incomprehension of black struggle for survival in a racist American society.

involves the analysis of interlocking oppressions, Davis' work on radical political solidarity is sometimes misperceived, perhaps as a result of her historical association with the Black Panthers. Yet, Davis stresses that "black communities are heterogeneous [...]. You can't talk about a unitary black community." To unsettle dominant ideologies of "unitary' blackness, Davis advocates in this lecture the use of "political criteria" to "think about community-building in a different way."[155] Emphasizing the political heterogeneity of black communities, she promotes not a post-racial perspective, but the critical review of political agendas and strategies to consolidate alliances giving priority to radical visions of social transformation. Davis invokes "common," in an epigraph beginning this chapter, to encourage the meeting of "political aspirations" in ways that avoid the reproduction of oversimplified racial ideologies.[156]

In this chapter, I draw on Davis' conception of an imaginative crisis related to racial alliance and political freedom. Linking that crisis to debates over black nostalgia and queer studies, I follow with an analysis of Michelle Cliff's representations of radical abolitionism and guerilla organization in *Free Enterprise: A Novel of Mary Ellen Pleasant* (1993) [157] and *No Telephone to Heaven* (1988). In doing so, I continue to assess representations of black female

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[155] Rinaldo Walcott conceptualizes black queer studies "as the unthought of what might be thinkable within the confines of the black studies project proper" (91). He finds that black homogeneity and nationalism are limiting approaches that "constitute the major crises of the black studies project and projects for the making of community everywhere— even in queer studies" (93).

[156] Davis' feminist, internationalist political orientation is influenced by working with the Black Panthers, Third World Left, and prison abolition movement. Of the Free Angela Davis and All Political Prisoners Campaign she claims: "[w]idespread national and global activism was *the* determining factor in my acquittal. There is no doubt in my mind that my acquittal was a direct consequence of organizing efforts both here and abroad" (Mendieta 106).

[157] The original publication of this novel, in 1993, carried the shorter title *Free Enterprise*.

protagonists, in relation to racialized, feminized, and classed geographies of the neoliberal medium, which I conceptualize as an extension of Paule Marshall's "double exposure" examined in chapter two. Exploring the resistance work of black female protagonists, Cliff imagines how the neoliberal conditioning of bodies threatens to limit the orientation of social struggles and troubles inherited notions of free enterprise and communism. *Free Enterprise* provides an anachronistic historical meditation upon the intersectional dynamics of radical U.S. abolitionism during the nineteenth century, while *No Telephone* portrays the attempted re-indigenization of Creole social formations by guerillas in Jamaica seeking to transform caricatured politics of the twentieth century. In both novels, death and violence are the horizon of failure for radical politics.

Linking the racialized dynamics of power and subjection imagined in the slave plantation to those in the spaces of the leper colony and guerilla commune, Cliff provokes questions concerning the role of culture industries to selectively historicize resistance for popular consumption. While her strategic uses of anachronism and caricature unsettle a vision of conventional political identity formation, her depictions of conflict and difference, especially among allies, signal the need to re-imagine orientations towards social solidarity with a critical view of how resistance is historically represented to limit the imagination of collaboration, alliance, and company.[158] I thus pursue the following question: if a

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[158] See Katherine McKittrick's article "On plantations, prisons, and a black sense of place" for an analysis of the "slave and post-slave black geographies" of "the plantation, practices of annihilation (urbicide) and the prison (947). While she emphasizes the impact of these spatial dominations on "a black sense of place" (947), I find Cliff seeking to deconstruct "black" geographies for the purpose of illuminating potentials and limitations for cross-racial solidarities. Both McKittrick and Cliff articulate convincing connections between historical and contemporary geographic formations of racialized domination.

body *needs* company, then what kind of labour is imagined to fulfill such a need and what kind of company generates solidarity?

In a letter to her Jamaican Creole ally Annie Christmas, the African American entrepreneur and activist Mary Ellen Pleasant writes, "a body needs company, no matter how much you *resist* that notion" (69; my emphasis). In this scene in *Free Enterprise*, Cliff's fictive representation of the historical Pleasant involves an intimate appeal, to the fictional character Christmas, for physical proximity and political solidarity; yet, it signals misrecognition of the kinship Christmas forges when she trespasses upon a leper colony to make connections with a transnational constituency that is segregated inside. I discuss the leper colony in relation to recognition later in this chapter; it is significant to note, however, that this novel emphasizes the polysemy of concepts such as freedom and enterprise, company and collaboration.

In a subsequent epistolary scene in the novel, Pleasant recalls being asked by white abolitionist Alice Hooper to provide a reading of the famous 1840 painting inspired by the Zong massacre by artist J.M.W. Turner entitled, *Slavers Throwing Overboard the Dead and the Dying, Typhoon Coming On*. Hooper suggests to Pleasant: "Perhaps you can instruct the company about the incident the painter was illustrating" (72). The painting depicts slavers disposing of live slaves by throwing them overboard into the sea, in order to obtain insurance compensation for the capital loss of slave labour as commodity. This painful history is casually referred to by Hooper who asks Pleasant to indulge the imaginations of white abolitionists in company. Cliff illuminates a tension

between white and black optics as Pleasant aligns white abolitionist interest with the "background" of the painting inhabited by the white slavers, while she expresses solidarity with the flailing limbs of drowning slaves in the "foreground" (81).[159]

Following this scene of a black female protagonist in the company of white abolitionists, Cliff introduces the "hologrammatical man" (75), who she implies is Malcolm X: "he was waiting on his time, when he would first be called Homeboy, then Detroit Red, then X" (76). Mary Ellen Pleasant sees X as "the shadow of someone" and while "she tried to locate him in the past, she didn't know he was an impression of the future. She only hoped he might offer company" (76). That the futuristic ghost of Malcolm X casts a shadow upon the historical scene of abolition as a casual and yet murdered figure is significant for our interpretation of Cliff's concluding portrayal of Pleasant's political afterlife. Although she is heralded as a significant figure of black resistance by fugitive and former slaves in the novel, Cliff invokes, in the end, the epitaph inscribed on her real tombstone which states "she was a friend of John Brown." In closing the final scene of the novel at her tombstone, Cliff states that "a midden grew as a monument to their ingenuity" (213). An image of preserved waste signifies political creativity.

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[159] A similar concern is raised in this novel about the commissioned artist Augustus Saint-Gaudens' strategy to sculpturally represent the black 54th Regiment without the aid of photographic evidence; he replies, in a letter, "I am an Irishman, and so honor your caution with regard to becoming 'background'" (163). Walters offers insightful analysis of "the racial politics of visual spectatorship" by discussing *Free Enterprise* in relation to John Ruskin's consumer practices as the historical owner of the Turner painting. She asks "[w]hat does it mean to 'take pleasure' in looking at images of terror? And how does visual culture, and writing about visual culture, work to consolidate group identity in national or racial terms?" (501).

What lessons Malcolm X could provide to Pleasant who appeals to his

spectral company remains ambiguous; in part, this is because Cliff writes a

historical novel in the post-Civil rights era of a U.S. neoliberal, multicultural

compromise whereby social and economic empowerment is haunted by the

seeming failure of anti-colonial and anti-imperial struggle. Meanwhile, U.S.

nationalist culture industries selectively valorize historical scenes and speeches, as

evidence of battles won for freedom and equality, rather than trouble the notion

that "remembrance is always a form of forgetting, and the dominant narrative of

the civil rights movement--distilled from history and memory, twisted by

ideology and political contestation, and embedded in heritage tours, museums,

public rituals, textbooks, and various artifacts of mass culture--distorts and

suppresses as much as it reveals" (Dowd Hall 1233).[160] Cliff's intimate

sequencing of the three scenes discussed above thus articulate a range of

orientations concerning the politics of company and collaboration in the context

of resistance to slavery and its legacies.

In an interview Cliff acknowledges the "multi-generic" and "non-linear

fashion" of her writing, particularly in *Free Enterprise*, and relates these features

to the oral tradition of drawing upon dream and myth (Adisa 280). She credits

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[160] Dowd Hall argues that as Martin Luther King Jr. has become an iconic "defining figure-frozen in 1963," his critiques of "the urban North," "the Vietnam war," and his connection of "racism at home to militarism and imperialism abroad" are downplayed: "[g]one is King the democratic socialist who advocated unionization, planned the Poor People's Campaign, and was assassinated in 1968 while supporting a sanitation workers' strike" (1234). She regards this censorship as aiding "a New Right bent on reversing [civil rights] gains" and argues for the perspective of a "'long civil rights movement' extending from the 1930s into the 1970s," which "inspired a 'movement of movements' that 'def[ies] any narrative of collapse" (1235). Rather than downplay current forms of structural inequality, she calls into question the teleology of the racialized narrative of rights acquisition to indicate the necessary persistence of grassroots radicalism. Arguably, as U.S. history emphasizes distinctions between King and Malcolm X, their political positions seem static and non-interactive rather than adaptive to changing circumstances.

Toni Morrison's re-imagining of U.S. slavery and the Reconstruction era, in

Beloved, for shaping her sense that "time is not linear. All things are happening at

the same time. Past, present, and the future coexist" (280). While she seeks to

challenge "received versions of history" because "if one does not know that one's

people have resisted, then it makes resistance difficult" (280), Cliff does not

simply idealize black female militancy. Rather, she imaginatively confronts

historical violence resulting from assertions of racialized solidarity and resistance.

It is notable, then, that Cliff is hesitant to over-emphasize the centrality of two

racialized female protagonists in *Free Enterprise*:

> Christmas and Pleasant are the two main characters who come together in
>
> this revolutionary moment, but there are other characters from other parts
>
> of the world who also represent resistance, other revolutionary moments. I
>
> want to show that national boundaries evaporate, that people can reach
>
> each other across distances and resist. One of the things I am trying to do
>
> in this book is adjust the lens, to re-vision history. (280)

Cliff's imperative "to re-vision history" seems to expand upon Morrison's

conception of re-memory portrayed in the novel *Beloved* as a haunted form of

remembering whereby historical traumas of slavery resurface psychically and

through bodily sensation. In this chapter, I pursue the assertion that "a body *needs*

company," by positing that Cliff imagines, in *Free Enterprise* and *No Telephone*,

a politics of re-orientation for the purposes of cultivating alternative visions of

sociality propelled by political heterogeneity, conflict, and collaboration. In this

sense, she shifts focus from the body as a "site of memory" (Morrison 1990)

towards the relation between bodies as it creates "a space of appearance" (Butler 3) for creative interaction.

Re-visioning the orientations of anti-colonial and anti-imperial political collaboration by drawing on examples of radical abolitionism, in *Free Enterprise*, and guerilla insurgency, in *No Telephone*, Cliff signals the necessity of expanding our imagination of the tactics and strategies for effective resistance in the neoliberal era. In part, the anti-redemptive political imagining she offers stems from a disavowal of the efficacy of modern state intervention to ensure social and economic justice for non-white constituencies. Of the guerillas in Jamaica who ride in a truck that carries the slogan of the novel's title, *No Telephone to Heaven*, Cliff explains, "they cannot depend on anyone to free them from their situation. They have to get out of it themselves" (Adisa 276). Although strategies for social transformation are debatable in her novels, Cliff prioritizes conscientious collaboration when she explains, in an interview, that as a Creole person "[m]y fate in Jamaican society as seen by my family and the middle-class community was to marry an upper-class Jamaican man and to have children. My role was to become a collaborator, and in Jamaican society that would mean collaborating in the oppression of other people of color as well as myself as a female. I think that liberation has to begin with oneself" (277-278).[161]

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[161] Stauffer describes the inter-racial, radical abolitionist collaborations in the U.S. between McCune Smith, Gerrit Smith, Frederick Douglass, and John Brown as influenced by "'sacred self-sovereignty'" which "denote[d] a state of individual autonomy that was God's intention for everyone. [Ralph Waldo] Emerson captured something of the idea of sacred self-sovereignty in his 1854 speech 'The Fugitive Slave Law': 'Divine sentiments,' he said, 'are always soliciting us, are breathed into us from on high and are a counterbalance to a universe of suffering and crime'; thus 'self-reliance, the height and perfection of man, is reliance on God'" (16). Sharing a view of God as "'immanent or indwelling,'" they "reinterpreted the Golden Rule, as stated in Luke 6:31 and Hebrews 13:3, as a requirement for empathy, and this empathetic awareness was

Addressing a crisis of political imagination, Cliff also stresses the relevance of oral social practices to the creation of alliances that can confront white supremacist culture industries that reduce racialized resistance to entertainment spectacles for consumer markets. In this context, I place analytical emphasis on Cliff's construction of a U.S. leper colony, in *Free Enterprise*, and a Jamaican guerilla commune in *No Telephone* because each signifies an unsettled struggle to re-occupy space and to transform the social relations impacted by histories of segregation and incarceration. I argue that Cliff's portrayals of segregation and incarceration provoke readers to review, as interrelated, the racialized and feminized socioeconomic struggles of the nineteenth and twentieth century so that we might see connections between slave trade and free trade between the U.S. and the Caribbean. The novels ask us to consider how labour value is calculated in capitalist production but also in relation to the social reproduction of resistance. Although the political potential for the re-occupied spaces of the leper colony and guerilla commune is fragile and its inhabitants are endangered, part of Cliff's intervention is to imagine processes for unsettling the spatial coordinates of power and to inspire new perspectives of radical social transformation.

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central to their reform efforts" (16). Brown's failed slave raid at Harper's Ferry was a revolutionary turn that resulted in his execution and led Gerrit Smith to an insane asylum. Historians note Douglass' skepticism over Brown's plan. With this religiously-inflected, radical abolitionist context in mind for self-sovereignty, it seems significant to note Cliff's perception of her semi-autobiographical protagonist Clare as "on the [No Telephone to Heaven] truck because [she] want[ed] to show her inching towards wholeness" (Adisa 276). This wholeness emphasizes the centrality of individual to social liberation but Cliff's rejection of a religiously redemptive teleology is also implied by the title of her novel. Anti-redemptive narrative ambiguity may be symptomatic of the view of liberation and sovereignty as inextricable from dynamics of power and subjection.

Crisis "Incarcerated" Black Communities for Nostalgia and Resistance

That "one of the most debated issues in American politics is the value of

an independent African American political-cultural community" (James

Shadowboxing 31) seems related to the long historical struggle over and between

forms of racist, institutionalized segregation and racialized, political organization.

As Rinaldo Walcott contends, "the wounds and injuries of African American

positionality, and black peoples more generally, [...] have conditioned the

monolingual voice of the black studies project" (93). In this context, dominant

black intellectual or political traditions may conceal difference or dissent to

confirm their own legitimacy. Wilson J. Moses is critical of a dominant "black

intellectual tradition" that reinforces "segregation nostalgia" (621). Too often he

finds that "black authenticity" is thought to derive "organically from the folk" and

that, by extension, black intellectual traditions must be "popular," "grassroots,"

"vernacular," "plebeian," "democratic," "communal," "proletarian," and

"colloquial" (621).[162] Once "the fear of erosion of the black vernacular and

organic authenticity" comes to be perceived as a "crisis" (622), "segregation

nostalgia" becomes a compensatory measure to promote the unification of black

communities even while it risks reinforcing inequality. "Crisis" in this context

signifies ideological conflict regarding political notions of solidarity,

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[162] Moses finds that the manipulation of cross-class alliances is a tactic used by Left and Right politicians to amass broad-based support (633-637); thus, he argues that "[i]t takes little imagination to perceive that the organic linkage between mass culture and elite intellectualism has frequently been a factor that enables oligarchies to dominate the minds of the masses" (633). See Dunkley for a critique of former Jamaican Creole Prime Minster Michael Manley's promotion of cross-class solidarity through populist speech and the state-funded institutionalization of Afro-centric arts programs. The article's opening line resonates with Moses' article: "Jamaicans today are either nostalgic about the seventies (1972-1980) or view this period with regret" (1).

organization, and even blackness.

Yet community-building has also been central to radical black feminist cultures and to "the lives and work of black females" (James *Shadowboxing* 30). As Joy James explains, "[c]ommunity in fact is understood as requiring and sustaining intergenerational responsibilities that foster the well-being of family, individuals, and a people, male and female. Even if the idea is discredited by the dominant culture, the knowledge that individual hope, sanity, and development come through relation in community resonates in black politics" (30). Black feminist political and intellectual traditions can be credited for addressing complex issues of intersectional alliance and for initiating debates over presumptions of political consensus regarding group identity formation. With these critical perspectives of black community in mind, I return to Davis to clarify the relation between a crisis of political imagination and a history of racialized incarceration.

In the same Eric Williams Memorial lecture, Davis conceptualizes a longer history of "abolition democracy" by suggesting linkages between racial enslavement and incarceration. The political disenfranchisement of imprisoned, racialized populations seems indefinite when criminalization functions to "withhold the vote from people of color" as is the case in "[a]ll fifty states [which] bar former inmates from acquiring state license" (*Abolition Democracy* 13). She argues that "the prison is a mechanism of wealth extraction from African Americans not just through exploitation of prison labor, but also by appropriating black social wealth" and energy needed "to sustain their communities: schools,

churches, home ownership, etc. At any given moment, given the exorbitant

amount of blacks in prisons, social wealth does not return to black communities,

or it is withdrawn through political and economic disenfranchisement and

exclusion" (13-14). For civil rights lawyer and activist Michelle Alexander, these

processes engender what she calls "the new Jim Crow" era where discourses of

colorblindness conceal the "justification for discrimination, exclusion, and social

contempt" (2). The "basic structure" of a racist American society remains secure

as the "criminal justice system [is used] to label people of color 'criminals'" (2).

Alexander elaborates on this form of racialized criminalization:

> Today it is perfectly legal to discriminate against criminals in nearly all
>
> the ways that it was once legal to discriminate against African Americans.
>
> Once you're a felon, the old forms of discrimination—employment
>
> discrimination, housing discrimination, denial of the right to vote, denial
>
> of educational opportunity, denial of food stamps and other public
>
> benefits, and exclusion from jury service—are suddenly legal. [....]We
>
> have not ended racial caste in America; we have merely redesigned it. (2)

The disenfranchisement of racialized populations by way of incarceration

has serious implications for the increased criminalization of public dissent and

protest in the U.S.[163] While anti-neoliberal protestors of all backgrounds are

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[163] Alexander explains that "[o]ne in three young African American men will serve time in prison if current trends continue, and in some cities more than half of all young adult black men are currently under correctional control--in prison or jail, on probation or parole. Yet mass incarceration tends to be categorized as a criminal justice issue as opposed to a racial injustice or civil rights issue" (9). While the Reagan administration's investment in antidrug law enforcement during the 1980s included a "crack down on the racially defined 'others'" (49) at the same time "inner-city communities were suffering from economic collapse" (50), she finds that "scholars, activists, and community members who argue that moral uplift and education provide the best solution to black criminality and the phenomenon of mass incarceration" subscribe to a "'politics

increasingly threatened by state protections of neoliberal ideology and

corporatized space, police brutality nevertheless continues to pose a distinct threat

to racialized protestors, particularly those with prior histories of incarceration. As

racial and criminal profiling become intersectional surveillance practices, political

disenfranchisement is reinforced on multiple levels. Within an increasingly

totalitarian American society, political freedoms are further threatened by the

privatizations of public space which increasingly limit, or prohibit, open displays

of civil disobedience and peaceful protest. Militarized and corporatized, the

prison-industrial complex promotes the political paralysis of racialized bodily

resistance, yet it re-inscribes bodies with racializing criminal discourses.

Conceptualizing "surplus repression," Angela Y. Davis contends that "the

institutionalization of the prison regime into an industry" is simply accepted by

citizens as "both inevitable and desirable" and "a logical way and evident way to

deal with crime" (*Abolition Democracy* 15). These conditions she refers to as a

type of imaginative crisis that causes her to ask: "what are the conditions of

possibility for the abolition of entrenched social institutions?"

  In *Free Enterprise* and *No Telephone*, Cliff suggests that racialized

incarceration and segregation are intended to be deeply repressive to the

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of respectability--a politics that was born in the nineteenth century and matured in the Jim Crow era" to "prove to whites that [blacks] are worthy of equal treatment, dignity, and respect" (212).With some exception, "moral uplift ideology became the new common sense" causing "many African Americans [to] endorse aspects of the current caste system and [to] insist that the problems of the urban poor can be best explained by their behavior, culture, and attitude (214). Thus, "the current caste system [...] appears voluntary. People choose to commit crimes, and that's why they are locked up or locked out, we are told. This makes the politics of responsibility particularly tempting, as it appears the system can be avoided with good behavior"(215). I go on to suggest a conceptual link between Alexander's "politics of responsibility," Fax's " neoliberal sentimentality" (1) and my concept of the neoliberal condition in a section of this chapter.

potentialities of radical political imagining. She places pressure on unitary notions of political identity by reorienting them towards black feminist and queer-inspired notions of social relation.[164] The novel *Free Enterprise* begins in 1920 and ends with a letter dated 1898 while *No Telephone* is set between 1960 and 1982.[165] As part of their struggle, black-identified characters confront white-dominated culture industries, which commoditize black struggles, and nation-state military apparatuses that actively work to exacerbate them in nineteenth- and twentieth-century contexts. Emphasizing the effects of black political containment, Cliff explores the spatial coordination of power and how resistance is landscaped by the state as well for the imagination of consuming audiences.

Cliff's literary commitment to represent black political history is complicated not only by the class-race nexus of her own status as a Jamaican Creole, but also by her status as a mixed-race, lighter-skinned Jamaican immigrant woman living in the United States. Her literary identity also enables her to mobilize queer politics within potentially more accepting, cultural and intellectual milieus. Yet, according to Belinda Edmondson, Cliff "occupies an ambiguous space in West Indian society" (180), for while she is considered "culturally 'black,' or Afro-Caribbean," because "the Afrocentric dynamic permeates all classes and race of Anglophone Caribbean society regardless of its particular configurations within these groups," she is also "representative of both colonizer and colonized" (180). Cliff's efforts "to revalue black identity" are

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[164] Cliff's queer perspectives are discussed below but the following conception is useful as a starting point: "queerness can never define an identity; it can only ever disturb one" (Edelman 17).

[165] In *No Telephone* Cliff notes that Clare is fourteen when she moves with her family to the U.S. in 1960 (53); when she returns to Jamaica to join a guerrillaorganization she is 36 (87).

"debated by West Indian feminists and intellectuals," who find that "her novels are not truly part of an Afro-centric Caribbean discourse because her project as a feminist emanates from an American feminist sensibility and perhaps more importantly [...] her discovery of a black identity is a foreign fashion she has appropriated" (181-182).[166] Despite my contention that Cliff's novels confront the limitations of unitary racial political identities, I concur with Edmondson's critique of Cliff's over-reliance upon the representation of "black women [...] as having a direct and unmediated linkage to a positive black history and consciousness" (188). Specifically, Cliff's novels promote the relevance of black radical feminist political history to the formation of contemporary progressive political agendas. In effect, there may be an "inherent assumption that the empowering resistance properties of a West Indian text are to be found only in a narrative 'blackness' which operates in direct relation to the writer's subject position" (Edmonson181).[167] Edmondson's critique focuses on Cliff's earlier novels *Abeng* and *No Telephone to Heaven*.

Marni Gauthier finds that because few critics study *Free Enterprise*, Cliff's commitment to transnational black politics is underestimated. In addition, I find that critics who have written about this novel generally explore aesthetic questions concerning the historical representation of Diaspora and transatlantic

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[166] "Unlike [in] the United States, where racial categories are rigidly drawn, in the West Indian context they are more nebulous" given that "people of mixed black and white heritage can be called 'brown,' 'red,' or 'white' depending on the particular circumstances," argues Edmondson (fn7: 190-191). Although "Cliff regards herself as black or mixed, in Jamaica she is considered, socially and economically speaking, 'white'" (Edmondson fn.7: 190-191).

[167] I concur with Gauthier's following assessment: "[a] survey of the wealth of scholarship on Cliff reveals a curious omission of her 1990s fiction, for critics consistently and almost exclusively address either one or both of her first two novels—*Abeng* (1984) and *No Telephone to Heaven* (1987)—and *The Land of Look Behind* (1985), a collection of poems and essays, and Cliff herself as a 'Caribbean' and 'postcolonial' writer" (101-102).

slavery (Johnson 2009; Bost 2005;Walters 2008; Garvey 1999).[168] Focusing on

the understudied novel *Free Enterprise*, Gauthier intervenes to conceptually re-

frame the U.S. as historically post-colonial, transnational, and part of a

hemispheric conception of the Americas. This move follows trends in the new

American studies paradigm of the 1990s which was seemingly initiated to address

the hegemonic effects of U.S. literary and cultural studies.[169] In contrast to

Gauthier, I perform a relational analysis of these two books which tend to be

critically isolated from each other, seemingly as a result of paradigmatic

disciplinary orientations in Caribbean post-colonial studies and African American

studies.[170] *Free Enterprise* can be read as expanding upon Cliff's earlier

exploration into the limiting constitutive processes of radical political alliances in

No Telephone.[171] Set in different times and places, both novels approach as an

imaginative crisis the reliance upon unitary notions of race for alliances and

solidarities.

　　While Belinda Edmondson signals as problematic Cliff's mobilization of

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[168] Bost's intervention is notable for its historicized analysis of regional processes of racialization in the U.S. and the Caribbean, which she relates to political questions of subversive racial performance in Cliff's literary genealogy.

[169] Gauthier does not fully interrogate the implication of her study of Cliff's novel as "American fiction."

[170] In regards to *Free Enterprise*, Johnson cites Cliff as "defin[ing] [*Beloved*] as something of an ur-text for her own work" particularly in the attempt to re-imagine a "'historical event'" (Johnson quoting Cliff in Raiskin 115). In her 1993 analysis of Cliff's *Abeng* and *No Telephone to Heaven*, Edmondson suggests the influence of *Wide Sargasso Sea* and identifies white Creole writer Jean Rhys as "her literary forebear" (182).

[171] Stitt argues that the "embrace of essentialist forms of black nationalism in her earlier work," *Abeng*, contrast with her "subsequent rejection of these modes of nation building in her 1987 novel, *No Telephone to Heaven*" (53). Although she convincingly demonstrates Cliff's contribution to Caribbean women's critique of masculinist "representations of folk mothers as nationalist mothers" (24), I question Stitt's praise for the enlightened political progression from *Abeng* to *No Telephone.* She does acknowledge how Cliff's novels, as serialized political bildungsroman, portray the protagonist's feminist political maturity as a passage from childhood into adulthood.

political blackness in her Clare Savage novels,[172] Cliff's literary strategies have received consistent critical celebration (Schwartz 1996; Chancy 1997; Toyosato 1998; Garvey 1999; Stitt 2007; Smith 2009; Gauthier 2011). Cliff is said to promote "oppositional activism" throughout her literary genealogy (Schwartz 304). She is praised for invoking "oppositional consciousness and praxis" (Toyosato 295) and "non-essentialist" (Stitt 72) identities, in *No Telephone*, as well as female "'rebel consciousness'" in her novel *Abeng* (Springer 43). I distinguish myself from this criticism to challenge the tendency to validate Cliff's protagonists simply on the basis of their transnational performances of resistant blackness or queerness.

For the literary critic to redeem what is perceived to be a resistant performance is to risk the obscuration of resistance as an unstable process that is nonetheless culturally defined in relation to social perspectives of success and failure. Redemptive criticism implicitly involves an ideological calculation of the labour value of protagonists in the context of the novel. We can thus question the conditionality underlying such critical praise and consider whether it inadvertently supports the neoliberal conditionality of bodily value premised on the paradoxical logic of disposability and responsibility. The selective validation of a particular set of characteristics can produce a critical perspective whereby resistant labour is imagined as the valued responsibility of the black female protagonist, rather than as the necessary and often messy struggle over task-sharing among a heterogeneous social mass. The labour value of the female

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[172] These novels include *Abeng* and *No Telephone to Heaven*.

protagonist, measured as the individualized performance of anti-imperial, transnational blackness and queerness, may be praised while, implicitly, those characters who do not meet this ideological expectation for resistance become disposable or discredited in literary analysis. The selective validation of prototypes draws critical attention away from the complexity of internal conflicts, struggles, debates, and failings among heterogeneous constituents represented to struggle for solidarity against a capitalist system that manipulates cultural and racial diversity by repressing political and economic differences. Adopting an anti-redemptive critical approach, I explore Cliff's portrayals of conflict and crisis in organized resistance to clarify some of the contradictions upon which neoliberal imaginaries can thrive.

E. Patrick Johnson contends that "[o]ften, it is during times of crisis (social, cultural, or political) when the authenticity of older versions of blackness is called into question. These crises set the stage for 'acting out' identity politics, occasions when those excluded from the parameters of blackness invent their own" (2). As Cliff portrays performative, cross-racial and queered social relations, she provokes questions of how people relate across space. Sarah Ahmed's conception of queer orientation is useful here: "[q]ueer orientations are those that put within reach bodies that have been made unreachable by the lines of conventional genealogy. Queer orientations might be those that don't line up, which by seeing the world 'slantwise' allow other objects to come into view" (107). With Ahmed in mind, I argue that Cliff queers the orientation of black political genealogies to illuminate political difference concealed by unitary

organizations of identity-based, political culture.

Free or Captive Enterprise? Abolitionist Culture Industries and the Politics of Misrecognition

     Free Enterprise is Cliff's imaginative work to capture the radical spirit of the historical life of Mary Ellen Pleasant. Pleasant was a successful African American entrepreneur who participated in Westward expansion but also assisted in the Underground Railroad. Her biographer Lynn M. Hudson explains that dispute surrounds her financial activities; furthermore, historians have discredited her claim to have participated in, and provided substantial funding for, white abolitionist John Brown's organization of a slave raid at Harper's Ferry in 1859.[173] While her legal battles for black enfranchisement under Jim Crow are documented, Hudson finds that "[i]n the last century, Pleasant has become a figment of imagination as much as a figure of history" (119). The range of activities Pleasant engaged in has made her a mysterious figure for speculation in culture industries. Hudson explains:

> Coming to terms with her life as an abolitionist, activist, entrepreneur, philanthropist, and litigant means coming to terms with multiple versions of her legacy. Because Pleasant's life has been the subject of contradictory narratives in newspapers, courtrooms, silent films, and diaries, her history is also the story of these narratives and why certain ones predominate. The version of Pleasant as a faithful servant or mammy is the one that

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[173] Pleasant modeled "the wealthiest men in the West [...][who] accumulated their wealth by successfully exploiting vast numbers of workers in the construction of the Central Pacific Railroad. Pleasant used the same strategies on a smaller scale to diversify and operate her businesses, from her laundries to ranch" (Hudson 118).

becomes more and more prevalent both in her own lifetime and in

twentieth-century popular culture. There are several reasons for this. In the

first place, Pleasant imposed this definition on herself in public spaces in

San Francisco as she was repeatedly called to defend herself and her right

to her own property. Second, as her enterprise increased, so did the need to

disguise it. (119)

Although Pleasant is noted for refusing to deny or confirm many of the

mythologies and accusations surrounding her life activities (120), she testified on

record to journalist Sam Davis, in 1901, to her participation in the funding and

organization of the John Brown slave revolt (40-41).[174] She explained that the

signed note found in John Brown's pocket when he was captured was misread.

The note included the confirmation, "'[t]he axe is laid at the root of the tree. When

the first blow is struck there were will be more money and help'" (41), but the

signed initials were read as "W.E.P." rather than "M.E.P." This apparent

misreading of signature saved her life; nonetheless, Pleasant was critical of John

Brown, viewing his attempted raid as "'a fiasco'" because he began earlier than

planned and caused it to fail (41).

It could be argued that Cliff's portrayal of Mary Ellen Pleasant works to

imaginatively redeem a black female activist who has been discredited for her

labour contributions to commercial business enterprises as well as to radical

abolitionist resistance.[175] Yet, Cliff seems to consciously weave into her narrative

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[174] Although little evidence is noted to substantiate her claim, Brown's children
apparently recalled their father receiving a substantial amount of money from a woman of colour
whom they could not identify by name (Hudson 40-41).
[175] See Walker for a critique of white historical discourses as they constitute successful

a sense of the competing rumours and histories surrounding Pleasant's life; thus, the novel in several ways portrays her in the context of an emerging black culture industry whereby the pursuit of an accurate account may be questionable. The power of this industry is temporarily displaced, however, when Cliff downplays the centrality of John Brown's attempted raid by emphasizing imagined political conflicts between Brown and Pleasant and social differences between Pleasant and Christmas. The historical novel thus focuses less on the accurate recovery of subjugated history, and more on the illumination of historical conditions for racialized misrecognition and strained solidarity.

In Erica L. Johnson's analysis, "Cliff works as a novelist, historian, and biographer, a combination that produces a framework specific to the genre of ghostwriting" in this novel (117). Noting that the City Lights publishers changed the novel's title from *Free Enterprise* to *Free Enterprise: A Novel of Mary Ellen Pleasant*, she argues that the newer "subtitle emphasizes an important dimension of the novel, and that is Cliff's positioning of herself as a witness to Pleasant's

U.S. business activity. She argues: "It is not enough to emphasize the existence of wealthy blacks in post-Civil rights America as an example of black economic advancement. There were wealthy blacks in pre-Civil war America who had to contend not only with racism but also with slavery" (xvii). She finds it a mistake to presume the lack of a black business tradition in the U.S. for it overlooks the state's historical role in the domestic promotion of white free enterprise: "One has to wonder why, despite the agency of blacks in attempting to forge their own economic liberation through business activities and entrepreneurship since the 1600s, the reconstruction of the black business tradition continues to evoke only limited historical interest, compared to that given to the servile-labor contributions of blacks in the development of the American economy. Within the voluminous literature that examines the broad scope of the African American experience, historical assessments of black business activities have remained at the periphery of American scholarship. Is it because slavery has ended and the nation can congratulate itself into the advancement of liberty, while the continued poor performance of black businesses, underscores the extent to which racism has persisted in the economic life of black America?" (xvii). Keeping in mind Walker's critique and that of Dowd Hall who is concerned with the U.S. nationalist imperative to suppress a long tradition of black political radicalism, I find that a figure such as Mary Ellen Pleasant becomes irreconcilable in dominant narratives of capitalism and resistance.

life" (fn. 2: 136).[176] Yet, I have also indicated Cliff's view that *Free Enterprise* is

not designed to simply spotlight Pleasant or Christmas, as black female

protagonists, but rather to draw attention to the transnational scale of diverse

social struggle.[177]

In *Free Enterprise*, Cliff is preoccupied with the range of debatable

interpretations for concepts such as freedom and enterprise, company and

collaboration. "Enterprise" refers to a variety of politically, racially, and

socioeconomically motivated projects. For example, it is associated with the

imagined resilience of Chinese and native Indian labourers who are imagined as

part of a "sisterhood" (101) because they "deserve a monument. To their

enterprising ways" (100); yet, the tribute paid seems painfully ironic: "TO THE

WOMEN WHO SERVICED THE MEN WHO OPENED THE FRONTIER"

(100). Limited by their disenfranchisement, the racialized female labours become

complicit in exploitative enterprises. Yet, enterprise also refers to militant notions

of black abolitionism, rebellion, and entrepreneurialism (99-106). Brown's

attempted slave rebellion at Harper's Ferry is articulated as "a failure of their

enterprise [that] haunted [Pleasant]" (100). Cliff tells us that "[Pleasant] placed the

origin of the burning in October 1859, when Harriet Tubman had been

disregarded and Captain Brown seized the (wrong) day" (100). As I illustrate

below, the determinant meaning of enterprise is unsettled by Cliff's portrayal of

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[176] A 1993 Dutton / Penguin books version carries the title *Free Enterprise*. I quote from the 2004 City Lights version *Free Enterprise: A Novel of Mary Ellen Pleasant.*

[177] The titular transformation of the novel reinforces a link between "free enterprise" and the life of Mary Ellen Pleasant, whereas the original title, *Free Enterprise*, allows for connotative ambiguity and no singular reference point to identify a protagonist. While it is not uncommon in literary slave narratives to portray the exceptional life of an individual slave, or to capitalize upon this figure as a representative who reveals the horrors of slavery as an institution, it seems that Cliff's intention is not to reproduce nineteenth-century ideology but rather to challenge it.

conflict and difference between Pleasant, Brown, and Christmas.

In *Free Enterprise*, Pleasant "travels first-class" as "a successful business-woman in San Francisco, hotel keeper in the wide-open city, entrepreneur and woman of property, investor in the opening of the West" (101). Her hotel industry thrives on her "'Mammy'" performances, which "catered to those movers and shakers eager to coat their gold-dusted selves with things civilized" (103); her "staff that made these enterprises (and her others)" consists of "fugitive chattel, although by their dress and demeanor you'd never guess it" (103). Participating in the Underground Railroad, Pleasant "took care to keep their origins secret" and she "was not above ensuring the silence of the leaker—through a well-placed bribe, warning, bullet" (103). Her capacity to protect the runaway slaves is contingent upon her profiteering from "railwaymen," "army officers," "miners," and "and the bankers who underwrote it all: this, the greatest enterprise the continent had ever witnessed" (105). Cliff's invocation of "the greatest enterprise" is thus paradoxical: Western expansion implicated and exploited racialized labourers who were made to service racist nation-building.[178] Pleasant is thus "no stranger to capital, [and she is even] respectful of it," for she "moved among [capitalists] naturally, as if born to the making of money" (105). Although "[s]he began her empire building by embodying Mammydom," it is this performance which enables her to "move among" frontier men and women "easily" and yet

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[178] I do not mean to oversimplify Pleasant in terms of her complicity or non-complicity with exploitative capitalist enterprises. Zackodnik's critique of the tendencies in passing studies to deploy "the binary logic of successful or failed passing" and to "elide the interimplications of identitarian categories in favor of exploring the challenge an act of passing poses to a single category" (xi) is a useful cautionary criticism. Such work, in her view, reinforces "the simple duality of subversive versus complicit acts" (xi) and this effect is one I seek to avoid in my analysis.

"[d]isguised" (105). Projecting an image of herself which *seems* to conform to her racist clientele's expectations, she conceals the guerilla orientation of her political activities.

Marni Gauthier reads *Free Enterprise* as illuminating the transnational dimensions of nineteenth-century abolitionism and, by extension, a theory of "critical transnationalism" (110). Characterizing Cliff's version of Pleasant's notion of "free enterprise" as "quintessentially American" (114), however, she implicitly links U.S. capitalist free enterprise to transnational abolitionism. This critical strategy assigns ideological credit to American history for transnational abolitionist labour; furthermore, it does not help to address the paradoxical predicament faced by Pleasant who simultaneously works as an exceptionally successful African American female entrepreneur, as a Mammy, and as a financier of anti-slavery. Erica L. Johnson notes that "Pleasant's financial records are archived in the University of California (Irvine) Special Collections [...] [which] puts Pleasant's wealth at $30,000,000" (fn.17:137).[179] The novel suggests that a significant portion of profit acquired by Pleasant through imperialist and racist enterprises was refinanced to support underground anti-racist resistance movements.

Pleasant is portrayed in the novel as meeting with a stockbroker in 1858 to sell her Baltimore and Ohio shares because she "'don't trust money that don't look like money'" (105). These shares are first converted into $30,000 cash but then,

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[179] This figure is far higher than estimations given by Hudson; it may be a typing error intended to be $30,000.

"when she pressed him, converted [...] to gold" (105).[180] This gold in the novel is

intended to represent Pleasant's covert financial contribution to the acquisition of

weapons and organization of slaves for revolt at Harper's Ferry. Given Cliff's

representation of a political debate between the fictionalized Pleasant and Brown,

it seems that Pleasant wants to fund fugitive slave revolts and overthrow white

supremacy but maintains a system for the capitalist accumulation of property and

wealth. She opposes segregation but also the overthrow of capitalism which,

implicitly, she envisions as reconcilable with democratic social equality. Brown,

on the other hand, supports the seizure of white slave-holding land for the

Christian-inspired purposes of communization (142-143).

Pleasant's closest female political ally in the novel is Annie Christmas, a

fictional Jamaican character who travels from the Caribbean to participate in the

U.S. efforts towards abolitionism. By the end of the novel, Christmas lives alone

and is forced to reckon with the failure of slave revolt, the death of Pleasant, and

the widespread disenfranchisement of African Americans under Jim Crow (142-

151). While the novel ultimately portrays black slave survivors as honouring "the

beloved memory of Mary Ellen Pleasant" as a "[d]edicated fighter in the Cause,

Mother of Freedom, Warrior and Entrepreneur, who some believe came back

from the dead in nineteen and six to avenge her good name, and the loss of

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[180] Controversy surrounds the ambiguous sources of Pleasant's income. Her first of two wealthy husbands invested in Cuban bonds and owned a tobacco plantation (24). Hudson explains: "the sum of money bequeathed to her by her first husband is [...] the subject of wild speculation. Many claim it was as much as $30,000; one source claims it was $40,000. W.E.B. Du Bois alleged that the amount was $50,000" (26). In any case, Pleasant has "a tremendous sum for anyone to invest in the 1850s, [with modest estimations] equaling nearly 200 times the annual earnings of a working-class white man in California, where the wages were already markedly inflated because of the Gold Rush" (26). Hudson finds that "[l]ike other successful capitalists, she diversified her investments in gold, silver, quicksilver, and property, and like most nineteenth-century black women, she worked" (32).

property she suffered at the ends of the fathers of San Francisco, who finally brought her down, charging she was a witch" (203), Christmas is a survivor haunted by Pleasant's fate; yet, her interactions with a leper colony provide her an alternative experience of solidarity. I would therefore make a distinction between Cliff's portrayal of Pleasant as a capitalistic, radical abolitionist and that of Christmas as a middle-class Creole migrant to the U.S. who is skeptical of racial uplift and vanguardism.

From the outset of the novel, Cliff portrays the complexity of Christmas's perspective as she ruminates over her upbringing in Jamaica with all its racial, social, economic, and linguistic hierarchies, and feels guilty about her decision to join the black U.S.-based abolitionist cause. Annie was "[n]ever settled, never at home on the continent to the north, even after a lifetime in exile there" and "thought of her island each and every day of her life" (19).While her "break" with the Caribbean was "clean," it "haunted her" (4). Retrospectively, the Caribbean is "a confusing universe [...] with no center and no outward edge," a place "[w]here almost everything was foreign," and "[l]anguage, people, land," and "[t]ongues collided" (6). People there "[s]truggled for hegemony" (6). Annie recalls feeling "not strong enough to resist on home ground" because "it overwhelmed her" (10); thus,"[s]he'd turned her back on her people" to join "the movement on the mainland, believing the island to be without hope" (10). In the novel, Christmas migrates on the assumption that while abolitionist work is transnational at this time, it seems to have more potential for impact in the U.S.[181]

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[181] The Haitian revolution led to the first black Republic in 1804. While it posed the threat of slave revolt in the minds of slave-holders elsewhere it seems that, by 1858, Christmas

Fleeing from her homeland, described as a plantation "[d]ivided and planted with feudal exactitude" and dominated by "the overseer's house," after she acquires "money of her own" (10), Christmas is likened to "Harriet [Jacobs], and Ellen Craft, and other runaway women she had come to know" because "she began her revolting behaviour with her own escape" (11). As a runaway, she continues to feel racially and politically alienated, not only from her roots but in the context of the abolitionist culture she encounters in America. At home, her mother encourages her to mobilize her Creole status as "the better class" of "*le gens inconnu*" (8; 13), but she prefers instead to "apply Mr. Bones's Liquid Blackener to her carefully inbred skin" because "blackened life" is what "saved her life," and "saved her skin" (9).While Christmas' Creole identity could allow her to pass and benefit from the social and economic security that whiteness accrues, she chooses to emphasize and politicize her blackness as a resistance to class exploitation. That this choice is less available to those whose appearance is not suitable for passing becomes a class conscious feature of Cliff's mixed-race protagonists to disavow the privileges associated with white optics; in this regard, the explicit refusal to pass involves an assumption of political and social risk that can be read as a gesture of black solidarity. The universal acceptance of this gesture of solidarity by a black constituency who cannot pass remains uncertain.[182]

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lacks confidence in Caribbean revolutionary potential. Buck-Morss argues, "the Haitian Revolution was the crucible, the trial by fire for the ideals of the French Enlightenment. And every European who was part of the bourgeois reading public knew it" (837).

[182] Bost explains that "the unreliability of color as a social category has a long history in the Caribbean" (96); in the U.S. context, she adds that "tragic mulatta narratives" often emphasized the sexual violation of a black woman by a white man to suggest failures to protect her chastity and respectability (105). Bost aligns Cliff's construction of transnational, mixed-raced

In her move to join the black abolitionist movement in America, Christmas becomes apprehensive of the DuBoisian Talented Tenth philosophy circulating in Cliff's anachronistic portrayal of black abolitionist culture. The strategic anachronism of the historical novel enables us to consider how nineteenth-century notions of black free enterprise can be retrospectively complicated by our knowledge of the neoliberal capitalization upon a black "'politics of respectability'" which Michelle Alexander explains, following Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham, is "a politics that was born in the nineteenth century and matured in the Jim Crow era" to "prove to whites that [blacks] are worthy of equal treatment, dignity, and respect" (212). Her critique of the black "politics of respectability" seems related to my assertion of the neoliberal condition of responsibility and disposability and can be connected to Joanna Fax's conceptualization of “neoliberal sentimentality" (1) and “*vulnerability discourse*” (2), which I discussed in the introduction. In an interview, Cliff admits to her skepticism regarding mainstream women's movements and declares, "I do not want feminism to become consumed by the recovery industry" (Adisa 278).While Du Bois' vision of the Talented Tenth was not expressed in essay format until 1903, Cliff portrays Francis Ellen Watkins Harper as evoking its sentiments at an 1858 abolitionist convention in Chatham. When Harper delivers her speech "The Education and Elevation of the Colored Race," Annie questions her promotion of

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female protagonists with a more subversive "tradition of Harper, Pauline Hopkins, [Nella] Larsen, and Jessie Redmon Fauset [as] an enhanced awareness of racial and national complexity that is the product of her Afro-Caribbean experience" (119). "Race for Cliff," as Bost argues, "is not black and white but rather a composite of color, class, gender, culture, and education, and her characters cross each of the axes of subjectivity in multiple different ways" (119).

exceptional race leadership.[183]

The 1858 Chatham convention portrayed in the novel is likely the one in which John Brown gathered North American abolitionists to publicize "for the first time, [...] his plan to attack slavery by invading the Blue Ridge Mountains in Virginia and waging war on plantations on both sides of the range" (Earle 65). Notable in his "Provisional Constitution and Ordinances for the People of the United States," delivered at this gathering, is his assertion that "[t]he entire and real properties of all persons known to be acting either directly or indirectly with or for the enemy, or found in arms with them, or found willfully holding slaves, shall be confiscated and taken, whenever and wherever it may be found, in either free or slave States" (Earle 68). Yet, Brown also vowed that his proposed articles "shall not be construed so as in any way to encourage the overthrow of any State Government of the United States" (69). Brown thus simultaneously promoted the radical abolitionist seizure of private land for communal ownership as well as the preservation of the integrity of state-based governance. According to Jonathan Earle, "Chatham was home to a large free black community, many members of which were fugitives from slavery in the United States who had built a new life in

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[183] In Foster's description, this particular speech "begins with a statement of personal commitment to a common struggle. It presents a candid acknowledgement of weaknesses and needs but presents those elements within their historical and social contexts. The essay lists progress and achievements, declares that self-help should be supported by right thinking people, and optimistically asserts that eventual triumph of right" (95-96). While Cliff expresses admiration for Harper, in an interview, she finds that she had "some limitations, like advocating the idea of the Talented Tenth" (Adisa 278). According to Ammons, "The Education and Elevation of the Colored Race" was Harper's first anti-slavery speech delivered in August of 1854 in New Bedford, Massachusetts. The geopolitical anachronism suggested by Cliff's shift from New Bedford to Chatham, as the imagined primary location for the significance Foster's speech, works to reinforce a transnational dimension for the historical scale of social struggles against racialized exploitation and disenfranchisement. It is significant that this transnational orientation is invoked in a historical novel which seems so haunted by the nation-state management of the U.S. civil rights movement and the work to compromise transnational solidarity for anti-imperial struggles.

Canada" (65). Lynn M. Hudson adds that, in 1858, both Pleasant and abolitionist journalist Mary Ann Shadd Cary lived there (39). Significantly, Cliff never portrays Brown's vision at this convention; instead, she focuses on Christmas's reaction to Harper's speech and on her first encounter with Pleasant.

While Cliff builds upon earlier African American women's literary traditions of invoking the figure of the mulatta, she also explores traditions of black feminist militancy, by elaborating upon tensions between rhetorical and performative constructions of racialized political identity.[184] In the chapter "Plucky Abolitionism," Mary Shadd Carey[185] is portrayed at the Chatham convention characterizing "their enterprise" according to "'the difference between word and movement, talk and blood, drawing room and battlefield'" (16). Shadd Carey states that their enterprise marks "'the difference [...] between being an American liberal and being an American radical'" and thus she anticipates the "horror" to be felt by white sympathizers once they confront an armed and militarized black resistance movement (15). Yet, in this context of the Chatham

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[184] While "the canon of the turn-of-the-century African-American literature is mulatta literature, and the most studied authors of this period contribute to mulatta mythology," Bost finds that Francis E.W. Harper and Pauline Hopkins helped to "prefigure the race, sex, and gender fluidity of contemporary texts" (68) by portraying instabilities and subversions of African-American identity (69). Although noted by contemporary critics for "their ambiguous political messages," insofar as the figure of the "*mulatta/o* [tends to be perceived] as an assmiliationist identity category," she nonetheless contends that "[m]ulatta/o mixture might have presented a radical challenge to racist definitions in the later nineteenth and early twentieth century--eras obsessed with racial purity and white supremacy--but such a mixture is [also] antagonistic to the racial definition that founds much contemporary African-American resistance to white racism. In contrast to Mexican and Chicana/o nationalism, which encompasses mestiza mixture, Black Nationalism, Black Power, and African American studies are built on African-American particularism and an oppositional relationship between blackness and whiteness, an oppositional integrity that mixed-race identity politics defies" (69-70). In this context, "Cliff is able to go beyond the gestures of resistance in Harper and Hopkins by invoking traditions of West Indian rebellion and twentieth century historical and political developments" (126).
[185] The correct spelling of Cary's last name does not include an "e" but Cliff spells it with this vowel included.

convention, we also learn that Christmas does not identify with the "light-skinned female Christian octoroon" of Harper's novel *Iola Leroy* and finds that the discourse of black racial uplift problematically promotes "'the necessity of leadership by the exceptional among us'" to reinforce strategies of social "'elimination'" (12). In debate with Harper, Christmas contends that "'[t]here should be no exception made; we are all exceptional, surely'" (12); in turn, Harper regards her as "'supremely romantic'" and lacking practicality: "'Our people live in a hostile universe, we have no choice but to accommodate ourselves to its laws'" (12). At this point, Pleasant introduces herself to Christmas and invites her to dinner to establish their alliance.[186]

There are a number of ways to assess Cliff's signification of the African American mulatta literary tradition. While Teresa Zackodnik observes that Harper's *Iola Leroy* is too "frequently read as adopting white values and a bourgeois ethos" (xii), it may be that Christmas, as a cultural outsider, misrecognizes "the political uses of the mulatta through double-voiced appeals" forwarded by African American women writers and speakers (xii); thus, her resistance to Harper may signal a perceptual slippage in reading for political alliance. Christmas may not detect the "African American women's rhetorical and textual strategies" conveying a "genealogy of the mulatta as a figure of hybrdity who reaches across, challenges, and confounds the color line" (xii). Suzanne Bost finds that Cliff subversively plays with the African American mulatta literary

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[186] In 1921, when Annie reflects back on these events, the narrator suggests that""[i]n her *guise de guerre*, light-years from the stone-enclosed fields, the overseer's eminence, her back turned on *gens inconnu*, Annie may have been too much, too easily typed in Mrs. Harper's talented eyes as one of the nine tenths" (11).

tradition by drawing on "Caribbean race histories [as they] bridge mulatto and

mestiza dynamics" (15).[187] In some respects, her analysis over-privileges the

mestiza figure as challenging views of unitary race formation; however, she

acknowledges that, historically, the celebration of the mestiza reflected white

supremacist desires for the racial and cultural whitening of so-called brown

populations. The mulatta, instead, invoked the fear of racial mixing and inspired

strategies for segregation.

     In terms of communicative performance, Cliff's imaginative staging of a

debate between Harper and Christmas may be regarded as evincing what Barbara

Christian calls "'creative dialogue'" (qtd. in Henderson 351). Mae Gwendolyn

Henderson elaborates on this practice:

> [t]hrough the multiple voices that enunciate her complex subjectivity, the
> black woman writer not only speaks familiarly in the discourse of
> other(s), but as Other she is in contestatorial dialogue with the hegemonic
> dominant and subdominant or 'ambiguously nonhegemonic' discourses.
> These writers enter simultaneously into familial, or testimonial or public,
> or competitive discourses--discourses that both affirm and challenge the
> values and expectations of the reader. (351)

While Christmas's political vision can be distinguished from that of Harper's, it is

explicitly linked by Cliff with that of Ellen Craft (Cliff 11). During the 1850s,

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[187] Drawing on Joel Williamson's 1980 study *New People: Miscegenation and Mulattoes in the United States*, Bost sketches a history of racialization in the U.S. Once perceived as "a distinct race," mulattoes "were valued as intermediaries between whites and blacks, planters and slaves" (39-40). By 1850, the term "'mulatto' became an official census category" (6). Between 1850 and 1915, "whites became increasingly anxious about sharing social status with people of color" so the "one-drop rule" and other racial formulas were initiated (40).

Craft "played on [her] white reform audiences' interest in and identification with the mulatta and redirected their attention to the material conditions of American slavery they were being called to oppose" (Zackodnik xii). Harper, instead, "created mulatta heroines who 'pass' for 'true women' yet also embody a noble black womanhood in texts that openly contested late-nineteenth-century notions of racial difference" (xii). The alliance between Christmas and Pleasant, formed after Harper's speech, may be read to provoke contemporary readers to consider how distinctive historical performances of political radicalism may have been interactive and susceptible to re-orientation.

In a letter to Christmas, Pleasant relates ways in which her militant support for black populations to have an equality of opportunity under American capitalism differs from the political vision of her white revolutionary ally John Brown, who seems to support communism. Reflectively, Pleasant herself imagines the limitations of cross-racial alliance remarking that "had our enterprise succeeded it would have been interesting to see what would have happened, who would have prevailed" given that she and Brown "almost fell out over his devotion to communism, his notion of an African state as a christo-utopia, a heaven on earth for colored folks" (142-143). While Harper regards Christmas as romantic in her black populist aspirations, Pleasant seems to regard Brown in a similar light. Upon closer view, Cliff may be implying greater affinity between Harper and Pleasant, on the one hand, and Brown and Christmas, on the other. These distinctions are worth noting because black transnational political solidarity is thematized in the novel's criticism despite evidence of conflicting views

between characters.

In their very first meeting after the Chatham convention, Pleasant seeks to determine whether Christmas was born "'slave or free'" (24) and why she left the Caribbean for Boston as an effort to evaluate her investment "'in the race'" (24). Assuming they share "'friends *in common,*'" Pleasant announces that "'[p]art of *our* struggle is to give *our* children childhood'" (25; my emphasis). Cliff explains that "[i]t was soon after that meeting, after several meetings spent with M.E.P, and others, over fish stew in the back room of the Free Enterprise, as the restaurant was called, that Christmas discarded her Christian, given name, which M.E.P. said sounded too much like the royal orifice, and became Annie Christmas, whose life story, legend, M.E.P. recounted to her" (25). Christmas adopts this "'*nom de guerre* fit for a woman'" (25) from an African woman who "'lived around revolutionary times'" (26).

The African woman after which Christmas re-names herself seems as "'imaginary'" and "'unbelievable'" to her as Nanny, "the great Maroon chieftainness, as she was known, also conjurer, obeah-woman, science-woman, physician, warrior, herself with a necklace, signifying her life, one made from the teeth of white men" (27). Christmas is surprised by Pleasant's knowledge of Nanny, given her location in the U.S. and distance from the Caribbean. While she struggles to believe in her own black radical heroines, Pleasant declares more assuredly, "'[f]or some, this is fantasy; for others, history'" (29). The question of "who has ever heard of Annie Christmas, Mary Shadd Carey, Mary Ellen Pleasant" (16) signals a need to forge intergenerational and transnational links

between fictional and real black feminist militants.[188] Yet, the celebrated

exceptionalism of Pleasant seems to diminish the political horizontalism implied

in the question above. Mary Pollock's critique of Pleasant's uniqueness is useful

here:

> Despite the brilliance and effectiveness of Mary Ellen Pleasant's life,
>
> despite her enormous talent and intelligence, she is not presented as the
>
> model for what all resisters can or should be. Few women have parents
>
> like Mary Ellen's; few marry men such as Mary Ellen's husband, who
>
> teaches her all he knows about money and leaves her with the double
>
> legacy of obligation *and* wealth. If Annie's limitations are due to the
>
> energy required in claiming an identity, Mary Ellen's limitation is her
>
> inability to comprehend the psychic and moral trials faced by her
>
> companions in the struggle, black or white. The racial harmony
>
> symbolized by the intertwining plants surrounding Mary Ellen's grave is
>
> belied by the moral dilemmas of her own life. (214)

With this class perspective in mind, it seems significant that, in Cliff's portrayal,

Pleasant's communications with Christmas emphasize intimacy and solidarity but

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[188] Cliff's invocation of real and imagined resistant black women can be related to the black radical feminist politics of The Combahee River Collective and their 1977 document "A Black Feminist Statement." As Joy James points out, "Combahee black feminists selected an Afra-American military strategist and guerilla fighter as their archetype," Harriet Tubman, for the purposes of advancing a project of "black female militancy in the 1970s" (76), signalling "intent to radicalize feminism" and recalling a black history of "military insurrection against the U.S. government" (77). Her contention that the collective "reflects the sensibility of transcendent community and duty towards organizing for liberation" seems to resonate with Cliff's imagined alliance of Pleasant and Annie: "[t]here have always been black women activists-some known, like Sojourner Truth, Harriet Tubman, Frances E.W. Harper, Ida B. Wells Barnett and Mary Church Terrell, and thousands unknown—who have had a shared awareness of how their sexual identity combined with their racial identity to make their whole life situated and the focus of their political struggles unique. Contemporary Black feminism is the outgrowth of countless generations of personal sacrifice, militancy, and work by our mothers and sisters" (33-34).

also suggest a misrecognition of Christmas' capacity to form meaningful political and social relations apart from Pleasant's assistance. In a letter to Christmas, Pleasant writes: "I trust you are well and not too lonely. A body needs company, no matter how much you resist that notion. Come visit me in San Francisco when you can" (69). Pleasant fails to imagine the political potential for Christmas, who forms alliances with lepers, when she writes, "[t]he last time you wrote me, it seems like years ago and probably was, you spoke of your lepers, visiting them, the closest thing to the nunnery your mother urged you toward. Are you still there? You are still a young woman. Don't bury yourself there" (136).[189] She asks Christmas if she remains heartbroken about the failed slave revolt and tells her "[y]ou are the closest thing I have ever had to a daughter" (137). Pleasant is maternal towards Christmas but also sexually desirous: "you are to me like an old lover; don't be shocked. I mean you know me very well and can read between the lines. There is no one left who can" (133). That Pleasant fails to consider how Christmas builds solidarities seems indicative of her own limited political imagination. That the residents of the leper colony are a transnational and racially-mixed constituency seems significant, in this context, for it may be that while Pleasant is able to form an alliance with white radical abolitionist John Brown, despite their differences, she is unable to imagine the desire for an affiliation that is not primarily fixated on the security of black political and social enfranchisement by the U.S. nation-state.

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[189] Although the letter is dated August 5, 1874, Pleasant refers to Annie's experience of the leper colony which seems to have taken place in 1920 according to the second section of the novel. This apparent historical anachronism seems compelling insofar as it may compel the reader to imagine the persistence of black internationalist politics despite the failure of the Harper's Ferry slave revolt and the failures of Reconstruction.

In this section, I explored the conflict and difference evident in Cliff's portrayals of inter-racial and transnational radical abolitionist alliances in *Free Enterprise*. I argued that Cliff illuminates the political heterogeneity of racially enslaved and disenfranchised populations to engender alternative imaginings of social solidarity and resistance. In the next section, I suggest how the leper colony becomes a site for Christmas to reorient her vision of transnational struggle by exploring a politics that may reside in the space between the body and its company.

Colonialist Fears: Fugitive Plagues and the Queered Political Alliance of Lepers

In the second section of *Free Enterprise*, entitled "Plague," Cliff explores the social and spatial dynamics of racialized segregation within the context of a U.S. leper colony in 1920. It is here that Christmas finds solidarity. I focus on three issues pertaining to Cliff's configuration of the colony with Christmas in mind. First, I consider how leprosy diagnosis functions to racialize and segregate populations considered to be politically, socially, or culturally dangerous to colonialist enterprises. Next, I suggest how Cliff's construction of heterogeneous social practices from within the colony imaginatively reconfigures incarcerated space as a site of anti-racist and anti-colonial possibility. The colony is intended to manage and homogenize social relations through a diagnostics of racialized disease, yet some residents participate in interactive story-sharing to promote cross-racial critiques of colonization, segregation, and incarceration.

While participation in the social practice of oral story-sharing seems vital to cross-racial community-building in the colony, it is the physical orientation and

proximity of this social practice which engenders intimate and *embodied* political

alliances that threaten the colony's constitution. Judith Butler's critique of the

limitations of Hannah Arendt's conception of the "pre-political" body, as well as

her sense of the renewed potential for Arendt's notion of "the space of

appearance," is useful here (3). Drawing on Butler, I suggest that Cliff's lepers

engender bodily alliance towards each other, yet they do not subscribe to a unitary

logic of race, darkness, and leprosy. The social construction of race as diseased is

an implied precondition for the colonial segregation of people raced as lepers.

This process seems comparable with Michelle Alexander's critique of the

pretentious color-blind discourses which conceal contemporary processes of

racialized disenfranchisement and criminalization (2). The inter-implication of

disease and race is enabled by their colonialist association with darkness.

Although whiteness is socially constructed as a race, it tends not to be associated

with disease in Cliff's leper colony.[190]

   Finally, I address the relation of these racializations to political notions of

incarcerated space and consider their deconstruction through the performative

intervention of a story-sharing minority of lepers who not only inhabit the colony

but threaten to make contagious their politicized social practices to the outside

world. With these assessments in mind, I conclude to argue that Cliff's novel

offers a renewed imperative to explore the social and political heterogeneity of

communities constructed as black. Cliff's construction of the leper colony also

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[190] There is one exception in which a leper appears to be white but, as she states, "'I know I must have colored blood somewhere, else I couldn't be here, infected. Probably goes back to slavery days. Doesn't everything?'" (61). Her family illegally traded with Maroons; thus, her leprosy is constituted by criminalized involvement in black markets.

raises questions about the real political consequences of an imaginative crisis whereby black communities are rendered homogenous under unitary or diagnostic rubrics of race.

Cliff's narrator provides a sense of the social-spatial histories leading to the formation of a leper colony in Carville, Mississippi. We are told that it is "built on the site of a Houma Indian village" and replaces an "Indian Camp Plantation" (Cliff 38). After populations are diagnosed with leprosy and deemed contagious, they are shipped to this site of segregation by "convicts from the House of Detention on Tulane Avenue" (39). Although originally run by the "sisters of St. Vincent de Paul" (38), the colony is eventually taken over by the Public Health Services arm of the United States government. The narrator describes the 1920 colony as "a pastiche of the twentieth century" in its various offerings of imported products from the outside world (40). Furthermore, institutions ranging from plantation and penitentiary systems to Christian and public health organizations are implicated stakeholders, lending legitimacy to colonialist diagnostics and the subsequent formation of segregated communities.[191]

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[191] The institutional network invoked by Cliff resonates with Edmond's depiction of how social and cultural fears of leprosy were historically managed, although he explicitly states that segregation has been profitable. During the fourteenth century the sense that "lepers and Jews were pariah groups because of their ambiguous border-line status" coincided with the rise of "an aggressive mercantile class [which began] to sweep away the competition of the money-lenders"; furthermore, "there were large revenues to be derived from the administration of the many leper asylums" (1). Although charitable donations to the leper colony are tax-deductible, in *Free Enterprise*, there is no explicit acknowledgement of profiteering. I find that the importation of cultural commodities functions to pacify lepers and to keep them content in their condition of socioeconomic segregation. The U.S. colonization of Hawai'i bears significance to this section of the novel for it invoked practices of social hygenics in the leper colony on Molokai, which was comprised largely of Native Hawaiians and Japanese Americans. Racialization occurred through the containment of lepers as part of a Christian missionary practice. See Tayman, *The Colony*, for further details.

The legitimacy of the diagnostic process and these institutions becomes questionable in the novel, however, when the novel's narrator explains that the colony's residents "had not always been leprous" (42), In this context, we are urged to consider how processes of racialization and medical diagnosis interrelate to legitimize social and cultural fears surrounding colonialist theories of contagion. In my reading, Cliff, as narrator, is not advocating the imperative to delineate between healthy and diseased bodies, but more the implication of race and racial status as mutable and mutating political processes. Racialization engenders contestable forms of social management inspired by colonialist desires for segregated and incarcerated space. Theories of racial darkness may be formulated into discourses of identity and health to facilitate that management of social and political relations.

The two chapters in this section of the novel are entitled "U.S. Public Health Service Station #66" and "Oral History." Cliff represents primary motivations for the social management of racialized disease in the context of U.S. empire and enterprise. White colonialist forms of diagnosis aid in the authorized formation of racialized enclosures ranging from the colony, leper colony, detention centre, and the asylum. Yet, Cliff provides us with a fugitive imagining of lepers who share and spread their stories, like a political plague, both within the colony and to the outside world. The demographic criteria for this particular colonialist enclosure is premised on a theory of contagion involving the "safe guess" that this "disease flourishes among the darker races" (35); while the constituency of the leper colony is transnational, it is also homogeneously

rendered under the rubrics of darkness and leprosy. Although "'[n]ames are very important'" because "'they tell so much'" (53), Cliff's emphasis on the *processes* of naming is crucial to a historical critique of racialization. In tracking the references to lepers in this section, it is evident that assigned names and identities undergo transformation. Collectively, lepers are associated with "darker races" (35), but a single leper is imagined as a "carrier" (37) not only of disease but of stories. Life within the colony involves the "numericalization of individuals," as nurses sew numbers into the clothing that the "inmates" are forced to wear (40). Lepers are both the colonized and the incarcerated, yet they constitute the "Saturday night audience" that watches imported films in the colony's movie-house (41). A story-sharing leper is referred to as "one of the company [who] answered for the rest" (53), but lepers may consist of "[a] few in the group" (55). Story-sharers may be referred to by first and last name, first name only, or by national, racial, or ethnic origin.[192] Broadly stated, "[i]n the colony, new kinship was forged" (43).

Cliff's imagining of the colonialist fear of contagion has biological, social, and political dimensions. As lepers engage in "story-telling" as their "main pastime," they become increasingly protective of it as a social practice: "once [it] was] discovered, [it] was never relinquished" (Cliff 44).[193] Historical anxieties over leprosy stem not only from medical discourses but also from the Bible, Hollywood film, and Cold War foreign policy (Edmond 1-2). Although fear of

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[192] Christmas and DeSouza are referred to by their first and last name and in relation to their individual traditions and histories. Other characters are referred to only by place of origin (45, 54). One leper is identified by her assigned colony #12588 and her "née Bethany" (61); criminalized for her family's illegal trading activities with Maroons, she becomes "an exception to the general rule of darker-skinned race" that inhabits the colony (61).

[193] Although "story-telling" is the term used in the novel, I invoke "story-sharing" to emphasize fears of contagion.

contagion relates to colonialist renderings of leprosy as a diseased epidemiology, Cliff emphasizes leprosy as an imagined social and political threat. Medicalized fears of contagion relate to the colonialist fear of political and social uprising by the colonized.

In the practice of leprous story-sharing, Cliff conveys how "[s]tories of the original, outside world, and their place in it, were passed from mouth to mouth" (44); "[s]tories of the days in La Terre Lepaux, safeguarded by some of the old-timers among them, were released" (44). These images suggest how segregated populations may transmit social practices of politicized story-sharing to outsiders and perpetuate fugitive behaviours in others once stories intermix and transgress the epistemological borders of colonialist knowledge regimes. The image of stories being "passed mouth to mouth" (Cliff 44) alludes not only to potential contagion but also to physical and political *aspiration*. "[M]outh to mouth" story-sharing may help to resuscitate those people who have undergone what Orlando Patterson refers to in the context of slavery as "social death." The shared story may be conceptualized as "released" or emancipated even while the colonialist segregation incarcerates and disenfranchises racialized bodies.

Representations of the leper have varied over time. For example, "the biblical figure of the leper is, in fact, a deeply ambivalent one," but while the Old Testament renders the leper morally and physically diseased—"an emblem of sin"—the New Testament portrays her as "a figure of pity" and "a metaphor of divine salvation" (Edmond 2). This representational shift coincides with changing protocols for managing leprosy and Edmond argues that the Bible ultimately

placed "emphasis on treatment and cure rather than on diagnosis and segregation" (2). Nonetheless, leprosy is often imagined as a state of abjection because it "undermines the integrity of the body" and "the fundamental distinction between life and death" (3). The leprous body is feared as "putrefying and decomposing while alive and still able to reproduce" (Edmond 3). This paradoxical imaging of bodily decomposition and reproduction resonates symbolically with the political potential of leprous story-sharing as it promotes social contact and alliance to aid in the decomposition of the colonial state's legitimacy and its diagnosis of the leprous body.

In Cliff's imagining, leprous social practices become politically threatening to the physical and social landscape beyond the colony. In the scene below, lepers become fugitives who subversively re-occupy the outside world and spread their seemingly contagious stories:

Oral histories of lepers *breaking out* of the landscape, and into the City, *terrorizing* innocent people; lepers *looting* stores, *leaving behind* notes: "This is the hand of a leper"; lepers *disrupting* the auction block mainstay of the city's commerce—*jumping onto* the platform and *kissing* the auctioneer; *appalling* the paying customers. No wonder the authorities were forced to enclose them. They *threatened* the common good. They were outrageous, anarchic. (Cliff 44-45; my emphasis)

If an intended effect of the concentration of bodies into segregated and incarcerated spaces is immobilization, then a potential effect of the fugitive flight from the colony may be the creation of space for the political reanimation of

lepers. The lepers in the scene above have an effective and affective impact on the social-spatial relations in the outside world. Their actions are criminalized to justify their incarceration. Judith Butler's articulation of a bodily contestation over political legitimacy and the "space of appearance" has relevance here:

> the bodies on the street redeploy the space of appearance in order to contest and negate the existing forms of political legitimacy—and just as they sometimes fill or take over public space, the material history of those structures also work on them, and become part of their very action, remaking a history in the midst of its most concrete and sedimented artifices. These are subjugated and empowered actors who seek to wrest legitimacy from an existing state apparatus that depends upon the public space of appearance for its theatrical self-constitution. In wresting that power, a new space is created, a new "between" of bodies, as it were, that lays claim to existing space through the action of a new alliance, and those bodies are seized and animated by those existing spaces in the very acts by which they reclaim and resignify their meanings.
>
> For this contestation to work, there has to be a hegemonic struggle over what we are calling the space of appearance. Such a struggle intervenes in the spatial organization of power, which includes the allocation and restriction of spatial locations in which and by which any population may appear, which means that there is a spatial restriction on when and how the "popular will" may appear. ("Bodies" 5)

Cliff's representation of the leper intervention upon a slave market is

suggestive of Butler's "hegemonic struggle." While the slave on the auction block

is made highly visible because her body is publicly assessed for sale, her

appearance in this space is also premised on a pro-slavery social contract marking

her body as the absence of political enfranchisement and humanity. When the

lepers jump onto the auction block to kiss the auctioneer, they publicly humiliate

and threaten to contaminate him; furthermore, they socially implicate him in an

intervention to express political solidarity and bodily alliance with the slave. The

lepers disrupt the business of slavery and appall consuming audiences. Placing

their bodies between all of these different bodily entities, they unsettle the

triangulation of buyers, sellers, and slaves in the slave market to create space for

the appearance of an alliance beyond it.

If lepers and slaves can be linked in this way, then the leper colony may be

conceptualized as an extension of the slave plantation. The question of how

kinship may be forged in response to forced enclosure is pursued in Cliff's vision

of lepers who, not unlike New World slaves, vary in their origins and were

forcibly removed from their prior life systems. Both are socially reconstructed as

part of the "darker races" intended for plantation slavery or the leper colony. The

lepers and slaves who find themselves renamed and incarcerated may also find

political cause to revolt or flee in common pursuit of survival, self-defense, and

liberation.

The cultural relevance of oral history to plantations and colonies and its

politicization is another point of comparison between racialized slaves and lepers.

The contention that an accurate or complete history of slave experience is

irretrievable can be compared with the sense of distrust that Cliff's lepers feel

regarding the written records of colonial enterprises. A leper minority finds it

more politically urgent to orally historicize their experiences amongst each other.

Forcibly removed from their prior life systems and segregated from the outside

world, they collaborate to create an intimate space for story-sharing. This story-

sharing re-ignites their potential for political reanimation and alliance. Cliff thus

implies that communal oral interaction may be more immediately threatening to

the colonialist enterprise in its capacity to encourage bodies to collectivize,

organize, react and re-occupy in ways that can be socially and politically

contagious. Cliff tends to explore the social dynamics of cultural production and

consumption as related to processes of politicization in the leper colony. As I

discuss below, the majority of lepers are cast as consumers of colonialist culture

imported from the outside world, while a minority produces stories for themselves

at the site of colonization. From the perspective of colonialist enterprise, the

lepers who produce for and by themselves may be most threatening and,

therefore, in the greatest need of containment.

Rod Edmond's study of the medical and cultural history of leper colonies

of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century resonates with Cliff's imagining

of the leper colony, particularly as he draws on Paul Gilroy's concept of "camp

thinking" (183).[194] He explains that as "the nation-state in the era of high

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[194] Edmond explores interrelations between "the colony," "the camp," "the concentration camp," "the Native American reservation," "the Aboriginal reserve," "metropolitan colonies," "lock hospitals," institutions for "smallpox isolation," "the tuberculosis sanatoria," and the "Essex leper colony" (178-219).Edmond draws on Paul Gilroy's *Between Camps: Race, Identity and Nationalism at the End of the Color Line* (London: Allen Lane/Penguin, 2000), otherwise known in the U.S. as *Against Race: Imagining Political Culture Beyond the Colour Line* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2000)" (Fn 17:183).

imperialism redefined itself in terms of 'biocultural kinship,'" concentration camps were formed to manage social practices and disease (183):

> The imperative to fortify the nation was an inevitable concomitant of camp thinking, and was characteristically expressed in terms of containing and excluding disease. This was both metaphoric and literal. Figuratively, the body of the nation could be represented as threatened with infection from the purity of outsiders by cultural germs. More literally, there was the fear of specific diseases that those coming from unsanitary tropical zones would bring with them. This resulted in the need for a cordon sanitaire, quarantine and other methods of isolation and exclusion. Camp thinking produced camp-practice. (184)

While Edmond suggests a wide variation in the global experiences of camp formation, he contends that "'social death'" may be a common effect of the strategies of "temporary isolation," "long-term segregation" and "the life-long incarceration of the leper colony" (185). "'[S]ocial death'" may "range from the temporary loss of the 'home world' that confirms one's sense of self, to the death-in-life condition of the incarcerated leper" (185).[195] Diagnosed bodies thus become discoursed bodies insofar as they are prescribed segregation on the basis of perceived notions of racial, sexual, moral, or intellectual inferiority, disease, and contagion.

The strategy of containing such "disease" may involve the concentration of bodies into spaces effecting slow death. Edmond's figure of the coffin,

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[195] A link between leprosy and slavery is implied in reference to Orlando Patterson's *Slavery and Social Death*.

referenced in an epigraph to this chapter, indexes the bodily fate for those concentrated into camps: diseased and rendered ineligible for rehabilitation, these bodies begin to die politically, socially, and biologically. In addition to Orlando Patterson's concept of "social death," then, Giorgio Agamben's concept of the "'state of exception'" influences Edmond's research (Edmond 219). For Agamben, "the camp" represents "a biopolitical paradigm of the modern" (13). In his construction of the sovereign political subject, he makes a distinction between "bare" and "political" life, where the former refers to biological life stripped of, or perhaps which never had access to, official political identity and the rights such an identity theoretically confers. Those possessing only bare life function as a significant counterpoint to those people distinguished by power. The leper is thus exemplary of the construction of "'bare life'": "biologically alive but lacking the rights and expectations we normally attribute to human existence, this figure inhabited a no-man's land, a limit zone between life and death, a camp or, as it became termed, a colony" (Edmond 13). There are, however, some limitations, even as there are possibilities for, the association of lepers with the concept of "bare life." In some regards, Cliff's rendering of the racialized leper colony challenges Paul Gilroy's contention that "camp-thinking deprives in-between locations, that is alternative spaces within which non-polarised collectivities might be conceived and inaugurated, of any significance" (Edmond 185-186). My argument that Cliff signals a shift from embodied politics towards a political orientation of queered social relations thus draws from Butler's critique of the concept of the pre-political body and her imagining of bodily alliance formed

through relations across space.

Leprous Alliances and the Contingencies of Divergent Practice

Cliff's articulation of diverging forms of social and cultural practice in the leper colony is crucial to her underlying theme of the persistence of political heterogeneity among populations constituted as homogenous by way of colonialist and racializing enterprises. The majority of lepers comply with the socialization processes facilitated by the Public Health service of the U.S. government; as I shall illustrate, their social practices may be characterized as passively consumptive and deceptively benign. Alternative sociality is only apparent through the story-sharing initiative of a leper minority. This social sharing demands intimacy, interaction, and collaboration in a political project to question processes of racialized colonization as well as ethical responsibility to various communities. Here it is important to note that "camp-thinking" may involve the anxiety that "non-polarised collectivities" could form within the very enclosures intended to segregate them (Edmond 186). Edmond explains that "[w]hen sharply polarised camps are established, the space falling between them becomes crucial. This becomes imagined as a no-man's-land, a moat or a channel, a cordon sanitaire safeguarding the health and integrity of the coloniser's camp but which is constantly under threat" (186). The fear that "anarchic" (Cliff 45) social practices may be contagious elicits segregationist imperatives to strategically suppress the radical potential for racialized lepers to organize together to overturn colonialist societies. With Edmond's account of "camp-thinking" anxiety in mind, I would like to point out the ironic political potential of

polarity in the leper colony. It is precisely this social gap between consuming and sharing lepers that reveals an important critical disjuncture in colonialist management. While the greatest threat to the colonialist enterprise may be the organized revolt of the entire colony, I suggest that the internal social divisions scripted by Cliff help to rupture the colonialist endeavour to politically immobilize a population through processes of homogenization and segregation. As lepers, the people of the colony do not think, live, or act homogeneously and this suggests potential for unpredictable action.

Cliff's representation of the diversity of social practices among a cross-racial and transnational constituency of lepers is significant for at least two reasons. First, she suggests that the daily operations of the colony differ, *in practice*, from a colonialist theory that the concentration of bodies into segregated spaces will suppress the threatening differences which form the basis for political agitation. Furthermore, Cliff imaginatively intervenes upon the logic of "camp-thinking" by challenging the colonial capacity to reduce people to a pre-political status by way of the racialized leprosy diagnosis. Although the leper colony signifies the space of disenfranchisement and restricts its residents from participating in the outside world's social and political systems, it is also evident that the U.S. Health service purposely replicates for the lepers aspects of the outside world. From within the colony we can observe and interrogate the reproduction of paradigmatic divisions between the public and private, political and pre-political.

At the beginning of "Oral History," the narrator tells us of the various

pastimes taken up by the majority of the colony. There is "a movie-house" maintained as "part of a charitable arrangement" and which is "tax-deductible" (40). Lepers can also enjoy "a nine-hole miniature golf course with obstacles like a wishing well, Rhenish castle, network of trenches based on the Western Front," as well as "tennis courts and a bowling alley with duck pins" (41). We learn of their access to "a soda fountain" (41) with an ice cream parlor, of gardens, and of a gymnasium for socials and dancing (42). There are also opportunities to play "Bingo!" (44). While the majority of lepers become preoccupied with these activities, there are others who "found these distractions tiresome and lacked the dexterity or interest to sustain a game" (44). The leper majority is further colonized in their passive consumption *for* the colonizer who imports culture industries into the colony from the outside world. Their engagement in social mimicry helps to conceal differences which mark their actual exclusion from the outside world figured as the legitimate realm of the political. Alternatively, the creation of social space for story-sharing by a leper minority may be conceptualized as a tactical re-occupation of an already colonized space.

The space of new intimacy may be imagined as the realm of the "private" in comparison with the internal public space made available through the colony's institutionalized forms of socialization. Although bio-power "produces fields of historical commonality that are at once specifically related to events," it seems also true that "[f]antasies and practices of social belonging operate imprecisely, in interaction with complicated and contradictory environments of living" (Berlant 9). The leprous story-sharers may thus be performing "*anti-identitarian identity*

politics in which commonality is not forged through shared images and fixed

identifications but fashioned instead from connotative images that invoke

communal structures of feelings" (Muñoz 176). José Esteban Muñoz explains that

"[t]he structures of feeling that are invoked point to a world in which exile and

ethnicity are not stigmatized aberrations, but instead everyday aspects of national

culture" (176). "[D]isidentificatory performances" are unstable, however, for

while they "sometimes mimic and remake those [hegemonic state] performances

with a critical worldmaking difference," they can also "attempt to order reality

and prescribe 'truth' and organize hierarchies" (199). As a "disidentificatory"

performance, leprous story-sharing threatens to undermine the ideological

constitution of the colony by transforming the space into a political site for the

emergence of creative but unpredictable bodily alliances. These alliances may be

read as a bodily reorientation towards "disidentificatory performances" informed

by "structures of feeling" that cause a shift in the shaping of stories as told from

different historical angles and from distinct physical positions. The story-sharing

lepers may be pre-politicized by the state yet they are re-politicized through social

practices that challenge state-sanctioned forms of sociality.

It could be argued that the social relation of "structures of feeling" is a

precondition for the cultivation of bodies in alliance. Drawing on Hannah Arendt,

Judith Butler discusses some of the limitations of the dichotomization between

"pre-political" and "political" life (1-4). Conceptually, the "pre-political" body

helps to legitimize state-sanctioned political power as it "becomes the structuring

absence that governs and makes possible the public sphere" (6).[196] Although

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[196] For Butler, Arendt, and many others critical of human rights discourse, humans

"appearance" involves the contingency of a social visibility for which the person being visualized "cannot give an account," this sociality effects a necessary "displacement" of perspectives and a "performative exercise [which] happens only 'between' bodies, in a space that constitutes the gap" (3). Thus, the "space of appearance" becomes "not a location that can be separated from the plural action that brings it about" (3). The dominant political "vocabulary" fails to "describe the modes of agency and action undertaken by the stateless, the occupied, and the disenfranchised" (4), for even when we are "located" we are "always elsewhere, constituted in a sociality that exceeds us" and "establishes our exposure and our precarity" (11).

The political potential for "bodies in alliance" depends on how bodies socially relate across polarized space even as it is "acting on us, even as we act within it" (Butler 6); thus, it is crucial to consider how "appearance is registered by the senses, not only our own, but someone else's, or some larger group" (6). Butler insists that "the biological body acts politically to live" (7); the distinctions made between "active and passive bodies," between speech and silence, are questionable given that "action, gesture, stillness; touch and moving together" are not "reducible to the vocalization of thought through speech" and speech itself "*depends upon* a dimension of bodily life that is given, passive, opaque and so excluded from the realm of the political" (7). The gap between polarized relations may be reconfigured as space for the appearance of an "alliance" that "brings

always already had rights just as they are always political beings regardless of their institutional status. Butler thus acknowledges Arendt as confronting the limitations of pre-political concepts in her later work on the stateless and on refugees (4).

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about its own location" and is "highly transposable" (2).

To clarify my reading of the passivity of lepers who seem to affirm the legitimacy of the institutionalized processes of socialization, I do not argue that their consumption of colonialist culture is pre-political. My reading of leper consumption is that it allows for the reappearance of a dominant conception of the political which has historically relied upon a dichotomy between pre-political and political life. Seemingly satisfied with the institutional support given to their segregated socialization, the leper majority does not ally with those who experience the reproduction of the pre-political, biological, and bare forms of living within the colony.

Michel de Certeau's work to challenge the dichotomies of consumer and producer, reader and writer, in *The Practice of Everyday Life* is relevant here. He contends that "[t]he presence and circulation of a representation [...] tells us nothing about what it is for its users. We must first analyze its manipulation by users who are not its makers. Only then can we gauge the difference or similarity between the production of the image and the secondary production hidden in the process of its utilization" (xiii). It is insufficient to simply analyze the effects of power on the basis of a binary opposition between producers and consumers. Rather, it is more valuable to assess different practices of consumption bearing in mind the extent to which consumers become producers by interpreting, responding to, modifying, or repurposing objects of consumption or even as they disrupt the available circulatory patterns for consumption. Differentiating his analysis from the work of Michel Foucault, de Certeau contends that "the goal is

not to make clearer how the violence of order is transmuted into a disciplinary

technology, but rather to bring to light the clandestine forms taken by the

dispersed, tactical, and makeshift creativity of groups or individuals already

caught in the nets of 'discipline'" (xiv-xv). Significant in this context is Butler's

persistent reminder that in order to sustain a formation of "bodies in alliance" we

need reliable material and social support (1-3, 5, 7, 9, 11). Indeed, the leper

majority makes precarious the conditions required for alliances to emerge together

to create "durable and liveable material environments and of interdependency

among living beings" (Butler 5).

With limited social and material support, the leper minority draws on

stories as the limited "resources to regenerate themselves" (Butler 2). Story-

sharing may be thought to exemplify one of those "anarchist moments" in which

"the legitimacy of a regime is called into question, but when no new regime has

yet come to take its place" (Butler 2). Notably, "[t]his time of the interval is the

time of the popular will, not a single will, not a unitary will, but one that is

characterized by an alliance with the performative power to lay claim to the

public in a way that is not yet codified into law, and that can never be codified

into law" (2). I turn now to a consideration of how the social practice of story-

sharing in the colony promotes the appearance of intimate space for politically

prohibitive bodily alliance.

It is Annie Christmas, not Mary Ellen Pleasant, who leads us into this

leper colony to find solidarity with the lepers. Although it is established in the

first pages of the novel that she feels alienated in Jamaica and the United States,

she relates to the lepers as kin (Cliff 43). Christmas willfully trespasses on this colonial enclosure, for although she "first petitioned for visiting privileges" (40), she ultimately "entered the grounds through a tear in the wire fence, through which two lepers had once run off to get married" (39). This scene of border-crossing connects an exit from the colony by lepers seeking access to a heteronormative public sphere and an entry into the colony by a woman ironically seeking access to a segregated counter-public. Formally an outsider to the colony, Christmas finds that she "loved these people, once she found them, hidden away as she had hidden herself. Many from her part of the world" (42).

Throughout the second chapter of this section, "Oral History," Christmas and her fellow story-sharers contribute critical accounts of the impact of colonialism, imperialism, and racism, on their lives and communities, but they also acknowledge the limits of their own testimonial endeavours. Even as the Hawaiian great-grandson performs the act of bearing historical witness to the subaltern perspective of his great-grandfather's interactions with Captain Cook, he acknowledges that the "'version'" he sustains is a "'heroic'" one (49) and that, like all versions, it contains "'omissions'" to effectively "'purif[y] the experience'" into a "'monument'" attesting "'[t]o our people's innocence'" (51). The great-grandson thus attests to the partiality of his great-grandfather's narrative of resistance, particularly in its concealment of the likelihood "'that the women and some of the men went along with the English sailors willingly, for payment of biscuits or rum or belladonna'" (51). His admission that "'[t]he truth'" of this colonial encounter "'lies somewhere in between'" (51) can be read in relation to Butler's notion of the

gap between polarized relations which, as I suggest earlier, creates space for the appearance of "alliance." In this context, we might conceptualize the admission to the ambiguity of historical truth as enabling the creation of potential for a "queer orientation," to borrow from Ahmed, towards social solidarity. His critique is offered "in his own words" only after he has faithfully channelled his great-grandfather's voice to relay ancestral history (48). The conscious shift in voice from story-sharer to story critic suggests not only his sense of an ethical imperative to maintain the integrity of his great-grandfather's vision, but it also conveys a sense of responsibility to critically respond to the intergenerational process of historical transmission.[197]

A significant portion of the story that the Hawaiian man relays involves the framing of the murder of Captain James Cook as a type of "retribution" (35) for the spreading of disease. The Hawaiian man makes clear that syphilis is thought to have been carried by the English to the so-called New World. In a homophonic play on words he recalls in the voice of his dead great-grandfather: "'We had been syphilized, my friends, cured of our savage state'" (49). The Western civilizing mission is more intimately linked to disease, while leprosy is reconfigured as the political armour of the colonized (36). Leprosy is linked to the "*plague*" and to syphilis as a threatening force one "carries" (35) and transmits. Because "[n]o one knows exactly how, or when, leprosy entered the United States" (35), it is suggested that "the search for point of entry into the U.S.A.

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[197] "Speech about ancestors enables critical appraisals of historical oppression and also established communal ties to support and reflect political-spiritual, secular sacred traditions and practices. Ancestors illuminated an avenue for liberation. Instructional, and often inspirational, calls to expansive community come from various sites that nevertheless point to commonalities based on shared values" (James *Shadowboxing* 33).

appears to be as crucial as the search for cure, vaccine" (35). This ambition to search for points of entry historically relates to the political imperatives to establish border controls for immigration.[198]

　　Strategies of story-sharing within the leper colony vary. Stories are performed as monologue or deployed as antiphonal patterns of call and response. Characters sometimes interject to supplement stories in the spirit of collaboration. Christmas is validated when she intervenes upon a Tahitian woman's story-sharing to address slavery in Jamaica because it resonates with her own experiences in Tahiti (57). The physical gesture of nodding is a noted bodily expression of the willingness to validate stories (55), although story-sharers vary in their sense of the political and historical relevance of their story-sharing acts. While the Hawaiian man attests to the impossible accuracy of an historical account (51), the Tahitian woman expresses desire "to set the record straight" regarding her racial origins. (58). It is said that "Annie thanked the Tahitian on behalf of the company, not remarking on the mongrel status she herself owned" (58). In an exchange with Rachel DeSouza, Annie worries that "all we have are these stories" (59) which are "endangered" (59). She wonders if "[i]n years to come, will anyone have heard them—our voices?"(59). In the effort to console Annie, Rachel declares that "'[o]nce something is spoken [...], it is carried on the air; it does not die. It, our words, escape into the cosmos, space'" (59). In

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[198] Edmond characterizes John Wayne's 1952 film *Big Jim McLain* as a "cold war Hollywood movie" that ideologically links leprosy in Hawaii to Chinese communism insofar as both were perceived threats to Americanism (1-2). Although he does not explicitly raise the issue of race as part of the American logic of associating communism and leprosy, it seems evident that economic ideology and biological health become coordinates of nation-making historically imagined, mythologized, and sentimentalized as the geopolitics of a blood relation. On this notion of nation and blood relation see Ernest Renan's "What is a nation?"

opposition, Christmas insists upon the necessity of "'be[ing] heard here and now, on the planet earth'" or "'at the moment,'" although she cannot help but wonder "'[w]ho will take responsibility for these stories?'" (59). Rachel insists that collective responsibility is "'the only way'" while she responds with sarcasm (59). The lack of consensus regarding the survival and transmission of their stories does not prevent Rachel from repeating a testimony she has "told...before" because, "if space is infinite, a little repetition can't hurt" (59).

Collectively, the story-sharers value the distinctiveness of individual accounts and are conscientious regarding the social importance of sharing the testimonial platform. When Christmas tells her story, for instance, the narrator acknowledges that it is "her turn" (52). She is sensitive to the effects of relating across differences, for when she realizes that her reference to a "'jew plum'" may be offensive to a Jewish listener, she corrects herself and calls the fruit an "'otaheite apple'" (55). That her subsequent reference to indentured workers from India as "coolies" (55) goes uncorrected speaks to the cultural limitations of her own historical conscientiousness. In closing her story, Rachel self-consciously proclaims, "'I've gone beyond my story. And I see my time is almost up" (61). *Shared* communication involves time-sharing so that everyone's story may appear. I turn now to address ways that the leper colony signals an imperative to rethink the effects of the social construction of *black* communities to consider what it might mean to "flee" in alliance from limiting identitarian politics.

Just prior to the portrayal of the leper colony, Cliff offers "hypothetical case[s]" through which to imagine leprosy's point of entry in the New World. In

the first case, the narrator asks, "[w]hat if a slave is from Jamaica, Cuba, Surinam, Brazil, Barbados, the Virgins, any of the Lesser or Greater Antilles, emerges from the water, a man in an iron mask, the scourge spreading to his extremities" (36). We are encouraged to wonder, "what if he sets out to discover America" concealed by "an iron mask" and "belled around the neck" (36). As this fugitive slave wanders the world, limited in his capacity to communicate, we are asked, "[w]hat if he is armed only with his disease? These are dangerous times; it is every man for himself" and yet we are told that "[h]e is everyman, of a sort" (36). The fate of social and biological death is implied in the image of "the iron mask [as it] stands between him and food, smoke, and drink" (36). The slave is "someone" wearing an amulet around his neck, an "ebony toe" that would be "ground into a love charm" and consumed, "dissolved in warm water, believing in blackness, a cure for what ails him" (37). Cliff suggests that "[t]he same kind of thing, the avidity of black bodily parts, happened at lynchings, where there was a brisk trade," and asks, "what then?" (37).

Cliff offers a second hypothetical scenario in which "our carrier is not a runaway" (37); rather, "our missing link is a woman, described by the trader as possessed of a good set of teeth; pliant in limb, free of venereal taint; dreamy-eyed; a fast breeder" (37). This woman "stands in the open-air market" only to be sold as a slave even though she is the "unknowing host to the disease, potential containment" (37). The narrator's hypothetical imagining of the leprous slave on the auction block seems to foreshadow the story shared among lepers regarding the leper intervention upon the slave market (44-45). In the hypothetical version,

the trader seems to act upon the slave, while in the latter version the lepers seem to act upon the auctioneer. The versions are not explicitly related but it seems evident that leprosy is breeding as the disease within the slave's body. If leprosy is a political analogy for insurgency, then the diseased slave on the auction block is giving birth to a radically politicized life as the "unknowing host to the disease" (37). Following Butler, I argue that it is *between* these hypothetical and rumored stories that a "space of appearance" is created for the emergence of a newly embodied political alliance.

Michaeline Crichlow's conception of "fleeing the plantation" is useful for thinking through Cliff's imagining of a renewed imperative to question the dominant ways in which black communities come to be known, named, or aligned. Crichlow's research suggests that although Creole social practices of resistance and solidarity originated from the culture of the plantation, they have taken flight to occur as mutating social processes in other global spaces. Crichlow also suggests that "the performance of various, often disparate forms of national identities along with the production of new sites on which such identities are transformed and reformed is a common occurrence in many Caribbean places" (12). Elsewhere, by extension, Creole practices may signify something beyond the historical specificities of slave labour.[199] This observation has value for my own work to challenge unitary notions of racialized political commitment, although I

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[199] Edouard Glissant, like Crichlow later, imagines that "[c]reolization still has its legitimacy. It helps us understand that multilingualism is not a passport to impotence, as some have said, and helps us to emphasize that each language dying in the world is dying in us and with us, with a part of our imaginary order, even if we had never known about this language" (88). He finds it "creates a new land before us, and in this process of creation, it helps to liberate us from Columbus himself" (88).

wish to acknowledge the real precarious effects of racialized experience and the politics arising sometimes out of necessity as a result of such historical contingencies. Crichlow's contention that "staying or dwelling involves imaginative movement" (2) may signify as a poetic call to reinvigorate the political imagination even when strategic identification is required. If historically racialized community-building has sometimes effected self-segregation for purposes of protection, solidarity, liberation, development, or celebration, then it is important to consider what various practices of "staying or dwelling" *within* a "black" community may mean.

With Angela Y. Davis' critique of the unitary identification framing this chapter in mind, I find it significant to engage in questions of the political criteria for alliance although not only in the context of black community-building. Indeed, we can also question the privileging of what may appear to be cross-racial alliances, since critics ranging from Angela Davis to Walter Benn Michaels have suggested the ease with which neoliberal and corporate agendas appropriate and manipulate multi-cultural and anti-racist platforms (Davis in Mendietta 31; Michaels 2006:299). Davis and Cliff suggest, in different contexts, that the crisis of political imagination which reproduces the logic of racialized incarceration requires an imaginative critical consciousness of how bodies are coerced into unitary identity politics. I turn now to Cliff's earlier novel, *No Telephone to Heaven*, to consider how Jamaican-based, guerillas are portrayed to confront the crisis of racialized political imagination and the bodily need for political re-indigenization.

No Telephone to Solidarity: Segregated and Individuated Responses to Neoliberal Jamaica

In this section, I argue that Cliff's guerillas of *No Telephone to Heaven* contend with U.S. culture industries that caricature histories of Caribbean resistance by collaborating to re-politicize Creole orientations within the region. They do this by linking practices of militant self-segregation to a politics of indigenization that manifests itself in the space of the guerilla commune. This resistance work functions to oppose the neoliberal conditioning of Jamaica by the *IMF* and by U.S. cultural imperialism; however, Cliff portrays guerilla militancy as limited in political effect, for it leads to the death of black female protagonist, Clare Savage, and it facilitates the social and physical death of Mavis and Christophe. These latter two characters are domestic workers who I read not only as subjects of the neoliberal condition, but as potential allies whose implicit social exclusion from the collaborative resistance project is an effect of the guerilla strategy of self-segregation.

In the opening chapter to *No Telephone to Heaven*, entitled "Ruinate," Cliff introduces her reader to a Jamaican-based, guerrilla group who relies on subsistence farming and a black market trade with Americans who supply guns in return for marijuana.[200] They are an intentional community whose political basis

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[200] Their underground trading relationship involves meeting in an airfield to trade drugs for artillery: "The ammunition and the guns they received for the ganja were passed to them in wooden boxes, stamped MADE IN USA, further information as to their origin broadly stenciled in black on the ends of the boxes: Massachusetts, Virginia, Ohio, Indiana. The pilot explained that this—making weapons—was a big American business. Except he said 'Yankee' business, assuming he would not be seen as an enemy but as someone speaking to them on their own terms. He had been a mercenary in Angola; he knew the score." (11). While the guerillas strive to be anti-imperial, their daily survival is contingent upon importing and exporting goods associated with war and drug addiction.

for organization is initially ambiguous. The guerillas occupy a space concealed

from mainstream social and political government and may be read as promoting a

separatist model of community that is distinct from the vision imagined in *Free

Enterprise*. Although the land they farm and live on is formerly owned by Clare

Savage's black grandmother, it is reclaimed by Clare after a period of

abandonment for the purposes of communization.[201] Both the commune and the

leper colony represent segregated forms of community; however, the commune is

an intentional political formation inspired by anti-colonialist sentiment and not the

direct object of colonialist management. Yet, Cliff suggests that within the

context of people choosing to live politically as guerillas, there are links to be

made between slavery and the contemporary military-industrial-cultural-complex.

As part of her deconstructive literary strategy, Cliff portrays the guerillas

as self-conscious of their adoption of political identities so frequently caricatured

in popular culture. In the effort to repurpose military culture, the guerillas

establish their own codes for wearing the appropriated uniforms of American

soldiers. Cliff elaborates on the political ambiguity of their social relations and

emphasizes the *seemingness* of their bodily communization:

> These people—men and women—were dressed in *similar* clothes, which
>
> became to them as uniforms, signifying *some* agreement, *some* purpose
>
> that they were *in something* together—in these clothes, at least, they
>
> *seemed* to blend together. This alikeness *wassomething* they needed,

[201] Not unlike Merle, in *The Chosen Place,* Clare's class history empowers her to redistribute her inherited land to others. Merle redistributes the land of her white, plantation-owning father to individual families as plots in which they can farm their own sugarcane without having to depend upon colonialist agribusiness. Rather than redistribute the land into family plots, Clare communalizes the land and makes its general upkeep a shared social responsibility.

which *could be important,* even vital, to them—for the *shades* of   their

skin, *places* traveled to and from, *events* experienced, *things* understood,

food taken into their *bodies*, *acts* of violence committed, books read,

music heard, *languages* recognized, *ones they loved*, living family, *varied*

widely, came between them. That was all to be expected, of course—that

on this island, as part of this small nation, many of them would have been

separated at birth. Automatically. Slipped into places where to escape

would mean taking your life into your own hands. Not more, not less.

Where to get out would mean crashing through barriers positioned by

people not so unlike yourself. People you knew should call you brother,

sister. (4-5; my emphasis)

The heterogeneous practices of the guerillas stem from coerced separations and

divisions in the histories of slavery and colonialism. Here, we can consider again

Butler's notion of the gap which creates the space for the appearance of bodily

alliance. The sense of the bodily collectivity of the commune is not natural but

premised on self-conscious performances of semblance. The guerillas *seem* to

dress and perform *in common* so that they might *feel* in common politically. The

commune thus becomes a site of uncertain possibility, for here we find a

heterogeneous group of people who have intentionally collectivized on the basis

of desired political consensus not fully defined for the reader. Their struggles to

relate across difference bear the historical traces of racial hierarchy and

segregation. The commune as an unsettled site of possibility serves as a space for

the appearance of experimental political potentiality. Importantly, Cliff implies

that the success or the failure of this performative political initiative is possible.

While Cliff's imagining of transnational, guerilla-inspired political potential may seem romantic, it is clear that the commune struggles to be effective in a world where the predatory tendencies of capitalist culture industries oversimplify and deform histories of political resistance for profit. Given these conditions, political potentiality depends upon, but remains threatened by, political performances that border on "cliché":

> The camouflage jackets, names and all, added a further awareness, a touch of realism, cinematic verité, that anyone who eyed them would believe they were faced with *real* soldiers. True soldiers though no government had ordered them into battle—far from it. But this is how camouflage made them feel. As the gold and green and black knitted caps some wore—a danger because the bright gold would sing out in the bush—made them feel like real freedom-fighters, like their comrades in the ANC—a cliché, almost screenplayed to death, *Viva Zapata!* and all that—but that is what they were, what they *felt* they were, what they *were* in fact. Their reason emblazoned in the colors of their skulls. *Burn!* (7)

The guerillas are inspired by radical groups elsewhere, such as the ANC, and aspire to act in solidarity with them, but the very telecommunication systems that help to create political awareness also function as surveillance mechanisms to manage or restrict alliance. Furthermore, the circulating imagery of guerillas in military uniform can be used propagandistically in news media and film to manipulate popular and mainstream understandings of struggle.

Cliff's portrayal of guerilla politics implies the relevance of making distinctions between referential and reflexive identification. Reflexivity allows for performative slippages and may produce alternative or unpredictable connotations for political struggle. The political body can only indirectly relate to the political identification it assumes since the figure of the guerilla is already part of a global signifying chain and simulacrum representing Third World or Global South political insurgency. The appropriated political performance may be of value, especially insofar as the guerillas' exaggerated affectation and semblance helps to stimulate a critical performative process of embodying guerilla political practices.

Historical contingency is significant to distinguish this radicalized political becoming from past ones. For example, it is recalled in the novel that the colonial political body also wore a uniform: "alikeness had been a goal back in those days too, but for quite different reasons" (6). The current uniforms worn by the guerillas are the "discarded American army fatigues, stolen from white kids high on dope, plugged into machines sending our music into their heads, sleepyheads, on the beach at Negril or Orange Bay" (7). The theft of uniforms can be read as an aggressive response to Jamaican-American relations established through cultures of militarism and tourism. The Americans are surprised by the Jamaican theft of "credit cards" and "American Express traveler's checks" (6), as they presume that their consumer tastes for Jamaican culture secures their status as welcomed visitors. The narrator responds to the contrary: "Poor little Americans, after the [tourism] ad had promised JAMAICA, A WORLD OF CULTURE WITHOUT BOUNDARIES, to be told they were not welcome. Were hated deeply, by some.

Poor little Americans—had they harmed them?" (7).

Performance is relevant to the formation of radical political criteria in this novel because it involves a reinvigorated sense of the need to overcome the fear of being "screenplayed to death" (7). If performance and costuming are "never only a matter of appearance," although the adoption of camouflage is surely also "a practical matter, a matter of survival," then it is hoped that "survival dress could make them feel, seem to be, an army" (5). The people who communize *act like* guerillas to ignite the political feeling of community they otherwise lack. The political performance of "disidentification" conceptualized by Muñoz as stimulated by "structures of feeling" has continuing significance for what Butler theorizes as "bodies in alliance." That the guerillas "wore the jackets in a strict rotation" (7) is suggestive of the effort to abolish the constitution of the uniformed body as the property of the nation-state.[202] The original names sewn into these uniforms are not reassigned to specific guerillas as a result of their wearing the uniform. This situation contrasts with that of the lepers in *Free Enterprise*, who are assigned numerical designations by way of the nuns' sewing procedures. Yet, the political potential of the guerillas is threatened by the alliance between military and culture industries. Indeed, Cliff's novel ultimately seems to suggest the need for more than guerilla tactics of insurgency.[203]

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[202] The character Harry/Harriet is the medical officer for the guerillas and s/he wears the same uniform. The only identifiable cross-gendered character, "in the jacket she became Thorpe" (7). Guerillas otherwise role-played and "called each by the name on the pocket: Johnson, Washington, Skrobski, Diaz, Morrissey. The names from a B-picture—RKO-Radio or Columbia or Republic—like the ones they used to see in triple features at the open-air Rialto before it was torn down" (7).

[203] Cliff's *No Telephone* and V.S. Naipaul's *Guerillas* both call into question the figure of the guerilla in the context of caricatured political agendas. Unlike Naipaul, Cliff does not dismiss wholesale the relevance of guerilla political tactics, yet she implies a critique of political strategy

As I have noted, the formation of this intentional community is made possible by the communization of private land reclaimed by Clare Savage and formerly owned by her grandmother. At first, Clare is introduced anonymously as "[a] light-skinned woman, daughter of landowners, native-born, slaves, émigrés, Carib, Ashanti, English" (5). We are told that she "has taken her place on this truck, alongside people who easily could have hated her" (5). Spiritually inspired by black mythical heroines to imagine new and alternative futures, the guerillas can be found "[s]leeping on the ground, squatting at the roadside, evoking the name of Nanny, in whose memory they were engaged in this" (5). We are told "[t]heir efforts were tender. They were making something new, approached not without difficulty, with the gravest opposition; the bitterness, the fury some held, could be strip-mined, no need to send the shaft deep at all" (5).

Cliff's articulation of the range of social groups connected with this particular land seems founded upon a conceptual relation between communization, creolization, and ruination. I argue that the communization of land represents the intentional social segregation of guerillas oriented towards the project of recuperating a radical Creole politics premised on strategic indigenization. The socially segregated commune thus becomes a site of ruination and potentiality for revitalised social and political autonomy. Notably, the majority of family relations who might have inherited the land "were scattered through America and England and had begun new lives, some transplanted for

and pretensions towards an uncritical celebration of the guerilla as a progressive figure of revolutionary politics. While Naipaul caricatures Third World revolutionary politics as cultish, egotistical, sexually violating, and the object of a white, Western liberal gaze, Cliff implies that such a politics needs to be reconstructed on the basis of overlooked histories and strategies of black female militancy.

more than twenty years, and no one wanted to return and reclaim the property—at

least not until now" (8). While this Diaspora has ancestral roots and even a sense

of property entitlement in Jamaica, they are represented as lacking a political

stake there. Meanwhile, a more heterogeneous population self-consciously

chooses to re-route to Jamaica to indigenize radical political alliances in the

region. The overgrown farm becomes "a place to stay and conceal themselves"

(8). Edouard Glissant's theory of creolization as "unpredictable" (84) political

potential resonates here, for while the guerillas intend to generate a newly

indigenized Creole politics, it remains uncertain how they might succeed. As

creolization dissolves "the old formal categories" of "ethnic identity" to promote

"[a]n identity that would not be the projection of a unique and sectarian root, but

of what we call a rhizome, a root with a multiplicity of extension, in all

directions," it requires "imagination," Glissant argues, to promote "utopian ideals"

(84).[204] Linked to "ancient marronage, which was the quest for new traces,"

creolization involves "ambiguity, discontinuity, traces, and remembering" to

produce "unpredictable results" and an "unprecedented conception of identity"

(88).

Although "ruination" seems to imply a negative connotation, it is invoked

in this novel as a conceptual extension of creolization. Cliff opens the first chapter

with the following definition:

Ruinate: "This distinctive Jamaican term is used to describe lands which

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[204] Glissant draws on Deleuze's concept of the "rhizomatic." Crichlow's concept of the post-creole builds from Glissant's sense that although "absolute separation was the rule of the plantation" (84) it engendered "survival techniques set up by the slaves and their immediate descendents" (86).

were once cleared for agricultural purposes and now have lapsed back

into. . .'bush.' An impressive variety of herbaceous shrubs and woody

types of vegetation appears in succession, becoming thicker and taller over

the years until 'high ruinate' forest may emerge. . . . Ruinate of all forms is

an all-too-frequent sign of the Jamaican landscape, despite population

pressure on the land" (B. Floyd qtd. in Cliff (1).

The image of ecological uprising correlates with uneven population distribution

and threatens profitable agricultural development of the land. As the guerillas re-

occupy the land, they regard the death of coffee bushes and citrus trees through

the takeover of "Ethiopian apples and wild bamboo" (9). Metaphorically,

ruination may imply a lapse back into a horizontal spatial field whereby race,

class, and gender hierarchies become overgrown and die.

The theme of anti-colonial uprising is also linked to the concept of

ruination in *Free Enterprise* when Christmas shares her story of Jamaican

resistance with those who inhabit the leper colony (54). She introduces in her

story the historical figure Alexander Bedward as "a healer, prophet, asylum

inmate, early Pan-Africanist, flying, flying African manqué," who was "baptized

into the Jamaican Native Baptist Church" (52). She explains that the "healing

stream into which Bedward immersed his followers" has a tributary flowing from

Nanny Town where the militant black female maroon Nanny and her soldiers

organized. Thus, Bedward "was actually a nationalist in priest's vestments" (53),

who "rattled the colonial authorities intent on order, terrified should the masses

become uncontrollable, and the aisles of cane strangled by escaped native growth,

sending the colony into ruination" (53-54). In the end, "Bedward was locked away as a madman," and Christmas anticipated that " [l]ikewise will happen to Marcus Mosiah Garvey. You mark my words" (53-54).[205]

The recurring image of ruination, in *Free Enterprise* and *No Telephone*, may be read as signifying a "wider view of African liberation" to reclaim the "stolen lands" held by colonizers (Bogues 171). In this sense, "part of the work of revolution was to restore such lands to the representatives of the indigenous people" (171). Within the context of "Rastari language and wordplay," Anthony Bogues explains that

> "ground" became the site of sociality. [...]In the discursive practice of
> Rastafari, when "grounds" became "groundings," the meaning was
> layered. Not only did it mean sociality—an equal meeting that breaks
> socially constructed barriers of race, class, and education—but the nature
> of such an encounter was marked by "reasonings"—a form of
> discussion in which each person contributed equally to the discourse
> without any prior hierarchical claims to knowledge. (129)

During the 1960s and 1970s, Caribbean Marxist Walter Rodney conceptualized "the political practice of 'groundings'" to undermine the vanguard "intellectual and

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[205] Black nationalist Marcus Garvey was leader of the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA). Originally based in Jamaica, he migrated to the U.S. to shape a profoundly influential vision of black internationalism oriented towards the return to Africa via his ship the Black Star line. Given Christmas' perspective, it is notable that he was imprisoned in the U.S. for fraud. In efforts to contain the radical black politics of Ethiopianism and Rastafari, Anthony Bogues explains that "[b]y placing prophets in the mental asylum, the colonial authorities were reacting to a set of political activities that were outside the normal political practices of modernity—political party, trade union, mass demonstrations, and strikes. They confined the leadership of alternative movements in which 'revolution is revealed' to the mental asylum, for in the colonial eyes such revelations were truly abnormal" (157).

political practices of the Caribbean radical intellectual. [...] Thus his political practice was a drama that transgressed the normality of the postcolonial intellectual" (129). Rodney's political orientation seems influential to Cliff's re-imaginings of the leper colony and the guerilla commune, for not only was he critical of "'the 'pseudo-socialism' of Caribbean governments at the time, '" but he "called for 'a certain localization of the revolution'" to incite "the reversal of the tendency of Caribbean revolutionaries to participate in struggles away from the Caribbean'" (139).

In *No Telephone*, the guerilla work of clearing land for farming is likened to the archeological work of reconnecting to the labour history of slave ancestors: "[a]t first they used machetes, fixing themselves in a line against the green, the incredibly alive green, swinging their blades in unison, sometimes singing songs they remembered from the grandmothers and grandfathers who had swung their own blades once in the canefields" (10). The guerillas are not akin to plantation owners but to the ancestral slaves whose "human sound of metal against green" becomes "serving notice to the animals that the invaders were here to stay" (10). Their actions are performed in retribution for the enslavement of "their grandparents" and "for their mothers: our mothers who fathered us when the men were called away or drifted off" (10).

The efficacy of this farming mission is undercut by the fact that the guerilla farmers "may never be able to tell those who are still alive" because part of their political strategy is to withdraw and disappear from mainstream society and from the lives of their families and friends (10). Cliff's narrator explains:

"[s]ome of them think we are living off the streets in Kingston. Some of them think we are teaching school in Mandeville. Some of them think we made a better life in America. They might hate us if they knew" (10). The guerillas have therefore not attempted to establish political intimacy with their families yet they assume political legitimacy on the basis of their imagined relation to ancestors who endured the historical injustices of slavery. The narrator explains that "[a]s the land cleared, it turned black—blackness filled with the richness of the river and the bones of people in unmarked graves" (11). With a borrowed "mule and a plow," they plant "ganja" and "food" only to discover "in the process of clearing the land, things that had been planted long before—before even the grandmother—which had managed to survive the density of the world forest. Cassava. Afu. Fufu. Plantain" (11). Such discoveries help the guerillas to develop their creolized sense of indigenous politics; however, Cliff provides evidence of the limitations of their social segregation for political autonomy.

An economy emerges as the guerilla farmers "traded their surplus food, once the plantings were in, for rice, saltfish, coffee, cooking oil, sugar—things they could not produce" (12). Clare becomes "[t]he woman [who] went on foot with a basket on her head, and bartered surplus food with the owner of the shop, who had arrived in St. Elizabeth from Hong Kong fifty years before" (12). In "backless black bedroom slippers" with a "cutlass in [her] right hand" and an African-inspired, "basket on [her] head" (12), Clare "spoke to the shopkeeper in the name of her grandmother" (12). "Miss Mattie's granddaughter" becomes the primary distributor of surplus food to those "who did not have enough land to

support them" (12). In this way, she sustains "a practice of her mother and grandmother. The woman was used to it—what other use could be made of extra food?" (12). The question posed here unsettles the utopianism of the commune insofar as it alludes to food security as a bargaining tool to consolidate imbalances of power. As farmers and soldiers, the guerillas possess a truckload of "concealed stacks of guns, automatic rifles, and a few machine guns, boxes and belts of ammunition, grenades—and bags of rice, boxes of sugar, bottles of aerated water, tins of condensed milk, baskets of tomatoes, yams, and bananas" (7). To read the commune as a liberated autonomous political zone is to oversimplify its organization and development as facilitated by investments in global networks of trade, telecommunication, tourism, and militarism. Such networks create opportunities for exploitative capitalist alliances; furthermore, the guerilla strategy of self-segregation implies the social exclusion of potential allies living elsewhere in Jamaica. Prior to my elaboration upon the destructive effects of guerilla complicity with neoliberal globalization below, I explore how queer political orientation relates to Cliff's portrayal of conflict among the guerillas.

Queer Questions of Political Agency

In this section, I explore two scenes of queered political orientation in the context of Clare's debates with allies regarding political alliance premised on inherited notions of identification. Harry/Harriet is Clare's cross-gendered best friend and political ally who troubles unitary notions of race, gender, and sexuality. Whereas in *Free Enterprise* a queered logic of leprosy arises through the process of allying bodies in segregated spaces to challenge epidemiological

ideologies of racial and political inheritance, in this novel queered political performance involves the conscious reorientation of bodily alliances away from inherited notions of political experience towards the decisive action of assuming chosen political alliances.

Clare expresses solidarity with her "fairy guerrilla" (130), Harry/Harriet, when she proclaims "we are neither one thing nor the other" (131). As friends, they share a general understanding of Jamaican class and race conflict as well as a unique understanding of society's intolerance towards same-sex desire and trans-gendered identities. Clare presumes their shared sense of alienation regarding unitary identity and that they both have a hybridized sense of self. Challenging this notion, Harry/Harriet contends that "'the time will come for both of us to choose. For we will have to make the choice. Cast our lot. Cyaan live split. Not in this world'" (131). The conditions of social inequality in Jamaica help to reinforce unitary constructions of identity and community; yet, Harry/Harriet seems to also imply that, in times of crisis, one cannot necessarily afford to reside on the political border.

Clare is encouraged by Harry/Harriet to *choose* between the political position embodied by her father, who has assimilated into a United States culture of whiteness, and that of her mother and grandmother, whose sources of political inspiration stem from Jamaican histories of black female militancy. The phrase "'cyaan live split'" (131) signifies a predicament whereby certain historical contingencies necessitate forms of strategic identification that may compromise heterogeneity and reinforce singular notions of the political. Given that this

pronouncement comes from a "fairy guerilla" (130) crossing as a woman but answering to the name Harry/Harriet, it seems that we cannot read it in any straight-forward way.[206] Decisive political actions may be compromising, but they are also sometimes urgently required. The adoption of "[q]ueer orientations" to "put within reach bodies that have been made unreachable by the lines of conventional genealogy" (Ahmed 107) may thus be a valuable amendment to address problems associated with the internal dynamics of political organization formed on the basis of a unitary strategic identification. Later the medical officer of the guerilla commune, Harry/Harriet makes this early attempt to heal a political split in Clare, one marked by a hetero-normative and seemingly biological pressure to show solidarity with both parents. She is urged to critically choose rather than to unquestionably inherit her political alliances.[207]

Stephanie K. Dunning argues that "negotiated [forms of] nationalism" are often adopted by populations made vulnerable to racist or heterosexist nation-building (27). She identifies "an emerging trend at queer sites that not only calls black nationalism's heterosexism into question, but also [...] seeks to invade it, to subvert it and deconstruct the logic of nationalism by occupying its space" (25). Her attention to "'improvisational moments of transcendence'" (25) is relevant to

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[206] I find that "crossing" as a queer performative strategy bears relation to histories of "passing." Zackonik contends that "while studies of passing acknowledge the imbrications of race, sexuality, gender, and class, most tend to isolate one form of passing for consideration. Yet, since gender, sexuality, and class are strongly racialized, one may be said to 'pass' or to perform a gender identity without necessarily crossing from female to male or vice versa, or to stage the perceived sexuality of another race or class without necessarily crossing from straight to queer" (xi).

[207] Although political queerness undermines "[t]he assumption that stable collective identities are necessary for collective action" (Cohen 24), it can also reproduce "a simple dichotomy between those deemed queer and those deemed heterosexual" (24). For Rinaldo Walcott, "the nation-centered heteronormativity of the black studies project" has "produced black community as assumed and essentially heterosexual" (92).

Muñoz's politics of performative disidentification; thus, I reassert that Cliff's regionalized portrayal of queered guerilla politics involves a representational shift from the body as a site for identity politics to the relation between bodies as a space for social re-orientation.

Clare initially privileges the black dimensions of her own mixed-race identity and chooses to follow in her mother's political path by returning to Jamaica.[208] Her training for radical political agency thus involves a rejection of white American culture and her father. Clare's choice to privilege her black maternal ancestry is challenged not only by her transgendered friend and ally, but also by a female guerilla soldier who interrogates her political orientations and commitments. Significantly, their meeting takes place only after Harry/Harriet identifies solely as Harriet. She tells Clare, "'Girlfriend—come with me now. I have some people I want you to meet. It time'" (188). Harry/Harriet positions Clare in a situation in which she is required to become politically accountable to another female guerilla ally.

When Clare meets her interrogator in a "[s]mall plan room in a tenement yard" (189), the political and socioeconomic climate of Jamaica is precarious at best. With a new government in place, it is evident that there are shortages in basic necessities, severe inflation, and devaluation in local currency. The fear that "the IMF might repossess the country" lurks in the minds of Jamaicans while the tourist industry privileges the comforting experience of visitors. Polio is spreading

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[208] Clare's lighter-skinned Jamaican father chooses a life of gradual assimilation into a whitened American cultural identity while her mother ultimately rejects this whitening, first by sabotaging the image of Mrs. White, the fictional character representing a laundry service company she works for in the United States (83), and then by abandoning both her daughter and her husband for a life in Jamaica.

yet there is "[n]o vaccine" (187). The potential for an effective resistance seems nonexistent given that "tourists tipped demonstrators who let them pass, easing their escape" (187). Cliff's apocalyptic image of an impoverished, neoliberal Jamaica emphasizes the dissolution of nation-based sovereignty, the state destruction of social services, and the increasing violence of a racialized class war over public and private land use. Protestors are commoditized as tourists pay for their pacification.

Within this context and behind closed doors, a female guerilla demands that Clare account for herself as a Jamaican Creole who has chosen to return to neoliberal Jamaica, from the United States, to participate in revolutionary politics. Asked "[t]o whom do you owe your allegiance" (189), Clare responds: "I have African, English, Carib in me" (189). The interrogator discredits her genealogical appeal as evidence of political commitment. Clare shifts tactics to align herself with "the place my grandmother made" and with the resistant labour history of her grandmother and mother as "communists" (189). Explaining to the interrogator "[y]ou are the color of my grandmother" (190), Clare is made to feel mistaken in assuming that political authenticity is confirmed through a biological connection to black history. The interrogator retorts, "[a]s you well know, that could be as nothing" (190). Subsequently, Clare is required to clarify her understanding of "struggle" and what it means to be a "fighter" in practice (190).

The power dynamics between Clare and the interrogator shift once it is realized they share a similar graduate school background. Clare has become a Jamaican teacher of "reading and writing and history" (192) and initially

"returned to this island because [...] [she] could live no longer in borrowed countries, on borrowed time" (192-193). She explains that her teaching and research is premised on "our homeland" as well as "the spirits of Maroons" and the "[s]tories of Anansi...Oshun...Shàngó" (193). When the interrogator claims that "[h]istory can be found under water," Clare responds affirmatively that "Yes—some history is only under water" (193). Although the female guerillas share a view of the limitations of historical accountability, the interrogator makes it clear that "[w]e do not speak of past here, but present, future," while Clare insists that "[t]hese things are connected" (195). Here the women do not share consensus regarding the "'improvisational moments'" (Dunning 25) necessary for political and social transformation. According to the interrogator, Jamaicans bathe in and consume water that has been contaminated by "the bauxite mines and the aluminum refineries" (195). In this context, Clare must is justify her professional focus on history insofar as it addresses issues of "contamination from the outside" (195). The interrogator asks, "[w]hat good is your history to a child with bone cancer...polio...TB...a damaged brain?" (195), but Clare argues that "history brought [her] to this room" (195) and inspires her work "to restore something to these children," although she wonders "what good is imagination...whatever the imagery available to it...to a dying child [...] damaged beyond imagining" (196).

In Cliff's portrayal of neoliberal Jamaica, there is a perceptual conflict between historical imagination and practical political action. Although Clare is warned that she "could be held accountable" for guerilla activities, even if she denies her association with the commune, she is ultimately encouraged to "go

further" than she has before because "sometimes it is the only way" (196). The interrogator implores Clare to explore "the knowledge of resistance" and the "loss of knowledge" in the context of anti-colonial freedom fighters like "Bishop. Rodney. Fanon. Lumumba. Malcolm. First. Luthuli. Garvey Mxembe. Marley. Moloise. Think of these who are gone—and ask yourself how, why...?"(196). It is only at the end of their meeting that the interrogator finally introduces herself to Clare as *Amandla*. Shaking Clare's hand, she promises to "be back" after she has returned to her "own country" (196).[209] It is evident, in this scene, that although the interrogator and Clare can relate to each other as guerillas on the basis of a shared desire to transform neoliberal Jamaican life, it is clear that their historical and practical orientations are distinct enough to cause readers to anticipate potential ideological conflicts.

To clarify my analysis of the social exclusion resulting from the self-segregation of the commune, I will now address the distinctive self-segregating tendencies of the character Christophe in the context of intergenerational poverty. Although he and Clare never meet they are both killed on the same Hollywood movie set at the end of the novel. Their parallel stories imply the simultaneity of a heterogeneous struggle against neoliberal living conditions and their mirrored fates reinforce a linkage between neoliberal bio-political conditions of

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[209] Bogues explains that "if the radical Caribbean political tradition in the colonial era focused itself outside the Caribbean—Garvey, James, George Padmore, Henry Sylvestor Williams, and others—Rodney wished to 'return to the source' to make revolution" (135). Influenced by Frantz Fanon's "notion of 'a process of retrogression,' Rodney developed seven features of Caribbean and African postindependence politics" (142). The features relay abuses of power and concentrations of wealth including "the manipulation of race and other divisions among the people," "the vulgarization of 'national culture' as a tool for class rule," and "the deliberate distortion of revolutionary concepts" (142). The last feature relates to the interrogator's insistence that guerillas are "not thugs" (Cliff 196).

disposability and the social reproduction of resistant failure. Failed resistance, in this context, is confirmed at the site of the Hollywood movie set, but it is already in process as an effect of the practice of segregation which Clare and Christophe adopt in response to neoliberal experience in Jamaica.

The anti-redemptive political orientation of the novel is implied by the phrase "No Telephone to Heaven" which serves as the title of the novel's second chapter and as a refrain for introducing a range of violent scenarios. It is painted as a slogan on the truck obtained by the guerrillas to imply a critique of faith-based liberation theories emerging from Cliff's portrayal of the Dungle, a slum bordering the city of Kingston (16). "No Telephone to Heaven" symbolizes the horrified reaction of a Jamaican Diaspora bearing witness to the televised displays of gang violence in Tivoli Gardens from their homes in Canada and the U.S. It refers to employment insecurities and the perspective of a Jamaican middle class that regards the situation as "[Michael] Manley's mess" (Cliff 20). Not unlike the concept "enterprise," in *Free Enterprise*, "No Telephone to Heaven" is a phrase invoked to signify a complicated, anti-redemptive political reading of revolutionary violence and struggle.

In this chapter Christophe is introduced as a man who grew up under his grandmother's care in the Dungle and who later murders his employer and employer's family. By the end of the novel, Christopher is cast in a Hollywood movie as a wild figure of the jungle. The cultural imperialism of the Hollywood film production, which portrays maroon history as caricature, signifies a hegemonic response to the cycles of intergenerational violence stemming from

racialized and regionalized poverty. Christophe's historical experience as victimized and as victimizer is superficially distorted and subsumed by film spectacle. Protecting the Hollywood space of film production, the Jamaican military neutralizes Christophe's political and mortal life.[210] Christophe's violent responses to the intergenerational cycles of poverty and violence in neoliberal Jamaica stem from an experience of racialized segregation that corrupts his perspective of the political agency and disenfranchisement of black women. The discussion of these issues below forms the basis for my concluding analysis of the novel.

Returning from a late night pool party, Paul, the son of Christophe's employer, finds his parents and sister naked, sexually mutilated, and murdered in their destroyed home (25-27). Despite these horrifying circumstances, Paul's discovery of the family's black maid is exceptional: "[h]er body was on the floor, slashed in a way none of his family had been slashed. The machete had been dug into her in so many ways, so many times, that Mavis' body became more red than brown. She had no more eyes" (28). Although employed with the family for years, Mavis is barely known to Paul, who has "no cancelled checks to reveal a surname" (28). Paging through her Bible, Paul notes that "no family record appeared" (28).[211] In her bedroom, Paul finds

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[210] The Savage family to flee "from Montego Bay to Miami," and then to Brooklyn (53) to escape escalating violence. When Clare's father explains that "Charles and his family had been chopped by some ungrateful gardenboy" (53), Cliff creates for her reader a disjuncture between a superficial rendering of Christophe as gardenboy, by Clare's ignorant father, and the a more historicized conception of him enabled by the flashback Cliff's narrative provides of his childhood upbringing.

[211] This detail represents a point of contrast to that of Christopher's grandmother who, despite her relatively more impoverished condition of living in a slum, maintains a family genealogy in her bible (34).

No papers. No birth certificate. No savings book, no insurance policy. No [Bible] verses were underscored. No letters pressed between the thin leaves. He was truly stupid if he thought he would find anything from the contents of this room which would reveal this woman's name, the names of her ancestors, the name of her mother, her father, her place of birth, her date of birth, the names and ages of her children. Her opinion of life. (28)

Rather than remorse, Paul feels "*inconvenience* at the presence of Mavis' body" because as the he will have to go to the trouble to bury her separately from his family in order to maintain class hierarchies between the help and his family (29). After Christophe is enlisted by Paul to assist him the moving of her body, not knowing that he is the one who has murdered Mavis and the family, Christophe catches Paul unawares and kills him with a machete.

It becomes evident why Mavis receives an extreme death sentence after Cliff provides a flashback of Christophe's childhood. He grew up in "a town of structures built by women and children" located "near the Esso refinery on the outskirts of Kingston" (31). The "[s]tructures [were] made from [the] packing crates" of household appliances shipped from "overseas," and "discarded behind one of the big dealers downtown" only to be "[d]ragged by the woman and her children through the streets of Kingston" (31). Such structures are "made more commonly […] from bits and pieces, findings" (31). Women and children constitute the majority living in "the dung-heap jungle where people squirmed across mountains of garbage" (32).[212] In this scenario, women are socially

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[212] Mike Davis explains that "[s]ince 1970, slum growth everywhere in the South has outpaced urbanization *per se*" (17). Given the rate of acceleration, he suggests that "the cities of

positioned to provide the only limited security available to their children.

In *Planet of the Slums*, Mike Davis explains that the urban poor confront "a complex equation as they try to optimize housing cost, tenure security, quality of shelter, journey to work, and sometimes, personal safety" (27). Such "shelter strategies" (Davis 29) are no doubt paramount for the women and children living in the Dungle. As part of his "slum typology" for the "metro core," Davis includes "formal" and "informal" housing in addition to various forms of living in the "periphery" including "refugee camps" (30). Cliff's representation of Kingston conveys similar zoning principles. For example, the Dungle exists on the edge of the city whereas the home of the now murdered family of Paul H. is in the north Kingston residential neighbourhood of Stony Hill (Cliff 23). Davis argues that "[s]ince 1970 the larger share of world urban population growth has been absorbed by slum communities on the periphery of Third World cities" (37). He refers to this process as "the 'horizontalization' of poor cities" explaining that "the suburban zones of many poor cities are now so vast as to suggest the need to rethink *peripherality*" (37). Whatever constitutes "today's urban edge, abutting fields, forest, or desert, may tomorrow become part of a dense metropolitan core" (37). With this analysis in mind, I read the guerilla commune and the Dungle as different yet related articulations of Kingston's evolving periphery where the former signals a self-conscious political segregation in reaction to neoliberal Jamaica while the latter conveys the "shelter strategies" (Davis 29). Following

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the future, rather than being made out of glass and steel as envisioned by earlier generations of urbanists, are instead largely constructed out of crude brick, straw, recycled plastic, cement blocks, and scrap wood. Instead of cities of light soaring toward heaven, much to the twenty-first century urban world squats in squalor, surrounded by pollution, excrement, and decay" (19).

Davis, we can imagine how spaces are transformed by processes of segregation, disenfranchisement, or gentrification. While social relations may always be in flux, they are inevitably affected by forms of neoliberal urban planning that alter the context for what constitutes inhabitability.[213]

Intergenerational cycles of poverty and violence limit the social capacity and political solidarity required to initiate protest over changing living conditions in *No Telephone*. Of Christophe, Cliff explains that "[l]ike his labor, his connections to other people were causal. If he had thought about it, he would realize that there was not a single smaddy in the world who cared if he lived or died. His death would cause inconvenience to no one—unless him dead on dem property. In this loneliness he longed for his grandmother" (44). While his grandmother provided affection for him as a child, he lacks human intimacy in adulthood. Christophe's appeal to Mavis to affirm his justifications for murder seems his singular attempt to establish an intimate relation. He contends that he was owed by his employer a "'piec of lan'" although "his request to the master this debt, this obligation of the master to him, had not been spoken" and "it was only to himself and Mavis that he spoke it" (48). Presuming his racialized alliance with Mavis, Christophe regards her as a traitor when she opposes his views. Enraged, he calls her "their faithful servant" and "cut her like an animal, torturing her body

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[213] The relationship between the zoning of the Dungle and of education seems a case in point. Cliff's narrator explains that "[m]ost of the children of the Dungle did not go to school, and so few could read. It was only from the pictures on the signs around them that they could tell what was being advertised on the walls of the shacks—evidences of the world outside" (33). The people of the Dungle are walled in and bombarded by an accelerated culture of advertising for capitalist consumption even as they become the inheritors of the nation's protracted global debt. While the slum women search for food in dumpsters, businessmen are said to dine in their restaurants, "sharing nostalgia for a country upbringing with a contact" (33).

in a way he had not tortured theirs" (48). This exceptional violation seems

symptomatic of the pressures of black, low-income working women to sustain the

life of the household, yet also to function as the political allies of black men in

racialized struggles. Christophe punishes Mavis for betraying a sacred, racialized

political bond.[214] Already exploited by her employers, she is mutilated and

murdered by a man who feels rejected in his attempt to establish a racialized and

class-based political alliance.

In this novel, both the "Dungle" and the guerilla commune represent forms

of social management which give shape to limited notions of alliance and

collaboration. While the guerillas worry their political agendas will be caricatured

as a result of mainstream media representation, Christophe's social alienation and

economic poverty causes his collaboration with a Hollywood film production.

Although they never meet, Clare and Christophe both end up, for different

purposes, at the same Hollywood movie set at the end of the novel. While Clare

hides in the bush, preparing to attack the film set, Christophe awaits his cue to

enter the next scene as the forest monster in a film mocking maroon resistance.

Together, they represent variations of bare *and* political life. In the end, both

Clare and Christophe are the targets of a military-cultural industrial complex that

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[214] Cliff's exploration into the political agency and material conditions of working and poor black women is developed further in her chapter in *No Telephone* which pays tribute to the "Magnanimous Warrior." This warrior represents "[s]he in whom the spirits come quick and hard. Hunting mother. She who forages. Who knows the ground" (163). The narrator asks, "What has become of this warrior" especially "[n]ow [that] we need her more than ever. She has been burned up in an almshouse fire in Kingston. She has starved to death. She wanders the road of the country with swollen feet. She has cancer. Her children have left her. Her powers are known no longer. They are called by other names. She is not respected. [...] They tell her she is senile. They have taken away her bag of magic. Her teeth. Her goat's horn. We have forgotten her. Now that we need her more than ever. The nurses ignore her. The doctors make game of her. The priest tries to take her soul" (164). The narrator asks, "Can you remember how to love her?" (164). Clare's relation to this warrior seems evident when she is described as "white. Black. Female. Lover. Beloved. Daughter. Traveler. Friend. Scholar. Terrorist. Farmer" (91).

seems to have tracked their movements with bio-political precision to uphold a fatalistic neoliberal agenda.[215]

Cliff's novels *Free Enterprise* and *No Telephone* imply the limitations of the popular imagining of revolution in the neoliberal era of military and culture industries. As the cast and crew prepare for a scene, in *No Telephone*, "[t]wo figures stood out in the costumed group. One, a woman, the actress called in whenever someone was needed to play a Black heroine, any Black heroine, whether Sojourner Truth or Bessie Smith, this woman wore a pair of leather breeches and a silk shirt—designer's notion of the clothes that Nanny wore" (206). This actress is positioned opposite "a strapping man, former heavyweight or running back, dressed as Cudjoe, tiny humpbacked soul" (206). Clare is said to be "lying flat in the bitterbush" (206) while Christophe awaits his cue, as De Watchman to attack Nanny while Cudjoe "rescues her" (207). The movie director reminds Christopher that he should howl because he is "'not human'" (207). What follows is a disoriented series of unscripted actions. Christopher unleashes a series of cries while "Clare imagined she could feel them through her belly" (207). Meanwhile, the cast and crew go into hiding "waiting for this to pass" (207). Military helicopters fly overhead and begin "[s]praying the breadfruit tree" with bullets. Seemingly aware of the intended guerilla attack, the Jamaican state intervenes in defense of Hollywood. Christophe—or "Sasabonsam"—"fell, silent" after a "[s]hot found the bitterbush" (208). The final lines of the novel contain

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[215] The names of Christophe and Clare Savage raise the question of how to characterize political agendas. Who is to be martyred or demonized? Notably, both characters have a politicized sense of intimacy with their grandmothers.

fragments of Creole and invoke Clare's mother's name. Ambiguously, the narrator claims that "She remembered the language. / Then   it was gone" (208).

While the military-cultural-industrial-complex ensures the bio-political end of both Clare and Christophe, Cliff allows for the emergence of a poetic response to the paralyzing effects of over-determined death. Edouard Glissant's sense of creolized political imagination is useful to conceptualize the end of the novel. "Although the plantation has vanished," Glissant argues that "creolization is still at work in our *megalopolises*,[...] where the inferno of cement slums is merely an extension of the inferno of the sugarcane or cotton fields" (88). Within "the Americas" he finds that "languages are emerging or dying" and "the old and rigid sense of identity is confronting the new and open way of creolization. This phenomenon probably has no political or economic power. But is precious for mankind's imagination, its capacity for invention" (88-89). With this imaginative Creole potential in mind, I find that Cliff's anti-redemptive narrative tendencies reflect the processes by which political and social orientations are "emerging or dying" to push beyond the parameters of the scripted performances sanctioned by state and corporate culture industries.

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In conclusion, we might hold in critical suspension the view that Cliff's anti-redemptive characters retain a desire for what Robin D.G. Kelley refers to in a different context as the "freedom dreams" of a "black radical imagination" (4); yet, they are suspicious of historical political practice. In *Free Enterprise*, Pleasant worries over the ease with which black histories of resistance are

integrated into, and monumentalized by, a black culture industry. In a letter to Annie, she expresses frustration over popular renderings of John Brown and the Harper's Ferry raid as either a mythology of individualized heroism or madness. Significantly, she argues that "our victories are not recorded, not really," which I read as an indictment of the white supremacy of a liberal culture industry that entails a calculation of the historical labour value of black resistance. What is valued, Pleasant argues, are "Spirituals, not war chants; laments, not battle cries. Liberation is not achieved it is handed down" (137). The preferred white genres for racial politics emphasize black suffering, passivity, and accommodation.

Joy James argues that "[i]nadvertently, as black women manage images auctioned in a market they do not control, black feminisms function as spectacle and black feminists as storytellers for a society nursed on the colonized frame" (10-11). Her critique should cause us to question the praise Suzanne Bost assigns to Cliff's female protagonists who challenge racial and sexual paradigms of power, as well as patriarchy, through their uses of "parody, inversion, costume, and fluidity" (129). In Bost's calculation, "[c]olor alone does not determine her heroines' fates. Education and imagination allow them to conceive alternate worlds. [...] Clare, Annie, and Mary Ellen use their advantages to support revolution with economic resources and knowledge from multiple cultures. They chart new territory for shifting, multivalent, empowered, resisting, Africanist- and woman-centered feminist subjectivities" (129). Although she rightly signals the political significance of "education and imagination," it seems she emphasizes a subversive tradition that implies solidarity *as* consensus among Cliff's black-

identified, female characters. By contrast, I have worked to trouble the tendency

to gloss over differences emanating from characters that might otherwise be

imagined as homogenous in their orientation towards a shared political culture.[216]

For those of us who are already convinced of the necessity to intervene upon a

military-cultural-industrial-complex that is so destructive to the political and

social life of communities, it seems that important work must still be done to

better understand the theoretical and practical heterogeneity of Leftist political

cultures.

The production of slave narratives catering to white consumerism and

liberationist sympathies is a significant example of the U.S. political ideology at

work in the historical context of a documentary culture industry. Drawing on

Marcus Wood's notion of "'blind memory,'" Barnor Hesse suggests that

"*abolitionist memory*" is only "*the memory of* [slavery's] *abolition*" (149).

Modifying Alessandro Triulzi's conception of "postcolonial memory," he argues

for an "ethics of remembering slavery" and for "postcolonial memory" emerging

from studies of "interrupted and incomplete forms of decolonization" (165). I find

his view of the necessity to confront "the historical complicity and contemporary

failures of Western liberal democracies" to be particularly compelling given the

issues addressed in this chapter.

In no context in *Free Enterprise* is it safe to engage ethically with

institutionalized let alone critical memory. The "official version" is celebrated on

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[216] We must be critically conscious of the popular treatment of "the history of militant
black female fighters," if it works to "expand the intellectual base for progressive struggles while
simultaneously providing a comfort zone that validates images of revolutionaries marketed as
commodities through publications for consumers" (James *Shadowboxing* xii).

"the television screen," in "convocations, colloquia; is substantiated—like the Host—in dissertations" only when it "[d]oes not cause trouble" or "give aid to the enemy" (16), and only when it "entertains" and [i]llumines the Great White Way" (17). Although "[t]he official version is in everybody's mouth," Cliff predicts that "[t]here would soon enough be no one who knew the real story" (17). *No Telephone* suggests how black radicalism is not only incorporated into entertainment industries but also prone to reproduce forms of social exclusion by virtue of its oppositional strategies of intentional segregation. Because Cliff holds a doctorate in history, critics like Erica L. Johnson find that she "works within generic parameters specific to a group of African diasporic texts that have been labeled variously as historical novels, neo-slave narratives, literary archeologies" (115). Yet, Cliff's novels imply the limitations of representational works for the realization of political change. Perhaps it is this that the fictional Pleasant means when she describes the ocean, and its history of slavery, as "'A place I can't measure'" (133).

Nonetheless, we must review how cultural productions commemorate or confuse oppositional political histories to cultivate consensual public spheres and one-dimensional imaginings of sociality. Of civil rights iconography, Joy James argues that the "national American culture has jumbled the contradictory values of ancestors who promoted oppositional world-views" of slavery and racism, anti-slavery and anti-racism (33). Angela Y. Davis adds that African Americans problematically identify as a "'superior minority'" who feel they "established the historical anti-racist agenda for the United States of America" and thus "will

always remain its most passionate advocates" (Mendieta 33). Expressing the view that "[b]lack cannot simply be considered an uncontestable synonym of progressive politics," she argues that "cross-racial" "solidarities and alliances" are vital to an "anti-racist future" (Mendieta 32-33).

The U.S. "Movement era" (1955-1975) produced unmet social demands for more inclusive radical political criteria to address historical oppressions and struggles in their complex diversity.[217] The Caribbean's Left and women's movements have also been critiqued for their power dynamics and failures to account for differences among constituencies that otherwise seemed to share anti-colonial and anti-imperialist sentiments on a regional basis. As the conclusion of this dissertation will indicate, I find that we may be at a global crossroads whereby the institutional support for revolutionary activity is a paradoxical burden and necessity; whether or not institutional support of any kind helps to produce "cross-racial communities of struggle that arise out of common--and hopefully radical--political aspirations" (Davis in Mendieta 33) seems questionable, particularly if the available forms of material support function to inhibit our imagination of political change beyond electoral processes. To conclude this study, I will reflect upon the significance of forgiveness and dissent to a politics of critical social care as I address Caribbean feminist struggles to generate regional solidarity for anti-neoliberal activism.

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[217] The Movement Era "included black civil rights struggles, the American Indian Movement (AIM), Chicano activism, and Puertorriqueňo insurrections, and militant feminism" (James *Shadowboxing* 74).

Conclusion

Anti-Neoliberal Solidarities:
Reflections on Forgiveness and Dissent as a Politics of Critical Social Care

> What I dream of, what I try to think as the 'purity' of a forgiveness worthy of its name, would be a forgiveness without power: *unconditional but without sovereignty*. The most difficult task, at once necessary and apparently impossible, would be to dissociate *unconditionality* and *sovereignty*.
> Jacques Derrida, *On Cosmopolitanism and Forgiveness*, (59).

> In practice, feminist politics in the Caribbean has de-emphasised the struggle against poverty in favour of analysis, limited advocacy, and projects whose gains for poor women are at best partial, trickle-down and reversible.
> Andaiye, "The Angle You Look From Determines What You See: Towards A Critique of Feminist Politics in the Caribbean," (16).

> "'Privatize or die.'"
> Davison L. Budhoo, former IMF official, quoted in Klein, *The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism*, (12).

The problem of the social reproduction of violence within cultures of resistance has motivated my study of literature and film in this doctoral project. I have also been driven by the question of how anti-neoliberal solidarities can be imagined and cultivated to generate practices of critical social care without reinforcing the exploitation, alienation, or fatigue of individuals, particularly women. Open debate regarding the scale, organization, and orientation of resistance must be part of any struggle for solidarity; yet, it also seems crucial to guard against the promotion of internal class hierarchies and debilitating critique. Any initiative to engage in "the conceptual mapping of genealogies of organizing" (Alexander and Mohanty xix) against the exploitative legacies of slavery, colonialism or capitalism, whether it is scholarly, creative, and/or activist in orientation, must therefore attend to complex questions of the social reproduction

of power and subjection as it occurs in everyday life.

It has been suggested that a limitation of postcolonial theory resides in the academic tendency to rely upon dichotomous spatial metaphors to describe dynamic relations of global power and resistance (O'Brien and Szeman 607). This tendency can reinforce a contained conceptual understanding of social formation and serve to perpetuate feelings of "postcolonial melancholy" (O'Brien and Szeman 607) for a Western academy over its seeming failure to engage with complex dimensions of lived political struggle. Such melancholy can exacerbate problems of critical passivity among scholars who feel they do not achieve practical political effects. While the question of how people live marginally continues to be a subject of academic speculation and imagination, David Scott argues that "[w]hat is at issue is not *whether* the colonized accommodated or resisted. What *is* at issue is how (colonial) power altered the terrain on which accommodation/resistance was possible in the first place. Attention has now to be turned, therefore, to a description of that terrain and the power that produces the alteration--i.e., a description of modern power" (16). Given that modern power takes several forms, it seems that a singular or totalizing description of it is inadequate to the work of comprehending nuanced social relations geared towards neoliberal opposition and resistance.

In my analysis of selected works by Paule Marshall, Jamaica Kincaid, and Michelle Cliff, I placed necessary pressure on questions of "terrain" and "power" by focusing on the late twentieth-century neoliberal age of U.S.-Caribbean relations. Rather than reproduce a limiting dichotomy of U.S. centre / English

Caribbean periphery, I troubled discourses of solidarity premised on unitary

categories of identity. I conceptualized a neoliberal condition as a bio-political

calculation of labour value that has uneven effects on human life and thus uneven

implications for the organizational cultures of resistance to U.S.-Caribbean

neoliberal relations of trade, labour, and development. Questions of scale and

orientation have enabled me to address the too- often overlooked issue of

racialized and gendered social power as it is classed and regionalized in late

twentieth-century representations of black resistance and solidarity.

Representations of both regional and transnational orientations have been troubled

by my analysis. Attending to the relational, geopolitical dimensions of resistance

and solidarity, as imagined by writers living in the U.S. and associated with the

Caribbean Diaspora, I subscribe to the necessity of examining the "alteration"

alluded to by David Scott (16), but within the specific context of a U.S. neoliberal

condition imagined to emerge and manifest itself in late twentieth-century,

transnational relationships with the English Caribbean.

In my analysis I have aimed to cut through debates regarding whether or

not postcolonial studies sufficiently emphasizes cultural *and* economic

dimensions of late capitalism. I find these to be less useful than those which might

review the relation between practices of reading and the dissemination of

knowledge, a relation which is of central concern to the politics and pedagogies of

decolonization.[218] Nonetheless, I have shown how both cultural and economic

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[218] See Paolo Freire, Donaldo Macedo, and Henry Giroux for pioneering discussions of "critical literacy." See Gayatri Spivak for discussions of "transnational literacy" in the context of a transnational cultural studies and trans-disciplinary analysis (1992; 1999; 2003). See Susan Standord Friedman for a conception of "geopolitical literacy" emphasizing "locational feminism"

questions are central to the imaginings of a neoliberal conditioning of black social life and to the bio-political calculations of human labour value offered by Paule Marshall, Jamaica Kincaid, and Michelle Cliff. In the process of examining their works, I have come to share the view that "[t]o ponder the conjunction of globalization and fiction is to explore not just those fictions of globalization that have (most evidently) transmuted neoliberal ideology into fate, but the fictions that have been built up around literature itself" (O'Brien and Szeman 612).

The question of why I have chosen to focus on prominent writers located in the English-speaking, U.S. Caribbean Diaspora, rather than on less-studied or even well-known residents of the Caribbean, is therefore a relevant one. More pointedly, one should ask why I have chosen to focus on issues of blackness and black feminism if, indeed, these are relatively recurrent subjects of study in comparison to the study of other non-white female writers living in the U.S. or the Caribbean. Recovery work is an important and necessary form of research. My aim, however, has been to directly confront the troubling ways in which blackness can be thought to serve as a dominant signifier for more expansive struggles in the English-speaking Caribbean and the U.S. I have chosen to focus on well-established writers who have accrued U.S. academic cultural capital through their imaginative contribution of representations of Caribbean women, Caribbean women's migration, and their imagined role in U.S.-Caribbean relations. I do not consider Paule Marshall, Jamaica Kincaid, or Michelle Cliff to be quintessentially representative of a Caribbean Diaspora; rather, I identify them as distinctive

and "cultural geography" (2001). See VeVe Clark for a conception of "diasporic literacy" (1991). See also Diana Brydon for a discussion of critical literacy in the context of comparative literature and the global circulations of English studies (2010).

mediators for the cultural imaginary of U.S.-Caribbean relations within the North American academy of literary study. In this sense, it is crucial to explore the ideological and critical work they perform in neoliberal times and when the political efficacy of both postcolonial and African American studies continues to be questioned.[219]

The relationship between the persistence of neoliberal violence and the expression of mixed feelings regarding black resistance has compelled me to examine evidence of self-reflexivity by writers who have been problematically positioned by literary critics as transnational writers who yield special insight into cross-cultural experiences of late twentieth-century, U.S.-Caribbean relations. Diana Brydon reminds us that "[w]hereas older notions of diaspora implied to persistence of a homeland through the scattering of its peoples, newer notions stress transnational circulations, multidirectional flows, and the capacity to occupy multiple locations" ("Post-colonialism Now" 8). By focusing on three English-speaking female writers in the U.S. Caribbean Diaspora, I have been able to demonstrate how one's "capacity to occupy multiple locations" is contingent upon a differential access to power. It is not a given that a particular geopolitical

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[219] See, for example, Kenneth Warren's *What Was African American Literature* (2011) for a critique of the fixation on racism and cross-class solidarities within African American literature, culture, and criticism. He finds that where African American literature was once "prospective" (41) during the Jim Crow era, contemporary African American literature seems unnecessarily "retrospective" (42) in the post-Civil rights period. His analysis does not adequately attend to the possibility that civil rights acquisition was never fully achieved by African Americans in the U.S. See Alison Donnell's *Twentieth-Century Caribbean Literature: Critical Moments in Anglophone Literary History* (2006) for criticism of dominant paradigms of literary study and canon formation concerning Caribbean literature. Her work, unlike mine, considers understudied writers. We share the view that black Caribbean women's writing has tended to receive more critical attention by literary critics than writing by women associated with other racial and ethnic groups.

terrain or social relation will yield one's empowerment. Furthermore, such

capacity is inevitably effected by one's exposures to the unevenness of neoliberal

conditioning. This conditioning influences the logics of social orientation and

political response.[220]

Working with U.S.-based, Caribbean women writers has enabled me to

demonstrate that anti-neoliberal solidarity or resistance is not convincingly

theorized on the basis of a unified conception of Diaspora, black internationalism,

cosmopolitanism, or even shared Caribbean ancestry. U.S. imperialism in the

English Caribbean has resulted in forms of neoliberal economic, cultural, and

military conditioning that can be reproduced within a variety of social relations.

This means that the English Caribbean must also critically review its complicity

in the reproduction of violence as it manifests itself in neoliberal policy and

culture within the region. Modern "governmental power," as David Scott argues,

"operates [...] on the conditions in which behaviours are obliged to assume their

form; it operates by bringing into being a new horizon--the *social*--in relation to

which action is defined, experienced, and transformed" (16). Throughout this

dissertation, I have illuminated ways in which cultures of resistance are

susceptible to the neoliberal conditioning of social relations and to the processes

by which the value of human life can be calculated by degrees of responsibility

and disposability.

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[220] Brydon adds that "Steven Vertovic and Robin Cohen (1999) distinguish between diaspora as social form, as type of consciousness, and as mode of cultural production, but there is no unitary form of diaspora however modulated. An interdisciplinary collaboration will be necessary to make full sense of how these different modes function together" (8). My work to combine neoliberal criticism with women and development studies and theories of black feminist intersectionality represents an effort to make a more interdisciplinary intervention in literary analysis.

I have explored variations of one possible neoliberal condition, but there are many more. Intersectional analysis informs my assessment of Paule Marshall, Jamaica Kincaid, and Michelle Cliff insofar as they provide distinct imaginings of the neoliberal condition of the transnational black female protagonist emerging in the context of U.S.-Caribbean relations. I have thus conceptualized the neoliberal medium as a social-spatial platform for a neoliberal condition experienced unevenly by racialized and feminized figures across classed geographies. This unevenness should cause us to question the assumption that "[d]ecolonization [...] becomes an urgent project precisely because of the homogenization and cross-border domination effected by global capitalist processes" (Alexander and Mohanty xxix). Although M. Jacqui Alexander and Chandra Talpade Mohanty insist that "global processes clearly require global alliances"(xxix), they also call for a feminist, "transborder participatory democracy which is outside the purview of the imperial" (xxix). I question not only the notion that "global alliances" can escape "the imperial," but also whether it is even ethically desirable to refuse the persistence of the imperial trace as an inevitability within any given social relation where struggles for and against power are at stake. Nonetheless, I share with Alexander and Mohanty the view of the necessity to examine organizational struggles in the interest of harnessing generative capacity to form more expansive alliances premised on practices of decolonization.

Focusing on U.S.-Caribbean neoliberal relations as represented in selected works by Marshall, Kincaid, and Cliff, I have deliberately called attention to their complex, conflicting, and sometimes limited imaginings of U.S.-Caribbean social

relations in the neoliberal age. However, I have also suggested how the writers explore the social reproduction of exploitation and violence among characters who I read as constituents differentially impacted by neoliberal conditions. As prominent writers living in the U.S. and associated with the Caribbean Diaspora, Marshall, Kincaid, and Cliff cannot escape the imperialist dimensions of their cultural production in the neoliberal age, even while their works signal critical consciousness of late twentieth-century historical processes that demand a collective re-imagination of solidarity and resistance. David Scott argues that "the collapse of Soviet-style communism and the resurgence of neoliberalism alters the cognitive-political context in which postcolonial criticism can operate, and therefore the *demand* criticism is called upon to meet"(136). As objects of postcolonial criticism, literary and cultural works such as the ones studied in this dissertation are influenced by the very conditions of global capitalism that can unsettle historically-driven social commitments. I am thus wary of the assertion that global democratic feminist practices can, "[i]n place of relativism, [...] substitute responsibility, accountability, engagement, and solidarity" to promote "a paradigm of decolonization" (Alexander and Mohanty xix), for I find it crucial not to overlook ways in which stakeholders located at different points within the global economy may vary in their conception of such terms and in their capacity to practically achieve these aims. We must therefore continuously ask ourselves and each other what constitutes an appropriate "paradigm of decolonization," and for whom? My analysis of a neoliberal condition premised on racialized and gendered calculations of responsibility and disposability thus represents an

attempt to illuminate some of the disorientations in the imagination of solidarity and resistance that can be exacerbated by neoliberal discourse and policy.

In what follows, I argue that an anti-neoliberal politics of critical social care may require an unconditional commitment to the dynamic interplay of social forgiveness and dissent. I do not claim to define what forgiveness or dissent should mean in any particular place or time but seek to explore some of the social possibilities and limitations of this proposal. Although Derrida argues that forgiveness without sovereignty "must remain a madness of the impossible," he insists that "this is certainly not to exclude or disqualify it. It is even, perhaps, the only thing that arrives, that surprises, like a revolution, the ordinary course of history, politics, and law" (*On Cosmopolitanism* 39). If such a forgiveness is "heterogeneous to the order of politics or of the juridical as they are ordinarily understood" (39), then let us consider how it might relate to unconditional dissent for purposes of cultivating critical social dynamics of care in the age of anti-neoliberal resistance.

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The Rolling Jubilee campaign, launched on November 15, 2012, is a recent U.S. activist initiative focused on the socioeconomic practice of unconditional debt forgiveness. As a coalition that formed out of the Occupy Wall Street Movement,[221] Strike Debt provides the following objective for its project of

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[221] The Occupy Wall Street (OWS) movement began on September 17, 2011 to challenge neoliberal austerity, corporatism, militarism, and government corruption. Its first social experiment was to live communally outdoors while occupying the privatized space of Zuccotti Park (or Liberty Square). Although mainstream media was critical of its failure to establish demands, OWS formed a New York City General Assembly (NYCGA) through which to articulate "Principles of Solidarity" and the "Declaration of the Occupation of New York City" within the first two weeks of occupation. The principles of solidarity range from "engaging in personal and collective responsibility" to "redefining how labor is valued" to "endeavoring to

anti-neoliberal resistance: "we buy debt for pennies on the dollar, but instead of collecting it, we abolish it. We cannot buy specific individual debt—instead, we help liberate debtors at random through a campaign of mutual support, good will, and collective refusal" (Strike Debt). In this case, debt abolition disrupts practices whereby third parties capitalize on debt purchased from lenders by increasing collection penalties for late payments (Business Insider).[222] While the name of the campaign "refers to the biblical tradition of a jubilee year, in which debts are forgiven and all indentured servants are given their freedom" ("Rolling Jubilee"), it seems that the tradition is limited because, not unlike the subversion enabled by carnival, the freedom enabled by debt forgiveness is conditional upon a time-limited jubilee permitted by a sovereign power. Notably, the coalition claims that

practice and support wide application of open source" (NYCGA).The NYCGA explains, "we are daring to imagine a new socio-political and economic alternative that offers greater possibility of equality. We are consolidating the other proposed principles of solidarity, after which demands will follow" (26). On November 15, 2011, the NYPD entered the park at 1am with sanitation trucks to evict occupiers. Reportedly, "all press passes except NYPD press credentials" were blocked from covering the event (Writers for the 99% 179). OWS belongings were removed in dump trucks and most of the People's library was "trashed or destroyed" (183-184). Five days prior to eviction, the NYCGA passed a "Statement of Autonomy" in which it claimed that "Occupy Wall Street is a people's movement" that does not support political parties, businesses, or brands but "values collective resources, dignity, integrity and autonomy above money" (NYCGA). OWS has received criticism for mobilizing a universal identity politics premised on the economically disenfranchised 99% and occupiers have reported internal struggles against racial, sex, gender, and class discrimination (Ashraf 33-35; Writers 61-67). Popular movements in Bolivia, Argentina, Cairo, and Spain inspired OWS, which has expanded to over 100 U.S. cities. In July 2011, the Canadian magazine *Adbusters* asked its readers, "Is America Ripe for a Tahrir moment?" (Farrell).This provocation along with the "Bloomsbergville" encampment at New York City hall to protest budget cuts also stirred activist imaginations. References to OWS as the "American Fall," and to Quebec's 2012 student protest movement as the "Maple Spring," signal solidarity with the Arab Spring uprisings. David Graeber adds that "the direct democratic process adopted by Occupy Wall Street" is inspired by the civil rights movement, feminist politics, Quaker and Native American spirituality, and anarchism (22-23).The long-term impact of the OWS movement is uncertain, but occupiers have faced political repression and criminalization.

      [222] Although "[t]he original debt holders will get a certified letter informing them they are off the hook," it is not clear how supportive banks will be to this socioecomic arrangement (Business Insider). Cornell West and Angela Davis, and other activist-scholars, have shown support for OWS. In various addresses, Davis has drawn on Audre Lorde's notions of complex solidarity to encourage OWS.

"debt resistance is just the beginning," and they encourage others to join them "to imagine and create a new world based on the common good, not Wall Street profits (Strike Debt). Debt abolition as a social relation of economic forgiveness is not immune to the conditionality bred by sovereign powers and by neoliberal capitalism. Furthermore, anti-neoliberal strategies of resistance can reproduce power relations to limit and compromise solidarity. An unconditional commitment to dissent as a materialist social relation within cultures of resistance can enable those people constructed as the "forgiven" to contest or refuse a presumed identification. Dissent may thus be conceptualized as a crucial critical correlative to forgiveness in situations of critical social care.

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We must continue to examine the social relations between debt, power, and conditionality. Although unwavering anti-neoliberal solidarity seems necessary for effective social change, it also seems a mistake to limit understandings of anti-neoliberal dissent to conventional or consensus-based identity politics. The strategy of promoting difference through coalition, or even singularity in the context of the commons,[223] can also be limited, especially given that state-based, neoliberal paradigms can appropriate diversity discourses, not

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[223] Hardt and Negri explain that "[w]hen we place so much weight on the common, [...] some are likely to object that this amounts to an assumption of sameness or identity that denies or negates differences. We should emphasize, on the contrary, that when the common appears in the thought of Wittgenstein or Viveiros de Castro, it brings with it an affirmation of singularities. Wittgenstein's conceptions of language games and forms of life present the common only insofar as they engage alterity: the common is composed of interactions among singularities, such as singularities of linguistic expression. The same is true for the Amerindian multiple ontologies and the processes of becoming that Viveiros de Castro describes. Differences in perspective mark differences over not only opinions or principles but also what world we inhabit--or really they indicate that we inhabit different worlds. And yet every world is defined by becomings, constantly engaged with alterity. Whereas identity and difference stand in opposition, the common and singularity are not just compatible but mutually constitutive" (124-125).

only to promote the popular ethos of global consumer individualism alongside selective concentrations of wealth, but to cultivate an imagined consensus of the toleration of differences within and across national citizenries. We must examine and debate the range of neoliberal processes at play in the calculation of human labour value and in the management of social dissent. Experiences of exploitation, exclusion, disenfranchisement, or dispossession cannot be adequately understood if reduced to a tale of difference or adversity to be overcome. There are distinct and uneven conditions of neoliberal experience still to be explored and discussed within, across, and among bodies recognized, unrecognized, and/or misrecognized in relation to particular constituencies.

I have aimed to illuminate varied orientations in the critical imagining of U.S. neoliberal imperialism in the Caribbean and its impacts upon possibilities for oppositional organizing. Literary criticism surrounding black women's writing in the U.S. and Caribbean can often promote a cultural politics of resistance that is problematically celebratory insofar as it obscures material conditions for the reproduction of exploitation.[224] Thus, I have argued for the necessity to study processes by which authors illuminate, without resolving, theoretical and practical problems regarding struggles for solidarity and resistance in the neoliberal age. It is crucial to reflect upon anti-redemptive depictions insofar as they refuse to reinforce illusions of neoliberal, anti-neoliberal or post-neoliberal social consensus. Even though Paule Marshall, Jamaica Kincaid, and Michelle Cliff do not invoke the term neoliberalism, they provide critical imaginings of a neoliberal

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[224] As Helen Scott puts it, there are "readings in Caribbean literature that constantly move away from material relationships and experiences towards allegorical interpretations emphasizing language and representation" (13).

condition emerging from U.S.-Caribbean relations of trade, labour, and development. In doing so, they confront the unsettled meaning and security of equality and freedom in the late twentieth century during the neoliberal turn.

The writing of Marshall, Kincaid, and Cliff can be conceptualized in relation to the emergence of specific historical conditions enabled by U.S.-led neoliberal globalization in the Caribbean. Collectively, they evoke a similar sense of neoliberal life, but the orientation of their criticism is distinct. Drawing on Raymond Williams, Helen Scott argues that Caribbean women writers may share "'forms and structures of feeling,'" but she insists that "any such pattern will show variations, with some authors conforming to and others departing from the archetype" (18); one way to address individual variation, without foreclosing possibilities for a relational analysis, is to consider how "'substantively interactive'" forms of authorship can enable the "'reciprocal discovery of the truly social in the individual, and the truly individual in the social'" (18). In my view, literary criticism should avoid reproducing the effects of neoliberal hyper-individualism whereby the black female protagonist is analyzed as a synecdoche for resistance and exploitation. Rather than overburden this figure as the simultaneous embodiment of individual and social experience, why not consider her uneven relations to the material and social conditions imagined for her in the fictional world and in the culture of literary criticism? Such an approach may help us to identify distinctive features of neoliberal criticism as it is creatively disseminated by authors. It can also help us to redirect debates in the Humanities in the effort to better grasp anti-neoliberal political interventions.

The imaginative work to address problems of black solidarity and failures of resistance need not undermine aspirations for strategic anti-neoliberal social organizing; however, such work can disturb imagined, inherited, or naturalized social bonds and thus contribute to perceptions of community betrayal or hostility. Anti-neoliberal solidarities oriented towards critical social care must do away with the punitive culture of neoliberal ideology and policy. An unconditional commitment to both forgiveness and dissent may be needed to generate social solidarities that work to avoid exploitation, alienation, and fatigue. My proposal is paradoxical, however, for it seems that it is formulated as a conditionality: the unconditional commitment to dissent requires the unconditional commitment to forgiveness. *Must* this be the case? Is unconditional forgiveness always possible or even advisable? When is it necessary for dissent to function as an intervention to disrupt the violence or failure of social organization? When should solidarity be sustained despite the expression of dissent? These questions require ongoing debate.

I have suggested limitations for intersectional analysis insofar as it can re-inscribe exclusivist ideological priorities and paradoxically idealized imaginings of black women as prototypical figures of exploitation and resistance. Yet, I have also demonstrated that a critical revitalization of intersectional analysis may be crucial to illuminate unevenly classed processes of racialization, feminization, and regionalization. The neoliberal age is not post-intersectional; rather, neoliberal discourse obscures intersectional experiences of exploitation, exclusion, disenfranchisement, and/or dispossession. It can promote the illusion of equality

and freedom by sustaining oversimplified imaginaries and seemingly unified political and social identifications. This illusive neoliberal orientation can distract popular attention away from the violent contradictions of neoliberal policy in practice. It can also distract attention away from the social reproduction of violence within cultures of resistance.

Writing about the politics of black female representation, I have tried to be conscientious of lived struggles for activism and movement-building. The reluctance to address signs of trouble and struggle within cultures of resistance may be read as a terrified response to encounters with a militaristic neoliberal culture and to the ease with which public perceptions of failure can shake the activist morale of social movements. Because individuals assume different risks to participate in social protest and movement-building, we must be more critically responsive to the various conditions under which people are selectively terrorized to different degrees. The failure or success of social movements may be more productively articulated in relation to a wide-ranging analysis of the social constraints effected by neoliberal geo-economics and the bio-political military state apparatuses operating to manage dissent and calculate criminality. The unconditional commitment to critical social care can aid us in the process of rethinking what counts as success and failure in the neoliberal age. Mainstream media performs a neoliberal service when it transforms activist struggles into spectacles for popular consumption. We should thus refuse to be resigned to depictions that reduce the arrest of an individual protestor to the singular act of policing in the context of the singular event of activism. As we explore evidence

of social movement-building in the neoliberal age, we should consider how the social scale of policing effects freedoms and constraints to delimit cultures of resistance.[225]

<center>***</center>

In the introduction to this dissertation, I make the claim that "[p]overty can create conditions for competition as well as for the destruction of one's sense of social commitment to others" (15). Arguing that the neoliberal condition involves "not only a bio-political calculation of responsibility and disposability, but also [...] a *geo-economic calculation of social time*" (15), I have suggested how the individualized engagement in anti-neoliberal struggles can be limited or inhibited. How, in this context, can cultures of anti-neoliberal resistance collaborate to challenge the geo-economic and bio-political constraints of the neoliberal age? A turn to the neoliberal state for answers will not suffice; to reinvigorate and popularize political imaginings of social care, we must address the felt limitations of our own capacity to relate to and care for others.

Poverty as geo-economic constraint is by no means the only potential obstacle to the expansion of social solidarity for anti-neoliberal resistance. Criticism regarding the professionalization and corporatization of activist cultures has illuminated hierarchical, capitalist, and punitive features of social movement-building over the past few decades (Andaiye; Ford-Smith; Smith; Rodríguez). The argument of Dylan Rodríguez and Ruth Wilson Gilmore that "the NPIC [Non-Profit Industrial Complex] is the natural corollary to the prison industrial complex

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[225] I borrow from the title *Freedom and Constraint in Caribbean Migration and Diaspora*, edited by Thomas-Hope.

(PIC)" in the U.S. is one example (Smith 8). Rodríguez defines the NPIC as "'a set of symbiotic relationships that link political and financial technologies of state and owning class control with surveillance over public political ideology, including and especially emergent progressive leftist social movements'" (qtd. in Smith 8). Andrea Smith adds that it functions to "redirect activist energies into career-based modes of organizing instead of mass-based organizing capable of actually transforming society" (3); it can thus "allow corporations to mask their exploitative and colonial work practices through 'philanthropic' work" and "encourage social movements to model themselves after capitalist structures rather than to challenge them" (3). In the context of the Caribbean women's movement,[226] Guyanese activist Andaiye has been critical of the professionalization of feminist politics as it has undermined the expansion of a popular social base for anti-imperial movement-building. In the neoliberal NGO "Age of Projects," she finds that the study of "the interrelationship of oppressions and transformation" is displaced by a hierarchy of "theoreticians of this view or consultants on it" ("Counting" 210). These critical perspectives should remind us that financial support for social movements does not necessarily promote solidarity, egalitarian participation, or horizontal forms of mutual aid. As class structures continue to be integrated into social movements, the neoliberal culture of management and conditionality is reinforced to permit exploitation, alienation, and fatigue.

To bring this project to a close, I would like to reflect upon a small sample

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[226] Peggy Antrobus suggests that the period for the movement was 1975-1995 ("The Rise").

of regional activist newsletters produced by the Caribbean Association for Feminist Research and Action (CAFRA) during the 1980s and 1990s. Drawing on the archive of *CAFRA News* as a printed documentary source of Caribbean feminist anti-neoliberal research and activism, I offer a provisional analysis of the newsletter's portrayal of the aspirations and struggles to consolidate Caribbean solidarity on a regional scale. I also discuss criticism of CAFRA by Peggy Antrobus, Andaiye, and Rhoda Reddock to suggest how it informs my conception of critical social care. Taking a cue from Alison Donnell who argues that "a diasporic critical model has trumpeted the Caribbean as a theoretical utopia in which creolisation, hybridity, synchronicity, deterritorialization find their models but not their archives" (127), I draw on *CAFRA News* to consider social possibilities of cultural production coordinated in conjunction with the historical unfolding of Caribbean-based, feminist anti-neoliberal activism during the 1980s and 1990s.

The opportunity to work with a non-digitized, material archive of *CAFRA News* arose from a conversation that I had with Professor Rhoda Reddock while working in Trinidad as a Visiting Researcher at the University of West Indies in 2010. Although I wanted to maintain a literary focus in my dissertation, I felt it would be valuable to consider cultural accounts of Caribbean women's activism in the region. Keeping in mind my literary and cultural studies training, Professor Reddock arranged for me to access the *CAFRA News* archive housed in the library at the Tunapuna Office of the Secretariat for CAFRA in Trinidad.[227] Grateful for

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[227] The CAFRA Secretariat was closed to the public due to financial insecurities when I was in Trinidad in 2010.

this opportunity, I acknowledge the limitation of my provisional analysis as a Canadian researcher who has just begun to study CAFRA.

In several respects, the newsletter suggests how CAFRA feminist activists linked neoliberal criticism with the imperative to produce feminist research and action *within*, *for*, and *by* the region.[228] As such, I find that an imagined Caribbean feminist anti-neoliberal "counterpublic" was constructed through the newsletter medium. If, as Michael Warner argues, "[c]ounterpublics are spaces of circulation in which it is hoped that the poesis of scene making will be transformative" rather than "replicative" of dominant publics (88), then the early issues of *CAFRA News* can be read as a mode of address through which Caribbean feminists worked to constitute an anti-neoliberal public in neoliberal Caribbean society. Several challenges arose from the work to constitute such a public.

CAFRA encountered internal struggle and debate over what should constitute a regional and feminist politics. I foreground this matter to unsettle potential assumptions that the question of solidarity and resistance is simply less divisive when encountered on a smaller regional scale. Further to the point, it seems important to keep in mind ways in which "a fetishism of organizational preference all too often stands in the way of exploring appropriate and effective solutions" (Harvey *Rebel Cities* 70). My aim in the examination of CAFRA, then, is not to promote a romantic depiction of practical and effective anti-neoliberal grassroots organizing to serve as a counterpoint to the limitations that I have suggested for the transnational Caribbean organizing imagined in works produced

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[228] CAFRA's eight objectives listed on the inside cover of early issues reinforce this imperative. See note 231.

by writers of a U.S. Caribbean Diaspora. As will become evident in my

provisional analysis, the political and social orientations of women working

against neoliberal conditions in the region were not homogenous; as such,

consensus regarding the relevance and efficacy of feminist politics was and

remains difficult to achieve.

  CAFRA deliberately departed from regional Leftist movements of

the1960s and 1970s to prioritize the development of feminist research, theory, and

action (Reddock 2007).[229] While Peggy Antrobus, Sonia Cuales, Joan French,

Rawwida Baksh-Soodeen, Honor Ford-Smith and Rhoda Reddock are the official

founders, forty feminists reportedly attended the association's launch meeting at

the Caribee Beach Hotel in Barbados on April 1st 1985 (CAFRA "Minutes").

Ramabai Espinet explains that "the event took place [...] immediately following a

regional meeting celebrating the end of the U.N. Decade for Women"

("Introduction" xiii). According to CAFRA's launch meeting minutes, the

attending women came from ten different countries[230] and ranged in their

experiences working within government and nongovernment organizations, as

well as with postsecondary and media institutions. Justifications, objectives, and

calls for action for the association were established at this meeting and it was

decided that coordinators, national representatives, steering committees,

volunteers, and a central Secretariat were to be recruited. Collectively, the

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[229] According to Paget Henry, "[t]he contemporary phase of Caribbean Marxism" faced the challenge "to assimilate feminist critiques of the notions of wage labour that have been central to this tradition of thought. These critiques have suggested that, in spite of its universal form and gender-neutral appearance, the concept has a male bias which results from the systematic underrepresentation of the economic contributions of women" (328).

[230] Representatives of the following countries were in attendance: Antigua, Barbados, Belize, Curacao, Guyana, Jamaica, Martinique, St. Vincent, Suriname, and Trinidad & Tobago.

attendees defined feminists as "those who recognize the exploitation and oppression of women and its relationship to other forms of exploitation and oppression in the society, AND work actively to change it" (CAFRA "Minutes"). Media was to be used strategically to disseminate "the concept of feminism" and to "shatter the myths, [and] negative connotations that have built up around it" (CAFRA "Minutes"). It would also be a tool to "inform the general population of CAFRA's activities," "its research findings," as well as to encourage "feminists already working in the media to join CAFRA" (CAFRA "Minutes").

In the 2002 issue of the newsletter entitled "Caribbean Feminism: Where are we going?" Sheila Rampersad explains that "the original vision for *CAFRA News* was that the newsletter serve as a vehicle for information exchange among a membership separated by sea, language and culture. The updates are critical in bridging information gaps and were therefore considered indispensible in this issue" (3). According to Rampersad, CAFRA is "the only organisation of its kind in the region," while "*CAFRA News* is the only publication of its kind in the Caribbean" (3). Cited as "the primary networking tool of the Caribbean Association for Feminist Research and Action" on the inside cover of many issues, the newsletter has not, to my knowledge, received any extensive critical analysis. Nonetheless, it represents a valuable archival resource for anyone seeking to gain historical insight into the complex struggles for regional anti-neoliberal alliance among Caribbean women of diverse backgrounds. The newsletter provides research into export processing zones, development policy, and U.S. Cold war strategy, at the time of the neoliberal turn when autonomous

social organization was being challenged.

The general aims of CAFRA established at the launch meeting are
reproduced in the inside covers of the first two volumes of *CAFRA News* (March
1987 and December 1988);[231] in subsequent issues, they are replaced with a
statement that such information is available in brochure format upon request. In
the 1987 and 1988 issues, the significance of the "analysis of relations between
men and women in non-capitalist and socialist societies" is cited, but "CAFRA's
Mission" by the January 1996 issue is characterized by the language of "social
justice," "non-patriarchal procedures, perceptions, and structures," as well as
"economic self-sufficiency." Sheila Rampersad suggests that "[a] recurrent issue
in Caribbean feminism is the extent to which feminism does not have a grassroots
orientation" (3). Thus, while the discursive shift away from "non-capitalist and
socialist" orientations may be reflective of the post-Cold War age, it may also
subtly cue the institutionalization of feminist activism.

The first issue of *CAFRA News* was published in March 1987 and
subsequent newsletters were published two to three times per year throughout the

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[231] In the first issue, the editors include 3 general aims and 8 objectives on the inside
cover. The aims include the following: "1. (i) develop an approach to women's problems from the
perspectives of race, class and sex, specifically to show how the exploitative relationship between
men and women facilitates the continuation, maintenance and reproduction of exploitative
capitalist relations, and how the capitalist system benefits from this situation; (ii) develop an
approach to the analysis of relations between men and women in non-capitalist and socialist
societies. 2. Develop the feminist movement in the entire Caribbean region. 3. Promote the
interrelationship between research and action." The stated objectives range from the development
of "research priorities based on the needs of the women's movement in the entire region," to
"shatter the myth that 'feminism divides the struggle,'" to "provide a focal point for bringing
together feminist organizations in the entire region," to "develop a base of documentation" and
"access to available source of documentation." The final objective listed is to "promote the
continuous analysis of language in order to identify and correct the sexist assumptions embedded
in its structure which are detrimental to women's expression and development at every level."

1980s and 1990s.[232] All newsletters were published in English until the January-

June 1995 bilingual issue was released in English and Spanish. This fact may

have helped to reinforce the perceptions of English-speaking dominance in

CAFRA and in *CAFRA News* as conveyed in letters to the editor and in meeting

reports included in the newsletter. Many issues document debates and conflicts

expressed among constituents of CAFRA. While the newsletter suggests barriers

to regional recognition, communication, and participation, the retrospective

criticism identifies key limitations to Caribbean feminist organizing. The extent to

which a feminist politics is useful to anti-neoliberal social movement-building

remains an unsettled debate in these contexts. That the first bilingual issue of

CAFRA News was published eight years after the first issue is suggestive of an

outreach delay that is not without implications, especially if Sheila Rampersad is

right to suggest that "feminism has developed, and is developing, differently in

the different language areas of the Caribbean, i.e. Dutch, Spanish, French-, and

English-speaking regions" (3).[233] Early on, CAFRA stated that *CAFRA News*

"operates on no budget at all" ("Last Words" 28); thus, the association may have

been too financially limited to accommodate multilingual communications.[234]

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[232] The newsletter has continued production into the 2000s but concision requires me to limit analysis to early issues.

[233] Norman Girvan explains that "'the Caribbean' is a sociohistorical category, commonly referring to the cultural zone characterized by the legacy of slavery and the plantation system. It embraces the islands and parts of the adjoining mainland—and may be extended to include the diaspora overseas" (3). He adds that "[i]t was not until the 1940s that 'the Caribbean' began to acquire some currency in the European West Indian colonies. This was originally as a result of the activities of the (Anglo-American) Caribbean Commission and subsequently that of the work of regional historians and social scientists" (7).

[234] The following statement is made under the section "Last Words" in the September 1988 issue: "The CAFRA office is struggling along on a tiny budget since at present our funding is almost all project-specific. We are sure that there are members in countries outside the region who would like to help CAFRA in some tangible way, and who could assist us with our stationary needs (typing paper, envelopes, scrap pads, paper clips, or whatever). We also have a Canon

Yet, the symbolic power of the English Caribbean should not be underestimated given that it served as regional centre for feminist research and action in CAFRA's early years. In 2002, *CAFRA News* continued to be published in just two of the four official languages of the region (Rampersad 3).

CAFRA News does not ignore CAFRA's problems of constituency and membership. The first issue includes letters of support for the development and expansion of CAFRA. Michelle Cliff writes in her letter sent from Santa Cruz, California: "I am a Jamaican living in the U.S. Do you accept membership from those of us living abroad? If so, I would very much like to join. I was most excited by your statement of aims and objectives. Your organization is a truly vital one. All the best. Yours in sisterhood" (2). That a question of "membership" is raised by a Jamaican-American author in the first issue is suggestive of an unsettled debate concerning the politics of attachment and affiliation between Caribbean residents and those living in the U.S. Caribbean Diaspora. To press this issue further, I would suggest that the hesitation conveyed in the first issues of *CAFRA News* regarding the acceptance of women living in the Caribbean Diaspora as full members in the association may be linked to the desire to coordinate regional social relations outside the purview of foreign (and especially U.S.) influence. That Cliff, as a U.S. resident, would not have been permitted to join CAFRA as a full member, at least according to the rules outlined in the first

AP150 typewriter that eats typewriter ribbons and correction tape at a horrendous rate (the former cost US $8.00 each locally). Whatever you can supply will be gratefully received and put to good use. Why not bring it with you to the November meeting, or send it with another who is attending. We also want to remind members and subscribers to *CAFRA News* to please PAY UP! Paper costs have almost doubled since the recent devaluation of the TT [Trinidad and Tobago] dollar, and the newsletter operates on no budget at all" (28).

issues of *CAFRA News*, is suggestive of a regional Caribbean feminist politics of proximity that can be read as signaling a decisive form of anti-neoliberal positioning.

The ideological role of Caribbean writers, scholars, and activists living in the neoliberal U.S. during the academic rise of postcolonial criticism may thus be questioned alongside, but necessarily always in relation to, the desires of those living within the Caribbean and pushing for more rooted articulations of anti-neoliberal politics and culture. The first issues of *CAFRA News* provide evidence to suggest collective hesitation by CAFRA to conflate the desires, goals, and orientations of Caribbean women living in the region and in the Diaspora.[235] Rootedness, in this context, seems motivated by the desire to establish routes for more productive communication and activism on an intraregional basis, although *CAFRA News* also makes evident CAFRA's commitment to analysis and activism informed by both local and global dimensions of capitalist, racist, patriarchal violence.[236]

"The Summary of Meeting Decisions" for CAFRA's General Meeting in

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[235] David Scott argues that "it may well be the case, for instance, that *one condition* for the rise of 'postcoloniality' as a going category especially in the North Atlantic academy is the transformation of capitalism. It would be an interesting question whether the themes and modalities that animate its deployment in critical practices are in some ways *dependent* upon the material conditions produced in the wake of a distinctively transnational or global capitalism. But to acknowledge that a practice has determinate conditions does not *thereby* make it a mere ideological *reflection* of any one of them" (139-140).

[236] As Rhoda Reddock argues, "[t]here is continued debate on what precisely can be defined as diaspora; yet [James] Clifford calls for a shift from precise defining characteristics to a focus on discourses of diaspora which focus on both the routes and the roots in order to create a community consciousness and solidarity of difference. In other words diaspora should be seen as 'a signifier, not simply of transnationality and movement, but of political struggles to define the local as distinctive community, in historical contexts of displacement' (Clifford,1994: 308). With such an understanding of this concept, it would be interesting to see the extent to which the idea of Africa continues to have resonance in the African diaspora and the forms that this takes. It is also important to track the ways in which this process has been gendered as well as the diversity in the experience of diaspora among sexes, classes, and nationalities" ("Editorial" 1-2).

the December 1988 issue of the newsletter explains that as "one of the chief

mechanisms of communication and networking," *CAFRA News* "should be

available in Spanish and French, with additional translation into other languages

(especially the creoles) at the national level wherever possible" (3). Reportedly,

women at the meeting felt that CAFRA should place greater emphasis on "non-

English speaking territories" and use audio-visual aids to facilitate communication

when possible (3). Sign language was discussed a possibility for communication.

The issue of CAFRA membership dues was assessed according to regional

variations in currency exchange that limit newsletter access and it was decided

that, "[f]or those countries with foreign exchange transfer problems, barter can be

used as a last resort with prior arrangement with the CAFRA office" (3). One of

the key "Aims and Objectives" described in the first issues of *CAFRA News* is to

"[b]ring a feminist perspective to bear on the work of existing progressive

organizations and shatter the myth that 'feminism divides the struggle.'" In the

first two issues, however, eligibility for CAFRA membership is cited as "open to

Caribbean women within the region who support CAFRA's general aims and

objectives," whereas "[a]ssociate membership" is available to "Caribbean women

living abroad." In the December 1988 issue, no distinction is made between the

membership of Caribbean women living within the region and those living

elsewhere. There were likely multiple motivations for the expansion of the

membership base including political and economic ones.

In the December 1988 issue, Tina Johnson explains that "[a]ll four

language groups were in evidence" at CAFRA's "first General Meeting since the

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formation of the organization in April 1985" (1). In the CAFRA General Meeting

report, Cathy Shepherd relays "a debate on Associate membership and

presentations on the status of the women's movement in the non-English-speaking

Caribbean" (2); the "Summary of Meeting Decisions" confirms that "[t]he

category of 'Associate Membership' is abolished" (CAFRA 3). This revision is not

without conditionality, for while "[f]ull membership is open to women living in

the Caribbean and women living outside the region who support CAFRA's Aims

and Objectives," organizations in the Diaspora are prohibited from joining

CAFRA (CAFRA "Summary" 3). This decision could be read as part of an anti-

neoliberal strategy to imagine the Caribbean as the primary site for feminist

organizing and institution-building. The conditions for Diaspora membership may

also be read alongside the omission of CAFRA's thirteenth research priority

premised on the application "of existing feminist theory as developed in Europe

and the U.S.A. [...] to the Caribbean situation."

Most issues produced between 1987 and 1992 include a geographic map

evocative of an expanding regional constituency. In the January-March 1992

issue, the map on the inside cover includes the addition of Central American

countries bordering the Caribbean Sea, as well as Florida and its surrounding

islands.[237] Although the January-March 1993 issue entitled "Si Por Cuba" does

not include a map, it features articles written in English by Caribbean women who

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[237] In the first two issues, dated March and December 1987, the map for CAFRA
includes: Turks & Caicos, the British Virgin Islands, St. Kitts/Nevis, Montserrat, Antigua &
Barbuda, Dominica, St. Lucia, St Vincent & the Grenadines, Barbados, Grenada, Trinidad &
Tobago, Guyana, the U.S. Virgin Islands, Surinam, French Guyana, Puerto Rico, Dominican
Republic, Cuba, Martinque, Belize, and Jamaica. In the March 1988 issue, Anguilla, St. Maartin,
St. Vincent, Bonaire, Curaçao, Aruba, Haiti, San Salvador, and the Bahamas are added to the map.

travel to Cuba to report on the country's orientations towards feminism, healthcare, trade and development policy, and the elderly. With the inclusion of articles entitled "CUBA TODAY... because Cuba is Caribbean, like Us," "Cuba needs our Help," and "First Impressions of Cuba," it seems evident that this issue of *CAFRA News* represents the work of English-speaking Caribbean feminists to engage with less familiar non-English constituencies in the region.

The December 1988 issue provides profiles and interviews featuring CAFRA women living and working in places throughout the Caribbean as well as in North America and Western Europe. Palmira Rios is identified as a Puerto Rican woman who resides in New York and works as Deputy Director of the Center for Immigration and Population Studies at the College of Staten Island/CUNY. The profile preceding the *CAFRA News* interview with her explains that "[a]t the CAFRA Meeting, [Rios] was particularly forceful in arguing for the abolition of the category of Associate Member, because of the various compelling factors which cause Caribbean women to live outside the region (political, economic, etc). The change in membership status was subsequently approved by the meeting" (CAFRA "Palmira Rios" 20). Reporting on the 10th Anniversary Consultation and Symposium on the Women and Development Unit (WAND), Rhoda Reddock suggests that "[w]hile for some of us immersed in the movement its existence is never in question, the Consultation reminded us of the large constituency of organised women, let alone the women not involved in organisations, who have been only marginally touched by the new women's movement and by feminist discourse and action" (28). In her portrayal,

feminist organizers can misrecognize political and social affiliations among women who belong to "religious, trade, and political party-based organisations" (28); she stresses the need for cross-organizational collaboration to build regional networks for feminist consciousness and support.

I have characterized the early issues of *CAFRA News* as anti-neoliberal in orientation but, as a cultural production, it remains questionable what postcolonial work is performed by them and whether or not the term 'postcolonial' would even be relevant to such an analysis. While focusing on ways in which Paule Marshall, Jamaica Kincaid, and Michelle Cliff engage with the neoliberal imagination, I addressed the limitations of analysis arising from the ideological imperatives of postcolonial and black feminist literary criticism surrounding their works. In "The Genres of Postcolonialism," Brent Hayes Edwards argues that "the term *postcolonial* may have proven itself to be most useful when it is placed under severe pressure" (1). Responding to the perceived inefficacies of postcolonial criticism, Edwards reminds us of Stuart Hall who "has suggested that part of the reason for the failure of postcolonial work to deal with the economic may be that it has been 'most fully developed by literary scholars, who have been reluctant to make the break across disciplinary (even postdisciplinary) boundaries required to advance the argument'" (2). It is clear to me that economic questions are not absent from the literature studied in this dissertation; however, Hall's claim is provocative to me as a literary critic who also finds it impossible to ignore the interdisciplinary dimensions of *CAFRA News*. The anti-neoliberal work of the newsletters is world-building, both in its critical and creative scope despite its

Caribbean situation" is listed as CAFRA's thirteenth research priority, but, as already mentioned, it was removed in subsequent issues. This revision suggests CAFRA's conscious reorientation towards the generation of regional theory and analysis.[239]

During the 1980s, *CAFRA News* focused on a range of women's experiences and developed projects related to agricultural, industrial, and creative labour. In the regional analysis of Caribbean life, the early issues emphasized technologies of neoliberal control in a variety of ways. For example, contributors addressed the U.S.-led, Caribbean Basin Initiative (CBI), the trade embargo of Cuba by President Ronald Reagan's administration, and the impact of neoliberal Free Trade Zones on Caribbean women workers. The September 1988 issue contains Sharon Chacko's cover image "The Tree of Life (The First Strike)" portraying a woman breast-feeding a child beneath a palm tree surrounded by natural tropical vegetation. This image was reproduced for the cover of CAFRA's poetry anthology *Creation Fire: A CAFRA Anthology of Caribbean Women's Poetry* published in collaboration with Sister Vision Press in 1990. The text on the cover of this issue of *CAFRA News* reads: "Focus on Free Trade Zones." Combining themes of the defense of women's labour rights and the promotion of working women's poetry production, this issue is indicative of *CAFRA News*' multifaceted attention to interlocking forms of cultural and economic oppression and the work to shape a critical consciousness of the distinctive neoliberal conditions of control arising from U.S.-Caribbean relations.

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[239] See Mohammed's 1998 article "Towards Indigenous Feminist Theorizing in the Caribbean" for elaboration.

In Rawwida Baksh-Sodeen's review of Export Processing Zones in the September 1988 issue, she describes struggles for regional solidarity against U.S. imperial aggression accordingly:

> The differences between the experiences of war and peace in the Caribbean and Central America are so great as to be a difference in kind, in dimension. Yet I believe that they can be placed along a continuum. In the contemporary Caribbean, apart from Haiti, we know little of military dictatorships which brutalize our people through the gross use of terror; which systematically wipe out villages of women, men and children; which commit acts of genocide against the indigenous peoples.
>
> To the Central American trapped in a war which is hell-bent on destroying her or him, fleeing to a neighbouring Caribbean country must come as a respite, a break. Are we in the Caribbean, then, experiencing peace? Is peace the overt absence of war? I do not think that we are at peace for, as has been discussed over the last two days, the Caribbean, like its Central American neighbours, is a focus of United States' aggression. The Caribbean region has been the focus of a political war through a specific economic package designed to debilitate, to make us metaphorically 'anaemic', a shadow of ourselves. (8)

The impulse to homogenize experiences of U.S. aggression among Central America and Caribbean populations is resisted in the passage above; yet, Baksh-Sodeen is suggestive of the relevance of critical relational analysis as she illuminates the seemingly less visible conditions of U.S. violence arising in the

Caribbean.[240] Although she articulates interregional patterns of U.S. imperialism, Baksh-Sodeen upholds a focus on policy issues affecting workers in the Caribbean. She thus calls for the clarification of a specific and under-examined form of U.S.-led, neoliberal violence while keeping open the critical space for a relational analysis of variation.

Drawing on the research of CAFRA member Joan French, Baksh-Sodeen identifies links between U.S. national interests, the Caribbean Basin Initiative, and the International Monetary Fund, to argue that the promotion of a "'free market' economy" contributes to the "devaluation of [Caribbean] national currencies to make US investment cheaper" while imposing "massive cuts in public service employment and government expenditure on social services" (8). In her view, economic insecurities have been exacerbated to compel Caribbean people to take up employment in exploitative Export Processing Zones (EPZs) where wages, health and safety standards, and rights to union organization are severely threatened by comparison with standards she imagines are upheld in the U.S. (8-9). Finally, she argues that the U.S. collaborates with Third World military dictatorships on aid and trade policy to secure the Caribbean as a U.S. sphere of influence (9).

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[240] In 2002 Andaiye maintained that "at the economic level, our relatively high rankings in terms of growth, per capita income and other indicators not only mask the inequalities inside our countries (in particular, the fact that the great majority of Indigenous peoples live in absolute poverty", but do not take account of the threat to the small, open CARICOM economies being wielded in the name of trade liberalization. The fact that our wages are 'high' means that foreign capital which invests here because of our other 'comparative advantages' (geographic location; levels of literacy; the fact that many of us speak English), is always in search of cheaper labour, is always poised for flight. Capital can move freely, but not labour, except when the developed world needs our skills: the theft of our teachers and nurses now amounts to a crisis. Public violence (like domestic violence) is escalating, and in one territory after the other the response of governments is to increase State violence" (21).

The consciousness-raising and world-building effect of *CAFRA News* seems integral to the work of constituting an imagined anti-neoliberal public. In addition to the focus on political and socioeconomic issues, the newsletters contain book reviews, visual art, and poetry to promote the political and social significance of women's grassroots cultural production. The development of "[w]omen's cultural expression as an instrument for the building of power," as well as for the promotion of "[w]omen in Caribbean Literature," are "priority research/action areas" cited in the first issues of *CAFRA News*. Writing workshops are advertised and discussed as are regional theatre and textiles groups working to promote women's political consciousness-raising and popular education. Ramabai Espinet argues in the first issue that poetry is the most appropriate medium for working women whose creative time is restricted due to their work and family obligations. In her view, "[i]t is not difficult to understand why. It is easier, after all, to write a poem if one has a few minutes between cooking, looking after children and coping with housework than a novel or a play. But much of this poetry is 'silent' in that it remains private, unobtrusive, closeted" ("anthology of ♀♀'s poetry" 4). She adds that "the problem of writing and publishing is compounded by our history of slavery and indentureship, colonialism and its attendant disabling mechanisms" (4). Linking labour exploitation to the disempowerment of Caribbean women's creative expression, Espinet lends support to my conception of neoliberal geo-economic constraint as it limits women's participation in social movement-building.

Notably, Espinet edited the 1990 poetry collection *Creation Fire* which

was intended to provide "Caribbean women the opportunity to present themselves, for the first time, in a common medium which intends to cross all of the boundaries of class, race, language and country. Such a fertile accumulation of poetic experience cannot but reproduce itself" (Espinet "anthology of ♀♀'s poetry" 4-5). In the anthology's introduction, Espinet claims that"[t]o mark the birth of CAFRA many women spontaneously wrote poetry" (xiii); as such, the anthology is dedicated "To the courage, heroism and resistance for the women of the Caribbean region" (n.p). Espinet explains that although the editorial board "sought originally to reach the so-called 'grassroots-constituency,'" of Caribbean women, it "soon discovered that the 'unrepresented voice' transcended the barriers of race, class and language" (xx).[241] The poems of 121 Caribbean women are included in the anthology, along with author biographies, and the contributors are said to represent the diversity of the region (xvii).[242] Thus, not unlike the initial vision of membership in *CAFRA News*, the initial editorial agenda for the

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[241] As Carole Boyce Davies argues, "to identify Black women's writing primarily with United States writing is to identify with US hegemony" and therefore it remains crucial "to locate [...] a variety of geographical and literary constituencies" (8); however, such a process requires us to be mindful of the fact that "terms like 'minority,' when used to refer to people of color in the US, or 'Black,' in Great Britain, 'alien' or 'immigrant' have power only when one accepts the constraints of dominating societies or when one chooses tactical reappropriation for resistance. As soon as one moves out of those contexts to see what 'Black' conveys in geopolitical scope [...] or the more expansive implications of the category 'African-American' or 'Caribbean' [...], then we are talking in a transnational or global context which eschews localized minority status and recognizes these as attempts to place nation-state/binding identity status on transnational identities. The dynamics of location and re-connection offer a new and more contradictory set of questions and responses" (*Black Women* 14-15).

[242] The editorial board received over 500 poetry submissions (Espinet "Introduction" xv). Espinet explains that "[f]or emerging Caribbean women writers [in 1990] there are few theoretical models" and thus CAFRA aims to empower "the voices which lay dormant in the region-- struggling to find utterance, producing hidden writing or composing in their heads songs, poems and stories which were still unwritten" (xix). The poetry collection is divided into the following sections which thematically invoke conceptions of Caribbean women and their relation to resistance: The Seer, The Artist, The Mother, The Lover, The Exile, The Mourner, The Land, The Region, The Worker, The Guerilla, The Survivor, and the Praise Singer. Photography and visual art are included to depict women in relation to these themes. Espinet offers a conceptualization of these themes in her introduction (xvii-xviii).

anthology was to prioritize a particular imagining of Caribbean women's diversity and solidarity in the region.

The question of whether anti-neoliberal solidarity among Caribbean women should emerge primarily from a regional "'grassroots-constituency'" (Espinet xx) or through processes of forming "global alliances" (Alexander and Mohanty xxix) can be put into productive tension through an examination of the "CAFRA Conversations" section of the December 1988 issue of *CAFRA News*. Interviewed on the subject of the value of feminist politics to black and Caribbean women (4-8), Audre Lorde and Andaiye reveal the potential limitations of their own perspectives regarding issues ranging from U.S. imperialism, black feminist discursive power, homosexuality, and economic injustice. While they are both described in the newsletter as "dynamic women of the Caribbean," Lorde is distinguished as a "black lesbian feminist poet and author" as well as "the mother of two children and a cancer survivor," who was "[b]orn in New York of West Indian parents" (4). Andaiye is described as "a veteran political activist of Guyana," "a leading member of the Working Peoples' Alliance (WPA)," "[a] founding member of Red Thread," "a former school principal," and "a consultant with WAND [Women and Development Unit]" (4). Lorde and Andaiye can be read as occupying distinctive critical positions for U.S. and Caribbean perspectives in this interview. Lorde characterizes Black Power and the Civil Rights Movement of the sixties as "a time of "incomplete visions" to argue that "if we as black people cannot deal with the lessons of our history—both our mistakes as well as our triumphs—we will simply repeat them" (5-6). She is particularly

wary of the way in which resistance cultures can be romanticized to obscure violence against women (6). Andaiye, in turn, cites as her influences Black Power and Marxism but acknowledges their limitations in dealing with gender violence.

Although Lorde and Andaiye agree with the interviewer when she suggests that black American and Caribbean women have been reluctant to embrace feminism as a result of homophobia (6), their assessments of this issue are distinct. Lorde argues that "CAFRA, like any other organisation, is going to have to take on full face [...] the issue of difference" (6). Meanwhile, Andaiye finds little evidence of a women's movement in Guyana at the time of the interview and adds that gay and lesbian communities of the Caribbean seem to be underground since she does "not personally know any Guyanese lesbian who does not live abroad" (7). Admitting to the "widespread feeling" in the region "that [homosexuality is] a wrong thing," she adds that "the question of sexuality" is not a priority for people preoccupied with securing basic needs for "water, food, and light" (7). Lorde argues for a distinctive "process of naming" same-sex intimacy as a Caribbean right, while Andaiye finds that economic insecurity prevents such communication, adding that government solutions such as "structural adjustment" and "health cuts" are "profoundly hostile to women" and "to the Caribbean" (8). According to Lorde, "the major challenges facing black women in the United States are now two-fold" (8). First, she cites "false complacency" among women who feel they have "'made it," but suggests that the "even more important challenge" is to recognize that as "citizens of the most powerful country in the world [...] we have a responsibility to identify that power and use it in concert

with other people, for our sisters. We are part of an international community of people of the diaspora and of people of colour, and that international community represents seven-eighths of the world's population, and being black is not going to protect us much longer" (8). Andaiye adds that, in a Caribbean context, the work to eliminate the "exploitation of women" is not only to improve the lives of women but the life of the region (8).[243] Here, it seems that, in addition to the unsettled issue of solidarity, we get insight into unsettled issues regarding the orientation of resistance and the emphasis that such resistance should place on U.S. imperialism, Black feminism, and Caribbean regionalism, and Caribbean Diaspora.

Although Lorde and Andaiye share concerns regarding the destructive role of U.S. imperialism, and related Caribbean state policies that render disposable the freedoms, rights, and socioeconomic care of communities racialized and gendered under late capitalism, it is not evident that they share a common sense of strategy for resistance. In fact, their responses offer distinctive emphases which,

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[243] Audre Lorde is a compelling cultural figure in U.S.-Caribbean relations. In March 2010, I attended a lecture supported by the Institute of Gender & Development Studies at the University of West Indies in Trinidad. Alexis De Veaux presented the talk, "Audre Lorde and the Longing for Home(land)," in which she reflected upon the research experiences of writing *Warrior Poet: A Biography of Audre Lorde* (2004). In the question-answer period, people debated Lorde's decision to move from the U.S. to St. Croix in 1986 where she lived until she died of cancer in 1992. Although her parents were from Grenada, Lorde felt connected to the region not only by way of ancestry. According to De Veaux, she envisioned the Caribbean as an inspirational site of revolutionary struggle and identified it as her political homeland. One woman in the audience suggested that the Caribbean could only be an idealized political destination for Lorde because she was not *of* the Caribbean, while another expressed disbelief over the notion that a place like Trinidad could inspire revolution. Referring to the frequent scene of dead animals left on highways to rot, as her example, she argued that both her government and her society lacked the organization for effective change and the impulse to care. I left the talk wondering in what ways Lorde idealized the Caribbean for her own revolutionary imagination? Alternatively, in what ways could she view the region from a critical angle that those who spent their lives in the region could not? The influence of Lorde's work is celebrated in the 1992 October-December issue of *CAFRA News*, which pays tribute to her life just after she died.

to my mind, suggests potential difficulties in the establishment of critical linkages for transnational or cross-border organizing. Andrea Smith has recently argued that the goal of anti-racist, anti-imperialist organizational resistance to white supremacy "should not be to organize around a common oppression, but rather to organize around building strategic alliances based on where each one of us is situated in the political economy" (qtd. in Khan, Hugill, McCreary).[244] The orientation of this anti-imperial work is not to collapse differences in the interest of solidarity, but rather to expand the analytic scope to address the "multiple logics" (Smith in Khan, Hugill, McCreary) of supremacy and violence. Transnational alliances may be productively forged from this perspective, but I would add that multiple formations of a "grassroots-constituency" may be necessary to address how neoliberal conditions alter social relations of power within specific terrains and, to draw again on David Scott, to the "description of that terrain and the power that produces the alteration--i.e., a description of modern power" (16). The question of "common oppression" thus becomes secondary to strategic questions of socioeconomic situatedness in the formation of alliances.

With these issues in mind, it could be argued that the responsibility that has been implicitly attributed to U.S.-based, black-identified, women writers of Caribbean Diaspora requires reassessment in the context of a literary-critical re-imagining of anti-neoliberal resistance and solidarity. Helen Scott finds that,

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[244] Smith argues that "[w]here we go wrong with questions of privilege, I think, is that we tend to individualize them," adding that guilty privilege "would make people say 'I wish I could be quadruply oppressed too.' What we didn't realize was that these oppressions are about larger logics that make us all complicit. They need to be collectively, rather than individually, addressed" (Khan, Hugill, McCreary).

historically, the middle-class culture of published Caribbean writers has meant less direct involvement in "anti-imperialist cross-class coalitions or other collective oppositional movements" and she adds that the seeming "gap between the world of the writer, and her fictional characters, that of the majority of Caribbean women, is cavernous" (17). In response to this predicament, she argues that "[t]he writer is neither simply a representative of their class position and social environment nor the autonomous subject of bourgeois ideology: the two coexist dialectically" (17).

In every text that I have examined in this dissertation, a case can be made to suggest the writer's consciousness of a strained relationship between Caribbean and U.S. forms of organizing against neoliberal conditions. By the end of Paule Marshall's *The Chosen Place, the Timeless People*, Merle intends to travel to Africa but is committed to return to the Caribbean; in turn, she urges the Jewish American anthropologist Saul to engage less with the Third World and more with local political struggles in the United States. The mother-daughter relationship in Marshall's *Daughters*, as well as the relationship between Annie Christmas and Mary Ellen Pleasant, in Cliff's *Free Enterprise*, reminds us of the productive networks as well as failed expectations that can arise from social relations of transnational solidarity. The works of Kincaid challenge readers to resist feelings of sentimentality and nostalgia as she depicts transnational familial and social relations of obligation under neoliberal conditions; in doing so, she reveals her own limited capacity to imagine and engage with activist counter-publics as they may exist in the contemporary Caribbean of which she is no longer a part. In this

sense, her "capacity to occupy multiple locations" (Brydon 8) is apparently more limited than a North American literary academy might have imagined.

The homosexual and queer identities of figures such as Kincaid's brother, Devon, in *My Brother* and Cliff's character, Harry/Harriet, in *No Telephone to Heaven*, remind us of the false dichotomies of insider/outsider status when it comes to matters of sexual and homophobic violence at state and interpersonal levels. This last point has resonance with the conversation had between Audre Lorde and Andaiye in *CAFRA News*. If Andaiye could claim to only be aware of homosexual life in the Diaspora, then what does it mean for people living in the Caribbean to produce their own language of non-heterosexual intimacy, as Lorde would have it at that time? What does it mean for Andaiye to prioritize the necessities of access to food and water over questions of homophobic sexual violence in the region? Are these experiences necessarily mutually exclusive in the context of critical social care for the Caribbean?

Are characters such as Devon or Harry/Harriet necessary to the imagination of real counter-publics within the region or do they serve as a more complicated projection of primarily U.S. Caribbean Diasporic concerns? Marshall, Kincaid, and Cliff do not provide answers to the problems they imagine and explore, but they provoke us to embrace a more anti-redemptive analysis than much literary criticism would suggest concerning transnational social commitments in the context of neoliberal life. Their literary productions may not be entirely exclusive from the cultural production of *CAFRA News*, particularly if contextualized along a continuum of creative neoliberal critique and associated

with the work to re-imagine solidarity and resistance in a neoliberal age. In the

context of literary criticism, then, it seems necessary to reexamine what

methodologies dominate to shape a flattened and too common interpretation of

texts. From which geopolitical locations do dominant methodologies emerge?

What power do they accrue and for whom? It is necessary for literary critics in

the North American academy to consider whether they participate in neoliberal

calculations of value through the selective definition and celebration of particular

traditions of black women's solidarity or resistance over those of others.

CAFRA's concerns regarding a range of living conditions for women in

the region were covered in the early issues of *CAFRA News*. During the 1990s,

the newsletter featured articles on debt crisis, policy implementation, cultural

production, fair trade, employment, education, health, religion, equal opportunity,

and human rights. The 1994 October-December issue focuses on CAFRA's plans

to participate in the UN's 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women held in

Beijing, where CAFRA achieved international reputation serving as the

"Caribbean NGO Focal Point" ("CAFRA Get Ready for Beijing" 9.1 p9).[245]

During the 2000s, *CAFRA News* has focused more on sexual health, youth

culture, aging, and generational distinctions in Caribbean orientations towards

feminism. As an umbrella organization for a variety of women's groups working

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[245] Drawing on a report by CAFRA Projects Coordinator Gemma Tang Nain, the January-June 1995 issue of *CAFRA News* explains that "the first task of 1995 was the development of links with focal points preparing for Beijing in Caribbean countries where linkages had not yet been established" ("CAFRA Gets Ready" 9). It is added that CAFRA is scheduled to "host three panels in Beijing under the themes--Women in Politics; Caribbean Feminism: A New Generation; and Feminist Economic Alternatives for the Caribbean. The main objective is to ensure Caribbean visibility in Beijing" (9). Notably, "[w]ith respect to preparations for the official conference, Andaiye of Guyana represented the Caribbean on the international team of drafters, on CAFRA's recommendation" (9).

throughout the region, CAFRA's vision was to establish a regional network through which to raise feminist consciousness, conduct research, disseminate information, and facilitate communication for action.

This does not mean, however, that participation in international conferences, networks, and funding agencies were not promoted. One of the most compelling issues raised in the retrospective criticism of the association concerns the institutionalization and professionalization of feminist politics and how this has impacted the development of regional women's social movement-building (Antrobus 2000; Andaiye 2002; Reddock 2007). Despite key differences in orientation, the retrospective criticism shares a basic consensus that Caribbean feminist politics has been compromised. The Lucille Mathurin Mair lectures, delivered respectively by Peggy Antrobus, in 2000, and Andaiye, in 2002, are interrelated, while Rhoda Reddock's critical reflection upon CAFRA's feminist politics provides a key supplementary response to Andaiye's ongoing critique of the association.

In the "The Rise and Fall of Feminist Politics in the Caribbean Women's Movement 1975-1995," Peggy Antrobus offers a critical genealogy of feminist political organizing based on her direct involvements with DAWN, WAND, and CAFRA (16).[246] She emphasizes the value of forging relations between grassroots organizations and universities to advance activist research agendas focused on women and development. This work, she argues, has been crucial to promote influential Third World feminist perspectives within institutions functioning at

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[246] DAWN is an acronym for Development Alternatives for a New Era. WAND represents the Women and Development Unit.

local, regional, and international levels (15).[247] Among the women whom

Antrobus thanks in this lecture for having supported her work is Andaiye (16).

Following this acknowledgement, she declares that "[i]nstitutional support is

essential for the intellectual and political work of promoting change" (16).

However, contrary to Andaiye, who is critical of the "post-Beijing" work

following the UN Fourth World Conference on Women ("Counting" 209),

Antrobus emphasizes the successes of Caribbean feminist conference organizing

(19). Underscoring the value of collaboration among diverse Caribbean

constituencies, she endorses an oppositional model of feminist politics capable of

"challenging [...] structures of oppression and the institutions which promote

them" (27). Notably, Antrobus focuses on feminist accomplishments despite her

wariness of neoliberal institutions as they threaten radical political agendas

(25).[248] To overlook the mainstream impact of feminism is, in her view, "to

condemn our efforts to failure," for "it is only a clear recognition of the energy of

feminist politics in our work as administrators, teachers, researchers, practitioners

and organizers that will save it from becoming a meaningless exercise, and some

of us from colluding in undermining our vision" (25). The positive depiction of

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[247] According to Antrobus, WAND sought "to define a different relationship between the university and its constituency" and to forge "a link between academia and activism" in the region ("The Rise" 11). Notably, *CAFRA News* promoted its work with the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) (12). WAND's critical approach to development is distinguished from the Women in Development (WID) paradigm, where the former addresses "'practical needs'" as well as "'political consciousness about international dependency relations and the resulting socioeconomic exploitation that affect both women and men,'" and the latter is said to focus on reform and "'equal opportunity'" (Nora Cebotarev qtd. in Antrobus 16-17).

[248] Antrobus notes the decreasing support for "the feminist political agenda" at the same time that there is a "co-optation of feminist language […], feminist concepts […] and feminist visions […] and by various bureaucratic devices such as gender mainstreaming, gender analysis, and the substitution of the word 'gender' for 'women' in so many programmes" (25). In her view, "[t]he mainstreaming of women's projects was to be a strategy for making women's projects into the processes of development planning and delivery systems so that women gain access to mainstream development resources" (25).

institution-building and the work for "gender justice" leadership, "in all our institutions—in legislatures, churches, school and families" (27) is to reinforce the notion that "[w]omen can lead the challenge to globalization, as we did in challenging the policies of structural adjustment" (27). She qualifies her position to acknowledge "[t]he shift in focus from public-sector led, broad-based development to private-sector led, market-oriented trade" as it "undoubtedly poses special threats to the well-being of the majority of people of small island developing states" (28). If competitive disadvantage resulting from the neoliberal failure to differentiate between "economies of scale" contributes to regional inequality, then it "is not the time to de-politicize a movement which over the past ten years has extended its analysis to the major global issues of our time" (28).

The 2002 Lucille Mathurin Mair Lecture, delivered by Andaiye, directly responds to the 2000 lecture delivered by Antrobus. In regard to CAFRA, Andaiye signals as a foundational problem the privileging of gender in the articulation of oppression as a structural opposition between the powerful and powerless (11). In a 2004 *small axe* interview with David Scott, Andaiye further denounces CAFRA, the women's movement, and contemporary feminist politics wholesale. When asked if current Caribbean feminist politics is "reproducing the mistakes of [her] generation" ("Counting" 211), she responds accordingly: "I don't see any evidence that any section of the Caribbean feminist movement retains the commitment it claimed to something that is truly transformative in this region" (211-212). Caribbean feminism, in her view, is largely middle-class and specialized to the extent that it ignores "the lives of women at the bottom" who

are "working class" and "of color" (211-212). Unlike Antrobus, she condemns the "structured courses" in university Gender Studies programs, as they provide a "training ground" for individual professionalization rather than for social transformation (211-212). She thus believes that CAFRA fell into "the UN trap" by focusing on gender sensitivity training (209).

In the context of the UN Fourth World Conference on Women, of which she was a part, Andaiye admits that she no longer understands the purpose of Caribbean feminists beyond the enhancement of "their credentials as gender experts" ("Counting" 210). She finds that donors ultimately invest in "gender projects" because

> [c]apital is based on extracting surplus value from women's unwaged and low-waged labor. They want us in economic development so we do two jobs instead of one, or three jobs instead of two. So we work harder. So if our politics are about increasing women's participation in economic development or mainstreaming women into economic plans designed by the IMF, we're sometimes doing their work of getting women to work harder under the pretext that we're helping them to be liberated. And these projects of mainstreaming gender also have the effect of turning all the middle-class skills away from any working-class access to them: none of these agencies who fund gender consultants would fund a middle-class woman to organize with working-class women in defence of their needs and demands. ("Counting" 210-211)

Although she has admitted to the headway made by "[i]ndividual feminists," she

finds that, in general, "feminist politics in the region has *not* connected hierarchies in its organising, in spite of the determination many of us expressed in the 1980s to reverse the drive that previous movements had to control and exclude, a drive that was particularly true of Left movements led by Marxist-Leninist parties" ("The Angle" 10). CAFRA is a focal point of critique in this regard.

In her 2002 lecture, Andaiye is critical of the constitution of CAFRA insofar as it allowed for Afro-Caribbean women to dominate while Indo-Caribbean women comprised "a small minority and little or no connection [was made] with Indigenous women, the poorest women in the region" (11). She adds that the association failed to include many "[w]orking class women of all race/ethnic groups" and that "[t]he age range was and is still narrow" (11). With these facts in mind, she argues that "power relations" were reproduced "to dominate or exclude—consciously or not, deliberately or not—it does not matter" (11).[249] She adds, "[t]here is no feminist or feminist-led group that I know, including those where working-class women are the majority (like Red Thread), where working-class women are in the leadership" (13).[250] Given that "funders [are] setting the agenda" (15), she sees herself as complicit as "a gatekeeper for the development industry, helping to demobilize poor women" (16-17). Thus, she disagrees with "women [who] say that what we have been doing constitutes a new kind of activism" and explicitly opposes the views put forth by Peggy Antrobus in

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[249] Andaiye critiques black leadership to say that the movement "has a minority of working class women of African descent" who were also marginalized ("The Angle" 13).

[250] Red Thread of Guyana was founded in 1987 and it functions as the national coordinator for the Global Women's Strike which is an"international network for recognition & payment for all caring work, and the return of military spending to the community starting with women the main care" (Global Women's Strike). Andaiye is the primary contact for Red Thread.

her 2000 Lucille Mathurin Mair Lecture (17).[251]

Rhoda Reddock opens "Diversity, Difference, and Caribbean Feminism: the Challenge of Anti-Racism," by directly confronting Andaiye's critique of the predominance of middle-class and Afro-Caribbean women in her 2002 lecture, and suggests that it is in line with previous criticism by Rawidda Baksh-Sodeen and Nesha Haniff (2). Her 2007 article is thus written to "reflect on [Andaiye's] claims and possibly learn from these reflections" (2). Providing an historical context for processes of racialization in the Caribbean, including perceptions of religious and ethnic difference and division (2-3), Reddock clarifies that racialization has been "central to Caribbean history and social and economic stratification" (3). Yet, by the 1990s, Caribbean feminist scholarship was increasingly focused on the relationship between gender and race, while class analysis waned partly as a result of the popular decline of Marxist politics; in turn, developmental discourses of "poverty alleviation" replaced those of "class struggle" (4). Reddock suggests that throughout the nineteenth- and twentieth-century histories of Caribbean women's cross- class organizing, organizational cultures "ranged from solidarity to charity" (6). Discussing CAFRA, she reiterates the fact that founders were incited by the failures of Leftist movements to deal

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[251] In a U.S. context, Andrea Smith similarly discusses how universities and their academics were used as "intermediaries" to conduct research and contain revolutionary agendas of the 1960s and 1970s by encouraging "policy and legal reform" as well as "service delivery", an approach which she finds "helped to professionalize these movements, since only those with advanced degrees could do this kind of work" (7). The culture of the Non-Profit Industrial Complex thus "promotes a social movement culture that is non-collaborative, narrowly focused, and competitive. To retain the support of benefactors, groups must compete with each other for funding by promoting only their own work, whether or not their organizing strategies are successful. This culture prevents activists from having collaborative dialogues where we can honestly share our failures as well as our successes" (10). Smith and Andaiye both argue that the organizational culture of a movement should mirror the vision it has for society.

with sex or gender in their class-based organizing (12-13). In her estimation, one of the implications of "[t]he continuing weakness of the radical tradition in the region means that class solidarities are severely challenged and get translated into a language of race" (21-22).

Drawing on the work of Diane Wells, Reddock explains that, during the 1970s and 1980s, many of the Afro-Trinidadian women who dominated women's organizations "were educated abroad or at the University of West Indies" and thus worked from a tradition of "public social action by women, which included the formation of and participation in women's organisations. Feminism in this context was therefore seen as part of an Afro-Trinidadian version of womanhood which some Indian women were not willing to adopt" (15). Compellingly, Reddock adds that "this argument resonates with the antipathy held by many African-American women to the idea of feminism in the USA, where it was constructed primarily as a white concern, hence resistance to the label by many African-American women activists and the emergence of the term 'womanism'" (15). In this regard, Indo-Caribbean women may be thought to have been excluded from processes by which Caribbean feminist discourses were being shaped and disseminated by Afro-Caribbean women.

In the effort to account for the marginalized participation of Indo-Caribbean women, Reddock draws again on Diane Wells as well as Gabrielle Hosein to suggest that the greatest participation in CAFRA came from Afro-Caribbean women and women without children or families, as they had a greater flexibility of time to invest in research and activism, whereas the household

organization of Indo-Caribbean families, for example, limited their ability to participate (15-16). In Reddock's analysis, the relationship between flexibility and constraint, in terms of Caribbean women's mobility in political organizing, was shaped by cultural and ethnic differences that were often overlooked in CAFRA. This problem was exacerbated as urban/rural divisions between women were reproduced through the frequent planning of meetings in "Port of Spain and the East West Corridor where few Indo-Trinidadians lived'" (15). Reddock thus accounts for, but does not excuse, oversights in Caribbean feminist solidarity work, particularly in terms of its homogenizing assumption that women's regional identity politics could be formulated on a consensus-based model of gender. While Andaiye's scathing critique could be received as debilitating to feminist politics, Reddock reads her more generously, or forgivingly, as calling for other organizers to respond with careful retrospective analysis. In the effort to forge coalitions consisting of diverse constituencies, Reddock suggests the value of Nira Yuval-Davis' conception of "transversal politics" which "allows one to feel empathy and respect for others" but does not promote "uncritical solidarity or losing one's perspective" (21). In some respects, this politics resonates with my notion of critical social care as consisting of a dynamic interplay of unconditional forgiveness and dissent; yet, as I suggest in closing, there are limitations to consider for a politics of recognition even if reformulated on the basis of coalitional difference.

It should be noted that Andaiye does not conclude her lecture on a disempowering note of failure. Rather, she moves beyond the assumption that the

region can represent an appropriate scale to establish political consensus. She calls not only for a "new language that has clarity and purpose," but also for "a world which values caring labour [...] as the essence of relationships among people" on the condition that "different sectors with different levels of power [...] organize autonomously so they can cross their divides on the basis of equality" (22). In this regard, the "campaign [is] to serve the interests of all who are exploited" and "it must be led and waged in the interests of the poorest women, who bear the greatest burden of unwaged and low-waged caring labour which is the foundation of all economies" (22).[252] The perspectives offered by Andaiye, Antrobus, and Reddock should have increasing significance today given Ahn and Sengupta's claim that "[a]s the global women's movement presses the United Nations and national governments to recognize the commitments they made in Beijing and elsewhere, women must be vigilant about how they're deployed in the service of militarism and neoliberalism" ("The State of the World's Women").

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The commitment to critical social care requires that we refuse to blame complicated processes of globalization for our individual complicity in the local work of rendering invisible the social scale of human life. People who straddle systems of social exclusion and inclusion are everywhere, whether or not we know it. Thus, while we may be unable to fully recognize social exclusion and inclusion, we can work to confront local violence to move beyond our

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[252] Janet Conway and Jakeet Singh make a similar argument as they critique Chantal Mouffe's conceptualization of radical democracy by asserting that her organizational logic upholds questionable liberal democratic ideals that fail to interrogate the colonialist legacies that gave life to them in the first place. In the context of a wide-ranging anti-globalization movement, they promote organizational convergence over consensus thinking.

immobilizing standpoint epistemologies.[253] Part of the movement "beyond" a

limiting politics of recognition may require a critical forgiveness that is neither an

act of charity nor a reproduction of sovereign power. As Derrida explains, "[e]ach

time forgiveness is effectively exercised, it seems to suppose some sovereign

power" in the form of "a trial, an applicable judgment or, eventually, acquittal,

amnesty, or forgiveness" (*On Cosmopolitanism* 59). What is the socially

transformative effect of the equation: I will do X *on the condition that* you do Y?

Kelly Oliver's conception of "subjectivity as a process of witnessing that

requires response-ability and address-ability in relation to other people, especially

through difference" (19), is useful, here, for she finds that "[t]he spark of

subjectivity is maintained by bearing witness to what is beyond recognition, the

process of witnessing itself" (20). Theorizing her conception as *Witnessing*

Beyond Recognition, Oliver distinguishes herself from Charles Taylor, Axel

Honneth, and Nancy Fraser who "argue that recognition from the dominant

culture is necessary to develop a strong sense of one's own and personal group

identity" (23). Drawing instead on Frantz Fanon whose "analysis shows [...] that

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[253] "'Standpoint epistemology' [...] asserts positionality not as a way to link geopolitics to an understanding of how subjects become gendered in historically specific ways but as a way to embed a point of view that is claimed to be generalizable" (Kaplan 172). Kaplan argues that Nancy Hartsock's promotion of standpoint epistemology "depends upon a number of assumptions about subjectivity, history, politics and location or positionality. That is, Hartsock refers to differences between women but cannot specify her own difference or positionality vis-à-vis women whose interests might be different from her own" (171). In this context, Kaplan recalls Bernice Johnson Reagon's "critique of separatist identity politics in the U.S. radical cultural feminism of the early '80s [as] it hinges on a distinction between 'home' and 'coalition.' Our homes, [Johnson] cautions, are not to be confused with the space of our communities (which must always be mixed, contentious, changing). Even though this worldly analysis of the space of political action and affiliation still entails identity politics and a cultural nationalist 'home,'" Kaplan finds that Reagon, unlike Hartsock, "challenges the universalizing presumptions of a gendered standpoint" (175). Persuaded by Kaplan's critique, I nonetheless challenge the conception of "home" as a consensual space for identity politics.

these theories presuppose rather than challenge the pathology of recognition inherent in colonial and oppressive cultures" (23), Oliver finds that "[p]olitical and ethical agency, linked to sovereign subjects, also becomes linked to the property of those empowered within dominant culture to dispense according to their mercies. In turn, subjectivity becomes the domain of domination [...]" (24); thus, it is "the dominant culture and its representatives who have the power to confer or withhold recognition" (26). To more effectively confront multiple dimensions of exploitation and exclusion, within and beyond cultures of resistance, we may need to relinquish the notion of recognition as a condition for solidarity. We should be prepared to address implications for the inevitable reproduction of sovereign power if violence can and will occur "beyond [our] recognition."

The international cultural politics of debt-forgiveness and activism can be compelling in this context. After Haiti's 7.0 magnitude earthquake, in 2010, "debt relief activists" pressured the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to remove conditionalities attached to its loan agreements with Haiti and to consider transforming its emergency loan into a grant (Klein and Kim). Naomi Klein has argued that such a concession would demonstrate that "public pressure in moments of disaster can seriously subvert shock doctrine tactics" (Klein and Kim). In Richard Kim's calculation, Haiti's $165 million preexisting loan with the IMF was extended by $100 million in the months following its 2010 earthquake (Klein and Kim).[254] Although he suggests that "appeals to debt relief and for the

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[254] Kim summarizes Haiti's foreign debt: "The largest multilateral holders of Haiti's debt are the Inter-American Development Bank ($447 million), the IMF ($165 million, plus $100

recognition of Haiti's economic sovereignty were written to the Obama administration, the IMF, the World Bank, and anyone else who might play a role in Haiti's reconstruction," the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) makes clear, on its website, that "U.S. foreign assistance has always had the twofold purpose of expanding democracy and free markets while improving the lives of the citizens of the developing world."[255] While Haiti is widely considered to be the poorest country in the Western hemisphere, U.S. foreign assistance remains conditional upon U.S. national interests.

While the extensive history of foreign military occupation and government dictatorship in Haiti cannot be elaborated upon here, the ongoing struggles for Haitian justice and freedom should prompt the historical review of how humanitarian industries promote imperialist and colonialist imaginaries of racialized suffering to reinforce the popular historical forgetting of the structures that sustain domination, dependency, and debt. The privatization of aid continues to entrench Haiti in systems of dependency even though a Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative was organized by international players such as the Inter-American Development Fund and the World Bank. As the UN Secretary General Special Envoy to Haiti, Bill Clinton claims, in "What Haiti Needs," "[t]here are 10,000 non-governmental organizations working in Haiti, the highest number per capita

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million in new lending), the World Bank's International Development Association ($39 million) and the International Fund for Agricultural Development ($13 million). The largest bilateral loans are held by Venezuela ($295 million [...]), and Taiwan ($92 million)."

[255] Notably, the website highlights shifts in the orientation of USAID by decade. USAID emerged during the 1960s "'decade of development" but, in the 1970s, USAID is noted as having "shift[ed] its focus away from technical and capital assistance programs" towards "a 'basic human needs' approach." During the 1980s, USAID was marked by "a turn to free markets" but, in the 1990s, it reportedly focused on "sustainability and democracy." According to the website, the 2000s represent a period in which USAID assists in the context of "war and rebuilding."

in the world except for India" (78). The NGOization of this Caribbean country

reveals that relief and reconstruction efforts are generative of marketplace

conditions for the pursuit of a variety of local and foreign special interest

groups.[256] Unsurprisingly, the IMF's "National Action Plan for Recovery and

Development" for Haiti has endorsed neoliberal reconstruction and development

approaches through the expansion of "free trade and industrial zones" (IMF 9).

The seismological diagnoses of the poor building code standards in Haiti have

also helped to legitimize the intervention of privately-funded, foreign experts to

lead projects for the rebuilding of Haiti's capital. It remains a complicated project

to track whether or not the financial support pledged by countries has been

effectively delivered. Nonetheless, Clinton argues that "the private sector [must

be] involved" (79) in Haiti's reconstruction efforts.

Social opportunities and limitations emerge from neoliberal crisis

revealing itself in situations of war and natural disaster. Naomi Klein argues that

"disaster capitalism" demands "privatization, government deregulation, and deep

cuts to social spending" (10) and that "for-profit humanitarian relief" is becoming

a "new global paradigm" (15). She elaborates, "[b]elievers in the shock doctrine

are convinced that only a great rupture--a flood, a war, a terrorist attack--can

generate that kind of vast, clean canvas they crave. It is in these malleable

moments, when we are psychologically unmoored and physically uprooted, that

these artists of the real plunge in their hands and begin the work of remaking the

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[256] The documentary film *Potomitan: Haitian Women Pillars of the Economy* (2009) emphasizes a comparative analysis of Haitian women's struggles under neoliberal globalization; notably, it also portrays as a collective grassroots struggle the critique of the dominating presence of foreign, non-government organizations.

world" (24). The "clean canvas" produced by neoliberal shock strategies may signify the space of the neoliberal medium in which it is continuously reproduced. It is therefore insufficient to simply re-imagine resistance for a future solidarity; rather, we need unsettling strategies for the practical and long-term expression of critical social care.[257] Wary of short-term reactions to crisis situations,[258] I find it necessary to illuminate how social care can be too conditional upon the sovereign bio-politics of recognition and forgiveness in the neoliberal age.

While the "'*purity*' of forgiveness," dreamed of by Derrida (59; emphasis mine) may be a utopian ideal, we should never be prevented from proposing "the hypothesis" of a seemingly "unpresentable task," for, "be it as a dream for thought, this madness is perhaps not so mad" (Derrida 59-60). As such, it is imperative to work on multiple scales and with multiple logics to challenge the imposition of neoliberal conditions on bodies and imaginations. This means that the theory, practice, and language of our politics must be under continuous review, for we must never assume the absolute relevance of our own orientations to conditions of struggle within a given situation or in relation to a network of situations impacted by neoliberalism. Separately or together, we must generate capacity for social relations in which to *"seek beyond history / for a new and more*

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[257] See Solnit's *A Paradise Built in Hell: The Extraordinary Communities that Arise in Disaster* (2011) for an analysis of social solidarities formed during disasters. Her approach contrasts with that of Naomi Klein. They also provide distinct critical responses to the Occupy Wall Street movement. See Klein's "The Most Important Thing in the World" and Solnit's "Letter to a Dead Man About the Occupation of Hope."

[258] Tavis Smiley expresses concern regarding "Katrina fatigue" in the context of reconstruction efforts in New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina in 2005 (Rosenberg). In my conference paper, "We Are the World and You Are the Disaster: Text Messaging, Haiti Disaster Relief, and the Cultural Capital of Racialized Suffering in American Music," delivered in October 2010 at the R.A.C.E. 10th Annual Critical Race and Anti-colonial Studies Conference, I discussed how the accelerated culture of charitable financial giving, via text messaging, creates the illusion of emergency response but can exacerbate popular amnesia and fatigue over post-disaster relief work as practice.

possible meeting" (Lorde "Age, Race, Sex, and Class 123).[259]

Critical of how solidarity and resistance can be represented in neoliberal culture industries, I have been particularly compelled by the notion that capitalist crisis can stimulate a political re-imagining of transformative human social relations. How can social practices be reconfigured in relation to "the theory of our own misfitting" (Holloway 9) with neoliberal ideology, discourse, and policy? How can we apply this theory to anti-neoliberal social movement-building to unsettle the sedimentations of our intersectional identifications? How can we protect each other from the neoliberal exposures that destroy a culture of care which is so vital to human social relations? How might we practice "critical relationality" (Boyce Davies 56) in the analysis of neoliberal conditions by scale and by degree? I have offered just one provisional formulation of critical social care as an anti-neoliberal strategy of solidarity but I urge the proliferation of formulations and the generation of more expansive analyses of neoliberal conditions and cultures of conditionality. As a starting point, I suggest that, despite its potential paradoxes, the unconditional commitment to critical social care, if widely expressed, may be a profoundly radical way to expose the hegemonic instability of the neoliberal view of social obligation as subordinate to the prioritized rights of hyper-individualism.

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[259] Reflecting upon the failure of university to grant medical leave to black feminist intellectuals Audre Lorde and June Jordan when they were sick with cancer, Dagmaar Schultz argues that "21st century economics and [...] austerity measures have only gotten more severe with time," adding that "an institution knows how to preserve itself and it knows that Black feminists are a trouble more useful as dead invocation than as live troublemakers, raising concerns in faculty meetings. And those institutions continue to make money and garner prestige off of their once affiliated now dead faculty members" ("The Shape of My Impact").

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