THE CONSTRUCTION
OF AN ESSENTIALIST 'MIXED-RACE' IDENTITY
IN THE ANGLOPHONE CARIBBEAN NOVEL
1914 - 1998

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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the portrayal of the 'mixed-race' person in twentieth-century Caribbean literature. The premise that their portrayal has been limited by essentialised racial stereotypes is investigated and the conclusion is reached that these stereotypes have been founded in nineteenth century theories of racial hybridity. The development of this racial theory is explored and reveals that the concept of hybridity was generated through imperialistic and colonial endeavours to support a policy of racial subjugation predicated by European economic desire to exploit non-white peoples. In the Caribbean this took the form of African slavery, and the need to keep the 'races' separate and unequal under this system led to the demonisation of 'mixed-race' people of African and European descent. Despite attempts to prevent the proliferation of a 'mixed-race' population, their increasing numbers led to further plantocratic strategies to divide the 'mixed-race' and black population in order to maintain white socio-economic supremacy.

This thesis finds that the literary construction of 'mixed-race' identity has been grounded in a biologised fallacy of 'hybridity'. Despite recent attempts to appropriate the term 'hybridity' as a cultural metaphor, hybridity itself remains entrenched in nineteenth century notions of absolute racial difference. The biological concept of 'mixed-race' degeneracy coupled with the white engineered racial divisions within Caribbean society has left the 'mixed-race' person in an ambivalent position. Although the Caribbean novel has spearheaded an awareness of European colonial oppression and has challenged racial stereotypes of black people, offering positive portrayals of Afro-Caribbean identity, the portrayal of the 'mixed-race' person remains limited. The development of indigenous and, subsequently, diasporic Caribbean literature has tended to perpetuate the stereotype of the deviant 'mixed-race' person, previously popularised in the nineteenth century European novel on the Caribbean.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION: FINDING A SPACE

The aim of this thesis is to examine whether Caribbean fiction has helped to create a fallacious image of the 'mixed-race' person and to assess whether this portrayal has been influenced by European racial theories. Caribbean writers have actively written an indigenous history that had been suppressed through colonial control of the education system in the Caribbean. As A P Maingot puts it "[i]n an area where the poet, novelist and, indeed, the song writer, have very often provided the best descriptions of social reality, Caribbeanists learned early to incorporate their work not merely as data but as worthy conceptualizations of their societies".[1] With the premise that literature acts not only as a form of social and historical comment but also as an instigator of social ideology, this thesis questions to what extent Caribbean literature produces and perpetuates a racially essentialist ideology that feeds into repeated constructions of 'mixed-race' identities. To date very little research has been done which focuses specifically on 'mixed-race' identity within Anglophone Caribbean literature. Therefore, in many ways, this work acts as 'ground-breaking' research that examines the myths developed within the literature to define 'mixed-race' identity and opens up new and less stereotypical discussions regarding 'mixed-race' people within Caribbean literature and society.

The introduction has been divided into three parts. The first part addresses the theoretical approach and looks at some of the problems and limitations of postcolonial theory and cultural studies. The second section examines the need and/or relevance of a discussion on the representation of the 'mixed-race' person in Caribbean literature within a cultural

context that has generally been perceived as archetypically 'mixed' anyway. The third part gives a summary of each chapter.

Theoretical approaches

The premise of the thesis is that literature is not merely an inert aesthetic but a proactive form of media. As such this thesis is concerned with the way in which literature informs both our lives and our thoughts. I would support the argument that the term 'fiction' can be misleading, as it divides the so-called reality of lived lives from those of the imagination. Imagination does not come from outside the realm of lived experience, but rather draws from and plays its part in creating it.

The concept of 'race' is popularly thought of in absolute and biologised ways, and the legacy of nineteenth (and eighteenth) century scientific racism lives on in popular culture. These beliefs are not innate, they are learned – not because of any mass global accessing of original manuscripts, but because such ideologies are constantly re-constructed and disseminated through a multitude of media. One such medium is the novel, and this thesis sets out to examine the Caribbean novel specifically. By using these literary texts as examples of 'mixed-race' representations, rather than analysing them as literary compositions *per se*, this thesis aims to explicate one way in which a paradigm for 'mixed-race' behaviour/identity is dispersed into popular thought and culture.

Throughout this thesis the term 'mixed-race' has been placed in inverted commas to indicate that, whilst the term is used as it is a recognised descriptive, because of its pejorative connotations and because it implies an absoluteness of 'pure' race exists, I find this term problematic. Other writers opening the discourse on 'mixed-race' identity are finding similar difficulties and possible alternative terms have been put forward. One example can be found in *Scattered Belongings* by Jayne O Ifekwunigwe, who offers her

"formulations of *métis(se)* and *métissage* as stand-in responses to the limitations and ambiguities of existing terms".[2]

Because I am interested particularly in the way the content of the novel creates a perception of sociohistorical reality in the reader, from chapter four, in which I examine the significance of the slave period, I have chronologized the historical moment depicted by the novel rather than privilege the historical moment of the author. This is not to say that the time in which the author lives/writes is not relevant to the way in which they develop their portrayal of the 'mixed-race' character; as Edward Said argues, "a literary text is commonly supposed to gain some of its identity from its historical moment interacting with the attentions, judgements, scholarship and performances of its readers".[3] However, I would argue that the relationship between the novel's subject and reader is primary. By this I mean that a novel written, for example, on the slave period, regardless of whether it is written during the 1950s or the 1980s, will largely influence thoughts in the reader on the slave period itself, not on the historical moment of authorship. As such, a myth of sociohistorical actuality is created in terms of how the 'mixed-race' person is viewed as a participant of that 'history'. Thus, even within the contemporary cultural arena, the identity of the 'mixed-race' person has not been exorcised from the limited stereotype of the 'mixed-race' overseer whose collusion with the white hegemony is absolute. The chapters that follow are, in the main, written with a detailed opening discussion on the sociohistorical period depicted by the novels chosen for analysis. This approach has been taken in order to both elucidate and counteract the ways in which the 'mixed-race' character is set 'historically' by the novels.

In Kenneth Ramchand's pioneering work, *The West Indian Novel and its Background* (1983), Ramchand writes that his work is "an attempt to see the West Indian novel in its social and cultural context".[4] He argues that the "contexts are presented in order to make the novels more easily accessible, and not because of a primary interest in the conditions that are said to have produced the novels".[5] Although in his analysis he argues that social conditions are not of 'primary interest', he does stress that:

> the West Indian novelists apply themselves with unusual urgency and unanimity to an analysis and interpretation of their society's ills, including the social and economic deprivation of the majority; the pervasive consciousness of race and colour; [and] the cynicism and uncertainty of the native bourgeoisie in power after independence.[6]

Ramchand posits that Caribbean writers "are as much interested in society as in character"[7]; however, he argues that by focusing on the sociohistorical one "is in danger of losing one's sense of the mystery of the creative act and of the secrecy of the text".[8] Rather than 'losing' anything, this thesis argues that a sociohistorical approach leads to a greater understanding of the novel, and supports Kevin Yelvingston's argument that the "complexities of Caribbean societies dictate an approach (or approaches) that transcends traditional disciplinary boundaries".[9]

In criticising the development of comparative literature studies that came under the theoretical heading of Commonwealth Literature, Kenneth Ramchand argues that if comparisons are to be made they can be made between any two texts in any region - it should not be restricted to comparisons within colonies and ex-colonies. In other words, the restriction - or connection - is a false one. He writes that "analogous human situations and analogous states of society occur at widely different times, and between people who do not necessarily fall under the same social or political order".[10] Ramchand argues that if one is to

> take the Commonwealth viewpoint as an attempt, rather, to suggest the shaping influence on literature of common background realities in these areas, we would still be obliged to find it unsatisfactory. For the synthetic principle ignores too many social, cultural and political differences between the countries it seeks to hold together.[11]

However, he also criticises the theories of Commonwealth Literature because, as he argues "it forces us to concentrate on political and social issues to a degree that invests these with a disproportionate influence upon our attempts to offer critical opinions on what are, above all, works of imaginative literature".[12] But, as I have argued above, literature should not be viewed in aesthetic isolation, and the socio-political context of the novel represents more than a form of 'window-dressing' to enable the reader to appreciate the aesthetics of the novel. As Terry Eagleton argues, literature cannot exist without context and "the history of modern literary theory is part of the political and ideological history of our epoch".[13]

In *The Empire Writes Back* (1989), Ashcroft *et al* argue that the term:

> 'Post-colonial' is more useful than previous terms such as 'Commonwealth Literatures', 'Third World Literatures' or 'New Literatures in English' because it both embraces the historical reality and focuses on that relationship which has provided the most creative and psychological impetus in writing.[14]

However, the term 'Post-colonial' only embraces one point of historical reality and fails to address the very different histories of the multitude of countries restrictively defined as postcolonial. Ashcroft *et al* posit that "Post-colonial literature and its study is essentially political in that its development and the theories which accompany this development radically question the apparent axioms upon which the whole discipline of English has been raised".[15] Yet, as Eagleton highlights, the problem of postcolonial theory occurs when one "is allowed to talk about cultural difference, but not - or not too much - about economic exploitation. Postcolonial theory, Bhabha tells us, resists holistic explanations. The truth is that it has hardly any explanation of Post-colonial misery at all".[16]

Postcolonial theory aims to analyse the influence of colonialism "on the perceptual frameworks"[17] of 'postcolonial' peoples through literature. According to Ashcroft *et al*, literature "offers one of the most important ways in which these new perceptions are

expressed".[18] Whilst there is a lack of consensus among postcolonial theorists as to what the term means as a historical adjunct, Ashcroft *et al* use "the term 'post-colonial'... to cover all the culture affected by the imperial process from the moment of colonization to the present day.. [arguing that] ... this is because there is a continuity of preoccupations throughout the historical process initiated by European imperial aggression".[19] They list all the countries they believe fall into the category of 'Post-colonial', including such disparate countries as Canada, Bangladesh and the various countries within the Caribbean region. Amazingly, they also argue that the United States should be included as "its relationship with the metropolitan centre as it evolved over the last two centuries has been paradigmatic for Postcolonial literatures everywhere".[20] Their inclusion of the United States as postcolonial downplays America's very real role as a (neo) colonial force.

One of the fundamental problems with postcolonial theory is the premise, put forward by Ashcroft *et al*, that colonialism forms the most significant part in creating 'perceptual frameworks' in 'post-colonial' countries. Under this premise, the differences - historical, 'racial', economic, political and so on - between these regions pale into insignificance. As such the development of a nation's cultural identity becomes solely linked to its colonial past. Postcolonial theory purports to address the problems of marginalisation set up by colonial discourse. However, what it does is to perpetuate theories of marginality in its paradigm of resistance, whereby the so-called 'post-colonial' is constantly privileging the European metropolitan centre. For the Caribbean writer, this concept of 'writing back' denies the possibility that creativity could be an indigenous phenomenon; a phenomenon that can and does exist independently of European hegemony - albeit through European based publishing companies, who still exert control over what writing reaches a wider audience within and outside of the Caribbean region.

It has been argued that the "idea of 'Postcolonial literary theory' emerges from the inability of European theory to deal adequately with the complexities and varied cultural provenance of Postcolonial writing".[21] But postcolonial literary theory itself fails to deal adequately with these 'complexities' and 'varied cultural provenance'. Edward Said argued that the 'Orient'

was something created through the Western gaze and, therefore, that *Orientalism* had little to do with social and geographical reality. I would argue that postcolonial theory, like *Orientalism*, in its creation of the Caribbean as *postcolonial,* transposed by a Western gaze, has little to do with the sociohistorical and political reality of the Caribbean. Just as in Said's words, "Orientalism is more particularly valuable as a sign of European-Atlantic power over the Orient than it is as a veridic discourse about the Orient"[22] so too does postcolonial theory act in its relation to/over the Caribbean. The danger of postcolonial theories is that "the social realities of language fade as language replaces social and historical space".[23]

According to the Vijay Mishra and Bob Hodge, Postcolonial theory "foregrounds a politics of opposition and struggle, and problematizes the key relationship between centre and periphery".[24] They posit that there are multiple differences between the ex-colonies and argue that in order for Postcolonial theorists to acknowledge this disparateness there needs to be a new postcolonialism which recognises the material and historical differences between the regions included in Postcolonial theory. Such "[s]maller *récits* must replace the *grand récit* of postcolonialism in all these instances so that we can know the historical background better. In these smaller *récits* it may well be that the term 'postcolonial' is never used".[25] Anne McClintock writes that "the singular category 'post-colonial' may licence too readily a panoptic tendency to view the globe within generic abstractions voided of political nuance"[26], and that postcolonialism, "while having academic clout and professional marketability, run[s] the risk of telescoping crucial geo-political distinctions into invisibility".[27] Robert Young rhetorically asks whether there "can there be a general theoretical matrix that is able to provide an all-encompassing framework for the analysis of each singular colonial instance?"[28] He goes on to argue the affirmative; claiming that "[t]hose who today emphasize its geographical and historical differences may in effect be only repeating uncritically colonialism's own partitioning strategies".[29] But a social history *is* specific, and it is the specificity of each different social history in a region that creates a social and literary reality that cannot be simply transposed to or correlated to another region purely on the basis of its shared colonial oppressor. As Stuart Hall has pointed out:

> the common history - transportation, slavery, colonisation - has been profoundly formative. For all these societies, unifying us across our differences. But it does not constitute a common *origin*, since it was, metaphorically, as well as literally, a translation. The inscript of difference is also specific and critical.[30]

Postcolonial theories deny the reality of the so-called 'post-colonial' countries as heterogeneous, making them into a homogenous Other to the Metropole. This then becomes the primary concern of postcolonial discourse and the paradigm of analysis, although, as Anne McClintock writes, "many contemporary African, Latin American, Caribbean and Asian cultures, whilst profoundly effected by colonization, are not necessarily *primarily* preoccupied with their erstwhile contact with Europe".[31] Postcolonial theory presumes an umbilical link between the metropole and the so-called 'marginal' countries or ex-colonies. In this way the Anglophone Caribbean is viewed only in its relation to Britain as the omnipotent metropole. Far more useful for the Caribbeanist is an analysis of the interconnections between the various colonised countries within the Caribbean and a recognition that anomalies also exist. One example of an anomaly is Guyana, which, as a Socialist Republic, holds parallels with Cuba in a way it does not with another ex-British colony such as Barbados. Differences also exist between the countries within the Caribbean region due to the various levels of continued colonial control. Montserrat remains a British colony. The United States, which views the Caribbean as its own 'backyard', is now a significant neo-colonial power in the Caribbean region. It holds neo-colonial control over Grenada and Puerto Rico, respectively once British and Spanish colonies. In short, the very term 'Postcolonial' is problematic when used to encompass countries that are far from *post*-anything.

Ashcroft *et al* write that it is "the Caribbean which has been the crucible of the most extensive and challenging Postcolonial literary theory",[32] further arguing that "[f]rom the early days of slavery, cultural clash and miscegenation formed the brutal texture of Caribbean life".[33] By inexorably linking 'miscegenation' with 'brutality', the writers denigrate

'racial' admixture in a way that contrasts with their emphasis on the positivity of 'hybrid'. They argue that Postcolonial theorists "are beginning to recognize cross-culturality as the potential termination point of an apparently endless human history of conquest and annihilation justified by the myth of group 'purity' and as the basis on which the postcolonial world can be creatively stabilized".[34] The authors further posit that "[i]t is through an appropriation of the power invested in writing that this discourse [Postcolonial] can take hold of the marginality imposed on it and make hybridity and syncreticity the source of literary and cultural redefinition".[35] However, it is the appropriation of the term 'hybridity' within Postcolonial discourse, used to define a wider cultural phenomena, that has left no space in which the distinct treatment of the 'mixed-race' person can be analysed. The view of Caribbean culture as a homogenous syncretic whole ignores the marginalisation of the 'mixed-race' person from black and white (and, indeed, Asian) within the Caribbean context.

In recent years the word 'hybridity' has become popularised within the theoretical approaches of Postcolonial theory. Ashcroft *et al* state that colonialism created "a *hybridization* of culture"[36] and that the "post-colonial text is always a complex and *hybridized* formation" [my italics].[37] To some degree one can argue that the frequent use of the term 'hybrid' is an attempt to 're-appropriate' its meaning. *Hybridization* becomes synonymous with the idea of the mythical 'melting-pot' as a paradigm for Caribbean society. In this way, 'hybridity' is turned into a positive definition in much the same way that the once pejorative term 'black' was appropriated by organisations such as the Black Power movement in the 1970s to become a positive symbol of African identity. However, by using the term 'hybrid', as Robert Young points out, one is "utilizing the vocabulary of the Victorian extreme right"[38] and, therefore, one treads on dangerous ground. As Vijay Mishra and Bob Hodge argue, the "emphasis on hybridization leads to an uneasiness with social and racial theories of Postcolonial literature".[39]

Terry Eagleton's use of the term 'hybrid' as a reference to culture exposes the problems in wholeheartedly accepting its usage in Postcolonial theory. Eagleton argues that the Postcolonial theoretical world is one "in which 'hybridity', 'in-betweeness', a culture in

permanent transition and incompleteness, may be embraced without anxiety or nostalgia".[40] But to embrace 'hybridity' without 'anxiety or nostalgia' is to deny *hybridity's* historically retained referent as a biological marker, and prohibits any attempt to deconstruct the representation of the 'mixed-race' person as a biological 'hybrid'. As Williams and Chrisman have said:

> It is perhaps significant that... 'mixed-race' cast as... 'half-caste/hybrid'.. were eugenic concepts which held a strong theoretical and cultural currency within dominant Western intellectual production, throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Having fallen officially into political and academic disrepute or disregard, these concepts are now due for re-examination.[41]

Robert Young writes that the "fantasy of a post-colonial cultural theory, ... is that those in the Western academy at least have managed to free themselves from this hybrid commerce of colonialism, as from every aspect of the colonial legacy".[42] If one is to accept that the 'Western academy' has not managed to exorcise itself from a 'colonial' legacy, then postcolonial theory, at its worst, can be seen as little more than neo-academic colonialism. However, as Ania Loomba argues, "[w]hatever the nature of the 'metropolitan' academy, it continues to hold much influence over its counterparts in once-colonized societies, and this obliges us to engage with its debates".[43]

The theoretical approach of this thesis remains, almost by default, 'postcolonial' to the extent that it focuses on *Anglophone* Caribbean literature - a colonial rather than indigenous divide. However, it should be stressed from the outset that the decision to focus on writing from the English speaking Caribbean has solely arisen from my own language barriers rather than from any belief that this constituted an absolute cultural boundary. Within this paradigm, a variety of Caribbean countries, with distinct national identities, are included. Their inclusion is on the basis, as David Dabydeen and Nana Wilson-Tagoe have argued, that their "common experience of colonisation, displacement, slavery, indenture, emancipation and nationalism has shaped most West Indian

environments, creating a unity of experience that can be identified as particularly West Indian".[44] However, the thesis recognises that although a common colonisation has been shared within this region, as Bruce King has argued, "[c]onquest, slavery, the plantation economy and immigration had a different history and different effect in each country".[45]

Any theory needs to be actively engaged with and appropriately challenged rather than accepted definitively; in the words of Stuart Hall, "[t]he only theory worth having is that which you have to fight off, not that which you speak with profound fluency".[46] Grossberg *et al* argue that the rigid absolutism of some theories can be avoided by using the looser theoretical framework of cultural studies, which they describe as a multi- or inter-disciplinary approach. Although its lack of a closed disciplinary approach leads to problems of defining what *is* cultural studies and whose work belongs or does not belong within its domain, the authors argue that this is because cultural studies is "actively and aggressively anti-disciplinary".[47] Under the umbrella of cultural studies, Grossberg *et al* argue that nationhood, identity, race and ethnicity can best be explored by utilizing history and science, with colonialism and postcolonialism also forming a part of but not the whole frame of enquiry. Cultural studies, Grossberg *et al* argue, is interactive and "its practitioners see cultural studies not simply as a chronicle of cultural change but as an intervention in it, and see themselves not simply as scholars providing an account but as politically engaged participants".[48] If one is to accept that the practitioners of cultural studies are 'politically engaged participants' one must also question the political stance of these practitioners, and the important question, raised by Paul Gilroy, is that of "whose culture is being studied"[49] and who is doing the studying. According to Grossberg *et al,* there is a recognition within cultural studies that it is problematic:

> to adopt, uncritically, any of the formalized disciplinary practices of the academy, for those practices, as much as the distinctions they inscribe, carry with them a heritage of disciplinary investments and exclusions and a history of social effects that cultural studies would often be inclined to repudiate.[50]

In the examination of issues surrounding 'race' and identity, it is necessary to recognise any possible hidden agendas within a theoretical approach. In cultural studies, Paul Gilroy argues that blacks too often are seen as the victims and recipients of European action; it remains a "struggle to have blacks perceived as agents with cognitive capacity, and historicity, even an intellectual history".[51] This thesis utilises the paradigm of cultural studies only in as much as it seeks to draw "from whatever fields are necessary to produce the knowledge required".[52] In this way the literature examined can be seen not only in a sociohistorical context, but also in a medical/biological and psycho-social one; as these discourses have impacted considerably on the literary construction of race and 'mixed-race' in the Caribbean novel. This thesis examines the social, historical and scientific input into the creation of myths and stereotypes that have developed as definitive descriptions of the 'mixed-race' person within the Caribbean novel. As such, I have chosen to use an ecclectic theoretical approach which takes on board what Renu Juneja describes as the "historicity of Caribbean literature",[53] recognising that the "[h]istory in these texts is not merely to be suffered but also to be shaped, made, recreated, and redirected".[54]

Is 'hybridity' more than a metaphor?

According to Joyce Johnson, the portrayal of the Caribbean and its people in the English novel was very popular in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century, when "colourful representations, by popular novelists writing of life in colonial settings, ...served to disseminate ideas about race which helped to organise inter-group social relations to the advantage of the British".[55] These novels formed a part of colonial discourse as they can be included in "the variety of textual forms in which the West produced and codified knowledge about non-metropolitan areas and cultures, especially those under colonial control".[56] The novelists included some whom were permanently resident in the Caribbean, some temporarily and some whom had never set foot there, and they wrote at the peak of European fascination with pseudoscientific notions of race. Joyce Johnson posits that "[g]iven the importance that was attached to race as an index of character and behaviour

racially mixed individuals constituted a distinct category to be evaluated and defined".[57] She argues that a "popular stereotype of racial 'hybrids' evolved"[58] where a "tendency to generalize about persons of mixed race from single instances is apparent in the novels".[59] 'Mixed-race' people were "depicted as victims of ambition which is attributed to their white ancestry... [and] as victims of ungovernable passions which are attributed to their non-white ancestry".[60] Additionally, Johnson argues that these novels portrayed 'mixed-race' people as displaying "an inherent weakness of will",[61] which was viewed by the novelists "as a result of their inner conflict".[62] Johnson posits that "[s]tereotypes of individuals of mixed African and European heritage which were developed in novels by British writers of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries persist in novels written later by West Indians".[63] She concludes that:

> Once depicted as an "infraction of nature's law" and the regrettable evidence of the white man's failing when subjected to "the destructive effects of a warm climate", the racial hybrid has become an important symbol of creolization, as is implied by the recurrent uses of the term "cultural mulatto".[64]

However, is an analysis of the construction of a 'mixed-race' identity within the Caribbean novel a non-issue when a writer such as Lorna Goodison in an interview posits that for her 'mulatta' is simply a metaphor for Caribbean history? Although she tells Wolfgang Binder that her great grandfather was Scottish, her use of the term 'mulatta' is more to do with her belief that it acts as a metaphor for the creolisation of Jamaican history, a history which belongs to all Jamaicans. Goodison claims that "[i]f somebody tells you, take some and leave some, that is his or her problem, I am not going to do that. All of it belongs to me!"[65]. However, it was only when she had moved to America that she was actually referred to as a 'mulatta' by Latin Americans. She says "I never thought of myself as a mulatta. We use the term mulatta in Jamaica, but we use it for people who have a very light skin. But apparently, they use mulatta in the real sense of the term, for a person of mixed *blood* [my emphasis]".[66] She dismisses her use of the term as "anything heavy!" and claims that it was a term she used only as a form of 'persona'. In fact, what we see is a rejection of her

own (albeit tenuous) 'mixed-race' heritage. Despite embracing the concept as a cultural metaphor, she appears anxious to distance her own identity from that of the 'light' skinned, more obviously 'mixed-race' person. So what is it about the concept that makes it acceptable as a metaphor for the whole society but alienates people from claiming it as their own heritage?

Can the term 'hybrid' be used as a metaphor for the Caribbean *per se* or does it still retain its pejorative descriptive of the 'mixed-race' person and, therefore, connote rigid biological implications? This thesis will show that the Caribbean novel continues to stereotype the 'mixed-race' person, using four main stereotypes which are that (1) the 'mixed-race' person was inherently evil, cruel and oppressive, (2) that they are (somewhat paradoxically) weak and pitiable, (3) that they were sexually deviant (particularly women), and (4) that they were mentally unstable and biologically abnormal. The thesis will argue also that these stereotypes are all rooted within the concepts and discourses of European and North American racial theory that created the myth of 'hybrid degeneracy'. With their geneology, despite the popularity of terms such as 'hybrid', or what Joyce Johnson refers to as the 'cultural mulatto', as metaphors for Caribbean culture, it will be argued that they do still retain their pejorative implications.

Michael Gilkes has referred to his own "phenotypical ' Caribbean-ness', representing as [he does] an amalgam of at least five of the various racial strains of the Caribbean".[67] But he also talks of the Caribbean as a whole, rather than the 'mixed-race' person within it, when he argues that "the Caribbean, though essentially negroid, is the result of *Creole* cultures growing, under external pressures, into racially and culturally, hybrid societies".[68] His use of the term 'hybrid' is similar to its deployment in postcolonial theory, where 'hybridity' is used as a metaphor for the whole Caribbean. However, if, as Patrick Taylor argues, "colonial society was defined primarily in terms of race with the result that ethnic difference, as a cultural specificity of particular groups, tended to be reduced to racial difference",[69] the paradigm of the Caribbean as culturally and racially 'mixed' is untenable. David Lowenthal argued in *West Indian Societies* (1972) that the external Western gaze saw Caribbean

(West Indian) life as harmoniously interracial, an image, he goes on to say, that 'West Indian' governments were eager to promote in order to gain foreign investment. As Lowenthal writes, the reality was far from so idyllic. Lowenthal acknowledges that a paradox exists within Caribbean society whereby although stratification is often linked with colour (and class) the person of 'mixed-race' is also viewed, by those defined as 'monoracial', with "contempt".[70]

In the case of Guyana and Trinidad particularly, the significant demographic change brought about by mass Indian indenture in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries has added a new dimension to 'racial' stratification. Although Lowenthal writes that the Indian caste system disintegrated through the process of Caribbean identureship, he argues that Indians still followed "the traditional *varna* hierarchy, ranking lighter castes above darker, which follows earlier racial distinctions in India. Indians regard as outcastes only the *black* Creoles, not the light skinned, still less the white"[71]. More recently, Ralph Premdas has argued that the caste system completely disappeared, and that in Guyana there "is no evidence of any sort of inherent antipathy among the imported immigrants".[72] However, like Lowenthal, he stresses the cultural/racial divisions between Indo- and Afro-Guyanese, who, he argues, each view the other as "culturally inferior".[73] This divide has led to the off-spring of 'interracial' unions between Afro- and Indo- Caribbeans in an ambivalent position. Yoshiko Shibata, who conducted field research on national integration in Guyana during the early 1990s, found that children of Indo- and Afro-Guyanse parentage often found themselves having to identify 'monoracially', and that this was dependent on how their physical 'racial' identity was viewed externally. She concluded that cultural integration between the different 'ethnic' groups remained impeded by 'racial' antipathy that remained biological in focus.[74] To what extent Indian notions of racial purity have been governed by a legacy of India's national caste system remains debatable, but it does seem likely that Indians brought into the Caribbean from a country with a formalised caste system would have found it easy to readily accept the colonial system of racial hierarchy based on a biological concept of 'race'. This has alienated them from the African-Caribbean and resulted in negative attitudes towards those born from 'interracial' unions between black

and Indian, commonly referred to as "Douglas". The term, although now used less pejoratively, has a Hindi origin, meaning "bastard" or 'person born of miscegenation' (which includes the mixing between castes and outcastes).

According to Ashcroft *et al* a "major feature of Postcolonial literatures is the concern with place and displacement. It is here that the special Postcolonial crisis of identity comes into being; the concern with the development or recovery of an effective identifying relationship between self and place".[75] Caribbean literature is stereotypically represented as 'searching for identity' or foregrounding a 'crisis of identity'. The 'search for' or 'crisis of' identity is said to incorporate all the Caribbean people who, through the historical acts of colonialism and imperialism, find themselves, according to Michael Gilkes, "the product of a colonial Caribbean condition of fortuitous racial and cultural ad-mixture, where no background of long established habit, no social, political, religious or cultural traditions exist to give a sense of individual stability".[76] But, whilst it is possible to argue that "[t]here can be no doubt that the question of racial and cultural identity is a central theme in the Caribbean novel",[77] it would be over-simplistic and erroneous to consider this theme as coming from a united homogenous perspective. The so-called "Caribbean writers' sense of rootlessness, and the consequent need for racial and cultural 'pedigree'"[78] cannot be standardised. What would be more valuable for analysis is a removal from such limiting concepts such as 'pedigree'. Gilkes argues that a

> division of consciousness is a peculiarly Caribbean theme, the main *leitmotif* in the Caribbean novel, and one that is capable of a much deeper and altogether more meaningful formulation than 'a search for identity' suggests. It is the writers' awareness of a racial and cultural split *and his attempt*, by examining his relationships to the environment, to the natural and historical condition of the Caribbean, and to himself, to *define* and to *preserve* the integrity of the psyche against a constant danger of disintegration; a threat presented by outer, historical and social, as well as by inner, psychological forces.[79]

Michael Gilkes extends this profile beyond the Caribbean writer, arguing that this description of the writer is 'universal' - citing the Romantic and symbolist movements of Europe - because of what he terms as "an impulse towards unity of Being".[80] But if one is to accept that all writers write with the same psychological impetus - something that is highly debatable - should one also talk of universal social and historical factors guiding the writer? In order to do this one would have to see the writer as somehow separate from his/her cultural reality. Yet, writers are at once individuals and products of their *specific* environment, and any 'quest' their writing forms a part of must be seen in definite relationship to this.

The thesis examines novels from a variety of authors, whose work covers a broad spectrum of time, from the early twentieth century up to the present. I have included a substantial amount of work by Caribbean women writers who in the past (although this is slowly being rectified) have tended to be ignored. In the first part of this thesis an emphasis has been placed on the work of Edgar Mittelholzer, because, as Michael Gilkes argues, it was he who

> first raised the question of the role of heredity itself: The phenomenon of racial admixture and cultural disorientation which is beneath the Caribbean writer's deep psychological need to *define* racial and cultural identity in an attempt to heal a division of consciousness.[81]

Gilkes' argument ignores one important point - the fact that Mittelholzer was himself of 'mixed-race'. Therefore, his 'quest for identity' was ultimately more specific to his attitude towards his own 'mixed-race' than a general reflection of his Self as Caribbean *per se*. As such I have found his work to be particularly salient to the writing of this thesis. In the words of Terry Eagleton, ultimately "[w]hat you choose and reject theoretically, then, depends upon what you are practically trying to do".[82]

Summary of chapters

In Chapter Two I will focus on the development of racist scientific theories and highlight the emergence of 'hybrid degeneracy' theories. Using two very different novels, Edgar Mittelholzer's saga, *Children of Kaywana* (1952) and Vic Reid's anti-colonial novel, *The Leopard* (1958), I will examine how the fallacy of 'hybrid degeneracy' has been used and regenerated within these two novels in their respective constructions of 'mixed-race' identity.

In Chapter Three I will further explore the extent to which theories of 'hybrid degeneracy' influenced Caribbean novelists' thematisation of 'mixed-race' sexual deviancy that arose from, and tended to focus heavily on the 'mixed-race' *woman*. Using *Children of Kaywana* (1952) and *Sylvia* (1963) by Edgar Mittelholzer, *Black Fauns* (1935) by Alfred Mendes, and *Faces of Love* (1957) by John Hearne, I will look at how male Caribbean writers, in particular, have absorbed the fallacy of the 'mixed-race' female's dangerous sexuality, and used it to portray the 'mixed-race' woman as sexually deviant and degenerate.

In Chapter Four I will look at the slave period in Caribbean history and examine to what extent the stratification of slave society has been over-simplified within both a literary and historical sphere. Although, on a general level, the hierarchy can be seen as having been shaped by colour (race), writers have all too easily failed to recognise the complexities within this stratification and have tended to write the 'mixed-race' person in stereotypical terms, as (at best) a passive recipient of 'privileges' from the ruling whites and (at worst) as a collaborator in colonial oppression. I will concentrate on Valerie Belgrave's historical romance novel, *Ti Marie* (1988), and compare it with Fred D'Aguiar's *The Longest Memory* (1994) and Michelle Cliff's *Free Enterprise* (1995), in order to determine whether writing in the idealised and sanitised genre of romance fiction reinforces over-simplistic beliefs in the position of the 'mixed-race' person within Caribbean slave society.

In Chapter Five I will examine *Wide Sargasso Sea* (1966) by Jean Rhys, *Jane's Career* (1914) by Herbert de Lisser, *The Orchid House* (1953) by Phyllis Shand Allfrey and *The Open Prison* (1988) by Angus Richmond. Particular attention is paid to *The Open Prison*, in order to discuss the portrayal of the 'mixed-race' person within the context of the post-slavery period. This period was a time of rapidly shifting social and political boundaries, when the rigid stratification made possible by slave society was gradually eroded by increased social mobility. I will show that this led to increased, rather than decreased, levels of racism amongst the planter class, who wanted to justify their continued social distance from and political power over the 'mixed-race' and black population.

In Chapter Six I will examine how the 1940s and 1950s Caribbean genre of nationalistic literature affected the portrayal of the 'mixed-race' person in radically different ways. I will show how two political novels, *New Day* (1949) by Vic Reid and *Crown Jewel* (1952) by Ralph de Boissiére, focus on the growing nationalism within the Caribbean by using very different styles of writing. The similarities and differences of these two novels are brought out in their respective constructions of the 'mixed-race' protagonists, who are portrayed, on the one hand, as the instigator of social and political change in Vic Reid's *New Day* and, on the other hand, as peripheral to these sociopolitical changes in Ralph de Boissiére's *Crown Jewel*.

In Chapter Seven I will determine whether the Caribbean has been inscribed in the literature as a 'melting pot' or as a pluralistic society by writers. I will examine how the 'mixed-race' person has been portrayed as more than 'mulatto' within an apparent Afrocentric versus Eurocentric dichotomy in Caribbean literature. By looking specifically at the influence of the Black Power movement, I shall show how increasing racial essentialism in the 1960s - 1970s led to a continuation in the problems of locating a space for the 'mixed-race' person. *Chopstix in Mauby* (1996) by marina ama omowale maxwell and *The Last English Plantation* (1988) and *Timepiece* (1986) by Jan Shinebourne are used because these novels each foreground the often ignored place of the multi-'mixed-race' person in Caribbean society.

In Chapter Eight I will focus on the theme of migration and examine Caribbean Diaspora writing in order to determine whether recent Caribbean Diaspora writing has been affected by the more extreme polarisation of black and white people within British and American societies in its construction of the 'mixed-race' character. A selection of novels by Sam Selvon, Vernella Fuller, Beryl Gilroy, Joan Riley, and Michelle Cliff are used because of their themes of migration and their varied interpretations of the place of the 'mixed-race' person in this new metropolitan hierarchy.

In Chapter Nine I conclude that despite the so-called retreat of scientific racism there remains the view within medical discourse of a biological difference between 'races'. In this climate of 'racial' essentialism the portrayal of a biologically predetermined 'mixed-race' character has been prevalent in twentieth-century Caribbean literature. Within this climate, it was not until the 1980s and 1990s that the stereotype of the 'mixed-race' person as a biologically fixed entity was really challenged.

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[2] Jayne O. IFEKWUNIGWE, *Scattered Belongings: Cultural Paradoxes of "Race," Nation and Gender*. (London & New York: Routledge, 1999), p. 2.
[3]Edward Said, 'Orientalism Reconsidered' in Francis Barker *et al*, *Europe and its Others* (University of Essex, 1984), p. 16.
[4]Kenneth Ramchand, *The West Indian Novel and its Background* (London: Heinemann Educational Books Ltd., 1983), p. vii.
[5]*Ibid.,* p. 11.
[6]*Ibid.*, p. 4.
[7]*Ibid.*, p. 5.
[8]*Ibid.,* p. 11.
[9]Kevin Yelvington (ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 16.
[10]Kenneth Ramchand, *op. cit.*, p. 176.
[11]*Ibid.*, p. 176.
[12]*Ibid.*, p. 177.
[13]Terry Eagleton, *Literary Theory: An Introduction* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell Ltd., 1983), p. 194.
[14]Bill Ashcroft *et al, The Empire Writes Back: theory and practice in post-colonial literature* (London: Routledge, 1989), p. 24.

[15]*Ibid.*, p. 196.
[16]Terry Eagleton, 'Goodbye to the Englightenment' review of *The Location of Culture* by Homi K Bhaba (*The Guardian*, 8th Feb. 1994).
[17]Bill Ashcroft *et al*, *The Empire Writes Back, op. cit.*, p. 1.
[18]*Ibid.*, p. 1.
[19]*Ibid.*, p. 2.
[20]*Ibid.*, p. 2.
[21]*Ibid.*, p. 11.
[22]Edward Said, *Orientalism*, *op. cit.*, p. 6.
[23]Ania Loomba, 'Overworlding the "Third World"' in Robert Young (ed.), *The Oxford Literary Review,* special issue 'Neocolonialism', (Vol. 13, no's 1 – 2, 1991), p. 170.
[24]Vijay Mishra & Bob Hodge, 'What is Post(-)colonialism?' in *Textual Practice*, (Vol. 5, no. 3, 1991), p. 399.
[25]*Ibid.*, p. 412.
[26]Anne McClintock, 'The Angel of Progress: Pitfalls of the Term 'Post-colonialism'' in *Social Text*, 30 – 33, Spring 1992), p. 86.
[27]*Ibid.*, p. 86.
[28]Robert J C Young, *Colonial Desire: Hybridity in Theory, Culture & Race* (London: Routledge, 1995), p. 165.
[29]*Ibid.*, p. 165.
[30]Stuart Hall, 'Cultural Identity and Diaspora' in J. Rutherford (ed.), *Identity: Community, culture, difference.* London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1990), p. 226.
[31]Anne MacClintock, 'The Angel of Progress: Pitfalls of the Term 'Post-colonialism' *op. cit.*, p. 294.
[32]Bill Ashcroft *et al*, *The Empire Writes Back, op. cit.*, p. 145.
[33]*Ibid.*, p. 146.
[34]*Ibid.*, p. 36.
[35]*Ibid.*, p. 79.
[36]*Ibid.*, p. 129.
[37]*Ibid.*, p. 110.
[38]Robert J C Young, *Colonial Desire*, *op. cit.*, p. 10.
[39]Vijay Mishra & Bob Hodge, 'What is Post(-)colonialism?', *op. cit.*, p. 411.
[40]Terry Eagleton, 'Goodbye to the Enlightenment': Review of *The Location of Culture* by Homi K Bhabha in the *Guardian* (8th February, 1994).
[41]Patrick Williams & Laura Chrisman, *Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory: A Reader* (Herts.: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1993), p. 17.
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[44]David Dabydeen & Nana Wilson-Tagoe, *A Reader's Guide to W*
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[46]Stuart Hall, 'Cultural Studies and its Theoretical Legacies' in Grossberg *et al* (eds.), *Cultural Studies* (London: Routledge, 1992), p. 280.
[47]L. Grossberg *et al* (eds.), *Cultural Studies* (London: Routledge, 1992), p. 2.
[48]*Ibid.*, p. 5.
[49]Paul Gilroy, 'Cultural Studies and Ethnic Absolutism' in Grossberg *et al* (eds.), *Cultural Studies* (London: Routledge, 1992), p. 187.
[50]L Grossberg *et al* (eds.), *Cultural Studies, op. cit.*, p. 2.
[51]Paul Gilroy, 'Cultural Studies and Ethnic Absolutism', *op. cit.*, pp. 187-8.
[52]L Grossberg *et al* (eds.), *Cultural Studies, op. cit.*, p. 2.
[53]Renu Juneja, *Caribbean Transactions: West Indian Culture in Literature* (London & Basingstoke: Macmillan Education Ltd., 1996), p. 118.
[54]*Ibid.*, p. 118.
[55]Joyce Johnson, "A Voyage at Anchor': Among the Sang-Melées in the West Indies'. Paper presented at the Eighteenth Annual Conference of the Society for Caribbean Studies (Oxford, U.K., July 1994), p. 2.

[56]P Williams & L Chrisman (eds.), *Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory, op. cit.*, p. 5.
[57]Joyce Johnson, ''A Voyage at Anchor': Among the Sang-Melées in the West Indies', *op. cit.*, p.3.
[58]*Ibid.*, p.3.
[59]*Ibid.*, p. 17.
[60]*Ibid.*, p. 6.
[61]*Ibid.*, p. 6.
[62]*Ibid.*, p. 6.
[63]*Ibid.*, p. 20.
[64]*Ibid.*, p. 20.
[65]Wolfgang Binder, 'An Interview with Lorna Goodison' in *Commonwealth*, Vol 13, No.2, (Spring 1991), p. 57.
[66]*Ibid.*, p. 57.
[67]Michael Gilkes, *Creative Schizophrenia: The Caribbean Cultural Challenge* (The Third Walter Rodney Memorial Lecture, Dec. 1986), p. 1.
[68]*Ibid.*, p. 8.
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[70] David Lowenthal, *West Indian Societies*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1972), p. 96.
[71] *Ibid.*, p. 176.
[72] Ralph Premdas, 'Race and ethnic relations in Burnhamite Guyana' in David Dabydeen & Brinsley Samaroo, *Across the Dark Waters: Ethnicity and Indian Identity in the Caribbean.* (London & Basingstoke: Macmillan Education Ltd., 1996), p. 46.
[73] *Ibid.*, p. 45.
[74] Personal discussion with Yoshiko Shibata, stemming from her paper, 'Neither "African" Nor "Indian": Dougla-ization, Creolization and Guyanization', presented at the Eighteenth Annual Conference of the Society for Caribbean Studies, Oxford, 8th July, 1994.
[75]Bill Ashcroft *et al*, *The Empire Writes Back, op. cit.*, pp. 8-9.
[76]Michael Gilkes, *Racial Identity and Individual Consciousness In the Caribbean Novel* (Guyana: Ministry of Infomation and Culture/National History and Arts Council, 1975), p. 5.
[77]*Ibid.*, p. 5.
[78]*Ibid.*, p. 6.
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[81]*Ibid.*, p. 6.
[82]Terry Eagleton, 'Goodbye to the Enlightenment', *op. cit.*, p. 211.

CHAPTER TWO

HYBRIDITY AND 'MIXED-RACE' DEGENERACY: FALLACY AND FICTION

'Hybrid' ('mixed-race') degeneracy had been officially discredited amongst the scientific world by the 1950s. However, it becomes evident from an examination of the two novels in this chapter that the theory of 'hybrid degeneracy' had not only tutored the European racist, but had tutored the Caribbean novelist, both 'mixed-race' and black, into the acceptance and perpetuation of a biological construction of 'mixed-race' identity. Both novels were written during the 1950s and in each novel the 'mixed-race' character or characters are written in as the stereotypical miscreant/s. Whether it is expressed through the blood motif of Mittelholzer's *Kaywana* saga or the pathological and psychopathic paradigm of V.S. Reid's *The Leopard*, the portrayal of the racial 'hybrid' as defective acts in a way that is both reflective of society's myths surrounding 'mixed-race' identity and regenerative of such myths.

The portrayal of the 'mixed-race' person in the Caribbean novel has been founded on the myth of 'racial' incompatibility between black and white people. Kenneth Ramchand alerts us that "two stereotypes of the Coloured person - the unstable mulatto (usually male) and the highly sexed and sensuous coloured woman - appear in West Indian writing".[1] However, he also writes that "the psychological disturbance of the mulatto was a further deterrent to their emergence as a minority group bringing sweetness and light to the society",[2] so perpetuating the very stereotype he highlights. Theories surrounding 'mixed-race' identity were at the heart of European racism. As Robert Young has argued:

It was from the results of the sexual conjunction between those races considered furthest apart, namely the black and the white, that race theory which sought to maintain the separation of the races had to start. It is for this reason that we find the question of hybridity at the centre of racial theory.[3]

In order to deconstruct the stereotypes of the 'mixed-race' person in the Caribbean novel it is necessary to look historically at the emergence of racial 'hybrid' theory which evolved from various mythical, theological and biological viewpoints. These overlapped at varying levels to create a complex fallacy about the nature of 'mixed-race' identity and became deeply entrenched within the Caribbean novel.

Theories of 'hybridity' have been informed by a combination of biological and theological notions; and Cynthia L Nakashima argues that "the biological argument often gets merged with a theological argument in the sense that God and nature are commonly considered to be one and the same".[4] These theories have been perpetuated in the Caribbean novel. An early example of this can be found in *Jane's Career*, by Herbert de Lisser, which was written in 1914. In this novel, when Sarah, the protagonist's fellow servant, realises that she is about to be sacked by her 'mixed-race' employer, she responds by a verbal attack on her employer's 'mixed-race' as biologically abnormal and outside God's creation.[5] The theory that 'mixed-race' people were unnatural and were, therefore, not created by God was popular amongst racial theorists at the time *Jane's Career* was written; and Sarah's response suggests that Herbert de Lisser was influenced by this theory. Over half a century later, and In *A Kind of Living* (1978), written by Angus Richmond, one sees that the description of the 'mixed-race' character continues to be influenced by theories of 'hybridity'. When the black male protagonist Willie claims that a "red"[6] woman hates him, the cart-man Joseph's explanation is that "they got this white blood and the black blood mixed. They scared all the time... They neither black nor white... But they hate the black more than the white 'cause white mean favour".[7] Joseph implies that 'mixed-race' people aligned themselves to white people because of the powerful position held by white people

in Caribbean society. However, his statement also indicates his belief in a biological basis for their behaviour. To Joseph, it is the mixing of 'blood' that has caused the 'mixed-race' person to be confused about their identity. One sees that, despite the time lapse between the writing of these two novels, each novel utilises the theory of racial 'hybridity', in which the 'mixed-race' person is defined as biologically abnormal.

The development of 'pseudoscientific' racism

The history of 'racism' is a long one; born of ignorance, myth and greed, it developed into a theoretical framework which allowed for the domination, oppression and control of one group by another. Racism grew hand in hand with slavery, becoming "a principal hand-maiden to empire [and]...[f]rom the 1770s onwards the empire and the pseudo-scientific racism that served it developed side by side".[8] The sense of difference made it all too easy for 'racial' theories to be developed by the European. According to Peter Fryer, the semantics of the word 'black' were extremely negative prior to it being assigned as a referent to a people, as

> Blackness, in England, traditionally stood for death, mourning, baseness, evil, sin, and danger. It was the colour of bad magic, melancholy, and the nethermost pit of hell. People spoke of black arts, blackmail, and the Black Death. The devil himself was black.... White, on the other hand, was the colour of purity, virginity, innocence... and perfect human beauty.[9]

Thus, "the English happened to have a very old and very convenient pigeon-hole for black Africans. If their skin was black, what else could they be but devils?"[10] Despite increased contact in the sixteenth century with Africa, most British people remained poorly informed and myths abounded. These myths "tended to cement in the minds of British people the notion that Africans were inherently carefree, lazy, and lustful... Such myths eased British consciences about enslaving Africans and thereby encouraged the slave trade".[11] Various

racist theories were developed to account for the perceived differences of the African from the European, ranging from Divine retribution, with blackness thought to indicate descent from Ham who was cursed by God[12], to myths surrounding sexual contact between Africans and apes. These myths led to the widespread belief in seventeenth century Europe that Africans were "devilish, monstrous, ape-like, lustful, treacherous, and given to cannibalism".[13]

The concept of an hierarchical division of races was at the heart of racial science, and the so-called 'Chain of Being' was used to argue that racial hierarchy was part of nature's order. According to Peter Fryer, in the mid-eighteenth century, it was a Swedish botanist Carl Linné, "generally known as Linnaeus, who laid the basis for the modern classification of plants and animals. He was first to call us *Homo Sapiens*, and he arranged us in a hierarchy largely based on skin colour".[14] This hierarchy has perhaps led to the erroneous belief that Europeans thought 'mixed-race' people superior to Africans because of their lighter complexion. But the notion of a hierarchy of 'races' based on colour was founded on the belief of 'races' as distinct 'pure' categories. Those born through 'miscegenation' were viewed in an entirely different and negative manner. In fact, in the eighteenth century, calls for immigration controls to restrict the number of black people coming into Britain were often argued on the basis of specific fears over 'miscegenation'.[15] One such call came from a "Samuel Estwick, assistant agent for Barbados, [who] energetically pressed the demand for legislation to preserve racial purity by prohibiting the entry of black people into Britain".[16] Racial propaganda, often produced by the West Indian plantocracy, meant that "by the 1770s... the spectre of racial intermarriage and 'contamination', incessantly invoked by the West Indians' propagandists, was haunting England".[17] Philip Thicknesse, who spent time in Jamaica, refers to the 'dangers' of 'miscegenation' in Britain creating "a little race of mulattoes, mischievous as monkeys and infinitely more dangerous".[18]

Not surprisingly, those at the forefront of imperialism and colonialism argued fervently in their own economic interests. Thus, planters, in justifying slavery, claimed that "black people were not human beings but animals without souls to save".[19] One plantation owner,

Edward Long, has been described as the "[m]ost notorious and influential of eighteenth-century racist writers in Britain".[20] As well as expressing rabid opinions regarding 'pure' Africans, Edward Long, who wrote "that an oran-outang husband would [not] be any dishonour to an Hottentot female"[21], also argued that *mulattoes* (like mules) were infertile.[22] This unsubstantiated argument was meant to prove that the differences between the 'races' were unbridgeable. In Edward Long's book, *The History of Jamaica*, written in 1774, Long refers to Latin America's "vicious, brutal, and degenerate breed of mongrels... produced, between Spaniards, Blacks, Indians, and their mixed progeny" as a reason to prevent mixed unions in Jamaica.[23] According to Long, "[s]ome few of them ['mixed-race' people] have intermarried here with those of their own complexion; but such matches have generally been defective and barren. They seem in this respect to be actually of the mule-kind, and not capable of producing from one another as from a commerce with a distinct White or Black".[24] He goes on to say that "[t]he subject is really curious, and deserves a further and very attentive enquiry; because it tends, among other evidences, to establish an opinion, which several have entertained, that the White and the Negroe had not one common origin".[25]

Fryer asserts that Long, although his views were indicative of racist thought of the time, was unoriginal, and argues that, in *The History of Jamaica,*

> [w]hat is not plagiarism here is mere trivial prejudice, on the level of planters' dinner-table gossip...[but] Long's peculiar talent lay in linking a 'scientific'-sounding assertion of black inferiority - he was the first pseudo-scientific racist - with a defence of black slavery.[26]

In the nineteenth century racism went hand in hand with imperialism and became the vested ideology of white imperialists, who took "a feverish interest in [the notion of] distinctly endowed human races - races with innately unequal abilities, which could lead either to success and world power or to total subordination and extinction".[27] So-called 'pseudo-science' popularised racist scientific thought and "[v]irtually every scientist and

intellectual in nineteenth-century Britain took it for granted that only people with white skin were capable of thinking and governing".[28] The political and economical usefulness of these scientific 'facts' cannot be underestimated at a time when slavery was ending in the Anglophone Caribbean, when new methods of economic control and oppression needed to be justified. An array of supposedly incontrovertible scientific evidence was produced to show an absolute difference between the so-called 'races' in order to support the belief in British 'racial' superiority. Between the 1830s and 1840s *phrenology*, the belief that the shape of a person's head could be correlated with their mental ability, was very popular amongst scientists.[29] Phrenologists moved from studying individual differences to studying group differences or 'racial' differences. They argued that these differences were innate, and that the biology of each 'race' meant they could not exist, or had difficulty in existing, in other geographical areas. This argument offered support for the belief in the supposed dangers of 'miscegenation'.

Although *polygenesis* (the theory of separate origins for different groups) began in the seventeenth century[30], *monogenism* was still the prevailing theory at that time, which was influenced by the biblical account of all 'men' originating from one source - Adam (and Eve). But, whilst the principle of 'one kind' prevailed in moral thought, in practice the belief in equality was less than real. At the time of Edward Long's writing in the late eighteenth century, monogenism was beginning to be eroded, and by the 1840s the *environmentalism* of monogenists (e.g. hot climate equals darker skin) was rejected, so paving the way for polygenism, which by the 1860s was upheld by a significant minority in British scientific thought.[31] This change in thought was part of a wider change from seeing man as a social being to seeing man as a biological being unable to change. 'Race' was now seen as a static entity that equated an irrevocable difference between people and, as Robert Young argues,

> In the nineteenth century, the very notion of a fixed English identity was doubtless a product of and reaction to, the rapid change and transformation of both

> metropolitan and colonial societies which meant that, as with nationalism, such identities needed to be constructed to counter schisms, friction and dissent.[32]

The word 'race' has not always been used, but has been interchangeable with the words *type* and *species*, depending on which theory pervaded the day. All terms, however, are based on the fundamental premise of (significant) difference. In the 1850s 'type' replaced 'species' and 'race' in some theories as it was considered a less problematical term to be used in order to describe a permanency of difference.[33] Social Darwinism argued that species were not fixed, but were "continuously changing by a natural process of variation, struggle and the selection of traits favourable for survival".[34] This concept of evolution implied man's animal ancestry; and although Charles Darwin himself was a monogenist and an abolitionist, Darwinian evolutionist ideas readily embraced racial hierarchy, and so-called 'lower' races were seen as nearer to the ape than the white Anglo-Saxon race. The phrase 'survival of the fittest' associated with Darwin was actually coined by Herbert Spencer, a philosopher, who, after the publication of Darwin's *Origin of Species* "led the way in systematically applying Darwin's ideas to sociology and ethics".[35] Racial theorists argued that the strongest and fittest were the Anglo-Saxon race. Darwinian theories, on both an academic and political level, were applied to nations and so-called 'races'. Walter Bagehot, an economist, argued "that the strongest nations tended to conquer the weaker"; Karl Pearson, professor at London University and a student of Darwin's cousin, Sir Francis Galton, saw colonialism as the way to populate the world with the Anglo-Saxon 'race'; whilst in 1862 John Arthur Roebuck, MP for Sheffiled, argued that the the inevitable destruction of the Maori in New Zealand should happen as quickly as possible.[36] We see, therefore, as Fryer posits, that "Darwin's theories [were] distorted and adapted to provide an ideological prop for empire-building - a self-justification for a 'great power' that was expanding aggressively at the expense of so-called 'primitive' and 'inferior' peoples".[37]

Polygenists believed 'races' were so distinct that each was a separate species created independently, rather than from one source. Scientists had divided species by their lack of inter-fertility, but modified this argument when they found that some domestic animals

overcame this barrier. They argued, therefore, that human beings could still be divided into separate species as any proven 'interfertility' meant, that like the domestic animals, they had merely overcome this 'natural' barrier. They further argued that even if

> successful, [it] led to the deterioration of the superior race and produced a vicious type of half-breed, useless alike to himself and the world. In the opinion of the idiosyncratic French racist De Gobineau, hybrids were either 'beautiful without strength, strong without intelligence, or, if intelligent, both weak and ugly'.[38]

The eighteenth century thesis of *degeneration* held that the white male was the origin of humankind, and a process of degeneration had led to all others. Degeneration theory resurfaced in the nineteenth century in specific reference to so-called racial 'hybrids'. If 'hybrids' were proved fertile it would refute the polygenetic argument; so, in order to counteract this flaw in their argument, the notion of hybrid degradation or degeneration was developed. The theory that 'hybridity' led to degeneration ultimately became the strongest argument because it was the hardest to refute; and "[t]he claim of degeneration was thus the final, and undoubtedly the most powerful, retort to any apparent demonstration of the fertility of mixed unions".[39]

The belief in the infertility of inter-racial crosses persisted, despite the complete lack of evidence to support it. Views about the biological problem of 'racial' mixing were dependent on which 'races' were being mixed. European 'racial' mixing was argued to be acceptable because of the belief in 'racial' similarity; therefore, "[i]t was possible to accept mixing in Europe within the white races while still regarding them as absolutely separate from the yellow and the black".[40] In some cases it was even seen to be a virtue, thus allowing the British to retain their false sense of 'racial' superiority, despite (or because of) their own 'hybrid' heritage. Non-white (European) 'racial' mixing was also sometimes argued to be positive. For instance, Gobineau was able to argue that the Malay 'type' came from the 'yellow' and black races and "had more intelligence than either of its ancestors... [and] to racial mixtures is due the refinement of manners and beliefs, and

especially the tempering of passion and desire".[41] What was considered totally unacceptable was the racial mixing of the Caucasian and the African (referred to as the 'Negroid'), which were viewed by European racial theorists as the most distinct 'races'; and it was specifically their progeny who were defined as 'degenerate hybrids'.

By the end of the nineteenth century British science was committed to racial inequality and racial types. Disunity over definitions of 'race' and the inability to classify 'races' did not prevent overwhelming racist beliefs. Towards the end of the nineteenth century 'race' science was reinforced with the introduction of eugenics in 1883 by Darwin's cousin, Francis Galton.[42] Nancy Stepan describes eugenics as "a science and a social programme of racial improvement through selective breeding of human species".[43] Like 'race biology' and anthropology, eugenics highlighted the belief that 'miscegenation' created 'inharmonious' and 'unfit' people.

In the twentieth century racial theory became masked behind a euphemistic veneer of 'cultural difference'; and 'hybridity', which in the nineteenth century was constructed as biological, now became a cultural construct. However, the distinction is less than one might imagine, as 'culture' has never been an objective reality separate from the subjectivity of 'race'. According to Robert Young,

> Culture has always marked cultural difference by producing the other; it has always been comparative, and racism has always been an integral part of it; the two are inextricably clustered together, feeding off and generating each other. Race has always been culturally constructed. Culture has always been racially constructed.[44]

In his book, *Culture* (1993), Chris Jenks posits that various accounts exist of the origins of the concept of culture, ranging from its definition as the creative practices of an elite to its meaning as the way of life of a people. Jenks argues, however, that by the twentieth century "[c]ulture, to British and American social theorists, tends to have been most usefully applied as a concept of *differentiation* [my italics]".[45] The concept of culture became yet

another tool in which so-called First World hegemonies could stratify to their advantage people within and without their national boundaries. Chris Jenks points out that

> overlapping with the stratification of culture that arises from the ideologies of imperialism are those forms of stratification which seem persistently to emerge from the experiences of race and ethnicity...
>
> What is important here is the collective recognition of racial status characteristics, treated as natural, and their articulation in terms of the collective behavioural patterns of symbolic representations of ethnicity, real or supposed, that are treated as cultural.[46]

The reality is that 'race' has always retained its biological referent of difference - 'blood'; and as Young argues "[i]f there is one constant characteristic of the history of the use of the word 'race', it is that however many new meanings may be constructed for it, the old meanings refuse to die".[47] At the root of theories about 'hybridity' and 'degeneracy' lay an obsessive fear that the mythically 'pure' white race would be contaminated by non-white races. The belief in contamination rooted itself in the medical fallacy of blood as the expression of inheritance. As Ashley Montagu posits,

> In the cultural dynamics of Western civilization the concept of 'blood' has played a significant and important role. From the earliest times it has been regarded as that most quintessential element of the body which carries, and through which is transmitted, the hereditary qualities of the stock.... [and] today the words 'race' and 'blood' have come to be used as synonymous.[48]

Supporting the stereotype/s

Born of a free black mother and a white father, Mary Seacole's life is best known for her significant nursing of British troops in the Crimea during the Crimean War at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Her autobiography provides an interesting insight into the life of a 'mixed-race' woman free-born into Jamaican slave society, partly because her life and 'adventures' belie the myths of the 'mixed-race' woman as weak and degenerate, but more significantly, because her story reveals the extent to which the propaganda of 'race' infected the lives of those it denigrated. Rather than question the validity of ideologies that negatively stereotyped 'mixed-race' people, Mary Seacole chose to see herself as the exception to the rule rather than representative. Mary Seacole emphasised her white Scottish heritage, and referred to the "*good* [my italics] Scotch blood coursing in my veins" in which she felt could be "traced... that energy and activity which are not always found in the Creole race".[49] Notably, although unduly proud of her Scottish ancestry, she had no actual contact with her white father, and it is in her black mother's care with whom she grew up. Seacole's misplaced loyalty to her Scottish parentage or 'blood' was probably due to her being raised in a society which placed whiteness as the ideal. Her confusion over her identity is revealed when she and her 'mixed-race' companion were racially taunted by boys during her first visit to London (circa 1820) in the street. Initially, she was surprised that they could recognise that she was of 'mixed-race' because she felt that she looked almost white. She then 'blames' her darker-skinned companion, whom she describes as "hot-tempered," for the racial taunts.[50] Her attitude reveals the extent to which the white plantocracy's policy of 'divide and rule' had infiltrated the mind of a 'mixed-race' person.

In an obsessive climate of desire for racial 'purity' and paranoia about racial contamination, the 'mixed-race' person has consistently been pathologized and denigrated; as Young has argued, "none was so demonized as those of mixed-race".[51] But, as Mary Seacole's autobiography reveals, those of 'mixed-race' themselves are often just as likely to perpetuate this myth rather than to challenge it. None more so, perhaps, than Edgar Mittelholzer. Born in 1909, Mittelholzer is a classic example of a man who appears to have

fulfilled the negative stereotypes that have historically negated the 'mixed-race' person. Michael Gilkes correlates Mittelholzer's 'hybridity' with his pathological state of mind saying "[e]ven as a young man Mittelholzer was aware of a deep disharmony within himself and was constantly on his guard against melancholia and morbidity"; a 'morbidity' which resulted in his attempted suicide on May 14, 1936.[52]

In Edgar Mittelholzer's autobiography of his childhood and teens, *A Swarthy Boy* (1963), Mittelholzer, like Mary Seacole a century earlier, reveals an obsessive interest in his European (Swiss-German) ancestry and distances himself from his African ancestry. Mittelholzer clearly believed in the idea of an innate personality, arguing "[p]eople, I am convinced, are born what they are. Environment and "traumatic" experience cannot change character".[53] Despite, or because of, this belief in 'nature over nurture', Mittelholzer sought to foreground his European ancestry, which he appears to have held as vastly superior to any other. As Michael Gilkes writes, "[d]eeply conscious of his own 'hybrid' pedigree, Mittelholzer, the swarthy son of a near white, negrophobe father, seems to project in his work a dualistic fear of 'inner division'".[54] Mittelholzer's apparent difficulty in coming to terms with his own 'mixed-race' identity led him to explore some of his feelings within his novels. According to Michael Gilkes "[i]t was Mittelholzer who first raised the question of psychic imbalance and the resultant *angst* of identity which is the most central and urgent theme of West Indian literature".[55]

In *Children of Kaywana*, written in 1952, the first book of Edgar Mittelholzer's *Kaywana* trilogy, Mittelholzer invokes the stereotypes created by the biological notions of 'hybrid degeneracy' in his saga of one 'mixed-race' family's obsession with 'blood' and heritage, beginning in seventeenth-century Guyana. The story opens in 1612, with the character Kaywana described as a 'half-breed', the daughter of an Amerindian mother and an English father. Despite the fact that she has never known her English father and has been raised by her mother entirely within an Amerindian culture, Kaywana is described as being "[d]ifferent and unusual" from the other Amerindians.[56] In describing her as such, Mittelholzer implies that her 'mixed-race' heritage has made her innately *other*; a theory

based on his own belief in 'nature over nurture'. She also remains *other* to the white Dutch. Her 'marginal' status is symbolised by her position when the Spanish invade; for, although she wants to be near to her white lover August Vyfuis, a Dutch plantation owner, she hovers on the periphery, neither with the whites nor the fleeing Amerindians.

Kaywana's difference from the whites is portrayed as a negative 'quality'. Her white common-law husband Adriansen van Groenwegal reacts angrily when she kills Wakkatai's daughter with *curari* in revenge for his attacking her own daughter with poison.[57] As the European, Adriansen symbolises so-called civilised behaviour, whilst Kaywana, as the 'half-breed' symbolises the so-called 'savage'. Adriansen, standing in judgement over his wife, prophetically tells her "if you care to live according to the laws of the beasts, then you must do so and suffer as the beasts do".[58] Kaywana is brutally killed, along with four of her children, later in the novel. Paradoxically, whilst her 'nature' has been described as bestial by her husband, in death she becomes idolised for her strength, by later generations of the van Groenwegal family. The van Groenwegal descendants feel that they have inherited almost 'superhuman' strength through both Kaywana and Adriansen's 'blood'. Kaywana's son Willem, though not legally entitled to his father's name because he was born out of wedlock, claims his inheritance through 'blood' lineage. He declares: "[i]t's blood that counts... Not a mortal can drain the blood of that old man from my veins - or the veins of my children. What was in my father is in me and in mine".[59] Willem's views on 'blood' as an inherited trait reflect Mittelholzer's own belief. The inclusion of August, Kaywana's son from her previous lover August Vyfuis, within the van Groenwegal family tree, indicates that family pride is also taken in Kaywana's 'blood' or lineage. However, we are told that August "treated his slaves with extreme cruelty, and was very much hated by them".[60] Willem believes that August has inherited his mother's cruelty. His belief suggests that August's barbarity represents his Amerindian 'nature' and his emerging 'degeneracy', rather than signifying his 'honorary' European status and his abuse of power.

When strength is used to uphold European values, such as in the defence of a plantation, it is portrayed positively in the near-white van Groenwegal family. In contrast, when exhibited

by the slaves, strength is described in negative terms. Although some of the barbarism inflicted by plantation owners on the slaves is described by the narrative, it is in no way described as the norm. Therefore, the brutality of the rebelling slaves takes centre stage in such a way that the narrative seems firmly to support the *status quo* of slave society. The novel portrays Cuffy, the leader of the historic slave-rebellion of 1763, as a vicious rapist, who ultimately shoots himself. Thus, one of the greatest achievements in Guyana's history is reduced to a negative portrayal of barbarism.

Africans are portrayed throughout the novel as racist stereotypes, indicating Mittelholzer's own sense of distance from his African ancestry. Michael Gilkes posits that Mittelholzer's 'negrophobia' was instilled in him at an early age, arguing that "[t]here can be little doubt that the father's Negrophobia communicated itself powerfully to the child".[61] The narrative describes the African slaves as "thick-lipped and thick-skulled. They looked oft-times like beasts out there".[62] Although the narrative concedes that in their eyes can be seen "the flame of humanity like magnificent lightening",[63] this merely shows that the narrative has utilised two ends of European racist stereotyping - the 'beast' and the 'Noble Savage' - to describe the Africans. The slaves are described as "whining and whimpering. Like wild beasts", when they are literally forced (one is shot by Laurens) into defending the van Groenwegal plantation.[64] In contrast, the near-white van Groenwegals are described as heroic. Their supposed heroism is, therefore, portrayed by the narrative as an innate quality, which is specifically linked to their European 'blood'. Willem declares that "[y]ou can't keep blood down",[65] which implies that this innate 'quality' has kept them, not only alive, but strong.

Amerindian 'blood' is described in a variety of pathological terms; for example, Hendrickje tells Rosaria, who is of Carib and Spanish parentage, "[y]ou half-breed bitches bring a lot of rottenness into a family".[66] However, African inheritance is viewed even more unfavourably by the van Groenwegal dynasty. Willem reveals that his half-brother August is "debauching the black slave women - producing a host of mulatto bastards",[67] two of whom, Katrina and Hannah, are then brought to a neighbour's plantation. Only the 'mulatto' off-spring are

referred to as 'bastards' and Willem wants it kept quiet that they are related to 'mulatto' slaves, fearing it will damage the family's name and status. When Laurens becomes attracted to Katrina and Hannah, his two 'mulatto' half-cousins, he thinks to himself "[p]erhaps it's simply a degenerate streak in me".[68] His reference to himself as 'degenerate' implies that his attraction is somehow unnatural. Hendrickje, the daughter of Laurens and the 'quadroon' Katrina, whilst happy to have her sexual needs fulfilled by a 'mulatto' slave, does not want black 'blood' in the family, declaring "[b]lood or no blood, no kinky-headed people will be admitted into our family".[69] However, later in life, she relents and becomes attached to two of her 'mulatto' grandsons, declaring: "The old blood. It must come out. Never mind the black taint".[70] Her belief that the 'old' (meaning European) 'blood' is somehow more dominant in her 'mixed-race' grandsons reflects Mittelholzer's own belief that his Germanic ancestry was more significant than his African ancestry.

Although the van Groenwegal family believe in their own superhuman strength, shown in the novel by their repeated resistance to attack on their respective homes/plantations, as a 'mixed-race' family they are ultimately portrayed as degenerate. Scenes of Hendrickje burying alive slaves, who have become too old or sick to be useful, reveal a perverted form of strength. Hendrickje tells her son that she likes hurting soft things (by which she means people), and tells him "[o]nly the strong and hard deserve to populate this earth. The weak should be crushed out".[71] Her opinion reveals the influence of Darwinian theory on Mittelholzer's novel. Adrian calls his mother a "black, stinking beast"[72] because of the brutality she uses against his brother Cornelius, their father Ignatius, and himself, and he vows to kill her. The implication is that blood is somehow racially divisible and that it is the non-white 'blood' which is responsible for the family's 'savage' behaviour. Even when Adrian goes through a short oedipal period of (sexual) devotion to his mother, she is still seen by him as deviant and he describes her as "a strange mixture".[73]

The stereotype of the inherently cruel 'mixed-race' person is perpetuated in *Children of Kaywana* through the distortion, or perversion, of strength in the van Groenwegal family. Racial theorists also argued that physical and mental weakness could be a result of 'hybrid

degeneracy', and such weakness became another stereotype of the 'mixed-race' person. This notion is evident in the novel through the narrative's references to the 'soft-streak' in the family. This 'soft-streak' is attributed in the novel to the so-called gentility of the van Groenwegals' white European 'blood'. Gentility becomes subverted in the 'mixed-race' off-spring to become a degenerate weakness. Firstly, Reinald (Kaywana's grandson) goes mad, followed by his son Ignatius, who kills himself. Ignatius' son Adrian, tormented by his, often justifiable, paranoia about his mother, goes mad, and he too (probably) kills himself. Adrian's brother, Cornelius, is revealed to be homosexual, also thought to be a sign of 'degeneracy'. Of Adrian's children, Jacques typifies the 'soft streak', because he does not share their love of brutality, but even he is mesmerised by his grandmother and affected by the old stories of 'blood'. Finally he agrees to kill his mother for Hendrickje, and this act of matricide suggests Jacques' own mental aberration, and, therefore, the continuation of degeneracy within the family. The youngest child, Laurens, has a malformed foot, so that not only does he share in the perverted brutality of his siblings, a sign of his mental degeneracy, but he is also a physical embodiment of 'hybrid degenerate' theory, which argued that black and white people were so biologically or physiologically distinct that the 'mixed-race' off-spring were liable to develop physical malformation.

The van Groenwegals' obsession with innate qualities passed through their 'blood-line' mirrors Mittelholzer's own concept of heredity, one that was founded within a discourse of biological racial theory. The narrative's description of perverted strength, and the idea that bad 'qualities' are inherited from each (racial) parent, reveal Mittelholzer's own acceptance of racist theories about 'hybrid degeneracy', and his own extension and perpetuation of this 'mixed-race' fallacy.

The notion of a 'mixed-race' pathology is introduced in *Children of Kaywana* through the depiction of Laurens as physically malformed. This pathological image is also used in Phyllis Shand Allfrey's, *The Orchid House* (1982), in which the racially ambivalent Andrew is portrayed as slowly dying of tuberculosis. Tuberculosis symbolises the supposed biological weakness of the 'mixed-race' person, whom racial theorists argued to be prone to

disease and high rates of mortality. A pathologised 'hybridity' is more intensely foregrounded in Vic Reid's *The Leopard,* which was written in 1958 shortly after the Mau Mau uprising in Kenya as "a black Jamaican's imaginative rejection of anti-Mau Mau propaganda" and which casts a physically disabled 'mixed-race' boy as one of the two protagonists.[74]

The Leopard, as well as being a pan-African retort against imperial rhetoric, is also a psychological examination of 'mixed-race' identity. The 'mixed-race' protagonist is the son of the white/colonial 'msabu' Gibson and the black Kikuyu Nebu. Any maternal relationship between the white mother and her 'mixed-race' son is severed immediately after his birth when her white husband, Gibson, murders her. We are given little insight into the boy's early upbringing or Gibson's motives for initially bringing him up as his son. The boy's fractured relationship with his white adopted/colonial father, Gibson, and his African biological father, Nebu, is explored through their violent encounter in the wilderness of the African bush, after Nebu picks up the trail of what he assumes is an unknown lone white man. The portrayal of the unnamed 'grey' boy, as well as referring to the literal mixing of black and white colour, symbolises his 'anonymous' and 'unidentifiable' status.[75] The boy is described as a "crooked question-sign", and he tells Nebu "[m]y father gave me a crooked foot, something special to mark me from the rabble".[76] Although he is referring to the white Gibson, the statement could equally refer to his real father Nebu, the 'crooked foot' being his colour or 'mixed-race', which marks him from others, and alienates him from both white and black. He asks Nebu, "Don't you agree I look - different?".[77] The physically disabled boy or 'toto' is clearly an icon of 'hybrid' theory. According to Louis James

> Critics have been quick to see in Toto, crippled, the creation of two races, acceptable to neither, Reid's symbol of the West Indian. This interpretation is limiting. Toto is symbolic of all cultures produced by a meeting of civilizations, whether in the Caribbean, or in Africa or India. The important point about Toto is that he has no moral bearings. Because he cannot accept the values of either the European or the kikuyu worlds, he exists only in cynicism and hate.[78]

I would agree with James that the 'mixed-race' boy read as symbolic of the 'West Indian' *per se* is 'too limiting. Indeed, such a reading would imply that the seemingly innate evil of the boy is that of the 'West Indian'; an argument unlikely to be posited by Vic Reid, who advocated Caribbean nationalism in his novel *New Day* (1973). However, Louis James' shift from the 'racial' basis of hybrid theory to a 'cultural' one is unhelpful as the two are not distinct (as discussed earlier in this chapter). His argument that the boy cannot accept the values of either European or Kikuyu 'worlds' is not supported by the text, as the boy constantly privileges the European 'world' and uses its language to abuse his real father, calling him a "kikuyu ape! Filthy-filthy-filthy ape!", mirroring his white 'foster' father's racist verbal abuse of himself and his father.[79] We are also told that "[t]he boy spoke Kikuyu and yet was one with the bwanas" (meaning the whites).[80] The boy wants the rifle, which fails to work for his African father, Nebu, because he feels it should be his as he is the European and symbolic owner. Nebu tells him that it will not work for him either, only for the 'bwana', to which the boy angrily screams "Am I not a bwana?" but is unanswered.[81]

The white Gibson sees the 'mixed-race' boy as abnormal and, in his dying agony, he talks of his wife's child as " 'A-a-dam' freak".[82] Nebu is told by Gibson that he had brought Nebu's son to see him kill Nebu, after which he had planned to slit the boy's throat. Nebu seems uninterested, and later we are told that Nebu realised that Gibson was always planning to kill the boy, just as he had his wife, and recognised that "[t]he boy had been doomed from the beginning".[83] This reference to the boy as 'doomed' echoes the belief that *miscegenation* led to degeneration. The boy's abnormality or 'degeneracy' is further portrayed in his apparent schizophrenia. We are told that he hears things in his head, "[p]lanetary stuff. It gave him the most wonderful ideas. One time, on the in-trail, he had heard the music. After that, Gibson used to tie his hands when he took him piggy-back".[84] The inference is that the boy had tried to strangle Gibson, urged by the voices in his head. The boy also has to fight back his desire to kill Nebu, because he would be lost without him.

The boy's violent 'nature' and desire to commit patricide are both indicators of his supposed 'mixed-race' degeneracy. Mervyn Morris argues that the boy "is not only physically deformed; psychologically and morally he is a cripple...A potential killer, he is deceitful, willing to feign piety or love according to the moment's need".[85] His 'hybrid' status is contrasted in physical terms with that of Nebu's; "[t]he black, straight-boled as a good tree, bulked up, heels together. The boy stood crooked, one shoulder reaching higher".[86] Nebu tells the boy he himself is half Kikuyu and half Masai: "I farm on my father's side and I am a hunter on my mother's side. I am half".[87] However, unlike the 'grey' boy, his halves make a positive whole, combining farming and hunting. This positive evaluation reflects the belief, held by European racial theorists, that 'racially' close 'hybrids' were acceptable and possibly an improved 'racial' stock, whilst the supposedly disparate 'hybrid' progeny of the African and European were inferior because they were deemed to be unnatural.

At two points in the story the boy is carried by each 'father' and, as such, is responsible for Gibson's death and for the hastening of Nebu's death. By carrying the boy, Gibson leaves a clear trail which allows Nebu to find him easily and kill him. Nebu's death is hastened by the boy, who, whilst being carried, maliciously kicks his heels into Nebu. Mervyn Morris argues that, carried by his white 'father' and then his black, "the 'grey' mulatto, is both the white man's burden and the black's. The white man hates him and plans to slit his throat, whilst the black man loves him as a father and protects him dutifully".[88] I would argue that Nebu's behaviour is far from paternalistic. He, like Gibson, wants to kill the boy, and only desists because he feels he must pay penance for killing Gibson, whom he had 'already wronged'. The rifle Nebu had longed for is finally his; symbol of the white man's domination, it is the key to their power and now "[h]e was gifted with destruction".[89] When the rifle fails to work for him, Nebu rationalises that it is because he has wronged Gibson, and decides he must return the boy to his 'home' as his penance. Significantly, it is the 'mixed-race' boy who has stolen a necessary part of the gun, thus preventing Nebu from realising his longed for power. Here, the actions of the 'toto' represent the belief that the 'mixed-race' person's position as political 'buffer' within the Caribbean prevented the black (non 'mixed-race') person from accessing power.

The belief that black and white can meet and share intimacy, rather than hate, is expressed in Reid's erotic description of Nebu dancing naked. As the rain penetrates the earth in phallic imagery, so too Nebu and 'msabu' Gibson are joined sexually, and we are told that Nebu still "remembered the rough thrusts of the msabu's hips when she fought for him to fill her, using the rich language of her body to talk away his fears".[90] However, their sexual act is ultimately portrayed as a sin and an adulterous act. Although affection is apparent between the two afterwards, they do not develop a relationship outside the one of mistress/servant, and they do not have any further sexual liaison. Nebu's emotional distance from her is revealed by his voyeurism as he watches his lover being killed by her husband after she gives birth. We are told by the narrative that when Nebu sees a "demoniac" leopard and "the evil slew of the beast's head had reminded him of Bwana Gibson; the night the bwana had become an animal, shrieking and battering-in the flower face of the msabu as she lay spent and weak after the birth while Nebu crouched in the storm outside and peered in at them through the window".[91] Not only does he do nothing to prevent her death, but neither does he do anything to rescue his new-born son. Nebu's response reveals his complete rejection of his 'hybrid' son.

As father disowns boy, so too the unnamed and unclaimed boy disowns his father. Nebu does not reveal that he knows the boy's identity, and the boy pretends he does not know Nebu is his father, as he 'shrinks' from his name and the truth. The boy takes on the role of the 'bwana' - the colonial oppressor - and abuses his own father, mocking his failure to use the gun, when all along he is responsible for Nebu's apparent 'inability'. Thus, when he tells the truth about the rifle in order to prevent them from being killed by the leopard, Nebu does not believe him, because to him the boy "was false all through".[92]

Kenneth Ramchand refers to the leopard as "the leopard of hate",[93] whilst Mervyn Morris says, "[l]ike the rifle, the leopard is important as its literal self and as a symbol whose significance shifts".[94] The leopard is not a noble hunter; "[a]ll the great hunters of this land gave warning, except the leopard and the white man...he slew sneaking, he killed the

wounded and the weak".[95] However, the leopard's qualities not only represent the colonialism of the whites, but the 'hunting' tactics used by Nebu, who goes on the trail of the 'stumbling' white man, waiting to catch him off his guard. As the leopard symbolises more than one possibility so also his 'prey' shifts. Nebu seems to be stalked by the leopard, but the leopard goes for the boy instead. The boy is saved by Nebu, but Nebu is unable to kill the leopard because he is weakened by the wound Gibson had given him. We are informed by the text that the leopard only hunts the weak and the wounded; therefore, the fact that it goes for the boy instead of the wounded Nebu signifies the extent of the 'mixed-race' boy's pathological status.

As the leopard waits to kill them, the boy finally admits that he knows Nebu is his real father, and says he is aware that Nebu also knows the truth about their relationship to each other. Nebu claims he has said nothing because he "would not have hurt the half-bwana by telling him. For then you could not return to Parklands to the big house and play with the children of the white men".[96] His assertion of caring is inconsistent with his previous questioning of the boy's claim to whiteness.[97] His falsity is returned by his son, who claims that he loves Nebu, but this is said only through his fear of the leopard. The boy does not believe Nebu can kill the leopard without the gun and wants to persuade him to use it. When Nebu still refuses the boy returns to his usual abuse, calling Nebu a "Fool! Filthy Kikuyu!"[98] In the boy's attempt to get the gun he turns the attentions of the leopard onto himself and is killed. Ultimately, the leopard symbolises destruction; a destruction of the 'unnatural' 'mixed-race' boy, who "had distinctly heard the leopard call his name when he had fallen to the ground" and of those involved in his creation.[99]

The 'grey' boy remains unnamed throughout the story and so must exist named only by others. Nebu's call-name for his son - 'toto' - appears to mean only 'small child'. The school children treat him as *other* and refer to him as "the Grey Rat", and variously throughout the text he is referred to as 'freak', 'grey' and 'monkey'.[100] His secret unsaid name is his inaccessible 'true' identity, guarded carefully behind his eyes, the "brown doors" which he keeps closed from the world. The ambiguity of remaining unnamed

symbolises his blurred racial identity; an ambiguity reinforced by the uncertainty of the white Lieutenant who sees the boy and says undecidedly, "[i]t looks like a white boy".[101] Although Mervyn Morris argues that it is hard to believe that so many in the white community failed to recognise the boy as 'mixed-race', many 'mixed-race' people are perceived by white people to have ambiguous 'racial' features. It is this ambiguity which undermines the theory of a concrete distinction between the so-called 'races', and which has led to white paranoia about 'miscegenation' and its blurring of rigid 'racial'/power boundaries.

The Kikuyu references to whites made 'beautiful' in death subverts the European notion of their own physiognomical superiority, and has lead some critics to postulate that "[i]t still remains true, however, that on the level that dominates the book, the emotional, the story is one-sided and intensely anti-white".[102] I would argue that *The Leopard,* rather than being 'one-sided' acts as a challenge to the already 'one-sided' argument of the colonial propagandists, who portrayed the white settler in Kenya as innocent victim. Whilst the majority of the whites in the story are portrayed by Reid in negative terms, he focuses on those who stole the land from the Kenyans and exploited their labour, treating them as second-class citizens in their own land. Reid is not 'anti-white' *per se*, he is merely giving his explanation for the Mau Mau uprising. Thus, the white Mrs Gibson is remembered fondly by Nebu because she treated him as a fellow human being and, more significantly, as a man (who, as representative of the kikuyu has, symbolically, had his manhood undermined by the all powerful phallus, the rifle of the whites). As Mervyn Morris points out in his introduction, "*The Leopard* constantly reminds us that black and white share a common condition. The loins are blind. (P.96) 'The worms know no colour'. (P.49)".[103] The story implies that within their own (imagined) separate worlds, whites and blacks are (or should be seen as) equal to each other. What is problematised in the novel is the mixing of these 'separate worlds'. Colonialism has enforced an unequal meeting of two 'races', whereby one is subjugated by the other; but more importantly, this 'meeting' has resulted in *miscegenation*, every racial theorists' nightmare. *The Leopard* is not anti-white, but appears anti-'mixed-race'. The small boy or 'toto' is so extremely "demonised", he becomes

the ultimate icon of 'hybrid degeneracy', who, in his own hybridity, not only destroys himself, but destroys both black and white parents or 'races' as well.

The depiction of the 'mixed-race' character as engendering destruction to those they encounter, as seen in Mittelholzer's portrayal of the van Groenwegal family and Reid's pathological image of the 'grey' boy's devastating affect on his two 'fathers', is perhaps even more strongly emphasised through the portrayal of the 'mixed-race' woman. The 'mixed-race' woman was vehemently depicted in Mittelholzer's work, and in the following chapter this focus on the destructiveness of the 'mixed-race' woman will be examined more closely.

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[1]Kenneth Ramchand, *The West Indian Novel and its Background* (London: Heinemann Educational Books Ltd., 1983 [1970]), p. 41.
[2]*Ibid.*, p. 40.
[3]Robert J C Young, *Colonial Desire: Hybridity in Theory, Culture and Race* (London: Routledge, 1995), p. 101.
[4]Cynthia L Nakashima 'An Invisible Monster: The Creation and Denial of Mixed-Race People in America' in M Root (ed.) *Racially Mixed People in* America (California: Sage Publications, Inc., 1992), p. 178n.
[5]Herbert de Lisser, *Jane's Career* (London: Rex Collings, 1971), p. 56.
[6]A Caribbean colloquialism, meaning a person of African and European 'mixed-race'.
[7]Angus Richmond, *A Kind of Living* (Cuba: Casa De Las Américas, 1978), p. 107.
[8]Peter Fryer, *Staying Power: The History of Black People in Britain* (London: Pluto, 1984), p. 165.
[9]*Ibid.*, p. 135.
[10]*Ibid.*, p. 135.
[11]*Ibid.*, pp. 7-8.
[12]*Ibid.*, p. 142.
[13]*Ibid.*, pp. 141-2.
[14]*Ibid.*, p. 166.
[15]Robert Young, *Colonial Desire, op. cit.*, p. 144. According to Robert Young the term 'miscegenation' was first introduced in American in 1864, prior to which the term 'amalgamation' was used.
[16]Peter Fryer, *Staying Power*, *op. cit.*, p. 156.
[17]*Ibid.*, p. 161.
[18]*Ibid.*, p. 162.
[19]*Ibid.*, p. 146.
[20]*Ibid.*, p. 134.
[21]Edward Long, *The History of Jamaica, Vols. I and II* (London: Frank Cass and Company Ltd., 1970 [1774]), p.364.

[22] The term 'mulatto' was used to describe the 'mixed-race' offspring of one white and one black parent. It originates from the word mule which is an animal born from a horse and a donkey and which is infertile.
[23]*Ibid.*, p. 327.
[24]*Ibid.*, p. 335.
[25]*Ibid.*, p. 336.
[26]Peter Fryer, *Staying Power*, *op. cit.*, p. 159.
[27]Reginald Horsman, *Race and Manifest Denstiny: The Origins of American Racial Anglo-Saxonism* (London: Harvard University Press, 1981), p. 43.
[28]Peter Fryer, *Staying Power*, *op. cit.*, p. 169.
[29]Nancy Stepan, *The Idea of Race In Science: Great Britain 1800 - 1960* (London & Basingstoke: Macmillan Press Ltd., 1982).
[30]Peter Fryer, *Staying Power*, *op. cit.*, p. 144.
[31]Nancy Stepan, *The Idea of Race In Science, op. cit.*
[32]Robert J C Young, *Colonial Desire: Hybridity in Theory, Culture & Race* (London: Routledge, 1995), p. 4.
[33]*Ibid.*, p. 13.
[34]Nancy Stepan, *The Idea of Race In Science, op. cit*, p. 47.
[35]Peter Fryer, *Staying Power*, *op. cit.*, p. 179.
[36]*Ibid.*, pp. 179-180.
[37]*Ibid.*, p. 181.
[38]Christine Bolt, *Victorian Attitudes to Race* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1971), p. 10.
[39]Robert J C Young, *Colonial Desire, op. cit.*, p. 16.
[40]*Ibid.*, p. 87.
[41]Michael Banton, *The Idea of Race* (London: Tavistock Publications Ltd., 1977), p. 44.
[42]Nancy Stepan, *The Idea of Race In Science, op. cit.*
[43]*Ibid.*, p. 111.
[44]Robert J C Young, *Colonial Desire, op. cit.*, p. 54.
[45]Chris Jenks, *Culture* (London: Routledge, 1993), p. 10.
[46]*Ibid.*, p. 98.
[47]Robert J C Young, *Colonial Desire, op. cit.*, p. 83.
[48]Ashley Montagu, *Man's Most Dangerous Myth: The Fallacy of Race*, 5th edition (London: Oxford University Press, 1974 [1942]), p. 301.
[49]Ziggi Alexander & Audrey Dewjee (eds.), *Wonderful Adventures of Mrs Seacole In Many Lands* (Bristol: Falling Wall press Ltd., 1984), p. 55.
[50]*Ibid.*, p. 58.
[51]Robert J C Young, *Colonial Desire, op. cit.*, p. 180.
[52]Michael Gilkes, 'Edgar Mittelholzer' in Bruce King (ed.) *West Indian Literature* (London & Basingstoke: Macmillan Press Ltd., 1979), pp. 96-97.
[53]Edgar Mittelholzer, *A Swarthy Boy* (London: Putman & Company Limited, 1963), p. 30.
[54]Michael Gilkes, 'Edgar Mittelholzer', *op. cit.*, p. 96.
[55]*Ibid.*, p. 96.
[56]Edgar Mittelholzer, *Children of Kaywana* (London: Peter Nevill Ltd., 1952), p. 15.
[57]*curari* is a lethal poison extracted from a plant which paralyses the motor nerves and, in a large enough dose, could stop one from breathing by paralysing the diaphram.
[58]Edgar Mittelholzer, *Children of Kaywana*, *op. cit.*, p. 43.
[59]*Ibid.*, p. 61.
[60]*Ibid.*, pp. 65-6.
[61]Michael Gilkes, *Racial Identity and Individual Consciousness In the Caribbean Novel* (Guyana: Ministry of Information and Culture/National History and Arts Council, 1975), p. 7.
[62]Edgar Mittelholzer, *Children of Kaywana*, *op. cit.*, pp. 32-33.
[63]*Ibid.*, p. 33.
[64]*Ibid.*, p. 87.
[65]*Ibid.*, p. 90.
[66]*Ibid.*, p. 329.
[67]*Ibid.*, p. 62.
[68]*Ibid.*, p. 98.

[69]*Ibid.*, p. 332.
[70]*Ibid.*, p. 393.
[71]*Ibid.*, p. 208.
[72]*Ibid.*, p. 226.
[73]*Ibid.*, p. 259.
[74]Mervyn Morris, introduction to Vic Reid, *The Leopard* (London: Heinemann Educational Books Ltd., 1980), p. viii.
[75]*The Concise Oxford Dictionary, 7th Edition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982).
[76]Vic Reid, *The Leopard* (London: Heinemann Educational Books Ltd., 1980), p. 88.
[77]*Ibid.*, p. 89.
[78]Louis James, 'Of Redcoats and Leopards: Two Novels by V S Reid' in Louis James (ed.), *The Islands in Between* (London: Oxford University Press, 1968), pp. 70-71.
[79]Vic Reid, *The Leopard*, *op. cit.*, p. 80.
[80]*Ibid.*, p. 50.
[81]*Ibid.*, p. 82.
[82]*Ibid.*, p. 24.
[83]*Ibid.*, p. 38.
[84]*Ibid.*, p. 46.
[85]Mervyn Morris, introduction, *op. cit.*, p. xiii.
[86]Vic Reid, *The Leopard*, *op. cit.*, p. 27.
[87]*Ibid.*, p. 28.
[88]Mervyn Morris, introduction, *op. cit.*, p. xiv.
[89]Vic Reid, *The Leopard*, *op. cit.*, p. 32.
[90]*Ibid.*, p. 14.
[91]*Ibid.*, p. 17.
[92]*Ibid.*, p. 94.
[93]Kenneth Ramchand, *op. cit.*, p. 158.
[94]Mervyn Morris, introduction, *op. cit.*, p. xi.
[95]Vic Reid, 1980, *The Leopard*, *op. cit.*, p. 21.
[96]*Ibid.*, p. 101.
[97]*Ibid.*, p. 88.
[98]*Ibid.*, p. 101.
[99]*Ibid.*, p. 102.
[100]*Ibid.*, p. 39.
[101]*Ibid.*, p. 108.
[102]Louis James, 'Of Redcoats and Leopards: Two Novels by V S Reid', *op. cit.*, p. 72.
[103]Mervyn Morris, introduction, *op. cit.*, p. x.

CHAPTER THREE

'DEGENERACY' AND SEXUALITY: NYMPHOMANIACS AND OTHER NEGATIVES

In this chapter I will show how the sexuality of 'mixed-race' women has formed a central, and pivotal, part in the theme of disintegration and, as such, became firmly entrenched as an icon of sexual deviancy within the Caribbean novel during the first half of the twentieth century. I will look firstly at *Black Fauns*, written by Alfred Mendes in 1935, followed by a further analysis of Edgar Mittelholzer's *Children of Kaywana*, and also his novel *Sylvia*, published a year later in 1953, and finish with an examination of John Hearne's *The Faces of Love*, published in 1957. These novels all focus on their women characters, and as Rhonda Cobham has pointed out, women were often central characters in Caribbean literature written (usually) by male writers during the first half of the twentieth century. According to Cobham, these female protagonists were often portrayed as strong and independent, reflecting the socio-economic history of black women in the Caribbean, and she refers to Mittelholzer's "portrayal of dominant matriarchal figures in his historical novels" as one example of this.[1] However, the strength and so-called independence of these women was not necessarily written in as a positive attribute by such authors. In each of the novels chosen here one sees that the strength and/or independence of the 'mixed-race' woman, whether socio-economic or sexual, is written in as a destructive quality, rather than a positive one. Neither Mendes, Mittelholzer nor Hearne have questioned or challenged the racial myths surrounding the 'mixed-race' woman, having chosen, rather, to perpetuate the stereotype of the highly-sexed 'mixed-race' woman, who is at once both alluring and dangerous. All three novelists also portray the 'mixed-race' woman as either unable to produce children or unable to care for their children; thereby reproducing the

stereotype of the infertile 'hybrid'. Pornographic elements appear on a multiple of levels, from the objectification of the 'mixed-race' woman's naked body, through to imagined and real sexual violence. This sexual violence sees the 'mixed-race' woman, classically, as both willing 'victim' and instigator of sado-masochistic practices. The 'mixed-race' woman's sexuality is inextricably tied in with her own degeneration; as such, she is held responsible for her own inevitable destruction and the destruction of society's fabric itself.

The 'mixed-race' woman as icon and deviant

Sander L Gilman argues that "[n]o realm of human experience is as closely tied to the concept of degeneration as that of sexuality".[2] To the European racial theorist, no one was more central to this argument than the 'mixed-race' person. Racial theories about hybrid degeneracy were often gender specific, and the reputedly abnormal sexual behaviour of the 'mixed-race' woman came to represent the core of hybrid degeneracy. Cynthia Nakashima argues that, because sexual interaction between whites and blacks was taboo, "[t]he mixed-race person [was and] is seen as the product of an immoral union between immoral people, and is thus expected to be immoral him- or herself".[3] Interracial sex was encoded distinctly from same 'race' sex; paradoxically, whilst the 'mixed-race' woman herself was seen as excessively sexual, as an act of hybrid production, it became almost a non-sexual act. The term 'miscegenation', used to describe interracial sex, has always been used pejoratively; as Ashley Montagu argues, "[t]he extent of the prejudice inherent in and engendered by this word may be gathered from the fact that *Webster's New International Dictionary* illustrates the use of the word by the example 'one who is guilty of miscegenation'".[4] The paradoxical construction of the 'mixed-race' woman as both alluring and repugnant was supported by the most fanatical of racial theorists. Count Joseph Arthur Gobineau, the author of *Essay on the Inequality of Races*, published in the mid-nineteenth century, has been described as one of "the 'most zealous propagators' of scientific racialist doctrines in the nineteenth century".[5] But despite Gobineau's 'horror' of miscegenation, viewed by him as tantamount to racial degradation, Robert Young argues that the emphasis Gobineau placed on "the

'striking' sexual charm of many 'mulatto, Creole, and quadroon women' [suggests] Gobineau's furtive fascination with the sexual implications of the idea of miscegenation".[6] According to Kenneth Ramchand, "[m]ost eighteenth- and nineteenth-century commentators report on the beauty, sensuality and promiscuity of Coloured women".[7] The idea of beauty and sexual danger is not new and can be found in the Biblical story of creation, in which Eve is tempted by the serpent and gains sexual awareness through eating the apple from the tree of knowledge. On becoming sexually aware, Eve is sinful, tempts Adam in her turn, and causes *man's* downfall. This myth, although used generally to symbolise all female sexuality, can specifically be used to frame the stereotype of the 'mixed-race' female, who as the temptress brings about the downfall of (white) man through hybrid degeneracy.

In the Caribbean, 'miscegenation' was perpetuated repeatedly by the white male conqueror and coloniser, primarily in the form of "rape or coercive exploitation"[8] of the black and 'mixed-race' woman. Enslaved 'mixed-race' women were more likely to become the victims of rape than freed 'mixed-race' women. However, so-called free 'coloured' women did not escape sexual exploitation because the reality of plantation economies often left them no other means of survival than prostitution. Because of the interaction between sexual desire and racism, sexual behaviour become inter-linked with theories about racial degeneracy, and the 'mixed-race' woman became framed by a discourse of sexual deviancy. The infamous planter, Edward Long, claimed that 'mixed-race' girls "arrive very early at the age of puberty, and, from the time of their being about twenty-five, they decline very fast, till at length they grow horribly ugly. They are lascivious".[9] Young cites Edward Long's repulsion but also (sexual) obsession with black and 'mixed-race' women and refers to this paradox as "the white male's ambivalent axis of desire and repugnance".[10] In order to ease their guilt about what was considered sexually taboo, white men argued that their desire was beyond their control and was, therefore, the responsibility of 'mixed-race' women. In the nineteenth century it was asserted that "intense immorality ...exists amongst the Mulattoes and others of mixed blood".[11] As Cynthia Nakashima argues,

> perhaps the most common and most constant off-shoot of the biological-psychological profile of people of mixed-race is the stereotype that they are sexually immoral and out of control. This is especially true of multiracial women - whether they be "half-breed" Indian, Mexican "mestiza", "mulatta", or "Eurasian", they are consistently imaged as extremely passionate and sexually promiscuous.[12]

Thus, we see that, desired by the white male gaze of the plantocracy, the 'mixed-race' woman, rather than the 'mixed-race' man, became the sexualised icon of *hybrid degeneracy*.

In looking at the sexual oppression of African-American women, both Alice Walker and Patricia Hill Collins posit that 'mixed-race' women were the most highly prized by white men in the American South during slavery.[13] Patricia Hill Collins argues that the treatment of black women in pornography bears a direct relation to their economic exploitation and dehumanisation as slaves. According to Collins, black woman are portrayed within pornography as animalistic, and "as animals Black women... remain open to the type of exploitation visited on nature overall".[14] She argues that, whilst white women are objectified by pornography, black women are denigrated and exploited further. Her argument concludes that "[r]ace becomes the distinguishing feature in determining the type of objectification women will encounter. Whiteness as symbolic of both civilization and culture is used to separate objects from animals."[15] Although Collins argues that the "ideal African-American woman as a pornographic object was *indistinguishable* [my italics] from white women and thus approximated the images of beauty, asexuality, and chastity forced on white women"[16], the fact remains that it *was* the 'mixed-race' woman who was at the forefront of this sexual and racial oppression. When critics posit that there is a stereotype of "the Black whore and seductress, exotic, amoral and invariably *fair-skinned* [my emphasis]"[17], the mistake is to believe that the description 'fair-skinned' acts simply as a toned down or muted representation of black women *per se*. The image is specifically rooted in notions of 'mixed-race' sexuality, and the 'invariably fair-skinned' woman, rather

than being a representation of all black women, remains the icon of 'mixed-race' sexual deviancy.

In the nineteenth century it was claimed that "*mulatto-women* are particularly delicate and subject to a variety of chronic diseases. That they are bad breeders, bad nurses, liable to abortions, and that their children generally die young".[18] The obstetric pathology of 'mixed-race' women was a popular myth, and is mentioned in Lady Nugent's journal, when she contrasts the reputedly easy pregnancies and deliveries of black women with those of "mulatto women, who were constantly liable to miscarry".[19] The notion of the 'mixed-race' woman as infertile has been one of the most prevalent 'hybrid' theories. As discussed in the previous chapter, racial theorists posited that the biological incompatibility of black and white people resulted in infertile offspring. The supposed infertility of the 'mixed-race' *woman*, also became linked to her reputed promiscuity, which is stereotypically viewed as the antithesis of motherhood.

Deviancy and pornography: the 'mixed-race' woman as sexual fantasy

In *Black Fauns*, Alfred Mendes foregrounds the supposedly destructive nature of the 'mixed-race' woman and her effect on those around her. *Black Fauns* was one of a set of novels which came out of the Beacon group. *The Beacon* was a monthly magazine, published by Albert M Gomes between 1931-33. The anti-capitalistic stance of the magazine, according to Reinhard W Sander, alienated the Trinidadian middle-class, and the "race question was discussed at length and sparked off quite a controversy among contributors and readers".[20] The Beacon group, which included Gomes, Mendes and Ralph de Boissiére, amongst others, was formed in a move by middle-class writers to break away from the traditionally middle-class focus of novel writing in the Caribbean, to give an insight, instead, into the working-class life of the 'yard'; and Mendes actually went to live in a 'barrack-yard' for six months.[21] However, although the threat of eviction hovers peripherally in the form of Mr de Pompignon, the rent collector, and the hard lives of the women is to

some extent explored, the main focus is not so much on the lives of members of a specific class, but on the racial interaction between these characters. This theme, according to Edgar Mittelholzer, was a decidedly middle-class obsession.

The story opens with a group of black women, that includes Ma Christine, Christophene, Miriam and Ethelrida, talking in the yard about personal and life events. They debate whether God made them black or whether it was the result of the sun in Africa, one woman feeling it could not have been God, as God, being good, would have only made one type of people. Although the conversation appears naive, it can be viewed as a rudimentary version of the *polygenesis* versus *monogenesis* argument popularised by racial theorists. When the women refer to the power structure in Trinidad, it is in terms of two groups: the whites, who are in power, and the blacks, who are powerless. No comment is made at this stage about the status of 'coloureds' (mixed-races) within this apparent racial dichotomy. The first reference made to a "half-white" is a negative description of an untrustworthy person or a "mischief-maker".[22] The description of treachery forms a classic part of the racist stereotype of the 'mixed-race' person.

The 'mulatto', Miss Mamitz, enters the yard and the narrative voice describes her physiognomically, saying "her face possessed that queer mixture of refinement and coarseness in its features which is often to be found in mulattos".[23] The 'refinement' and 'coarseness' are crudely meant to symbolise, respectively, her European and African heritages. The use of the word 'queer' to define this 'mixture' implies that being 'mixed-race' is abnormal. As the group of women discuss Mamitz, one woman, called Martha, hedgingly suggests, "You think she conceited, an' consider herself more higher than al we, because she half-white?"[24], indicating the level of division felt between blacks and those of 'mixed-race' in the colonial context of the racial/colour hierarchy. Ethelrida reveals her contempt for 'mixed-race' people, arguing that only a 'pure' black woman can have something to be proud of, whereas the 'mixed-race' person cannot claim 'purity' and, therefore, is nothing. She says "People like that remind me of the worm that does turn into a butterfly".[25] The image of the 'worm' at once implies something not fully evolved and also

brings into play the idea of decay, as the worm is often linked with the image of decay and rotting. Although one could argue that the worm as chrysalis would turn into something beautiful, the feeling here is that Mamitz will remain in social limbo, neither one thing nor the other. To Ethelrida, Mamitz is perpetually marginalised because "She can't say she white, she can't say she black".[26] Miriam 'defends' Mamitz, saying that she "can't help" being 'mixed-race'; a comment which implies that being of 'mixed-race' is something to be pitied. Each argument, in its own way, condemns the person of 'mixed-race', one through hate and the other through pity.

As the women discuss Mamitz's unaccounted (relative) wealth, we learn that they believe she is a 'whore'. Mamitz's role as prostitute is one example of the narrative's use of stereotype to portray the 'mixed-race' women as sexually promiscuous and immoral. What makes it worse to the women is that Mamitz (allegedly) hides this immorality behind a facade of devout religiousness. These two apparently antithetical elements of her persona act as the stereotypical embodiment of her two inherited 'races', African and European, whereby the African is represented by her immorality and the European by her Christianity. When Mamitz is described as "lying across her bed with next to nothing on"[27], with a picture of Jesus behind her, she represents the complete sexual corruption of (religious) morality. Ethelrida refers to the 'mixed-race' Mamitz as a "bitch", saying that "even her name sounds like it ain't all right, is jamet [worthless woman's] name... I ain't have no respec' for people like that".[28] The reference to 'people like that' implies people of 'mixed-race'. Just as they finish talking about her, Mamitz "sauntered into the yard swinging her hips and breasts".[29] The juxtaposition of the woman's derogatory opinions and the sexualised physical description of Mamitz indicates that their opinions are supported by the narrative.

Ethelrida and Mamitz finally have a row, instigated by Ethelrida, who accuses Mamitz of thinking herself too good to row "with pure nigger".[30] A physical fight ensues in which Mamitz's dress is torn, exposing "her rounded brown breasts, luscious like two over-ripe sapodillas".[31] This semi-pornographic description pins Mamitz under an overtly sexualised gaze by the narrative. Ethelrida constantly refers to Mamitz's 'mixed-race' identity, judging

her actions and thoughts entirely on her racial identity. Ultimately, Mamitz's control disintegrates into tit for tat racial abuse, when she claims that she *is* better looking because she is of 'mixed-race', and that she is proud of it. She describes Ethelrida as a "nigger face".[32] The term 'nigger' is used constantly by all the black characters to describe themselves or the population generally, and, therefore, one has to consider if it is at all significant that Mamitz should also use the term. However, when Mamitz speaks privately to Christophene about Ethelrida, saying "she isn' my class, she isn' even my colour"[33], it is made clear that Mamitz does feel superior to Ethelrida because she is 'mixed-race'. In addition, her treatment of Christophene is very condescending because, whilst Christophene tries to talk to her as a friend, Mamitz distances herself from Christophene, and is very dismissive of her opinions. Mamitz is shown to fulfil the negative stereotypes used by the other women to describe her; and it becomes clear that the narrative, in offering no other side to her character, supports these stereotypes.

The second 'mixed-race' character is Estelle, a new tenant who is described as being 'dougla' (black and Indian), a fact the narrative implies is obvious by a "pronounced blackness of skin so often to be found in *douglas*".[34] Estelle is pregnant, and, because there is no father on the scene, her pregnancy leads to gossip about her sexual morality. She encourages these rumours by implying that she prostitutes herself, saying pointedly that she does not know who the father is because of the way she is forced to live. Estelle is portrayed as a particularly unpleasant character, who uses emotional blackmail to manipulate Martha into stealing for her. Ethelrida's dislike of Mamitz's 'mixed-race' heritage does not appear to extend to Estelle, suggesting that it is the fact that Mamitz is part white that causes Ethelrida to be so antagonised by her presence. The irony is that it is Estelle who acts against Ethelrida by stealing from her, and later accusing her of stealing the very same money back from her. Christophene, on hearing Estelle persuaded Martha to steal Ethelrida's money, tells Martha "Dat woman have a evil power over you"[35], exonerating Martha of any guilt for her own actions. Martha may commit the actual act of theft, but it is Estelle, the 'evil' 'mixed-race' woman, who uses her deviant sexuality to control Martha, and who is clearly meant to be seen as the true perpetrator and the catalyst of destruction.

Estelle's ultimate 'evil' is represented by her dysfunctional relationship with her baby. Not only does she neglect her baby whilst it is alive - which probably leads to its death - but she shows no remorse when it dies, indicating the extreme level of her moral degeneration. Estelle's lack of concern over her baby's death, and a comment that she makes about wasting money on the christening, make her character repulsive, and must be viewed as abnormal behaviour. Mamitz is shocked by Estelle's lack of maternal feeling for her baby, and she reveals that she would have liked to have children, but claims that "de doctor say somet'ing wrong wit' my oomb".[36] Mamitz's expressed maternal desire contrasts with Estelle's absence of maternal feeling; however, as a 'mixed-race' woman she is still portrayed as infertile. Although Estelle has 'reproduced', she has not been given a real status as 'mother' because of her inability to sustain the child, or to mourn its death. Thus, one sees that Mendes stereotypes the 'mixed-race' women as incapable of motherhood, either through lack of moral capacity, or through physical incapacity.

Estelle is repeatedly portrayed as overtly sexual; Mendes takes every opportunity to describe her nakedness, and one example of the way her body is continuously open to the external gaze occurs when we are told that Christophene was "inwardly contemptuous of the woman sprawling across her bed with *next to no clothes on*"[my emphasis].[37] When asked by Mamitz if she is a Catholic, Estelle replies "I'se nothing".[38] Her statement acts, not only as a reference to religious affiliation, but also to herself as a person. Estelle, in private with Mamitz, uses their 'mixed-race' status as a unifying factor against the other tenants, claiming that "black people is always jealous of those who ain't pure nigger like themself".[39] However, Mamitz's friendliness is only superficial, as we see when Estelle's back is turned and she looks at her with "contempt". Estelle is portrayed as cold and heartless, and angered that Christophene mentions Martha's name, we are told her words were "hissed [by] the *dougla*".[40] The obviously snake-like imagery, through the use of the word 'hissed', links Estelle to the Biblical symbol of the snake as the embodiment of sin. Through the omission of her name, when referred to in terms of her 'mixed-race' alone, as 'the dougla', she also becomes dehumanised.

Ma Christine's son, Snakey, becomes sexually involved with both Martha and Mamitz. What distinguishes his sexual involvement with these two women is that he pays Mamitz $50 for the 'privilege'; thus, we see that Mamitz fulfils her 'mixed-race' stereotype as the iconic 'whore'. Mamitz, like Estelle, is repeatedly described as "reclining on her bed with next to no clothes on".[41] Her sexuality is constantly foregrounded, as her body is portioned, described and desired. Her mouth is "sensuous",[42] and she never walks, but is continuously 'sauntering' through the yard, as if she is consciously encouraging the gaze fixed on her body. When Snakey and Mamitz dance they are described as dancing "wildly, Mamitz's beauty wild in the movements of the dance".[43] Mamitz reveals that when she sleeps with men for money, for her it is not simply a question of economic survival, she actually enjoys having sex with them. Her admission of wilful promiscuity makes it clear to the reader that the narrative views her sexual behaviour as deviant rather than as economic necessity.

Snakey is 'beguiled' by Mamitz, the sexual temptress and seducer, who has no feelings for him and takes all his money. Although he has sex with Martha, who loves him and would do anything for him, he is more attracted by the physical appearance of "Mamitz's luscious brown skin...[than] Martha's inky blackness".[44] Mamitz makes it clear that she is only selling her body to him, and in an ultimate betrayal of Martha, Snakey takes money from her to pay for sex with Mamitz. Martha, after discovering the truth, stabs Mamitz and slashes her face and her breasts, the symbols of her sexuality. Ethelrida, Estelle and Martha end up in jail, Snakey 'sneaks' away and Mamitz dies, leading Ma Christine to declare that "Sin an' corruption in dis yard, like Sodom an' Gomorroh of old".[45]

The sexual behaviour of Mamitz and Estelle is of primary significance within the narrative, for whilst the other women are portrayed as sexually active, and their relationships with men too often revolve around getting money from these men, their behaviour is treated as acceptable because they do not have relationships with more than one man at a time. Mamitz and Estelle, by having multiple sexual partners and by receiving payment from men

for sex, are portrayed as 'whores', and this sets them on a lower moral level than the other women in the yard. By entering into a more blatant 'sex for money/survival' scenario, they are seen as inherently deviant. The narrative's portrayal of their sexual behaviour clearly reflects European racial theories about 'hybridity' and 'mixed-race' women, in which they are argued to be sexually promiscuous and immoral.

The year is described by Miriam as "like Eurap was in nineteen-fourteen: a lot of fight and battle and crying"[46], and this conflict is directly linked to the influence of the two 'mixed-race' women, Mamitz and Estelle. Although it is Ethelrida who instigates the initial racial disunity within the yard, the story seems to imply something deeper. It is the 'mixed-race' characters who act as catalysts of destruction, and the novel firmly places the 'mixed-race' women as responsible for the ultimate collapse of harmony within the yard. Although Mendes' portrayal of Ethelrida - the most overtly racist of the women - is not empathetic, the narrative effectively justifies her racism in its portrayal of the two 'mixed-race' women, who are given no redeeming characteristics. In different ways it is the actions and personalities of these two women that cause the total disintegration of the 'community' within the yard. Mamitz's sexual deviancy leads to Snakey's (financial) downfall, and thus takes him away from his mother when he is forced to leave Trinidad early. Estelle steals and creates general suspicion in the yard, and is also responsible for aggravating Martha's violent behaviour. Both Mamitz and Estelle are shown to use and manipulate others in a way that cannot be sympathised with. Thus, although the other characters are seen to have their foibles and petty disputes, these seem insignificant and light-hearted in relation to the behaviour of these two women. Even Martha's act of murder is seen as somehow justifiable; so that although Mendes brings out Martha's growing unstable and obsessive nature, one is still drawn into empathising with her as the used and ill treated 'victim', whilst the death of Mamitz, the real *victim,* is dismissed as 'just rewards', a punishment for and consequence of her deviant sexuality.

It is, perhaps, no surprise that Edgar Mittelholzer, who made no apologies for his repeated thematizing of sexuality,[47] should, like Mendes, draw heavily from the racial theories about

'mixed-race' women's sexual behaviour. In his portrayal of the 'mixed-race' women in *Children of Kaywana*, Mittelholzer uses the two primary stereotypes of the 'mixed-race' woman as sexual deviant and as non-maternal. When Kaywana makes "no attempt to evade"[48] her rape by the white August Vyfuis, her apparent arousal by Vyfuis' violent lust places her in the role of the immoral sexual deviant. Mittelholzer's portrayal of Kaywana's compliance to Vyfuis' sexual violence suggests the influence of pornographic male fantasy, in which, stereotypically, the woman is portrayed as 'willing' victim.

Amerindians are portrayed as sharing the racial/sexual ideas of 'purity' and contamination that are part and parcel of European racial theory. Kaywana is told by the *piaiman* (narratively referred to as the 'magic' man) of her village, that because she has slept with two white men, no Indian would want her because she is "double dirt now".[49] The narrative also utilises European ideas about 'hybrid' degeneration when Kaywana is worried about her fading beauty, and it is suggested that her loss of beauty is caused by "the Indian in her. [As] Indian women faded quickly. After twenty-two, men no longer looked at them with desire".[50] One is immediately reminded of Edward Long's view that 'mixed-race' women physically degenerate early.

In the portrayal of the two 'mixed-race' half-sisters, Hannah and Katrina, the narrative correlates their levels of sexual deviancy with their degree of European heritage. Katrina, a *quadroon,* is described as the more sexually reserved and inexperienced.[51] Sexually submissive, if she likes someone, she says, "I give dem all I can give dem, but I not want nothing from dem".[52] Hannah, described as unattractive because she has inherited more African than European features, as the *mulatto* is portrayed as very promiscuous. Hannah's cousin, Laurens, is sexually 'addicted' to her, and excited by her strength. However, because she is his slave, he cannot tolerate her treating him as her equal. He beats her brutally and, eventually, their relationship degenerates into a sado-masochistic one. When Katrina becomes pregnant she becomes the 'Madonna' figure to Hannah's 'whore', and Laurens now decides he loves Katrina and wants to marry her. Hannah's self-destructive response is to drown herself, a plot development that suggests the narrative is

framed in terms of the racial theorists' argument that mental instability was associated with 'hybridity'. Her suicide also literally signals her inherent inability to sustain life as a 'hybrid'. By portraying Hannah as the more deviant of the two half-sisters, Mittelholzer correlates increased deviancy with a racial 'mixture' that incorporates a greater African heritage. Thus, he corroborates the myth of black 'blood' contaminating white and, therefore, causing the degeneration of the 'mixed-race' person.

Laurens' and Katrina's daughter, Hendrickje, is portrayed as sexually deviant, and her sexual liaison with her 'mulatto' slave is described in bestial terms, when "[t]hey make noise, like two beasts".[53] She tells Ignatius, "I believe most women, though they won't admit it, have a deep respect for men who knock them about".[54] However, the sado-masochistic relationship which develops between them sees her in the role of sadist. She relates these sado-masochistic practices in her letters to her parents; thus, Hendrickje takes on the role not only of sexual deviant but of pornographer.

The 'mixed-race' Rosaria, described as a 'half-breed' slave of Spanish and Carib parentage, is so promiscuous that her behaviour is portrayed as a form of *nymphomania*. Rosaria, the narrative informs us, is desperate for sex, and is described by Adrian van Groenwegal as "a seductive creature, but dangerous".[55] When she has finally 'seduced' him we are told ambiguously that "[s]he taught him perverted ways of love-making",[56] underlining her sexual deviancy. This sexual deviancy destroys the friendship between two men, and results in the emasculation of one, through the cutting off of his penis.

Mittelholzer also reproduces the racial theorists' argument that 'mixed-race' people as 'hybrids' are infertile. 'Mixed-race' women, as sexual deviants, are portrayed as unable to fulfil the role of motherhood. For example, after a fall during her third pregnancy, Hendrickje, who saw herself as a "good breeder",[57] now becomes semi-infertile. Although eventually becoming pregnant again, the baby girl is stillborn at seven months. After Hendrickje recovers, she again becomes pregnant, but this time gives birth to a premature boy, who dies after only a few days. Like Estelle, in Mendes' *Black Fauns*, even when the

women have produced children, they are described as unfit mothers. Rosaria's sexual depravity is seen as responsible for the neglect of her children; whilst Hendrickje treats her children with brutality and, as she breast feeds her first child, Ignatius tells her, "[y]ou don't look as a mother should".[58]

In his portrayal of the 'mixed-race' person in *Children of Kaywana*, Mittelholzer is deeply influenced by theories of 'hybridity'. Within this paradigm of depravity, he describes the sexuality of both men and women, but his primary emphasis is on the supposedly promiscuous sexual deviancy of the 'mixed-race' woman. The 'mixed-race' male characters are in many ways sexually peripheral and, particularly in the case of the castrated Jabez, appear to be portrayed in such a way as to emphasis the sexual deviancy of the women, rather than their own sexual behaviour. In the final analysis, Mittelholzer's portrayal of the 'mixed-race' woman in this novel concludes that she is not only sexually deviant but sexually destructive.

Edgar Mittelholzer continues to utilise theories about 'hybrid' degeneration in his novel, *Sylvia*. In the description of the protagonist, Sylvia, as with the descriptions of other characters, every minutiae of racial (mixed) identity is examined in terms of facial features, texture of hair, and colour of skin, illustrating Mittelholzer's morbid obsession with phenotypic racial identification. Mittelholzer has repeatedly indicted the 'coloured' middle-classes as the most virulent in their class and race prejudice, and this prejudice is illustrated in the novel when the white Grantly Russel's marriage to Charlotte sparks off a (temporary) ostracism from the well-to-do 'coloureds'. Sylvia's father, Grantly Russel, rapidly grows to despise his 'mixed-race' wife, although he becomes instantly attached to his baby daughter, whose 'mixed-race' is emphasised by the description of her having "blue eyes and ...a pinkish complexion. The features were European, though the cheekbones were high like Charlotte's".[59] Sylvia grows up pampered by her father, and even when her brother David is born, she remains his favourite, despite David being "a shade fairer in complexion and with his blue eyes could have passed for pure white".[60] As such, Mittelholzer portrays the white foreigner, Grantley Russel, as unaffected by the colour

obsession within Caribbean families and the wider society, where the more European looking children tended to be favoured.

The supposedly lower class behaviour and coarseness of the protagonist's mother, Charlotte, are tied directly, by the narrative, to her identity as a 'mixed-race' woman. She is of black and Arawak (one of the indigenous Amerindian groups) parentage, and her constant illnesses and resultant smell (of decay) signal her 'hybrid' pathology which ultimately leads to her death. In contrast to her white father's doting, Sylvia's mother constantly abuses her daughter, marking her as the stereotypical unfit mother. Like Kaywana in *Kaywana's Children*, the 'mixed-race' woman of Amerindian parentage is portrayed as inherently cruel, and, in one particular instance, Charlotte brands Sylvia's leg with a hot iron. When Sylvia's best friend moves away, her mother "sniggered. Laughed. In the sound was a mean, cruel pleasure. There could be no doubt, felt Sylvia, Mother was a low person".[61] The mother's inferiority becomes connected, not with social class, but with her 'hybrid' identity, which is portrayed as an innate fault. When Sylvia looks at her mother she thinks that "[h]er dark negro-Indian face looked really stupid,.... Stupid and weak. No character at all".[62]

After her father's death, Sylvia, who has identified with her father, has no white role model to look to, but in trying to find a sense of her self, she completely rejects her mother, and feels that "[s]he must remain noble - not degenerate into a poor specimen like Mother".[63] Sylvia's expressed fear of 'degeneration' implies that biological inevitability can somehow be consciously prevented. However, degeneration proves to be inevitable. Sylvia's degeneration is specifically linked to her awakening sexuality, that, portrayed as volatile and uncontrollably promiscuous, is stereotypical of female 'hybrid' sexuality. At only fifteen she is subject to the attention of numerous older men, and this attention leads to a change in her personality, from shy and reserved, to affected confidence. Her flirtatious response shocks her two female companions who, in contrast, show sexual restraint. Although her behaviour is linked to the spiking of her drinks, later, in sobriety, she continues to allow the sexual attentions of a young man on returning home. Sylvia's behaviour is meant to

indicate her lack of self control, which causes her to be led by her sexual desires rather than propriety.

Sylvia's abnormal sexual behaviour is further shown by the voyeuristic pleasure she takes in secretly watching as her friend, Naomi, is beaten and stripped naked by her jealous lover, in a 'simulated' rape scene. This sexual encounter can only be described as a form of pornographic fantasy. Male violence towards the passive and, therefore, receptive woman is a recurrent theme of pornography. According to Patricia Hill Collins,

> Violence is typically an implicit or explicit theme in pornography...rape and other forms of sexual violence act to strip victims of their will to resist and make them passive and submissive to the will of the rapist. Female passivity, the fact that women have things done to them, is a theme repeated over and over in contemporary pornography.[64]

In typical pornographic form, Naomi is portrayed as enjoying this form of sex. We are told that her "lips were slightly parted, and the light in her eyes revealed pleasure. A deep, luxurious pleasure. Her body seemed to writhe and quake in spasm after spasm of delight at every blow Jerry struck".[65] Sylvia also becomes a part of this act because she not only watches it but then explicitly relates it to her father, placing her in the role of pornographer. The narrative's portrayal of Naomi's form of sexual gratification not only signals her sexual deviancy as a 'mixed-race' woman, but also Mittelholzer's own misogynistic stance.

Sylvia's deviant sexuality crosses every social taboo, shown by her ambiguous relationship with her father. Sylvia's increasingly inappropriate jealousy over her father's lovers is revealed when she tears up the semi-pornographic photographs her father has taken of these various women. After the death of her father she becomes sexually obsessed with her younger brother whilst he is still a school-boy, so that her attraction to him is not only incestuous, it borders on paedophilic. Her brother's "lean young masculinity stirred up a strange excitement in her senses".[66] These feelings torment her and she tells her friend

Naomi, "I have a twist! I'm abnormal!"[67]; a statement which makes clear her own fear that she is perverted. When rebuffed by her brother, she feels a sense of self-disgust and "[i]n such moments she saw herself as two beings - one ugly and deformed, the other lovely and striving to be good and clean".[68] Sylvia's perception of herself as two people leaves no doubt that the narrative's explanation for her sexual deviancy is her 'hybrid' status. Her dual personality implies a schizophrenic tendency and, like the unnamed boy in Vic Reid's *The Leopard*, she hears voices, described as the "Brown Jumbie-men", who mock at her and put thoughts into her head, indicating her mental degeneration.

Sylvia develops a platonic friendship with a Milton Copps, who, A J Seymour argues, is "a thinly disguised self-portrait of the novelist".[69] Copps tries to get her to fight for survival, but Sylvia, the icon of 'hybrid' degeneracy, cannot fight what is her biological inheritance. When she tries to she fails, and she tells him in a letter, "I'm going down, Milton. Down all the time"[70], illustrating how the narrative is shaped by racial theories about the innate degeneracy of 'mixed-race' people. The voices in her head tell her, "You're weak. The weak must perish. It is the basic rule of life. People like you only clog and retard human progress".[71] Milton posits that "[h]eredity... has inflicted upon [Sylvia] a streak of weak character which, no matter what environmental influences have been at work, cannot be suppressed... a legacy from dear Mother".[72] Kenneth Ramchand argues that "Sylvia's angst-ridden sensibility is portrayed as having to do with the spirit of her time (the novel is set in the 1930's) not the fact of her mixed-blood".[73] But, as a 'thinly disguised' Mittelholzer, Milton's statement reveals that Mittelholzer attributes Sylvia's 'weakness' and degeneracy to her 'mixed-race' identity. Mittelholzer does not see Sylvia's situation as the product of a patriarchal society, instead, his focus in *Sylvia* is directed on the self-destructive tendencies of the sexually deviant 'mixed-race' woman. As Michael Gilkes argues,

> The novel is an indictment of the New Amsterdam and Georgetown societies through which Sylvia moves as a tragic heroine. But Sylvia's tragedy is also a projection of the author's pre-occupation with the psychological effects of genetic 'taint', and the real tragedy lies, not so much in the society's cruel rejection of the

> heroine, as in her own, destructive psychic disorientation, the result of *inherited* characteristics: the Caribbean condition of racial admixture.[74]

Although Mittelholzer does not have his anti-heroine follow the stereotypical path of prostitution, Sylvia is never described as chaste by the narrative. Whilst the fact that a woman has sexual needs should not indicate that she is deviant, it becomes clear that in the narrative's terms, Sylvia's sexuality is corrupt. This is made clear in her developing relationship with her fiancé Benson. It is Sylvia who wants to embark on a sexual relationship with him, whilst Benson holds back in the name of propriety. His ability to control his sexual urges contrasts with Sylvia's uncontrollable sexual feelings. It is this overt sexual desire which causes her physical decline. So, although Sylvia's deviant sexuality is usually expressed as fantasy rather than reality, it is portrayed as a mental contamination which engulfs her and leads to her physical degeneration and ultimate death from pneumonia.

The correlation between sexual 'deviancy' and death is also a theme of John Hearne's third novel, *Faces of Love.* Kenneth Ramchand writes that it is in "John Hearne's *The Faces of Love* (1957) that the type images of the Coloured person - socially insecure and sexually overcharged - are turned to impressive fictional advantage".[75] Writing in the same era as Mittelholzer, Hearne was also preoccupied with race, and, according to Frank Birbalsingh, the "main theme of Mr Hearne's five novels is race and colour consciousness".[76] *Faces of Love* tells the story of a *ménage à trois*, and is narrated by Andrew Fabricus, the ex-lover of Rachel Ascom, who makes up part of this *ménage à trois*. The two men involved are Andrew's friend Jojo and Michael Lovelace, the new English editor of the paper for which Rachel and Andrew work for. The majority of the main characters are middle-class and are described as 'mixed-race'.

Rachel Ascom's 'mixed-race' is foregrounded early on in the novel, and the description of her "West African print curtains"[77] suggests a retention of her African heritage. More overt descriptions of her physical appearance as 'mixed-race' occur through Andrew's description

of her "flat yet arched nose"[78] and in his opinion that "[t]he German and Negro had come out well in Rachel".[79] It is her 'mixed-race' which initially interests the white Michael Lovelace who, shortly after his arrival in the fictional Cayuna, tells Andrew: "That's the most exciting thing I've noticed, even in one day. The number of possible mixtures... Very exciting".[80] His 'excitement' and consequent relationship with Rachel, suggest a sexual, rather than anthropological, interest in those of 'mixed-race'. The narrative's correlation between 'mixed-race' and sexuality is illustrated by Andrew's repeated descriptions and references to Rachel's sexual power, which, according to him, she uses to ensure her financial and social climb up Cayuna's hierarchy. He claims that Rachel's "magnificent sexuality came packaged and deadly".[81] However, one is left wondering just how objective a narrator Andrew Fabricus really can be, as his jaundiced portrayal of Rachel is clearly influenced by his own position as the jilted lover. Andrew claims that her numerous sexual liaisons are "just decorations. You know, like scalps".[82] She has, according to Andrew, only once been almost in love, and that was with Jojo, before he was sent to prison on corruption charges. However, when Andrew tells Rachel that Jojo is in love with her, he describes her face as "bright and reassured, and *greedy* [my emphasis]".[83] The description of her 'greed' underlies her supposedly lascivious nature. Rachel is also described in bestial terms, "[s]he looked dangerous and watchful and balanced on a thin nerve, like a wild, carnivorous animal"[84]; and through Andrew's narration we are clearly steered towards the view that Rachel is morally depraved.

The idea that the sexual deviancy of the 'mixed-race' woman is not only self-destructive, but destructive to others is expressed through Andrew's fatalistic feeling that Rachel "would hurt him [Michael] badly as she had hurt every other man who had loved her".[85] Rachel's destructive powers are also implied when it is hinted that Rachel may have been involved in Jojo going to prison. When she again betrays him for her own financial gain, Andrew's response is to resort to misogynistic abuse, calling her a "dirty whore".[86] Whilst Andrew and Rachel are both on business for the paper in New York, Andrew becomes increasingly tense about his position as 'go-between' in Rachel's *ménage à trois*; again his objectivity is called into question when, in explicitly sexualised terms, he says, "I couldn't get her fierce

searching face out of my mind, or the big, heavy, firm-fleshed body as it looked when she sat on the bed and leaned towards me".[87] Somewhat sadomasochistically, he imagines what it would be like if she tried to fight him in her anger, as "[s]he was immensely strong and it would have been a great pleasure to slap her face".[88] This linking of sex and violence is, as Patricia Hill Collins argues, a persistent theme in pornography.

It becomes apparent that Andrew has a casual and careless approach to women sexually. He frequents brothels, where he can indulge in non-committal sex, and has a one-night stand with a Canadian lecturer whom he describes as "a pleasant hypocritical girl, like a lot of academic women, very willing and competent in bed".[89] His sexual activities are never questioned, despite his engagement to Margaret, whose passive acceptance of her fiancé's sexual exploits, rather than being realistic, imply a sense of authorial 'wishful thinking' on the part of John Hearne. The novel's uncontested portrayal of Andrew's character suggests that the author condones his behaviour and his attitude, and serves to highlight the negative light in which the sexual behaviour of the 'mixed-race' woman is inscribed within the text. Ramchand argues that

> if we say that Rachel is the highly sexed, immoral Coloured woman, and the socially insecure mulatto buttressing herself with material possessions, it is necessary to recognize in the same breath that Hearne has fused and metamorphosed these two images in a broader study of the psychology of power working through an extraordinary vivid character.[90]

Thus, according to Ramchand, "[b]y the time we come to the end of *The Faces of Love*, Rachel Ascom, mulatto, has been restored to her original status as Rachel Ascom, human person".[91] The argument that Rachel Ascom becomes more than a limited racial stereotype is not, however, supported by the text. In fact, Rachel is portrayed with no real redeeming qualities. To cement this, we learn that Rachel has a daughter, whom she had given birth to when she was fifteen years old, but with whom she has little or no contact. Rachel's unwanted pregnancy and maternal neglect represent her sexual deviancy, whilst her

strength and business shrewdness are seen only as negative qualities. It is only her act of saving Michael Lovelace from being shot by Jojo, and her resultant death, that are seen by the narrative as redeeming qualities. She has made the ultimate sacrifice, having finally loved a man, she must then die for him; paying the price in death for her past sexual deviancy.

So far I have focused on the development of theories on 'hybrid degeneracy' and have analysed the influence and the utilisation of such theories by Caribbean novelists in their portrayal of the 'mixed-race' person. This was approached more generally in the previous chapter, whilst in this chapter I have looked more specifically at the 'mixed-race' woman. In the following chapters I shall go on to examine the significance of how 'mixed-race' people were historically stratified within the Caribbean region. This approach begins in the next chapter in which I discuss how the *perception of* and the actual use of colonial divide and rule tactics during the slave period in the Caribbean have enmeshed with theories of 'hybridity' to create a stereotype of the 'mixed-race' person. The stereotype of the 'treacherous mulatto' in slave times has endured to the present day. Contemporary notions of 'mixed-race' identity – that is the alienation of the 'mixed-race' person from the wider black community, and their supposedly innate treachery towards the black population - are tied in to this over-simplistic reading of the slave period.

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[13]Patricia Hill Collins, *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment* (Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1990), p. 167.
[14]*Ibid.*, p. 170.
[15]*Ibid.*, pp. 170-171.
[16]*Ibid.*, pp. 167-168.
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[18]Robert J C Young, *Colonial Desire*, *op. cit.*, p. 126.
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[21]*Ibid.*, p. 42.
[22]Alfred Mendes, *Black Fauns* (London: New Beacon Books, 1984 [1950]), p. 14.
[23]*Ibid.*, p. 20.
[24]*Ibid.*, p. 21.
[25]*Ibid.*, p. 21.
[26]*Ibid.*, p. 21.
[27]*Ibid.*, p. 61.
[28]*Ibid.*, p. 28.
[29]*Ibid.*, p. 29.
[30]*Ibid.*, p. 34.
[31]*Ibid.*, p. 38.
[32]*Ibid.*, p. 37.
[33]*Ibid.*, p. 62.
[34]*Ibid.*, p. 141.
[35]*Ibid.*, p. 161.
[36]*Ibid.*, p. 198.
[37]*Ibid.*, p. 214.
[38]*Ibid.*, p. 199.
[39]*Ibid.*, p. 200.
[40]*Ibid.*, p. 214.
[41]*Ibid.*, p. 247.
[42]*Ibid.*, p. 217.
[43]*Ibid.*, p. 285.
[44]*Ibid.*, p. 297.
[45]*Ibid.*, p. 325.
[46]*Ibid.*, p. 184.
[47]A J Seymour, *Edgar Mittelholzer: the man and his work* (Guyana: 1967 Edgar Mittelholzer Lectures, 1968).
[48]Edgar Mittelholzer, *Children of Kaywana* (London: Peter Nevill Ltd., 1952), p. 11.
[49]*Ibid.*, p. 24.
[50]*Ibid.*, p. 30.
[51]Someone described as being three-quarters white and one quarter black.
[52]Edgar Mittelholzer, *Children of Kaywana*, *op. cit.*, p. 121.
[53]Edgar Mittelholzer, *Children of Kaywana*, *op. cit.*, p. 292.
[54]*Ibid.*, p. 167.
[55]*Ibid.*, p. 307.

[56]*Ibid.*, p. 314.
[57]*Ibid.*, p. 178.
[58]*Ibid.*, p. 185.
[59]Edgar Mittelholzer, *Sylvia* (London: New English Library Ltd., 1963 [1953]), p. 10.
[60]*Ibid.*, p. 19.
[61]*Ibid.*, p. 44.
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[63]*Ibid.*, p. 126.
[64]Patricia Hill Collins, *Black Feminist Thought*, *op. cit.*, p. 167.
[65]Edgar Mittelholzer, *Sylvia*, *op. cit.*, p. 82.
[66]*Ibid.*, p. 132.
[67]*Ibid.*, p. 134.
[68]*Ibid.*, p. 146.
[69]A J Seymour, *Edgar Mittelholzer: the man and his work*, *op. cit.*, p. 18.
[70]Edgar Mittelholzer, *Sylvia*, *op. cit.*, p. 213.
[71]*Ibid.*, p. 216.
[72]*Ibid.*, p. 225.
[73]Kenneth Ramchand, *The West Indian Novel and its Background* (London: Heinemann Educational Books Ltd., 1983), pp. 44-5.
[74]Michael Gilkes, *Racial Identity and Individual Consciousness in the Caribbean Novel* (Guyana: Ministry of Information and Culture/National History and Arts Council, 1975), p. 16.
[75]Kenneth Ramchand, *The West Indian Novel and its Background*, *op. cit.*, p. 45.
[76]Frank Birbalsingh, *Passion and Exile: Essays in Caribbean Literature* (London: Hansib, 1988), p. 39.
[77]John Hearne, *Faces of Love* (London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1957), p. 9.
[78]*Ibid.*, p. 9.
[79]*Ibid.*, p. 34.
[80]*Ibid.*, p. 55.
[81]*Ibid.*, p. 129.
[82]*Ibid.*, p. 53.
[83]*Ibid.*, p. 124.
[84]*Ibid.*, p. 75.
[85]*Ibid.*, p. 218.
[86]*Ibid.*, p. 246.
[87]*Ibid.*, p. 222.
[88]*Ibid.*, p. 247.
[89]*Ibid.*, p. 244.
[90]Kenneth Ramchand, *The West Indian Novel and its Background*, *op. cit.*, p. 47.
[91]*Ibid.*, p. 50.

CHAPTER FOUR

SLAVE OR FREE: THE 'MIXED-RACE' PERSON IN SLAVE SOCIETY

This chapter opens with an analysis of slave societies in the Anglophone Caribbean and examines the position of 'mixed-race' people during this period. I will look at the historical factors that have influenced the way 'mixed-race' people are portrayed in Caribbean literature generally and, more specifically, how they are portrayed within a fictional construction of the slave period itself. The three novels discussed in this chapter are all fairly recent contributions to the literary representation of the slave period. However, there is a marked difference between Valerie Belgrave's use of romance genre to portray the slave period and the representations offered by Fred D'Aguiar and Michelle Cliff. Valerie Belgrave has said that her work is "a deliberate attempt to enoble my country and its people, to promote racial tolerance, not so much by condemning racism as by promoting positive images of West Indians".[1] Stefano Harney's argument that Belgrave's attempt to trace the background to presumed 'racial harmony' in Trinidad "creates a monstrous distortion" is founded in his belief that 'mixed-race people are privileged within Belgrave's novel.[2] However, I will argue that *Ti Marie*, published in 1988, does little or nothing to challenge or deconstruct the myths surrounding the 'mixed-race' person's identity in the Caribbean slave society. As such, the novel continues to represent the 'mixed-race' person in much the same way as earlier twentieth century literary representations. Minor 'mixed-race' characters (referred to in the narrative as 'mulattos') are variously stereotyped, as sexually deviant, 'tormented', or as evil collaborators in an oppressive hierarchy. The role of the 'mixed-race' person in resistance is made invisible, so that *Ti Marie* fails to give a balanced portrayal of 'mixed-race' people in the Caribbean slave period, despite Belgrave's

insistence that she was "not attempting to change historical reality".[3] Fred D'Aguiar's novel, *The Longest Memory*, published in 1994, offers us an alternative to the (all too common) view that 'mixed-race' automatically conferred on one a life of privilege during slavery. D'Aguiar's foregrounding of the 'mixed-raced' Chapel's life and death as a young slave makes the point that whether 'mixed-race' or not one was still black and enslaved. *Free Enterprise*, written by Michelle Cliff in 1995, argues that, although some 'mixed-race' people may have sought 'whiteness' and inclusion into the white hegemony because they saw it as their only means of escaping the cycle of oppression, there were many more who "sought the race to which they once belonged, for which they longed".[4] As such, these two novels counter the limited stereotypes put forward in *Ti Marie*, and offer an alternative historical possibility.

Historical background: the emergence of a 'mixed-race' population

It is important to recognise the fact that the history of intermixture within the Caribbean was, and is, more diverse than simply African and European mixing. From the time the indigenous population of the Caribbean discovered European pirates on their shores, it was inevitable that so-called 'miscegenation' would begin to occur in the Caribbean. However, as pointed out in the previous chapter, it *was* during the period of slavery that 'miscegenation' really came into its own; from this point, the stratification of the Caribbean colonial society inexorably became linked with colour. According to Franklin W Knight,

> [a]s the plantation system matured throughout the eighteenth century, a concomitant social complex based on mutually reinforcing cleavages of race, color, and occupation not only manifested itself throughout the Caribbean but became indelible and pervasive.[5]

The ramifications of this still influence contemporary Caribbean society and its literature.

'Mixed-race' people were collectively referred to as 'coloureds'; however, this broad definition encompassed the vast array of racial classifications created during slavery to describe the 'mixed-race' population in the Caribbean. Caribbean countries differed in their levels of racial categorisation; according to Hilary Beckles, in Barbados, "[d]uring the 18th century planters tended to refer to all persons of mixed racial ancestry as coloured, unlike the Jamaicans, for example, who paid social and official attention to all the various types of interracial mixtures".[6] Gad Heuman has summarised the obsessive racial categorisation of the 'mixed-race' population in Jamaica as follows:

> a mulatto was the result of a union between black and white, sambo between mulatto and black, quadroon between mulatto and white, mustee between quadroon and white. The union of a mustee and a white produced a musteefino who was legally white and enjoyed full civil rights. Samboes, mulattoes, quadroons, and mustees were legally classified as mulattoes and were subject to the same disabilities.[7]

In many parts of the Caribbean even the remotest black inheritance defined a person as non-white. However, in Jamaica a law was passed in 1733 declaring that a "person with 15/16ths white blood and only 1/16th 'Negro'" was legally white, in an attempt to boost the white population numerically, as it was greatly outnumbered by the slave population.[8] This legislation offers an example of the political nature (and flexibility) of racial definition, and one sees that the status of the free 'mixed-race' population in the Anglophone Caribbean was both tenuous and ambiguous. This sense of ambiguity has led some historians to argue that it "contributed to their psychological disorientation"; a paradigm often used to portray the 'mixed-race' person in Caribbean literature.[9] Despite rigid lines of racial definition, in practise it is rather unlikely that strict biological categorisation could be practised on a day to day basis. Therefore, a person's racial identity would have more to do with their visual appearance than with their actual ancestry; and, collectively, all those seen to be of 'mixed-blood' would be "regarded as mulattos, or coloreds, or people of color, or simply, browns".[10]

According to Barbara Bush, "[d]espite the harsh, unequal and callous nature of slave society, close, loving bonds between black and white did exist".[11] However, sexual contact between white men and black women was, all too often, in the form of rape or prostitution, with little to distinguish between the two. As discussed in the previous chapter, 'mixed-race' women, "particularly... lighter-skinned coloured women", were often the most highly desired by white men, placing them at the forefront of this type of sexual slavery.[12] Although some slave women entered prostitution 'voluntarily', as a means of saving enough money to buy their freedom, more often the prostitution of slave women proved to be a fast way of earning extra cash for the *slave-owner*.[13] Thus, slave women were forced into prostitution on a level that can only be viewed as multiple rape. For the slave-owner, prostituting their female slaves held the added bonus of 'breeding' more slaves. As Barbara Bush argues,

> [w]hereas the male slave was valued solely for the economic contribution he made to the plantation, the woman was expected to perform both sexual as well as economic duties. Childbearing fell into the former area, but also sexual duties performed for white masters. In the West Indies, sexual relationships between black and coloured women and white men were widespread, commonplace and generally accepted by the plantocracy to be an integral part of the social structure of the islands.[14]

In contrast to legislature in the Anglophone Caribbean, which allowed for total abuse of the slave, the French and Spanish slave societies had, in theory, more laws to protect slaves. However, this could be argued to reflect a desire to keep the development of a 'coloured' population as low as possible, rather than genuine altruism on the part of the white law-makers. Under the French *Code Noir* and "under the [Spanish] *Siete Partidas*, female slaves could be compulsorily manumitted in compensation for abuse, violation or prostitution of a woman by her owner".[15] In the Anglophone Caribbean "Antigua was the only British colony to legislate against miscegenation during the seventeenth and

eighteenth centuries".[16] Enforcing this legislation, however, proved impossible and, thus, "slave women and slave families were afforded little or no special protection" from sexual exploitation at the hands of white men.[17] In Barbados, the offspring of slave women automatically inherited their mothers' slave status. Hilary Beckles writes that

> [t]his matrifocal legislative approach to slave reproduction ensured that from the point of view of white society, black women's maternity could not be separated from enslavement and degradation. Also it meant that white men could rape, seduce and impregnate slave women, as a normal part of their common culture, without any legal or social responsibility to spouse or progeny.[18]

Such legislation prevented the possibility of 'mixed-race' children claiming any rights or automatic inheritance from their fathers.

Hilary Beckles argues that although, in the early years of the slave society, there were sexual unions between black men and white women, their scarcity during the eighteenth century was influenced by "racial ideologies [which] became increasingly important to the white élite as tools of social control, and reports of such relations more or less vanished from official documents".[19] Barbara Bush suggests that the rarity of black male/white female sexual relationships resulted from "an extension of the moral precepts... of European society".[20] White women were not meant to be sexual. The scarcity of such unions was also influenced by gender inequality, in that women took the status of their male partner and not visa versa. Therefore, if a white man was with a black woman, even if the relationship was frowned upon, it would not ultimately affect his status. If a white woman was with a black slave/or freedman it meant a loss of her 'superior' status and a taking on of the 'inferior' status of the black male in a racist society.

The popular image of Caribbean slave society as a triangular structure is an over-simplistic, and somewhat misleading, iconic representation of the stratification of slave society. Here, the base of the triangle, or bottom strata, represents the African slaves; the peak of the

triangle represents the ruling white elite; and the middle section (stratum) represents the free 'coloureds' ('mixed-race' people). However, the use of this icon has led to the erroneous belief that no black people were free and that no 'mixed-race' people were enslaved. In addition, it ignores the fact that the free non-white population during the slave period was relatively small. According to Franklin W Knight, even by the beginning of the nineteenth century

> [i]n the English [...] colonies the proportion varied between a low of 1 percent in Berbice, later part of British Guiana, and a high of 12.6 percent in the Bahamas in 1810. In Barbados the free colored population represented 6.5 percent of the total in 1834. In Jamaica it was 10.2 percent in 1800.[21]

Much has been made of the fact that 'coloureds' owned plantations. Indeed, in Jamaica, the granting of property to 'coloured' offspring was considered by whites to be so prevalent that in 1761, after an enquiry of the House of Assembly, legislation was passed to limit the amount bequeathed.[22] However, the actual percentage of free non-white people (whether 'coloured' or black) owning slaves in the Anglophone Caribbean was very small and "only 6.5% of freedmen were slave owners".[23]

As a collective group, slaves were at the bottom of the social scale, but within this group there were further sub-divisions in terms of work done, and "a typical labour pattern found in plantation accounts of 1706 indicates that 64 per cent of slaves were field hands, 14 per cent domestics and 12 per cent overseers and craftsmen".[24] Initially, domestic work was the domain of white indentured labour, or of Amerindian women, who were preferred by some planters.[25] But, by the latter half of the seventeenth century, with the decline of white domestic labour, black women were turned to as an alternative. The highest status for a female slave became that of housekeeper, a skilled job which was considered equal to the position of the artisan.[26] In Barbados where there was a higher incidence of settled colonial families than in other Caribbean countries housekeepers worked directly under the wife. On plantations where there was no female head, the housekeeper's power on

domestic issues was far greater. Franklin Knight argues that "[s]laves of mixed ancestry were not generally regarded as good field workers. As a result there was a concentration of these slaves in the domestic, skilled, and artisan trades".[27] Knight's argument suggests that 'mixed-race' slaves were not given preferential treatment, but rather that their predominance in the 'domestic, skilled, and artisan' spheres resulted from European notions about 'mixed-race' biological weakness.

However, because of the predominance of 'mixed-race' people in what were considered higher status slave positions, it has been easy to stereotype the 'mixed-race' person as collaborating with the white hegemony. For example, the historian Barbara Bush addresses the invisible 'black' woman in Caribbean history and purports to challenge stereotypes, but in her book *Slave Women in Caribbean Society* (1990), she still perpetuates the stereotype of the 'mixed-race' woman as 'oppressor' and 'outsider'. Bush writes that her "main focus is the *ordinary* [my italics] black woman slave rather than the coloured domestics".[28] The term 'domestic' is an inaccurate euphemism, for in reality the 'mixed-race' woman was still a slave, whether house or field. Barbara Bush's dismissal of the 'domestic' slave ignores the 'mixed-race' woman's struggle against her oppressed status as slave, and effectively denies her true place in the history of the Caribbean. The majority of women slaves, whether black or 'coloured', laboured in the field; and, in fact, one of the methods of control used by planters over house-slaves was the threat of returning them to field labour.[29] One sees, therefore, that house-slavery did not exclude the reality of field-slavery. It is true that it was considered (and some still view it as) "a privilege to be so close to the seat of power"; yet, as Hilary Beckles argues, "many discovered that this proximity also meant their own vulnerability; it was an ambivalent experience".[30] Indeed, even Barbara Bush acknowledges that female house-slaves "were far more frequently the victim of sadistic whims and personal caprice" than their sisters in the field.[31] Although there were obvious advantages in domestic slavery to field slavery, as Hilary Beckles argues, it is important to note that "many housekeepers, like artisans and drivers, were at the forefront of the anti-slavery struggle, suggesting that freedom, rather than privileged slavery, was the ultimate goal".[32]

Freedom could be offered as a form of 'present', given on the whim of the master, and, according to Hilary Beckles, a domestic slave's "chances of manumission were infinitely greater" than that of a field slave.[33] Often old slaves were given their freedom, but this was not on humanitarian grounds; on the contrary, they were discarded because they were no longer considered productive. With no means of supporting themselves, 'freedom' was a harsh alternative to slavery. As Hilary Beckles writes,

> [f]or many of these survivors the life was one of alienation, isolation, and defencelessness, evidence of a society whose primary consideration was for the economic worth of labour with little value placed upon the social value of labourers.[34]

As a result of their relationships with their white masters, a high percentage of those manumitted were women. However, "most white males who manumitted their coloured children did not free their black mothers", and it was usual only to free off-spring when they had attained adulthood.[35] Indeed, sexual contact between white males and black females often led to the offspring being given as slaves to their white siblings - a "common case and not thought of as an enormity".[36] Statistical evidence points to the fact that there were more free 'coloureds' than free blacks, and "[a]ccording to one contemporary estimate, 80 percent of freedmen were colored and 20 percent black".[37] However, according to Hilary Beckles,

> the majority of enslaved coloured children [...] were never freed, and the free-coloured community, which features so prominently in most sociological analyses of slave society, represents no more than the tip of the coloured 'iceberg'.[38]

Freedom had its limitations, and as Gad Heuman argues, "whatever their parentage, freedmen did not become the legal equals of whites; for them manumission meant only a release from ownership and was not a grant of full civil rights".[39] Free 'coloureds' had

severe restrictions placed on their "political, economic and social life".[40] Like the later experience of Jews (and black people) in Nazi Germany, at one stage 'coloureds' were meant to 'prove' their freedom by having to wear a symbol of a blue cross.[41] In Jamaica, during the early eighteenth century, Privilege Bills were sometimes passed which overrode restrictions on civil rights for certain individuals, but often it was necessary "to marry whites if their children were to inherit the same immunities".[42] After 1761 these *privilege* bills lessened with white fears over the increasing wealth and power of the free black and 'coloured' population.[43] What is also important to note is that, as the slave society developed, even though financial and occupational status were considered to determine class amongst the free population, any person of *pure* European ancestry, regardless of their rank, was considered by whites to be superior to any non-white person. According to Franklin W Knight, "[f]or the white people, race and color rather than class and nationality became a consoling, fraternal bond".[44]

Free 'coloureds' were ostracised by white society and, according to Gad Heuman, "[t]he planters generally refused to mix with even wealthy or well-educated people of colour ... [and] regarded the coloureds with a mixture of superstition and contempt".[45] They were defined as a separate and lesser social group within the colonial society by both the law and the Church. Inequality was part of the legislature; and one example of

> [t]he inferior status of the free people of colour was brought out by the act of St. Vincent of 1767. Any free person of colour striking a white person was to be whipped and imprisoned for six months. Any white person beating a free Negro or mulatto, provided proof thereof was presented to a justice of the peace, was to be bound over.[46]

One sees, therefore, that the law was not disinterested or objective, but rather a tool enabling the white ruling class to perpetuate the subordination of the lower classes, both 'mixed-race' and black. Legal rights were full for whites, extremely limited for the free 'coloureds' and 'blacks', and although existing on paper for slaves, in practice were virtually

non-existent. Racism and racial segregation were also condoned by the Anglican Church; for example, 'coloureds' could not be buried in white cemeteries, nor could they sit in front or next to any white person (regardless of that person's rank) in church.[47] The mainstream church, made up of many slave-owning clergy, taught submission of both 'mixed-race' and black slaves. This racism was also practised by European missionaries; according to Heuman, "the free browns were not treated as the social equals of the European missionaries. No missionary married a free colored woman, and the missionaries were accused in the 1830s of being prejudiced against the people of color".[48]

Education for the majority of non-whites was seen as a threat to the existing order. Few slaves were educated, and by the end of the nineteenth century there was probably a maximum of 2% literacy among the slaves, and these would mostly have been the housekeepers.[49] However, a few 'coloured' children of the rich were sent to England to be educated in the early nineteenth century, and they were encouraged not to return, as it was felt that they would be less discriminated against outside of Caribbean society. According to Gad Heuman, they were often "accepted as whites in Britain,... [and] were dismayed by their reception in Jamaica when they returned home".[50]

Gad Heuman argues that up until the end of the eighteenth century, when free 'coloureds' in Jamaica "appealed to the Assembly for an improvement in their rights, coloreds proceeded as individuals; they were not seeking changes in the general condition of the people of color".[51] After the Haitian revolution some were scared of losing their limited rights and held back on petitioning, whilst others were spurred on and wanted to gain similar rights to those that the free 'coloureds' in Haiti had acquired.[52] From the early nineteenth century, 'coloureds' discovered from "scattered demographic statistics collected in 1812... their rapid numerical growth and their increasing proportion of the free population".[53] They began to develop more confidence as a group, and to join together in their demands for extended rights. In 1816 a group of free 'coloureds' petitioned for full equal rights with whites.[54] This petition was rejected, and revealed a split in the 'coloured' population, some fearing that their tenuous relationship with whites would be harmed.

Although both groups of 'coloureds' were only concerned with their personal rights within a context of harmonious relations with whites, the whites did not see it this way. Whites felt that their power was being undermined and regarded "any attempt to alter the coloreds' position in society as a threat to the structure of the whole society".[55] Whites also began to believe that freed(wo)men and slaves were planning to revolt. In fact, there were initially deep divisions even between privileged 'coloureds', as well as between privileged and lower class freed 'coloureds', and between 'coloureds' and 'blacks'. Faced with white colonial resistance, free 'coloureds' set out to establish links and gain support in England; and by the late 1820s, as the movement to end slavery continued, the whites began to view an extension of rights for free 'coloureds' as their only option in strengthening their own position.[56] So, in 1830 a restrictive franchise was included in a privilege bill for freed people.[57] This was a case of too little too late, as by now the continued resistance by whites to 'coloured' rights had begun to lead to what whites had feared most - a closer relationship between free 'coloureds' and 'blacks' against white oppression.

I shall now explore the ways in which three Caribbean writers, Valerie Belgrave, Fred D'Aguiar and Michelle Cliff, have represented the position of 'mixed-race' people during the slave period. *Ti Marie* (1988), by Valerie Belgrave, "declares itself from the outset as a utopian revisioning of Trinidadian history".[58] Written in the romance genre, it idealises the position of the free 'coloureds' in eighteenth century Trinidad, and pays scant attention to the experience of 'mixed-race' slaves. *The Longest Memory* (1994), by Fred D'Aguiar, redresses this by employing multiple narrative voices and perspectives to create a more realistic view of the 'mixed-race' person's position in slave society. *Free Enterprise* (1995), by Michelle Cliff, through its portrayal of two free 'mixed-race' women as its protagonists, offers an alternative to the stereotype of the free 'coloured' who aspired only to white ideals and to inclusion within a white hegemony. Although these latter two novels are set primarily in America rather than the Caribbean, they are included because their respective portrayals of slave society challenge accepted historical simplifications of the 'mixed-race' experience during slavery.

Ti Marie: Romance and Realism don't mix

Belgrave writes that in the novel she aims to show "how stereotypes operate in our environment" and that she "heighten[s] reality by not making the circumstances so unique that they become unbelievable."[59] What actually occurs within the story, through the interweaving of numerous historical references, is a romanticised and idealised history of Trinidad. The danger lies in the difficulty the reader then has in disentangling myth from reality. Valerie Belgrave's attempt at combining what Jane Bryce refers to as the "slipperiness and instability of the [romance] genre" with historical fact is problematical.[60] The difficulty occurs with romance genre's need to privilege a romantic plot, often at the expense of social realism, so that what results is a form of historical revisioning. In constructing a 'social history', Valerie Belgrave's use of stereotypes illustrates how literature can be influenced by *and* perpetuate certain myths about the position of 'mixed-race' people within the context of Caribbean history.

Steve Harney argues that "Trinidad, not unlike Brazil, imagines itself, indeed markets itself, as a nation of mixed heritage".[61] He criticises *Ti Marie* for its use of a 'mixed-race' protagonist to represent black womanhood. This, he argues, is yet another concession to colour paranoia and to European notions of black beauty, where the more fair-skinned ('Caucasian') a person is the more acceptable they become to the European eye. What this argument fails to realise or to acknowledge is that Valerie Belgrave has used a 'mixed-race' protagonist in the context of a theme concerned with interracial relationships, and with the 'mixed-race' person's status during the slave period. Eléna is not written in as the acceptable face of black womanhood, she is *specifically* 'mixed-race'; and it is her ambiguous position, as a 'mixed-race' woman in the slave society that is meant to be explored in the novel. However, Eléna does not challenge her tenuous position within the society; and although the narrative claims that Eléna recognises that her "place and role isn't prescribed" within the slave society, the narrative does not effectively show this.[62]

The story centres around the Santa Clara plantation, and opens with the birth of the main female protagonist, Eléna and her twin, Carmen, in 1777, when Trinidad was still a Spanish colony. Santa Clara is ironically portrayed as a haven, whilst Diego, the slave-owner, is defended as a liberal because although the slaves "were a subjugated people, ...they were never considered anything less than human beings".[63] According to Bridget Brereton, although many historians argue that slavery in the Spanish colonies was milder and more humane than in the British and French Caribbean, there is no evidence that it was milder in Trinidad during the 1780s and 1790s. By narrative admission, "Santa Clara might have been merely a poet's dream, or a fairy-tale spun to amuse a child's fantasy".[64] The 'mixed-race' protagonist, Eléna, is socially cocooned and her first knowledge of the 'real' world is gleaned through listening to the Spanish Governor, Don Chacon, and later to the newly arrived 'mixed-race' André Fontainbleau. From Don Chacon, Eléna learns that 'coloureds' made up the majority in Trinidad, and that the planters were afraid that the "new coloured immigrants are going to infect their slaves with dangerous ideas".[65]

According to Brereton, when Don José Chacon became Governor of Trinidad in 1784, he proceeded to give immense power to the new French immigrants, but significantly, these "were without exception wealthy white land-owners and slave-holders... men committed to the preservation of slavery and white ascendancy".[66] Although "Chacon... chose to ignore the laws that existed in the Spanish colonies against the free coloureds... They had no political power".[67] Despite their lack of power, generally these free 'coloureds' had better civil rights than in the French and British controlled Caribbean countries, where "in effect a system of apartheid was established... reaching its climax in the 1770s and 1780s".[68] After 1790 a new type of immigrant, both white and 'coloured', entered Trinidad, many of whom were committed Republicans.[69] These new 'coloured' immigrants were, significantly, given no power by Chacon; however, their large numbers still threatened his control and by 1797 the 'coloured' and black population was 4,476 compared to 2,151 whites.[70] Free 'coloureds' were certainly not treated as equal to whites. However, according to Bridget Brereton, "free coloured land-owners enjoyed a secure legal and social status during Chacon's regime" that contrasted dramatically with the treatment they received elsewhere

in the Caribbean, and resulted in a relatively large 'coloured' propertied class in Trinidad.[71] It is, however, important to realise that this group was a small minority within Trinidadian society.[72]

The 'mixed-race' André Fontainbleau acts as an historical conduit to the politically naive Eléna, and through him, she learns about the different treatment received by 'coloureds' in the various Caribbean countries. For example, he tells her that in Guadeloupe, 'coloureds'

> were humiliated at every turn. The Whites got the best of everything and we, almost nothing. We could not even walk on the same side of the street that they used. There was harsh punishment for the slightest offence.[73]

André concedes that 'coloureds' are better off in Trinidad, citing their numbers and relative wealth as reasons, but prophetically he feels that their position in Trinidad is an insecure one. Surprised at her intelligent involvement and discussion, he says that the Governor's fears of 'coloureds' joining with slaves in revolt, are unlikely to be realised, although "the Grand Blancs may just provoke what they fear".[74] He tells Eléna that this is what happened in St Dominigue (Haiti), where the whites' refusal to allow free 'coloureds' the vote, as was their legal right, led them to fight back, and resulted in a mass slave revolt. His discussion with Eléna is just one example of the way in which Belgrave fuses history with the fictional lives of her protagonists.

Eléna and André's initial meeting suggests a level of mutual suspicion between the so-called 'coloureds'. She is described as 'surprised' to encounter, in Diego's study, a "personable" (presumably meaning well-to-do) 'coloured' man, whose 'good' manners, we are told, indicate his having been educated in Paris. In turn, André cautiously expresses an interest in Eléna, "unsure of the status of a coloured girl in a white household".[75] The reader is also unsure, as no mention has yet been made of her or her mother's status, whether slave or servant, and certainly there is no mention of any work being undertaken by Eléna. She replies that it is *her* home, indicating her sense of security in her status - a

security which is later to be undermined. Diego refers to Eléna ambiguously as his daughter's companion, and, on her behalf, accepts an invitation to a social event at the home of the 'mixed-race' Fontainbleau family. Significantly, his white daughter, Juanita, is not invited. We are led to believe by the narrative that her superior status in a hypocritical society, where as a white woman (girl) Juanita would not have mixed socially with 'coloureds' in *their* homes, despite her companionship with 'coloureds' in her own home, would have made her visit impossible.

Santa Clara cocoons Eléna, and at one time she "thought that reality would never touch Santa Clara".[76] Reality never does 'touch' Santa Clara in terms of an accurate depiction of people's working lives, and Eléna's status, like her mother Yei's, remains ambiguous. Yei, was brought in to the white household to nurse Diego's sickly child, after his wife had died from a difficult childbirth. She is portrayed as a racial stereotype of the indigenous woman, a proven herbalist, described as an African and "Amerindian [who is]... very inscrutable".[77] Yei becomes the 'housekeeper', but also a "full member of [Diego's] family", making her status unclear.[78] We are informed by the narrative that Yei's twin daughters, Eléna and Carmen, were the "instant delight of Diego's children and indeed of everyone on the plantation". They are described as "black and white versions of each other", stressing the fact that even within one 'mixed-race' family the differences in skin colour can be great.[79] Although the education of 'coloureds' during slavery was severely restricted, Eléna and her sister Carmen are educated by default because their white playmates, Juanita and José, are being educated by a private tutor, Louis. It is hinted that his obvious pleasure in incorporating the twins into his 'school' may be because he is their father (which we eventually find out to be true). He becomes particularly attached to Eléna, renaming her Ti Marie. Her 'mixed-race' is always prominent, for whilst a flower in his eyes, she is a "wild flower", a metaphor which incorporates the stereotypical sexual traits of African and European; the flower represents the European notion of ideal femininity as delicate, whilst 'wild' indicates the European notion of the African as savage. Carmen, the fair-skinned twin, grows up whiter and whiter until she is said to resemble the white Juanita. When Eléna is invited to the Fontainbleaus', we are told that "Carmen would be reluctant to

accompany her sister" and, although we are not told why, the implication is that it is because she feels superior because of her near-white appearance.[80] This is reinforced later in the story when Carmen is portrayed as belonging nowhere, so that "because of an apparent reticence towards coloured people [she] had not, like Eléna, developed a small circle of coloured friends".[81] Paradoxically, she is not able to penetrate white society outside her home at Santa Clara, because she *is* 'coloured', and, therefore, she becomes isolated.

Eléna seemingly encounters only two occasions where slaves are treated brutally. The first is on her drive home from André's, when a slave is being savaged by two dogs, whilst two whites overlook the proceedings. Naively, and against André's better judgement, she insists that they try to help. The result is that André is quickly knocked out, Bella dies and Eléna is assaulted. The second instance occurs when Eléna sees Tessa, a young slave girl, being whipped and dragged down the street - significantly by a 'mulatto'. Again, Eléna intervenes, but this time uses the system to her own ends by offering to buy Tessa for the white Juanita, on the condition that the beating stops. Eléna's connection with slaves, like her mother's, is a partial acknowledgement of her own heritage, but it remains condescending and distancing: "knowing *them* [my italics] closely, I can intercede for them if necessary. I... I think they trust me as I do them".[82] This attitude places her in position of both a real and metaphorical bridge between slave and free, black and white. In fact, although Eléna's mother, Yei, stresses her solidarity with the Africans when she tells Bella "I live in the white man's way, but the Africans are more like me - more natural", she and her children mix little with the African slaves.[83] The distance Eléna feels from the slaves is further illustrated when she is caught up in a slave revolt that results in Diego's death and José's serious injury. A group of slaves pass by after the attack and run away without helping Eléna, and her response is to damn them, without any understanding of their justifiable antipathy. Indeed, Eléna is so far removed from her African and Amerindian identity that she is portrayed as an English 'lady'. For example, Tessa's initial view of her is as a 'lady', "so beautiful... And your voice like music. I ain't know you was black. I' thinking you one o' them white ladies".[84]

Belgrave barely addresses the position of enslaved 'mixed-race' people. The slave, Bella, is described as "brown-skinned", hinting at a mixed ancestry, but she is mentioned little and is soon killed off. The overseer Miguel is 'mixed-race', and is described as "a half-breed Spaniard, one of several lost souls", a description which introduces us to one stereotype of 'mixed-race' people as tormented and pitiable.[85] Belgrave's treatment of the (non-wealthy) 'mixed-race' man, conversely, perpetuates yet another stereotype of 'mixed-race' people as vicious oppressors of the black enslaved population; and Tessa's attack by the 'evil mulatto' is one example of this. In Belgrave's novel it is the 'mixed-race' man, not the white man, who is the racist, so that Barry declares that the black Fist "proved a contradiction to his [the 'mulatto's] ideas of white, and brown, supremacy".[86] To Fist, 'mixed-race' people are an embodiment of evil as he "knew that mulattos were notoriously the most cruel overseers and drivers".[87] This conveniently exonerates Barry, who in reality is the white beneficiary of the slave system.

Barry, the white romantic hero, comes from a background of privileged aristocracy, influenced by a 'liberal' grandmother. To justify his arrival in the Caribbean, Belgrave informs us that it was only out of necessity (running from the law after a duel) that he came to his uncle's plantation in Barbados. There he is (suitably) shocked and horrified by the inhumane treatment of slaves, and quickly leaves for the supposedly more humane Trinidad. Like Eléna, Barry's resistance to slavery is limited to saving a slave from his uncle's control - by winning Fist - when he is about to be brutalised by yet another 'evil mulatto'. In Trinidad, Barry soon becomes sexually excited by 'mixed-race' women, and "mulattresses, bejewelled on ears, neck and hands, even here in the market-place, made Barry catch his breath".[88] His initial reaction on seeing Eléna is that she is "the most stunningly beautiful creature he had ever laid eyes upon".[89] This beauty is directly related to her 'mixed-race', and her European features are highlighted when we are told that her "nose, which she had obviously inherited from that unknown white father, was straight, and turned up slightly at the tip" and her hair whilst black is long, like a European's.[90] We are told that Barry "thought nothing of her race, her colour or her nationality. His only thought,

as he finally rode way was... Velvet... her skin is like velvet!" The suggestion that Barry is not conscious of her race is ironic because his very conception of her beauty is based entirely on her visible 'mixed-race' heritage.[91] When asked whether he has "noticed how stark everything seems in the tropics" Barry replies, "Yes. Everything is mercilessly and clearly defined. Black and white... [as he observes] a band of slaves trekking through the fields with their white overseer".[92] Ostensibly, Barry refers to the balance of power between the white overseer and the black slaves, but in reality he is speaking of the racial divisions within a society stratified by colour. His words suggest that Barry has noted Eléna's race and feels that they are 'mercilessly' divided by colour.

Belgrave perpetuates the notion of the 'mixed-race' woman, rather than the 'mixed-race' man, as sexually volatile. The 'mixed-race' man is de-sexualised, represented by André's non-sexual devotion to Eléna. In contrast, Eléna's sexuality, like Sylvia's in Mittelholzer's novel, is a mixture of repression, shown in her attempts to suppress her feelings for the white Barry, and 'over-exuberance', represented by her eventual passionate love-making with him. The stereotype of the sexually deviant 'mixed-race' woman is highlighted during the depiction of the carnival where a white woman masquerades as a "mulatress", representing her by "gyrating in a most vulgar fashion".[93] Yvette and Eléna are described as upset and indignant, and their 'ladylike' response conforms to the typical romance heroine. According to Jane Bryce, "the romance heroine is typically of a lower social status than the hero, but in marrying him she is transformed, like Cinderella, into a 'lady'. She could not however, achieve this transformation, unless she already possessed the attributes of 'ladyness', [including] modesty [and] propriety".[94] Other 'mixed-race' women, who do not have to conform to the standards required of a romance heroine within the novel, are stereotyped as lascivious. One example is the description of the 'mixed-race' mistress of the white British Governor: "a voluptuous mulattress, bare to the waist, [who] climbed on to his lap... [E]nraged she was even more desirable".[95] The stereotype is ultimately extended to include Eléna, and the inscription of 'mixed-race' women as somehow sexually 'wild' is developed further in the novel through Barry's initial attraction to the 'mixed-race' Eléna, whom he describes in almost bestial terms as having "eyes like a

wild [my emphasis] deer".[96] Even her call-name Ti Marie is named after a flowering bush (a 'corruption' of the image of the 'English Rose') which we are told is "[c]ommon, but alluring, and dangerous and to be shunned".[97] The idea of sexual danger is also linked to Eléna's 'mixed-race' mother, Yei. Diego desires her, but it is taboo for him to be attracted to her sexually because she is not white. His sexual interest is, therefore, couched in semi-religious terms as a way of 'making-safe' her sexuality. She is initially described by him in hyperbolical terms as "a magnificent bronze goddess", but he then dismisses this perception of her as a trick of the light.[98]. The idea of her 'goddess-like' status is extended through her miraculous healing of his sick daughter, and this further diminishes her dangerous sexual potency which threatens his power over her and, by implication, his power within the colonial strata.

Interracial relationships are opposed by the white Diego and the 'mixed-race' Fontainbleaus. Early on in the novel Diego exclaims to his son, José, "so many of us are already intermarried with Africans or Indians. My son, in a companionship of misery, there's little room for discrimination".[99] Yet later he is outraged when his son informs him that he wishes to marry Carmen. Diego's pride in his "pure blood" reveals his hypocrisy in allowing his children to grow up together with Yei's children as an extended family unit.[100] Of course, this sort of hypocrisy was fairly common and, as mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, it was not considered unusual or wrong for a white man to bring in his *own* illegitimate 'mixed-race' children as 'play things' for his white children, only to revert them to their fully enslaved position in adulthood. Realism enters the story briefly in Diego's initial response, but then almost magically Yei reasons with him 'off-stage' and dismisses his outburst as inconsequential. He is only "a nobleman [with] strange notions about race", easily persuaded by Yei that the concept of 'purity' has no value or meaning.[101] Eléna is shocked by his reaction, and the narrative informs us that "[t]he question of racial inferiority had never struck her with such force before, but after hearing Diego bellow out the words tonight - half-caste, negro, peon, mulatto, miscegenation - she suddenly questioned her way of life, her very existence".[102] However, the subsequent narrative scarcely suggests

any profound anxiety; Eléna continues in her role as 'honorary white lady' and is seemingly happy to accept her place in the Santa Clara social circle.

André's parents refuse to allow their daughter, Yvette, to marry the white liberal, Mark. Their refusal is a direct response to their treatment by the new colonial power, the British, who took control of Trinidad in 1797.[103] Picton became the new military Governor, who, according to Bridget Brereton, was able "to establish an effective personal tyranny".[104] Although "Picton's terror was impartial in the sense that European soldiers were among his victims, ...the worst atrocities were inflicted on the slaves and the free coloureds".[105] Brereton argues that "[t]he dismissal of coloured officers symbolised a blow at the entire class".[106] In the novel the withdrawal of officer commissions effectively ends André's career, and Picton is described as "changin' all them easy, soft, slave laws and puttin' them mulattos in their place once an' for all".[107] We are told that "scant respect [is] now being shown to the free people of colour", who must carry passes and are restricted by a 9.30 p.m. curfew.[108] The Fontainbleaus, like all free 'coloureds' find themselves humiliated at every turn and are stripped of any status they had had under Spanish rule. As such, their rejection of Mark as a son-in-law represents their only resistance to white oppression.

It has been historically recorded that in 1801 "large numbers of slaves died mysteriously" and Bergorrat, a Martiniquan planter and Picton's closest friend, undertook a poisoning commission, which was meant to investigate those slaves suspected of using poison, during which suspects were tortured and horrifically executed.[109] Belgrave uses this historical information to weave a story around Tessa, the slave girl 'rescued' by Eléna. Tessa is brutally tortured, along with other slaves accused of involvement in the slave rebellion, during which she miscarries and later dies from internal injuries. Many of the other slaves are gruesomely executed in public, an event that has also been historically recorded.[110] Although Belgrave uses evidence about slave tortures and executions to inform her text, and remarks on the erosion of rights for free 'coloureds', she fails to bring in pertinent historical information regarding the treatment of all 'coloureds', both free *and* enslaved, by the British. For example, Brereton writes that in 1802 Picton - who referred to

free 'coloureds' as "a dangerous class which must gradually be got rid of" - subjected several to torture and execution, and branded all free 'coloureds' as revolutionaries, marking the end of civil rights for free 'coloureds' up until 1826.[111] This fact is not foregrounded, and the novel ends simply with the 'happy couple' dreaming of a bright future for Trinidad, as we are informed that the British are to remove Picton.

Barry and Eléna's relationship overcomes all social and 'racial' obstacles. Their 'happily ever after' future supports Eléna's declaration that "love goes beyond barriers of class...or race", and maintains the tradition of the romance genre.[112] This is all very nice, but in reality interracial marriage occurred rarely, and was, in fact, outlawed in some parts of the Caribbean. Apart from Yei's maternal concern, there is little in the way of an overtly negative response towards Barry and Elena's relationship. This tolerance undermines the credibility of Barry and Eléna's anxiety over embarking on an interracial relationship, and history is re-written in order to fit neatly into the genre of romance fiction.

The narrative portrays the black slaves as feeling a deep hatred towards 'mixed-race' people. The leader of the failed slave rebellion believes that 'mixed-race' people are 'treacherous' (another stereotype), and that they seek whiteness, loathing their African ancestry. He blames Eléna for their downfall, as he describes her as

> just like all them brown-skin devils who second in badness only to the white-skin ones, and sometimes they worse... don't ever fool yourself into thinking you could trust a mulatto. Them ain't sure if they standing up or sitting down. They wants to be white like the whites, and they hate the least drop of black blood in they body.[113]

The leader threatens to kill Eléna in order to "teach a lesson to all them mulatto bitches!"; his misogynistic declaration indicates that his hatred is specifically directed towards 'mixed-race' women.[114] Eléna is then captured by the runaway slave leaders, to be executed in a 'copy-cat' manner to the executed slaves. As Barry searches for her, he reflects that

> she was always caught in the middle, paying the price for her black blood, and now paying the price for her white blood as well... Was it her destiny to pay the price for those countless mulatto traitors, people who, despicable as they were, were themselves no more than dupes, victims?[115]

Barry's reflection on the 'mixed-race' experience follows the argument that, located in the 'middle' of a black/white dichotomy, 'mixed-race' people are peripheral to the struggle between whites (oppressors) and blacks (oppressed). This ignores their position as enslaved and denies their active part in slave resistance. The stereotype of 'countless mulatto traitors', is counterbalanced only by the possibility that they have been 'duped'. The fact that throughout the story we are offered repeated instances of 'mixed-race' people fulfilling the stereotype of the 'evil mulatto' would suggest that Barry's opinions are shared by Belgrave.

Revising the myths about 'mixed-race' people during slavery

The Longest Memory (1994) by Fred D'Aguiar is set on a plantation in eighteenth century America, and tells the story of a 'mixed-race' slave named Chapel and his black 'adopted' father, Whitechapel. The novel is written using a multiplicity of narrative perspectives; these include the slave Whitechapel's, the plantation owner's, the overseers, Sanders Sr. and Jr., the plantation owner's daughter, Lydia, Chapel's mother and Chapel. Whitechapel has managed to survive his enslavement into old age by continued submission. He believes freedom is a myth, and that the only escape from slavery is death, a conclusion reached after witnessing the slaughter of those who had tried to escape the whip. But with dramatic irony, it is his erroneous belief in submission that leads him to collude in the capture of his son, who is then whipped to death at the hands of his white half-brother. D'Aguiar writes that his use of a multiple narrative offers "a circular narrative. So you have a voice being contradicted by several other accounts. That's more of a polyphony rather than a singular voice".[116] Thus, Whitechapel's belief in compliance is challenged by

Chapel's desire for equality and freedom. What Zack Bowen refers to as the plantation owner, Mr Whitechapel's "attempt at reconciliation of slavery's dehumanising commodification with both Western humanism and Christianity" also proves to be an impossible contradiction.[117] The plantation owner's perspective, as with other narrative perspectives, such as his daughter, Lydia's belief in an interracial utopia, all fail under the horror of slavery itself.

One chapter takes on the form of a newspaper editorial in which slavery is being discussed. The editor's comments illustrate the way in which notions about social and racial identity were (are) disseminated through the media for popular consumption. He argues that despite the temptation for white owners and overseers, black female slaves should not be used sexually

> because of the offspring who have no place as slaves. And certainly they do not have a place in the household of the overseer or master who has succumbed to such temptations.[118]

The editor also writes of his disgust at seeing white women with black men in New York, insisting that "[t]here is no sight more perfidious than that of a white woman with a black man". He goes on to highlight what he sees as the terrible implications:

> Namely, what will become of the off-spring from these heinous alliances? Where is their place in these States when they see themselves as our equal and feel it too because the blood courses through their veins?[119]

The editor's pro-slavery position is revealed by his claim that the slave system enables everyone's place in society to be set. He argues that, at least in the slave society of the South, the 'mixed-race' slaves "know their station and are less of a problem than those who are born free and then have to learn that they are not and live with that.[120] According to the editor, the 'mixed-race' slave - a regrettable product of misplaced sexual desire -

recognises his or her own inferiority to the whites. The editor's primary concern, therefore, is focused on the free states of the North, where the 'mixed-race' person has no such clear parameters to define their place in the racial hierarchy. It is here, the editor argues, that the 'mixed-race' person becomes a threat to the white hegemony, because, as he sees it, their 'blood' links them to whites and, thus, blurs the boundaries of racial segregation.

The relationship between the enslaved 'mixed-race' Chapel and the plantation owner's white daughter, Lydia, is far less fantastical than Belgrave's romantic portrayal of Eléna and Barry's relationship. A friendship develops between Chapel and Lydia through her secretly teaching him to read and write. Their friendship grows into love and, as a result of Lydia's naivety, they interpret the relative freedom of the North as a racial utopia, where interracial relationships are allowed to flourish undeterred. Her false perception is possibly gained from the reading of newspaper editorials such as the one above. Whilst Chapel obviously loves Lydia, his desire to find this utopia is fuelled not only by wanting to be with Lydia, but by his need for freedom. Chapel's determination to gain his freedom, despite the risks, reminds us of Beckles' argument that most 'mixed-race' slaves sought freedom rather than collusion with whites.

In dramatic contrast to Chapel and Lydia's relationship, Chapel's black mother was raped by the white overseer. The rape was then hushed up to prevent a scandal, and the overseer's white son was not told of his 'mixed-race' half-brother. Sanders Sr. acknowledges that he is Chapel's biological father when he says that Chapel "resembles my son in all but colour", but takes no further interest in him.[121] After Chapel has been whipped to death by Sanders Jr., now the overseer, the plantation owner returns and admonishes him for killing his half-brother. Mr Whitechapel makes it clear that any other runaway could have been dealt with in such a manner, but because Chapel was the son of his overseer he had shown leniency and left instructions for them to wait to punish Chapel after his return. He tells Sanders Jr.: "[o]rdinarily, I would have let you run the plantation and hold dominion over the fate of a runaway. He was no ordinary runaway. I thought you knew."[122] The plantation owner is shown here to make a distinction between 'mixed-race'

and black slaves, because the 'mixed-race' slave has been fathered by one of his white employees. However, Sanders Jr. shows no such distinction. Having become overseer after his father's death, he denies having had any knowledge that Chapel is his half-brother, and later in his 'requiem' to the dead Whitechapel, he clearly does not accept Chapel as part of himself. He says, "I am sorry about your son. Not my brother. I knew him only as the son of a slave. He was trouble from the day he talked.... I see nothing of my father in him. Nor of myself".[123]

Any shared parentage is overshadowed by Chapel's maternal African ancestry; as 'mixed-race', Chapel is the racial Other to the white Sanders. Jr. Furthermore, Chapel cannot be treated as a brother because he is a slave, and, as such, the barrier between them is absolute. Sanders Jr. acknowledges to himself that even if he had known, it would have made no difference in his treatment of Chapel. To him a slave is a slave, and it is irrelevant as to whether they are black or 'mixed-race':

> Even if you had shouted to me that I was killing my half-brother I would have had no choice but to carry out the punishment.[124]

Chapel's position in the slave society has been determined by his maternal lineage. In the Caribbean the status of the 'mixed-race' slave was also linked to their maternal ancestry, and Hilary Beckles argues that "black women would be conceived as representing the maternal ancestry of the majority of coloured persons in the colony, irrespective of their legal or social status."[125]

Whitechapel carries the pain of his part in his son's death until he himself dies. He had wanted to protect Chapel and felt that all he could do during his son's upbringing was to teach him how to stay alive. The fact that he has failed in this illustrates the impact of plantation slavery that meant not only the loss of power over one's own life, but also over one's children's lives. His description of Chapel as being "born half a slave, half the master of your own destiny" is ironic because the 'mixed-race' Chapel is in no way master of his

own destiny, and his attempt at asserting any rights over his future lead only to his death.[126] Whitechapel concludes that it would have made no difference to have told Chapel that he was 'mixed-race' because ultimately his life was mapped out as a slave.

America as a white settler colony has, despite its shared slave history, developed a different system of racial categorisation than the Caribbean. Carlos A Fernández points to the fact that in America "no mixed category has ever existed officially".[127] The classification of all non-white people as 'Other' in America has been referred to as the "one-drop rule".[128] In contrast (as mentioned earlier in this chapter) 'mixed' racial categorisation was often carried out obsessively within the Caribbean. Here, the low ratio of whites led to the plantocracy's use of 'divide and rule' tactics to maintain their power over the non-white population. Therefore, D'Aguiar's treatment of the 'mixed-race' slave could be argued to reflect the difference between American and Caribbean slave societies. However, in Michelle Cliff's *Free Enterprise* (1995) these differences are minimised and its protagonist, Annie, finds that her role is equally prescribed in the Caribbean and America.

The similarities between the treatment of 'mixed-race' girls/women by white planters in both America and the Caribbean is also illustrated in the novel through a conversation between a homeless 'mixed-race' woman and a white woman. The 'mixed-race' woman speaks about her white father and tells the white woman that she was tolerated as a child as one would indulge a pet: "[a]s long as I am his bright little monkey, I will be spared my mother's life".[129] But then as she becomes an adult she is first "transformed into kitchen help" and then "[e]ncouraged to breed".[130] We see, therefore, that the 'mixed-race' *woman* is forced back into her economic role as producer of slave offspring, and is exploited as a sexual object for the pleasure of her white owners.

The enforced prostitution and rape of the 'mixed-race' protagonist indicates that the 'mixed-race' experience during slavery was many layered. As Annie reflects

> On that bed at that moment the entire history of the island could be captured. Arawak. Slavery. Cane. And herself, lying on that bed, having served the landowner well.[131]

To escape from Jamaica, Annie must, ironically, masquerade as a black man, applying make-up to make herself darker. In the role of a black man she is able not only to escape Jamaica but also to disassociate herself from her 'mixed-race' status as sexual object. When Annie is captured by whites in the American South, she is kept alive only because she is disguised as a black man, whilst the other women are murdered immediately. Along with all the men, Annie is enslaved, and when her disguise is eventually revealed, she is again forced into the role of sexual object. Raped repeatedly, she was

> cuffed around the neck and led from man to man. They were not allowed to resist. We never made eye contact, not once...Chain against chain...I detached my nether parts from the rest of me. But I could not disown my mouth, the burning in my throat. You can imagine.[132]

Thus, Annie's escape from her sexual exploitation in Jamaica has proved futile, as once again she is forced into an existence that solely fulfils the sexual fantasies of white men. As such, Cliff implicitly argues that the 'mixed-race' woman's experience during slavery is the same, whether in the Caribbean or America.

Cliff's portrayal of Mary Ellen Pleasant and Annie's involvement in helping slaves to escape offers an alternative to entrenched stereotypes of 'mixed-race' people as inherently cruel and oppressive during slavery. We learn that Mary's 'mixed-race' father had smuggled slaves to freedom on his boat. His own tenuous position is highlighted when the tearing up of his 'identity' papers meant that he could be imprisoned by whites, and reverted to the position of slave. Although Cliff's novel acknowledges that there were people of 'mixed-race' who were able to maintain comfortable and free status during slavery in Jamaica, it is

by no means offered as the only experience. This is illustrated when Annie is asked whether her family are slaves or free, and she responds that they are "[a] bit of both", thereby indicating the dual position of her family.[133]

Annie's 'mixed-race' is expressed in a sense of not belonging to a world demarcated on racial lines. We are told that Annie dreams of belonging; "[i]t was her fantasy, and she knew it, that there was a solution to the placelessness which had always been hers".[134] Disguise or masquerade is used in the novel to symbolise the ambiguity of the 'mixed-race' person's identity and status. Annie emphasises the need for disguise when they plan a slave rebellion and the freeing of black slaves in the South:

> Disguise was something she knew well. We all did. It was practically my birthright; you know that. Disguise. Masks. Never give out what you're thinking.... Disguise. How to pass through the nets.[135]

The meaning of disguise is both literal, in terms of the plot, and metaphorical, in its reference to those of 'mixed-race' who have managed to racially 'pass' for white as a means of survival within racist American society. Annie makes reference to the difficulties in knowing who to trust when planning the slave rebellion. She states that "[s]pies were everywhere, some in our own skins. But not as many as some books might have it".[136] Here, Cliff challenges the presumption of writers who portray the 'mixed-race' person, stereotypically, as traitor to the black cause.

This chapter has argued that whilst there were undoubtedly those of 'mixed-race' who gained a life of relative privilege under slavery, there were many more who did not. However, a combination of over simplistic interpretations of colour stratification in Caribbean slave societies, and a continued belief in the biological determination of 'mixed-race' identity and behaviour, has meant that 'mixed-race' people have been repeatedly portrayed as inherently cruel. The stereotype that has been the most residual is that of the 'treacherous mulatto' who, alienated from the wider black population, colludes in

maintaining the white hegemony. This is not only apparent in Valerie Belgrave's novel, which focuses specifically on the slave period, but, as I shall show in the following chapters, occurs repeatedly in Caribbean literature to form a paradigm for 'mixed-race' behaviour.

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[1]Valerie Belgrave, 'On Combining Batik Art and Novel Writing', in Selwyn R Cudjoe (ed.), *Caribbean Women Writers: Essays From The First International Conference* (Massachusetts: Calaloux Publications, 1990), p. 317.
[2]Stefano Harney, *Nationalism and Identity: Culture and the Imagination in a Caribbean Diaspora* (London: Zed Books Ltd., 1996), p. 54.
[3]Valerie Belgrave, 'Thoughts on the Choice of Theme and Approach in Writing *Ti Marie* in Selwyn R Cudjoe (ed.), *Caribbean Women Writers: Essays From The First International Conference* (Massachusetts: Calaloux Publications, 1990), p. 326.
[4]Michelle Cliff, *Free Enterprise*, (London: Penguin Books Ltd., 1995), p. 111.
[5]Franklin W Knight, *The Caribbean: The Genesis of a Fragmented Nationalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), p. 96.
[6]Hilary McD Beckles, *Natural Rebels: A Social History of Enslaved Black Women in Barbados* (London: Zed Books, 1989), p. 134.
[7]Gad Heuman, *Between Black & White: Race, Politics, and Free Coloreds in Jamaica, 1792 - 1865* (Oxford: Clio Press, 1981) p. 16, fn. 12.
[8]Mavis Christine Campbell, *The Dynamics of Change in a Slave Society: A Socio-political History of the Free Coloreds of Jamaica, 1800 - 1865* (London & Rutherford, N.J.: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1976), p. 40.
[9]Franklin W Knight, *The Caribbean: The Genesis of a Fragmented Nationalism*, *op. cit.*, p. 95.
[10]Mavis Christine Campbell, *The Dynamics of Change in a Slave Society*, *op. cit.*, p. 41.
[11]Barbara Bush, *Slave Women in Caribbean Society 1650 1838* (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1990), p. 115.
[12]*Ibid.*, p. 115.
[13]Hilary Beckles, *Natural Rebels*, *op. cit.*, p. 142 & p. 149, and Barbara Bush, *Slave Women in Caribbean Society 1650 1838*, *op. cit.*, p. 117.
[14]Barbara Bush, *Slave Women in Caribbean Society 1650 1838*, *op. cit.*, p. 11.
[15]*Ibid.*, p. 28.
[16]*Ibid.*, p. 28.
[17]*Ibid.*, p. 29.
[18]Hilary Beckles, *Natural Rebels*, *op. cit.*, p. 133.
[19]*Ibid.*, p. 134.
[20]Barbara Bush, *Slave Women in Caribbean Society 1650 1838*, *op. cit.*, p. 112.
[21]Franklin W Knight, *The Caribbean: The Genesis of a Fragmented Nationalism*, *op. cit.*, p. 105.
[22]Gad Heuman, *Between Black & White*, *op. cit.*, p. 6.
[23]Barbara Bush, *Slave Women in Caribbean Society 1650 1838*, *op. cit.*, p. 26.
[24]*Ibid.*, p. 36.
[25]Hilary Beckles, *Natural Rebels*, *op. cit.*, p. 56.
[26]*Ibid.*, p. 57.
[27]Franklin W Knight, *The Caribbean: The Genesis of a Fragmented Nationalism*, *op. cit.*, p. 98.

[28]Barbara Bush, *Slave Women in Caribbean Society 1650 1838*, *op. cit.*, p. 9.
[29]Hilary Beckles, *Natural Rebels*, *op. cit.*, p. 65.
[30]*Ibid.*, p. 58.
[31]Barbara Bush, *Slave Women in Caribbean Society 1650 1838*, *op. cit.*, p. 44.
[32]Hilary Beckles, *Natural Rebels*, *op. cit.*, p. 58.
[33]*Ibid.*, pp. 69-70.
[34]*Ibid.*, p. 51.
[35]*Ibid.*, p. 135.
[36]Quoted in Beckles, *Natural Rebels*, *op. cit.*, p. 65.
[37]Gad Heuman, *Between Black & White*, *op. cit.*, p. 4.
[38]Hilary Beckles, *Natural Rebels*, *op. cit.*, p. 135.
[39]Gad Heuman, *Between Black & White*, *op. cit.*, p. 4.
[40]*Ibid.*, p. 5.
[41]Mavis Christine Campbell, *The Dynamics of Change in a Slave Society*, *op. cit.*, p. 46.
[42]Gad Heuman, *Between Black & White*, *op. cit.*, p. 6.
[43]*Ibid.*, p. 6.
[44]Franklin W Knight, *The Caribbean: The Genesis of a Fragmented Nationalism*, *op. cit.*, p. 115.
[45]Gad Heuman, *Between Black & White*, *op. cit.*, p. 11.
[46]Eric Williams, *From Columbus To Castro: The History Of The Caribbean 1492 - 1969* (London: Andre Deutsch, 1970), p. 189.
[47]Gad Heuman, *Between Black & White*, *op. cit.*, p. 12.
[48]*Ibid.*, p. 12.
[49]Hilary Beckles, *Natural Rebels*, *op. cit.*, p. 20.
[50]Gad Heuman, *Between Black & White*, *op. cit.*, p. 11.
[51]*Ibid.*, p. 23.
[52]*Ibid.*, p. 23.
[53]*Ibid.*, p. 28.
[54]*Ibid.*, p. 29.
[55]*Ibid.*, pp. 30-31.
[56]*Ibid.*, p. 33.
[57]*Ibid.*, p. 57.
[58]Jane Bryce, "A World of Caribbean Romance': Reformulating the Legend of Love or: 'Can a caress be culturally specific?' in Joan Anim-Addo (ed.), *Framing the Word: Gender and Genre in Caribbean Women's Writing* (London: Whiting and Birch Ltd., 1996), p. 111.
[59]Valerie Belgrave, 'On Combining Batik Art and Novel Writing' , *op. cit.*, p. 318.
[60]Jane Bryce, "A World of Caribbean Romance': Reformulating the Legend of Love or: 'Can a caress be culturally specific?', *op. cit.*, p. 115.
[61]Steve Harney, 'Men Goh Respect All O' We: Valerie Belgrave's *Ti Marie* and the Invention of Trinidad' in *World Literature in English*. (Vol. 30, No. 2, Autumn, 1990), p. 110.
[62]Valerie Belgrave, *Ti Marie* (Oxford: Heinemann, 1988), p. 187.
[63]*Ibid.*, p. 13.
[64]*Ibid.*, p. 13.
[65]*Ibid.*, p. 15.
[66]Bridget Brereton, *A History of Modern Trinidad 1783 - 1962* (Oxford: Heinemann International, 1981), p. 23.
[67]*Ibid.*, p. 24.
[68]*Ibid.*, p. 24.
[69]*Ibid.*, p. 23.
[70]*Ibid.*, p. 24.
[71]*Ibid.*, p. 25.
[72]*Ibid.*, p. 25.
[73]Valerie Belgrave, *Ti Marie*, *op. cit.*, p. 18.
[74]*Ibid.*, p. 19.
[75]*Ibid.*, p. 17.
[76]*Ibid.*, p. 187.
[77]*Ibid.*, p. 6.
[78]*Ibid.*, p. 9.

[79]*Ibid.*, p. 9.
[80]*Ibid.*, p. 17.
[81]*Ibid.*, p. 52.
[82]*Ibid.*, p. 61.
[83]*Ibid.*, p. 13.
[84]*Ibid.*, p. 87.
[85]*Ibid.*, p. 6.
[86]*Ibid.*, p. 120.
[87]*Ibid.*, p. 120.
[88]*Ibid.*, pp. 44-45.
[89]*Ibid.*, p. 46.
[90]*Ibid.*, p. 46.
[91]*Ibid.*, p. 47.
[92]*Ibid.*, p. 47.
[93]*Ibid.*, p. 21.
[94]Jane Bryce, "A World of Caribbean Romance': Reformulating the Legend of Love or: 'Can a caress be culturally specific?', *op. cit.*, p. 110.
[95]Valerie Belgrave, *Ti Marie*, *op. cit.*, p. 265.
[96]*Ibid.*, p. 49.
[97]*Ibid.*, p. 117.
[98]*Ibid.*, p. 7.
[99]*Ibid.*, p. 4.
[100]*Ibid.*, p. 70.
[101]*Ibid.*, p. 71.
[102]*Ibid.*, p. 71.
[103]Brereton, *A History of Modern Trinidad 1783 - 1962*, *op. cit.*, p. 33.
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[105]*Ibid.*, p. 35.
[106]*Ibid.*, p. 50.
[107]Valerie Belgrave, *Ti Marie*, *op. cit.*, p. 83.
[108]*Ibid.*, p. 86.
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[110]*Ibid.*, p. 36.
[111]*Ibid.*, p. 37.
[112]Valerie Belgrave, *Ti Marie*, *op. cit.*, p. 118.
[113]*Ibid.*, p. 260.
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[116]Harold Leusmann, 'Fred D'Aguiar talks to Harold Leusmann in *Wasafiri* (No. 28, Autumn, 1998), p. 21.
[117]Zack Bowen, 'Fred D'Aguiar's *The Longest Memory*: From Book to Film' in *Journal of West Indian Literature* (Vol. 8, No. 1, October 1998), p. 102.
[118]Fred D'Aguiar, *The Longest Memory* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1994), p. 110.
[119]*Ibid.*, p. 120.
[120]*Ibid.*, p. 120.
[121]*Ibid.*, p. 52.
[122]*Ibid.*, p. 34.
[123]*Ibid.*, p. 130.
[124]*Ibid.*, p. 131.
[125]Hilary Beckles, *Natural Rebels*, *op. cit.*, p. 134.
[126]Fred D'Aguiar, *The Longest Memory*, *op. cit.*, p. 135.
[127]Carlos A Fernández, 'La Raza and the Melting Pot: A Comparative Look at Multiethnicity' in Maria P P Root, *Racially Mixed People In America* (California: Sage Publications, Inc., 1992), p. 134.
[128]Paul R Spickard, 'The Illogic of American Racial Categories' in Maria P P Root, *Racially Mixed People In America* (California: Sage Publications, Inc., 1992), p. 16.
[129]Michelle Cliff, *Free Enterprise, op. cit.,* p. 93.
[130]*Ibid.*, p. 94.

[131] *Ibid*, p. 5.
[132] *Ibid*., p. 207.
[133] *Ibid*., p. 24.
[134] *Ibid*., p. 124.
[135] *Ibid*., p. 194.
[136] *Ibid*., p. 196.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE CHANGING ORDER

In this chapter *Wide Sargasso Sea* (1966) by Jean Rhys, *Jane's Career* (1914) by Herbert de Lisser, *The Orchid House* (1953) by Phyllis Shand Allfrey, and *The Open Prison* (1988) by Angus Richmond will be examined. These four novels, collectively, cover the post-emancipation period up until the beginning of the twentieth century. Jean Rhys' *Wide Sargasso Sea* projects a view of a divided 'coloured' population, whose position in society is determined not so much by colour as by relative wealth. The 'coloureds' are portrayed by the narrative as antagonistic towards the white elite and, apart from the near-white Sandi, are portrayed as part of the oppressed black majority. Mrs Mason in de Lisser's *Jane's Career*, and Cornélie in Allfrey's *The Orchid House* tend to reinforce the belief of an emerging 'coloured' middle-class who, in the rejection of their African ancestry, and anxious to hold on to their tenuous position of privilege, become the 'enemy of the black masses'. Richmond's portrayal of the 'mixed-race' Angela in *The Open Prison*, on the other hand, offers an alternative view of the 'mixed-race' person as rejected by both black and white. Despite the fact that these novels were written during different historical moments and by varying authorial perspectives, what binds all four novels in their treatment of the 'mixed-race' person in the post-emancipation period is the paradigm of physical and/or psychological abnormality, made popular by pseudoscientific definitions of 'hybridity'. From the white 'Rochester's' description of 'mixed-race' malignancy in *Wide Sargasso Sea*, to the belief in a 'mixed-race' demonic inheritance, expressed by the black servant in *Jane's Career*; from the degenerative tuberculosis of the racially ambiguous Andrew in *The Orchid House*, to the suicide of Nathan in *The Open Prison*, and the symbolic death of Angela and

Nathan's son, the construction of 'mixed-race' characters within these novels pivots on the underlying fallacy of 'mixed-race' degeneracy.

Sociohistorical context of post-slavery society

According to Gordon K Lewis, increased social and political status was limited to the so-called coloureds in the post-emancipation period. Lewis posits that "[e]ffective leadership, then, for what it amounted to, passed increasingly to the coloured intermediate group".[1] He argues that their increased power did nothing to enhance the overall power for black people within post-emancipation society because of what he calls "their anxiety to deny their African heritage, [that] made them into the social and political enemy of the black masses, a few liberals excepted."[2] Lewis' antipathy towards those of 'mixed-race' alerts us to the danger of seeing history and historians as objective. He claims that 'mixed-race' people

> were the carriers, perhaps more than any other group, of the 'white bias' of the society. When the desire was frustrated it generated, frequently, a pathology of self disrespect so deep that they rejected even sexual contact with each other, a phenomenon which persuaded the eighteenth-century historian Edward Long, in the case of Jamaica, that the male and female members of the group were biologically incapable of procreation one with the other.[3]

This extremely racist attitude towards those of 'mixed-race' perpetuates the myth of the biologically degenerate hybrid who shows a '*pathology* of self disrespect'. Lewis' position that Edward Long, referred to by Peter Fryer as the 'father of English racism', was forced into his argument that 'mixed-race' people were biologically unable to reproduce simply because 'mixed-race' people did not like each other must be viewed as untenable.

As we have seen from the previous chapter, racial categorisation and division during the slavery period varied from country to country within the Caribbean. According to Gordon K Lewis, in post-emancipation Barbados "even remote descent from an African ancestor made some unhappy creature a pariah in that island's little world".[4] The correlation between colour and class has been used to describe stratification during both the slavery and post-emancipation periods. In reality, as R Smith argues, the so-called

> color-class system... represented by complex pyramidal diagrams... is far too complex to be conveyed in that way... [and] betray[s] the positivist conception of society as an aggregate of classifiable individuals, each with his or her array of relevant characteristics.[5]

However, race and racism, read as 'colour', has been inserted into 'class' within the analysis of post-emancipation Caribbean society and has emerged as an unquestionable correlate; so much so that it has become difficult to recognise that these two social constructs of political power are separate. R Smith argues that:

> The assumption that race determines (or should determine) social status and the distribution of power was so pervasive at the time, and the actual distribution of wealth and privilege so apparently congruent with this assumption, that it is easy to take it to be the structuring principle of those societies. And yet, the exceptions were so many and so obvious that it seems the intensity of expression of the principle was proportionate to the frequency of the exceptions.[6]

Because it has been recorded historically that the non-white middle-classes were predominantly 'mixed-race', novelists, as with many historians, have read this to mean 'mixed-race' *equalled* middle-class. But, as Kenneth Ramchand argues:

> there is more than an element of nonsense in speaking about a Coloured class: in complexion they ranged from near-White to Black; some were wealthy and owned

> property, some were well educated, and many were as poor and illiterate as Negroes [sic].[7]

Ramchand's argument challenges the position that those of 'mixed-race' can be viewed as a homogenous entity.

Slavery ended in 1838 in the British controlled Caribbean - after a four year period of so-called 'apprenticeship'. However, the ex-slaves were still tied by poverty to their ex-slave masters and power was still very much in the control of the white elite. Gordon K Lewis argues that emancipation only

> removed the gross features of the slave system without basically upsetting the underlying class - colour differentiations of the society. The three hierarchically ordered sections - white, coloured, and black - remained as solidly entrenched as ever.[8]

During slavery the possibility of a radical change in the stratification of the region was effectively prohibited by the plantocracy and the plantation economy. With the end of slavery, black and 'mixed-race' people had more chance of propelling themselves into a higher rung of the social ladder, and over the following century the rigid hierarchy that had previously existed during slavery was gradually eroded. Lewis argues that "all this, at best, was simply the effort of the emancipated slave to raise himself in a slowly-changing society. It was not a fundamental reconstruction of the society."[9] Lewis' argument implies that real change could only come from the top stratum of colonial society, and his comments belittle the achievements of the freed slaves. However, the motivation and ability of the oppressed classes to affect real economic change should not be undervalued. As Franklin Knight writes:

> [i]n Jamaica black freeholders increased from 2014 in 1838 to... about 50,000 in 1859... The situation was similar in Guiana, where land acquisition by ex slaves

was one of the most remarkable examples of West Indian industry. In 1838 the 15,000 ex slaves were virtually landless... By 1848 the Afro-Guianese population had bought more than 400 estates and built more than 10,000 houses for themselves.[10]

On a political level it would be sometime before more than a few minor political positions went to non-whites. During the post-Emancipation period, an indigenous political base was denied the Caribbean region and, according to Gordon K Lewis, the system of Crown Colony government

> with individual variations, characterized West Indian political life certainly from 1878 onwards, when the process of replacing the old constitutions, based on a narrow and almost exclusively white suffrage, had been virtually completed; although the Bahamas, Bermuda and Barbados retained the old regime, undisturbed by the process.[11]

This autocratic system meant there was no real internal decision making within the region. Although it moved power away from the vested interests of the plantocracy who held a "morally bankrupt oligarchy"[12] under the old representative system, it did not open up the political arena. As Gordon Lewis writes, the white elite chose the "autocratic Crown Colony regime, rather than embrace the dangers, as they saw it, of extending participation to the black masses".[13] However, a new societal phase was beginning, and according to Bridget Brereton, "by 1920, the traditional elite was under challenge from middle stratum coloureds and blacks, even from sections of the black masses".[14]

Change was inevitable. One reason was that the white population in the British controlled Caribbean became an increasing minority with the return of many whites to Britain after emancipation. For example, according to Kenneth Ramchand "[t]here were 30,000 Whites and 10,000 Coloured or people of mixed blood in Jamaica of 1798. In 1844, according to

the first Census, there were 69,000 Coloureds and only 15,000 Whites on the post-Emancipation scene".[15] One way in which the declining plantocracy hoped to keep their numbers up was through the introduction of a new white migrant peasantry. According to Isaac Dookhan it "was believed that Europeans would not only make industrious workers and so set an example to the ex-slaves, but also that they would eventually develop into a middle-class and help stabilize the society".[16] The first influx of immigrants came from England, Ireland, France, Germany and Malta, but a high mortality rate put a stop to this initial source. Portuguese from Madeira were found to be better suited, but the immigration was erratic, with the highest number coming to British Guiana between 1846-48, when 10,000 arrived from Madeira.[17] Overall, European immigration was unsuccessful, Europeans either being 'unable' to do the work or, as with the Portuguese, choosing to move off the plantations into retail business. Jamaica was the largest recipient of European immigrants and "[b]etween 1835 and 1845 a total of 4,087 Europeans went to Jamaica... During the same period [only] 381 Europeans went to Guyana, and between 1839 and 1846 several hundred... went to Trinidad".[18]

Oppressor or oppressed?: defining 'coloured' status

In Jean Rhys' *Wide Sargasso Sea*, European migration to Jamaica is portrayed by the narrative as forming a new white elite. This new white colonial order is seen by the black Christophine as a perpetuation of the old system. She expresses her cynicism regarding the reality of social change after Emancipation:

> No more slavery! She had to laugh! 'These new ones have Letter of the Law. Same thing. They got magistrate. They got fine. They got jail house and chain gang. They got tread machine to mash up people's feet. New ones worse than old ones - more cunning that's all'.[19]

Reference to the beginning of indentured labour is limited to when, over dinner, the English Mr Mason argues that the importation of Indian labour was necessary because black people would not work.

Social change is seen to effect, negatively, only the white creole population. As a child, the impoverished Antoinette Cosway, white creole and daughter of a deceased womanising plantation owner, perceives that her family have 'suffered' a loss of economic and social status and feels insecure in her surroundings. She begins her narrative by the comment, "[t]hey say when trouble comes close ranks, and so the white people did. But we were not in their ranks. The Jamaican ladies had never approved of my mother".[20] Antoinette informs us of a neighbour, Mr Luttrell, whose family she empathises with because they are "[s]till waiting for this compensation the English promised when the Emancipation Act was passed".[21] Her empathy with the economic plight of a white planter, rather than the ex-slaves, places the narration in an ambiguous position.

Antoinette Cosway is Rhys' response to Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*, and offers us a hypothetical history of Bertha Antoinette Mason, the mad wife of Mr. Rochester. Although modern readings of Brontë's Bertha have tended to view her as 'mixed-race', Rhys' portrayal of 'Bertha' is, as Cheryl Dash and Thorunn Lonsdale have argued, of a white creole.[22] As Judie Newman argues, '[f]or all its revisioning, the tale remains that of the white slave owner's daughter".[23] Antoinette constantly feels threatened by black people and any noise scares her so that "the safe peaceful feeling left" her.[24] Eventually Antoinette's and her mother's fears are realised as the black population rebel against the white planter class. Antoinette's house is set on fire, and her younger brother dies as a result. Black people are often portrayed by Antoinette with demonic imagery, and one example is when she describes the black faces as she leaves her burning home, as "the same face repeated over and over, eyes gleaming, mouth half open to shout".[25] Antoinette's narrative foregrounds the deeply entrenched division between blacks and whites. When she runs to her black friend Tia, whom she sees amongst the crowd, she is physically repelled:

When I was close I saw the jagged stone in her hand but I did not see her throw it. I did not feel it either, only something wet, running down my face. I looked at her and I saw her face crumple up as she began to cry. We stared at each other, blood on my face, tears on hers. It was as if I saw myself. Like in a looking-glass.[26]

In this image they are divided but connected as they are both victims of a racially oppressive society which divides them even in childhood. However, Antoinette's childhood feelings of friendship towards Tia do not alter her attitude to the colonial order; and Tia as as a 'reflection' of Antoinette remains an opposite and an unequal.

Antoinette's sense of 'unbelonging' is expressed when she tells her husband "I often wonder who I am and where is my country and where do I belong and why was I ever born at all".[27] Her comment reflects Jean Rhys' own sense of displacement as a white creole, having migrated to England at the age of sixteen, shortly before the First World War;[28] and as Laura de Abruna writes, Jean Rhys' fiction "is often autobiographical in inspiration".[29] The 'Rochester' character, who remains unamed, is, like Antoinette, written in the first person narrative for the entire middle part of the novel. Jean Rhys has chosen to mediate the story through these two characters, and this format not only gives credence to Antoinette's perspective, but also to his. He describes Antoinette as alien from himself with "[l]ong, sad, dark alien eyes. Creole of pure English descent she may be, but they are not English or European either".[30] The sense of alienation that he feels towards his wife is also extended to his environment which he finds "menacing".[31] The idea of dislocation between the white creoles and the English is a repeated theme in Rhys' work, but, as Thorunn Lonsdale argues, her "depiction of difference between colonial English and English is... more grounded in the differences between the English and their treatment of colonials than in a sympathy with other races".[32]

One of those gathered outside Antoinette's burning home is described by Antoinette as a "coloured man with a machete in his hand".[33] When a black woman cries in empathy for

Antoinette's mother, he rebuffs her: "[y]ou cry for her - when she ever cry for you? Tell me that".[34] His presence as part of the group of black people gathered outside, and his vocal and physical stance (machete in his hand), indicates that the narrative does not portray all 'mixed-race' people as on the side of the white plantocracy. The creation of a 'mixed-race' population is first referred to in the novel by the gossip amongst the new white elite, who refer to Antoinette's deceased father as a womaniser, and claim that Antoinette's mother "never did anything to stop him - she encouraged him. Presents and smiles for the bastards every Christmas".[35] The pejorative term 'bastard'[36] appears in the novel to specifically refer to 'mixed-race' people; like the whites, the black Christophine uses the term 'bastard' to describe the 'mixed-race' Daniel. In her defence of Antoinette, she tells Rochester that "[i]t's lies all that yellow bastard tell you."[37] Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak points out that the black Christophine is the only character to challenge the 'Rochester' character; she is subsequently removed from the story. Spivak argues that Christophine "cannot be contained by a novel which rewrites a canonical English text within the European novelistic tradition in the interest of the white Creole rather than the native".[38] Similarly, the portrayal of Sandi, the only sympathetic treatment of a 'mixed-race' character, also cannot be 'contained' within the novel; he remains a peripheral character and, apart from his 'rescue' of Antoinette - from less favourable 'mixed-race' characters, he exists only on the perimeter of the story.

Antoinette's 'rescue' by Sandi occurs on her first day at convent school when she is bullied by two 'mixed-race' children. Their racial mixture is seen as abnormal, and Antoinette describes them as physically repulsive:

> he had a white skin, a dull ugly white covered with freckles, his mouth was a negro's mouth and he had small eyes, like bits of green glass. He had the eyes of a dead fish. Worst, most horrible of all, his hair was crinkled, a negro's hair, but bright red, and his eyebrows and eye-lashes were red. The girl was very black and wore no head handkerchief. Her hair had been plaited and I could smell the

> sickening oil she had daubed on it... They looked so harmless and quiet, no one would have noticed the glint in the boy's eyes".[39]

Antoinette's victimisation by the two 'mixed-race' children, and her rush to the sanctuary of the convent school, represents the retreat of the white elite and the advancement of the 'coloured' middle-classes, who had appeared 'so harmless and quiet' but are now perceived as menacing by the white elite.

The 'mixed-race' Daniel Cosway, probable half-brother to Antoinette, epitomises the image of the 'threatening' 'mixed-race'. He is portrayed as an unpleasant man who poisons 'Rochester's' mind against his wife, telling him that madness is an inherited trait in Antoinette's family, and that he has been tricked into marrying her. Daniel blackmails 'Rochester' with the threat of scandal. After 'Rochester' receives a threatening letter from Daniel, he asks Antoinette's 'mixed-race' servant, Amélie, about him. According to Amélie, Daniel "lived like white people", because to her his standard of living is high.[40] However, 'Rochester' finds Daniel's room oppressively small when he visits him, and the position of Daniel's house acts as a metaphor for his social status. 'Rochester' describes that "there was no breeze, not a breath of air, this place was lower down the mountain almost at sea-level".[41]

The manumission (setting free) of slave women by plantation owners is referred to by Daniel, who tells 'Rochester' that Antoinette's father, old Cosway, had "a heart like stone. Sometimes when he get sick of a woman which is quickly, he free her like he free my mother, even he give her a hut and a bit of land for herself... but it is no mercy, it's for wicked pride he do it".[42] He claims that "of all his illegitimates... [he is] the most unfortunate and poverty stricken".[43] He relates to 'Rochester' how he went to old Cosway for financial assistance, but Cosway laughed at him and could not even remember his name, denied his parentage and told Daniel "if there's one drop of my blood in your spindly carcass I'll eat my hat".[44] In a reference to the class divisions between 'coloureds', he says that his half-brother, Alexander, was Cosway's favourite, and argues that "[b]ecause he prosper he is

two-faced, he won't speak against white people".[45] Helen Carr argues that Rhys' portrayal of "Caribbean men who are domineeringly or cruelly masculinist, are, whatever their colour, associated with Englishness".[46] However, Rhys' portrayal of Daniel Cosway as the stereotypical 'treacherous mulatto' seems to owe more to the influence of theories of 'hybridity' than an association with Englishness. 'Rochester' despises the 'mixed-race' Daniel and says "I must get away from his yellow sweating face and his hateful little room".[47] When Daniel openly blackmails him, 'Rochester' says "[n]ow disgust was rising in me like sickness. Disgust and rage".[48] Antoinette tells her husband that Daniel is not related to her and "[h]e hates all white people, but he hates me the most".[49] She does not give an explanation as to why he hates her most, but the implication is that he *is* related to her, and is, therefore, resentful of her holding a superior status in post-emancipation society.

Antoinette's 'mixed-race' servant, Amélie, is described by 'Rochester' as "half-caste", rather than 'coloured', perhaps to indicate his English, rather than creole upbringing.[50] He goes on to describe her in sinister terms as a "lovely creature but sly, spiteful, malignant perhaps, like much else in this place".[51] The use of the word 'malignant' implies that there is something pathologically wrong with her; however, his description of Amélie's "expression... [as] so full of delighted malice, so intelligent, above all so intimate that I felt ashamed, and looked away", suggests his sexual attraction towards her.[52] As seen earlier in this thesis, the notion of 'mixed-race' women's sexual danger formed a critical part in the theory of hybrid degeneracy. Amélie becomes Antoinette's rival for 'Rochester's' attentions. She openly displays her dislike of Antoinette, and when they get into a physical fight with each other, she calls Antoinette a "white cockroach".[53] Like Daniel, Amélie also stirs up trouble between 'Rochester' and Antoinette by suggesting that Antoinette had actually married Sandi, although she then adds that it could not be true because "Miss Antoinette a white girl with a lot of money, she won't marry with a coloured man even though he don't look like a coloured man".[54] 'Rochester' rejects his wife and denies Antoinette her own identity when he begins to call her Bertha. His complete rejection of Antoinette is shown by his sexual interest in Amélie, and culminates in his having sexual

intercourse with her, divided from his wife by only a thin partition. However, the following morning he is not so at ease, regretting that he has had sex with a 'mixed-race' woman; he now feels that "her skin was darker, her lips thicker than I had thought".[55] The 'Rochester' character exhibits seemingly paradoxical emotions of desire and repugnance towards the 'mixed-race' Amélie, which, as seen earlier in this thesis, was part of the white male's sexual excitement towards 'mixed-race' women. To get rid of her, he pays Amélie off, and she leaves, eventually for Brazil, where Rochester claims she goes because she wants to find a rich man. We see, therefore, that the 'mixed-race' Amélie can only escape her domestic servitude by running off to Brazil in pursuit of a somewhat dubious future. Antoinette tells her husband that he is no different from the slave owners:

> [y]ou like the light brown girls better, don't you? You abused the planters and made up stories about them, but you do the same thing. You send the girl away quicker, and with no money or less money and that's all the difference.[56]

Antoinette begins her own furtive relationship with the 'mixed-race' Sandi, who had rescued Antoinette, as a child, from the other 'threatening' 'mixed-race' children. At the time she knew that "his name was Sandi, Alexander Cosway's son. Once I would have said 'my cousin Sandi' but Mr Mason's lectures had made me shy about my coloured relatives".[57] This reference to Mr. Mason's social control suggests that a more easy relationship existed between creoles and 'mixed-race' than between the new white elite and the 'mixed-race' population. However, this is not supported elsewhere in the text. Later, Antoinette, schooled by Mr Mason into a denial of her 'mixed-race' relatives, tells her husband that Sandi is simply "a boy you never met".[58] Sandi, in contrast to Daniel, has been born into a well-to-do family and, according to the embittered Daniel, Sandi's family has colluded with the white elite. Daniel hints that Sandi has had a relationship with Antoinette, and argues that Sandi was socially accepted by white people because his family were 'middle-class' and because he was so fair, "like a white man".[59] At the end of the novel, Antoinette reveals that she and Sandi had shared an earlier intimacy: "We had often kissed before but not like that. That was the life and death kiss and you only know a long time afterwards

what it is, the life and death kiss".[60] However, despite Daniel's assertion of Sandi's social acceptability amongst whites, his relationship with Antoinette remains taboo.

In Herbert de Lisser's novel, *Jane's Career*, de Lisser has stereotyped the 'mixed-race' Mrs Mason as a cruel and oppressive character who demands virtual slavery from her black servants. As Rhonda Cobham writes, Mrs Mason's "dictatorial attitudes toward her employees and her unreasonable demands are satirised by the author as typical characteristics of the Jamaican, coloured middle class".[61] Mrs Mason distinguishes herself from black people, and when the policeman (who is black) will not throw out her black servant, Sarah, she exclaims, "Every nager is a nager".[62] Earlier in the novel this term is given a more neutral meaning of 'negro' by de Lisser, but here it is clearly used as a form of the derogatory term 'nigger'. Mrs Mason denies her African heritage and appears happy to take on board the distinction Sarah has set up between blacks and so-called 'coloureds'. As such, her character is a perpetuation of the stereotype of 'mixed-race' people in post-Emancipation Caribbean society as the 'enemy of the black masses'. Her one-dimensional portrayal offers no insight into how she genuinely feels about her tenuous status in a white dominated colonial society. Her delight in tormenting and degrading her servants is foregrounded, whilst her relationship with her own family is treated superficially, and no positive side to her character is revealed.

Set in Jamaica at the beginning of twentieth century *Jane's Career,* which was first published in 1914, was considered to be a pioneering Caribbean novel because it had a black female as its protagonist. Jane, the protagonist, is initially employed as a domestic or 'schoolgirl' by the 'mixed-race' Mrs Mason, who is described as "yellow". We are informed by the narrative that the simplified Caribbean triangular hierarchy of whites, followed by 'coloureds', then blacks, is already recognised by Jane at fifteen. However, when Jane moves to Kingston, she begins to see that the model is more diverse, and her initial awe of Mrs Mason soon diminishes. As Sarah says, Mrs Mason "was but a mulatto woman" and, as such, her power within the society was limited.[63] When Sarah is about to be sacked by Mrs Mason, she targets her employer's 'mixed-race' identity, saying "God mek two colour,

black an' white, but it must be the devil mek brown people, for dem is neider black nor white!"[64] In attacking her employer's 'mixed-race', Sarah unknowingly draws on the ideology of European racist scientific theory which posited that 'mixed-race' people as 'hybrid' crosses of two distinct species were unnatural. It has been claimed that de Lisser was himself of 'mixed-race' with a distant African ancestor.[65] However, he shows no empathy towards 'mixed-race' people in *Jane's Career*, and as Kenneth Ramchand writes, "[t]he author's contempt for the up-and-coming mulatto class is never out of view".[66]

The Orchid House, written by Phyllis Shand Allfrey in 1953, is set a few years after the First World War in the rapidly changing social world of Dominica. Like Jean Rhys' *Wide Sargasso Sea,* it portrays an increasingly impoverished white creole population, as the old colonial order disintegrates. *The Orchid House* portrays the 'coloured' population emerging as the new economic power base at the beginning of the twentieth century. Their increasing power is summed up by the white Stella, who declares "[n]othing changes here, except that the coloured merchants grow richer and white people poorer".[67] This is in part ironic, because her statement indicates that tremendous change *has* occurred since her childhood, when she and her sisters were encouraged not to interact with their 'mixed-race' relatives, considered by whites to be social 'untouchables'.

The story centres around three white sisters, Stella, Joan and Natalie, and is told through their black nanny, Lally. In many ways Lally epitomises the white fantasy of the completely loyal black servant and surrogate mother figure. Lally claims that, "being an English negress and proud of [her] skin, not Frenchy and Catholic and boasting of a drop of white blood, like Christophine, [she] could not understand the talk of this island very well".[68] But, paradoxically, Lally is the stereotypical black nanny who feels extreme devotion to the white family she works for and to whiteness itself. Lally loves 'her' children's whiteness and is thankful "there was no danger of any curly-heads in Madam and the Master's family" - a reference to 'mixed-race' offspring.[69] However, although Lally views her white charges as racially superior, she is attached to the sisters' childhood friend and love, the racially ambiguous, Andrew. His later physical decline from tuberculosis signals his innate 'mixed-

race' pathology and biological degeneration, argued by European scientific racial theory to be the inevitable result of a 'mixed-race' heritage.

Lally narrates that 'mixed-race' people were commonplace, for "it was not so exceptional to have curls and brown eyes in a place where brown eyes and curls were too ordinary for beauty".[70] However, within the white elite, relationships between white men and black women remain taboo. Therefore, the interracial relationships and 'mixed-race' children of the sisters' uncle, Marse Rufus, are viewed as scandalous and hushed up by the family. Ostensibly, their secrecy is to protect the Old Master (the sisters' grandfather), although Lally implies that he must have known about the situation and, therefore, was a part of the conspiracy himself. This illustrates the double-standard of colonial society, that 'allowed' the philandering of its (white) men with black or 'mixed-race' women, but would not openly admit to the existence of such relationships. The children of these relationships thus held an uneasy position in the society, and the narrative suggests that 'mixed-race' offspring were despised by both blacks and whites. One example of this estrangement is shown when Lally shuns the nurse and the children of one such liaison (of Rufus') because she feels the nurse is overly proud "as if the children... [were] pure white", and she tells her *real* white charges to "[l]ook the other way".[71]

Despite the influence of Lally's initial antipathy towards 'coloureds', in childhood, the three sisters form a secret childhood friendship with their 'mixed-race' cousin, Cornélie. When Lally finds out, she not only feels that it is too late to stop it, but also feels that it need not be stopped because Cornélie was "[w]hite and fine as my own children were".[72] Her comment suggests that 'mixed-race' people were considered more acceptable the more European they looked; therefore, *perceived* heritage was more important than *actual* heritage. Stella accepts Cornélie only condescendingly in childhood, but does not find room for her in adulthood. The adult Stella sees Cornélie on her return visit and is struck by her beauty, but Cornélie is described by Stella as stupid, and in bestial terms, "her gazelle eyes were limpid with ignorance".[73] She is reduced to the level of 'thing' and Stella cannot admire Cornélie as a 'mixed-race' *woman*, only as an object or doll. In contrast,

Lally, the once faithful 'lackey', recognises the new status of 'coloureds'. Her loyalties shift away from the white elite as she defends Cornélie against the sisters dismissal of her, informing them that 'coloureds' can no longer be treated as "no-account".[74]

The 'Old Master' ultimately acknowledges Cornélie as his grandchild and bequeaths to her a little house with some land. Thus, in adulthood Cornélie, as the landowner, comes to represent the rise of the 'coloured' middle-class. Cornélie's father, Rufus, who had ignored her existence as a child, now acknowledges his daughter, but as Andrew says "he never thought fit to notice [her] until she became a property-owner".[75] Rufus recognises that colonial society is in transition. Whilst as a child he considered her of 'no-account', as a propertied adult, he sees the necessity of cultivating a relationship with her in order to enhance his own position in a changing society, where the power is shifting from whites in favour of the 'coloureds'. He claims he has "fought against colour prejudice".[76] However, his 'acceptance' only extends to the newly emerged 'coloured' middle-classes, and he still refers to the 'mixed-race' but dark-skinned Baptiste (who represents the majority poor and black) contemptuously as a "foolish Nigger".[77]

Cornélie has adapted quickly to her new position in society, and is also portrayed as alienated from Baptiste, as "Cornélie had never thought him worthy of her notice: he was nearly black, he was against her father, [and] he was political".[78] She feels superior to him and clings on to her tenuous new status by being antagonistic towards anything 'political' that might undermine her position in society. Cornélie's behaviour reinforces the idea that the 'coloured' middle-classes saw black activists as a threat to their fragile status. When Cornélie accuses Joan of treating her "like a common coloured girl", it is not so much a defence against Joan's subconscious racism, but a reinforcement of Cornélie's own feeling of superiority, not only to blacks, but to other 'coloureds'.[79] Her comment emphasises the importance of the class factor in the colonial hierarchy, as 'common' represents 'lower-class', whilst Cornélie sees herself distinctly as 'middle-class' because she now owns property.

Finding Space: breaking the 'buffer' role

The Open Prison by Angus Richmond portrays the social position of the 'mixed-race' person within a changing colonial order as more ambiguous than is suggested by either the portrayal of the middle-class Mrs Mason in de Lisser's *Jane's Career* or the socially mobile Cornélie in Allfrey's *The Orchid House*. Richmond's 'rights of passage' story of the 'mixed-race' Angela is an indictment of a racially divided society, where the concept of 'purity' is a particularly damaging ideology within an increasingly 'mixed-race' population. Angela's 'Open Prison' is the rigid racial division between blacks and whites that marginalises her from both her 'biological' and adopted families. An invisible prison formed by the collective desire of a society to ignore her presence because she challenges their belief in a mythical 'purity'. Her sentence is for life, and she finds that she cannot escape her 'prison' but must exist as a 'prisoner' of a racial intolerance, where she is denied a sense of belonging with either black or white, and offered no alternative place in society other than as 'freak'.

Set in the multi-racial Guyana at the turn of the century, the novel has only marginal Portuguese and Indian characters. Society is portrayed as primarily composed of white (British) and black (African), despite the fact that, by the time in which the novel is set, over sixty years of immigration had occurred, or that there remained a viable indigenous population. The story opens with the turmoil of the 1905 riots by waterfront workers, protesting against their conditions. The 'mixed-race' protagonist, Angela, and her black mother, Nanny, are caught up in the violent eruption and we are witness to a small child's bewilderment over the events. The horseguards' indiscriminate shooting into the black crowds frightens Angela's mother, who is forced to recognise that her daughter's 'mixed-race' is not enough to protect them. Status for the 'mixed-race' Angela appears to be a tenuous illusion, dependent on those associated with her, rather than on her own reality.

Angela's white father has rejected his 'mixed-race' daughter, although an uneasy compromise has been made whereby he has made provision for her care with the white Gloria, his ex-lover/fiancé. He has presumably done this only because Angela is very 'fair'

skinned. He believes that Africans are a different species and "[t]he darker they are the less they are like us".[80] His attitude suggests, therefore, that if she had looked more African he would have relinquished any responsibility. As a small child Angela experiences no problems with her white guardian, but as she matures, their relationship disintegrates as Aunt Gloria finds it harder to identify with her, and Angela begins to recognise her guardian's racism. One way in which this is expressed is in Angela's change from child to woman when she first menstruates. She is scared and runs to Aunt Gloria for assurance, but Aunt Gloria sees the blood on the sheets and immediately thinks of obeah and shuns Angela. Her rejection of Angela occurs partly because she cannot accept Angela as a woman, but also because Angela is of 'mixed-blood' she sees the blood as somehow contaminated.

The cultural difference between Angela and Gloria is shown in Angela's belief in Old Higue and Jumbies; a belief that places her more in the black (African) cultural sphere than European, and contrasts with her white guardian's dismissal of these beliefs as imaginary. However, when Angela and her 'aunt' walk past the shack of an old woman, named Tanta, who we are told was more familiar with the African tongue of her parents, Angela is frightened of the rumours that she is an obeah woman. She expresses her fear, and the old woman hears and asks: "Was it her black skin? Her African ways?" and complains that Angela's guardian is trying to make Angela (culturally) white: "'til now black had lost itself everywhere in the colonies".[81] Angela becomes interested in the old woman talking of her herbs, but still looks to her white guardian for confirmation of approval in order to justify her own interest. Later Tanta becomes a positive image in Angela's mind, but only when Angela changes the (African) image of the obeah woman into the (European) image of the fairy godmother. We see, therefore, that Angela has been influenced by European definitions of what is positive and what is negative in the construction of her own value system.

On mistaking Angela as Aunt Gloria's child, the old woman causes Gloria to shudder inwardly; Aunt Gloria is happy to be a guardian to a 'mulatto' child, but not to be taken for

her mother, because this would imply that she has slept with a black man. Later in the story, we again see Aunt Gloria react negatively to the thought of Angela as a daughter, and the omniscient narrator rhetorically asks "Why? Because the idea of having a mulatto child that was flesh of her flesh, in her own valuation made her own body unclean?".[82] Now aged twelve, Angela recognises the physical repulsion her aunt exhibits at the idea, and realises that to survive as a whole person she must break the bond between them "and all she [her aunt] stood for".[83]

Knowing that she is only tolerated, rather than liked by the white Warner family, Angela does not want to stay with them whilst Aunt Gloria is staying in England. Aunt Gloria responds that she is lucky to be able to stay there, as white people would usually only have 'mulattos' in their homes as servants. Angela feels ostracised, saying to herself, "I'm a leper in their eyes, because I'm a mulatto".[84] The image of 'leper' symbolises the pathology associated with 'mixed-race' people who, according to European scientific racial theory, were said to be prone to disease and infection due to their so-called unnatural 'hybridity'. The Warner's daughter, Pansy, has learnt from her father that it is acceptable to be overtly racist, and openly talks of 'niggers' in front of Angela. Pansy believes black people are intellectually stunted and only good for labour, and she expects Angela to share this racist view. Pansy cannot comprehend that for Angela this would be a "betrayal of Nanny and of herself".[85] After Angela refuses to return to her school, it is decided that she should have private tuition with Pansy, but only because she is seen as a useful tool to spur the other (white) girl on. Initially Aunt Gloria rejects the idea as unsuitable, because she believes that educating the 'mixed-race' Angela would cause her to get 'above her station' in life. Pansy and Angela form a tenuous friendship, but Pansy's racism creates an impossible barrier between them and, when angered, she all too easily resorts to racially abusing Angela.

Angela is afraid of her guardian's acquaintance, Mr Hardy, who is a plantation owner. As a 'coloured' child she is socially insignificant to him, and through him she internalises this feeling of insignificance and becomes nothing - a dead self. He ignores her "as if his eyes

hadn't been looking at her at all; and suddenly she felt dead in her person. It was worse than going into the dark".[86] However, in later childhood Mr Hardy comes to view her as a sexual object; after Angela witnesses the rape of Elthrieda by Hardy, he threatens her with the same treatment, and Elthrieda tells Angela: "Me and you we living in a prison for the white man sport. In season and out o' season".[87] Elthrieda recognises the instability of Angela's status, who, unlike her white guardian, is prone to the threat of rape by white men in post-Emancipation society.

Like Angela's father, Hardy thinks of black people as lesser beings, saying "they're not human, you know, the nigger people".[88] Hardy calls Angela "Miss Mulatto" which is used ironically, because whilst the 'Miss' implies respect, combined with the pejorative term 'mulatto' his sarcasm is indicated. He refers to Angela's 'blood' when he argues that any amount of black blood is bad or "unruly". His overt racism concretises Angela's own sense of solidarity with black people. Whereas her actual experience of the riots had been distanced and unreal, now as he interrogates her, she brings back the images in her mind and empathises with the "terror of the [black] people".[89] Angela's attempt to re-establish her bond with Aunt Gloria fails when Aunt Gloria also calls her 'Miss Mulatto'. Angela now places Aunt Gloria on par with Hardy and, as such, Aunt Gloria becomes the enemy. As Angela travels to her mother's home, the words 'Miss Mulatto' echo in her head, making her feel "alone in her painful identity of Miss Mulatto".[90] She is overwhelmed by her sense of marginalisation, and is briefly tempted to commit suicide.

Angela finds that she also faces 'racial' alienation from her own black mother, Nanny, who is filled with bitterness towards whites. Nanny's grandmother had been a slave, and she carries this history with her, keeping the memory alive as a memorial to her ancestors, but in so doing her feelings for her daughter are negatively affected. Although Nanny wants her daughter to stay, she also wants to save her daughter from the hardship that she has faced as a black woman in a racist colonial society, and is driven by the idea that her daughter will have a better life if they live apart. Nanny sees her daughter as a means to bring her family line into a higher social sphere, but she also feels distanced from her

daughter. She secretly sees Angela as superior to herself because she has internalised a colonial culture which denigrates everything black. Nanny thinks that Angela should be glad to be 'mixed-race', saying, "Child, you ain't thankful I gi' you the colour? That black colour Mr. David take from me, it lift me out o' slavery!".[91] However, Angela has already learnt to regard her 'mixed-race' identity as a stigma, rather than a privilege. Nanny calls Angela a 'bacra' (meaning a white person) and despite Angela's protestations, her mother feels separated by Angela's 'red' hair and skin. Nanny and Dear Aunt distance Angela further when they both agree that only with a black African skin can there be empathy; with a 'red' skin, growing up in a white household, they believe that Angela can only develop hate and a sense of distance from black people. This is ironic, as it is Nanny and Dear Aunt who marginalise Angela, whilst she is desperate to belong.

Elfrieda describes Angela as a "Mulatto ... buffer".[92] Using the simile of the land she explains that Angela is "like trench fix between ... land... and the dam. Trench don't want vex them. Neither the land nor the dam. So is always he holding them apart".[93] This simile points to the position of the 'mixed-race' person of black and white descent who, by incorporating the two races, is said to be neither one nor the other, but caught in the middle. It further implies, by the idea of not making either 'vex', that the 'mulatto's' personality is structured by the desire to live well with both black and white, forcing them into a chameleon style of existence. But Angela finds that the role of chameleon is illusive. As a group of Gloria's black servants talk over the possibility of the white Rev. Alleyne having something to do with the death of a black man, Angela defends him, saying that he was for, not against 'the people' (meaning black people). Their reaction is to laugh at her as if she is mad, saying: "Is the black blood that don't mix proper with the white".[94] In so doing they repeat the myth of 'mixed-race' person as biologically abnormal and, therefore, prone to insanity. Angela is upset but stays, feeling she "had to belong somewhere".[95] Although she desperately needs to 'belong', she is constantly marginalised by both black and white, and in reality her acceptance by blacks is as tenuous as by whites. Angela feels drawn or linked to the group of black servants but "felt no more wanted than when she was

in Mr Hardy's company"; instead she is forced to search for "a positive definition of herself" among the familiarity of the farmyard objects.[96]

One of the arguments used by white racists against the sexual union between blacks and whites was that white 'purity' would be compromised or polluted by a so-called inferior race. In the *The Open Prison* this argument is voiced from a black perspective, when Dear Aunt exclaims: "Bacra wipe out the African slave breed like is a plague".[97] Her exclamation suggests her belief in a racial essence or 'purity' that can be decimated by 'racial' mixing. The idea of 'purity' as something positive and desirable is also expressed by Aunt Gloria's black servants when they talk about Tanta, who is believed to have been born on a slave-ship. Here, the concept of purity is not only racial but cultural; 'pure' meaning that "all her hopes, dreams of Africa [were] intact".[98] For Angela, however, 'purity' is an impossibility and she is "a creature in limbo within range of that horizon [Africa]".[99]

When Angela learns that her father had raped her mother, she is unable to deal with the idea of herself as a product of rape and turns her anger on her mother. Angela, already threatened with rape by the white Mr. Hardy, is nearly raped by an older black school boy, when she is just thirteen. He repeatedly calls her "red nigger" during his attack, making Angela feel that it is more than sexual violence, it is an act spurred on by his desire to gain power over her because he feels she is socially defined as his superior.[100] Paradoxically, she is also seen as 'fair-game' because of being the product of white rape against black women, and she is denigrated and dehumanised by the term "mongrel". As Angela discovers: "Everyone was judged by the colour of their skin. The whites set the fashion. The individual was not recognised as a person".[101]

As the novel progresses the changing colonial order is underlined by Nanny's contrasting reactions to her treatment by Angela's guardian. At the beginning of the novel, when she drops Angela off and is invited inside, she refuses on the grounds that there is too great a difference between the white guest (Mr Hardy) and herself, who is only "black and poor".[102] Later, after Angela's stay with her mother, Gloria offends Nanny when she comes to see

her daughter by sending Elfrieda to say she must have bush tea in the kitchen, rather than join them. However, this time Nanny speaks her mind and defies Hardy, who barely controls himself from hitting her. Nanny tells him things are changing between black and white, and uses the example of his getting a 'mulatto' child as part of the reason. As well as acting as a 'buffer' the 'mixed-race' offspring in society acts, therefore, as a link between black and white, undermining the very power structure which relies on complete separateness between the supposedly distinct races. Significantly, it is Hardy who backs away from the confrontation and rides away. Pansy and Aunt Gloria bond together in their whiteness, and unite against Angela, but through their rejection Angela also gains strength. Parallel to her mother's confrontation with Hardy, Angela confronts Pansy, who empowered by the history of her white 'superiority' feels her whiteness is protection, but Angela is no longer frightened and so cannot be oppressed. The narrative's portrayal of both Hardy's and Pansy's retreat from confrontation is used to symbolise the demise of white colonial control.

Angela's ultimate rejection comes from the man she is to marry. The relationship between Angela and the 'brown-skinned' Nathan, is obstructed from the outset by the issue of racial identity. Nathan claims that Angela does not like black people and denies her an identity as a black woman. He argues that because her father is white, division exists between them, making her a "red-nigger" who will not let him touch her. This is partly sexual blackmail on his part, but also points to his understanding of racial division, whereby he assumes that Angela feels superior to him racially and would, therefore, withdraw from him physically. After she submits sexually, Nathan admits "I never dream I had a chance with a mulatto thing".[103] On one level his comment refers to his perception of Angela as holding a higher status than himself, but simultaneously, the use of the word 'thing' dehumanises her and, therefore, makes her lesser than him. Nathan offers Angela marriage and she accepts, primarily as a way of escaping her marginalised life with her guardian. When she tells her mother that she is to marry, her mother thinks it must be a lucky break offered by a white overseer who has slept with her, and cannot accept that her daughter's seducer is black and working-class.

When Angela gives birth to their son, Nathan will not accept that he is the father because the baby is so 'white'. It is only later that we learn of the dramatic irony involved, as Nathan, without having known it, is also 'mixed-race'. The 'result' of a black man's rape of a white woman, unlike Angela, he was completely abandoned at birth and raised by a black family. Despite her own ambivalent experiences as 'mixed-race', Angela's relationship with her son is a perpetuation of her mother's relationship with her because, just like her mother, she is fixated on a bright future for her son, whom she feels will succeed because of his light complexion. The irony is that despite her mother's attempts at giving Angela a better future neither have achieved a sense of self worth, and Angela's perception of herself as worthless, and unable to achieve anything, is symbolically realised in the actual death of her son.

On learning that Nathan has also rejected his child with an albino woman because it is too black, Angela's response is to laugh. Her laughter is a release of tension and pain over the death of her own son, and a recognition of the insanity of a racially obsessed society in which a father cannot accept his own offspring because of its colour. However, her reaction is seen by society as an indication of her own insanity, and she comes to signify the mad 'mulatto' figure, believed to be doomed to mental instability. Consumed by hatred towards whites, Nathan now learns that he is 'half' white, and begins to have nightmares in which he is part of the oppressive class by virtue of his newly discovered 'white blood'. He cannot accept that he is 'mixed-race', and his whole sense of identity has been turned inside out. Nathan kills himself because he cannot cope with his 'mixed-race' identity in a society that encourages blacks and whites to see themselves as biologically separate. Angela has learnt to survive through a life-time of marginalisation as 'mulatto', and thinks of herself "as Miss Mulatto struggling to qualify as an acceptable member of the human species".[104] Nathan has had no such gradual initiation in creating a 'mixed-race' identity for himself and, confronted with his racial heritage in adulthood, it proves too much for him to survive.

In *The Open Prison,* the tenuous position of 'mixed-race' people in post-emancipation society is represented by Angela's ambiguous status in a white household, analogous of the wider social hierarchy. Richmond has challenged the one-dimensional myth of a homogenous 'mixed-race' population that chooses to distance itself from the wider black community. However, his novel perpetuates the stereotype of the 'mixed-race' person as a tormented soul. Both Angela and Nathan are born as a result of rape that, with its negative stigma, denies the possibility of a positive 'mixed-race' reality. Rejected on a familial level by both her black mother and her white father, on a broader level by both white and black society, and perhaps most poignantly, by her 'mixed-race' husband, Angela, finding no place for herself within the society, must search for her own sense of self and space. Whilst Angela's personal struggle to be accepted by the black community, and her refusal to collaborate with white racism, challenge notions of 'mixed-race' separateness from a 'black' Caribbean identity, both her and Nathan's struggle to assert their identities are seen, ultimately, not as a socio-political issue but as a psychological one.

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[1]Gordon K Lewis, *The Growth of The Modern West Indies*. (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1968), p. 76.
[2]*Ibid*., p. 77.
[3]*Ibid.,* p. 77.
[4]*Ibid*., p. 74.
[5]R Smith, 'Race, Class, and Gender in the Transition to Freedom' in Frank McGlynn & Seymour Drescher (eds.), *The Meaning of Freedom: Economics, Politics and Culture After Slavery* (Pittsburg: University of Pittsburg Press, 1992), p. 284.
[6]*Ibid*., p. 262.
[7]Kenneth Ramchand, *The West Indian Novel and its Background* (London: Heinemann Educational Books Ltd., 1983 [1970]), p. 39.
[8]Gordon K Lewis, *The Growth Of The Modern West Indies*, *op. cit*., p. 74.
[9]*Ibid*., p. 73.
[10]Franklin W Knight, *The Caribbean: The Genesis of a Fragmented Nationalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), p. 142.
[11]Gordon K Lewis, *The Growth of The Modern West Indies*, *op. cit*., p. 95.
[12]*Ibid*., p. 96.
[13]*Ibid*., p. 97.
[14]Bridget Brereton, 'Social organisation and class, racial and cultural conflict in nineteenth century Trinidad' in Kevin Yelvington (ed.), *Trinidad Ethnicity* (London & Basingstoke: Macmillan press, 1993), p. 38.
[15]Kenneth Ramchand, *The West Indian Novel and its Background*, *op. cit*., p. 39.

[16]Isaac Dookhan, *A Post Emancipation History of the West Indies.* (Essex: Longman Group UK Ltd., 1988 [1975]), p. 46.
[17]Vere T Daly, *A Short History of The Guyanese People* (London: Macmillan Publishers Ltd., 1975), p. 174.
[18]Dookhan, *A Post Emancipation History of the West Indies*, *op. cit.*, p. 46.
[19]Jean Rhys, *Wide Sargasso Sea.* (London: Penguin Books, 1968), pp. 22-23.
[20]*Ibid.*, p. 15.
[21]*Ibid.*, p. 15.
[22]Cheryl M L Dash, 'Jean Rhys' in Bruce King (ed.), *West Indian Literature: 2nd edition* (London & Basingstoke: Macmillan Education Ltd., 1995) and Thorunn Lonsdale, "One of the Most Beautiful Islands in the World and One of the Unluckiest': Jean Rys and Dominican National identity' in Joan Anim-Addo (ed.), *Framing the Word: Gender and Genre in Caribbean Women's Writing* (London: Whiting and Birch Ltd., 1996).
[23]Judie Newman, 'The Untold Story and the Retold Story: Intertextuality in Post-Colonial Women's Fiction' in Susheila Nasta (ed.), *Motherlands: Black Women's Writing from Africa, the Caribbean and South Asia* (London: The Women's Press, 1991), p. 25.
[24]Jean Rhys, *Wide Sargasso Sea*, *op. cit.*, p. 31.
[25]*Ibid.*, p. 35.
[26]*Ibid.*, p. 38.
[27]*Ibid.*, p. 85.
[28]Francis Wyndham, Introduction in Jean Rhys, *Wide Sargasso Sea* (London: Penguin Books, 1968), p. 5.
[29]Laura de Abruna, 'Family Connections: mother and Mother Country in the Fiction of Jean Rhys and Jamaica Kincaid' in Susheila Nasta (ed.), *Motherlands: Black Women's Writing from Africa, the Caribbean and South Asia* (London: The Women's Press, 1991), p. 261.
[30]Jean Rhys, *Wide Sargasso Sea*, *op. cit.*, p. 56.
[31]*Ibid.*, p. 58.
[32]Thorunn Lonsdale, "One of the Most Beautiful Islands in the World and One of the Unluckiest': Jean Rys and Dominican National identity', *op. cit.,* p. 204.
[33]Jean Rhys, *Wide Sargasso Sea*, *op. cit.*, p. 36.
[34]*Ibid.*, p. 37.
[35]*Ibid.*, p.24.
[36]It is interesting to note that this word not only means 'born out of wedlock', as is commonly believed, but also means "unauthorized, hybrid, counterfeit...closely resembling another species;...person of mixed race...disliked or unfortunate person or thing." *The Concise Oxford Dictionary*.
[37]Jean Rhys, *Wide Sargasso Sea*, *op. cit.*, p. 129.
[38]Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, ' Three Women's Texts and a Critique of Imperialism' in Henry Louis Gates, Jr. (ed.) *"Race," Writing And Difference.* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1986), p. 272.
[39]Jean Rhys, *Wide Sargasso Sea*, *op cit.*, p. 41.
[40]*Ibid.*, p. 99.
[41]*Ibid.*, p. 100.
[42]*Ibid.*, p. 101.
[43]*Ibid.*, p. 80.
[44]*Ibid.*, p. 102.
[45]*Ibid.*, p. 103.
[46]Helen Carr, *Jean Rhys* (Plymouth: Northcote House Publishers Ltd., 1996)
[47]Jean Rhys, *Wide Sargasso Sea*, *op. cit.*, p. 103.
[48]*Ibid.*, p. 104.
[49]*Ibid.*, p. 106.
[50]*Ibid.*, p. 55.
[51]*Ibid.*, p. 55.
[52]*Ibid.*, p. 57.
[53]*Ibid.*, p. 83.
[54]*Ibid.*, p. 100.
[55]*Ibid.*, p. 115.
[56]*Ibid.*, pp. 120-121.

[57]*Ibid.*, p. 42.
[58]*Ibid.*, p. 74.
[59]*Ibid.*, p. 103.
[60]*Ibid.*, p. 152.
[61]Rhonda Cobham, ' Women in Jamaican Literature 1900-1950' in Carole Boyce Davies and Elaine Savory Fido (eds.), *Out of the Kumbla: Caribbean Women and Literture* (Trenton, N.J.: Africa World Press, Inc., 1990), p. 198.
[62]Herbert de Lisser, *Jane's Career* (London: Rex Collings, 1971 [1914]), p. 58.
[63]*Ibid.*, p. 69.
[64]*Ibid.*, p. 56.
[65]Amon Saba Saakana, *The Colonial Legacy in Caribbean Literature* (London: Karnak House, 1987), p. 54.
[66]Kenneth Ramchand, *The West Indian Novel and its Background*, *op. cit.*, p. 60.
[67]Phyllis Shand Allfrey, *The Orchid House* (London: Virago Press, 1982 [1953]), p. 80.
[68]*Ibid.*, p. 4.
[69]*Ibid.*, p. 7.
[70]*Ibid.*, p. 7.
[71]*Ibid.*, p. 37.
[72]*Ibid.*, p. 37.
[73]*Ibid.*, p. 67.
[74]*Ibid.*, p. 82.
[75]*Ibid.*, p. 68.
[76]*Ibid.*, p. 152.
[77]*Ibid.*, p. 153.
[78]*Ibid.*, p. 155.
[79]*Ibid.*, p. 183.
[80]Angus Richmond, *The Open Prison* (Herts.: Hansib Publishing Limited, 1988), p. 110.
[81]*Ibid.*, p. 22.
[82]*Ibid.*, p. 59.
[83]*Ibid.*, p. 59.
[84]*Ibid.*, p. 57.
[85]*Ibid.*, p. 95.
[86]*Ibid.*, p. 17.
[87]*Ibid.*, p. 27.
[88]*Ibid.*, p. 17.
[89]*Ibid.*, p. 18.
[90]*Ibid.*, p. 104.
[91]*Ibid.*, p. 77.
[92]*Ibid.*, p. 20.
[93]*Ibid.*, pp. 20-21.
[94]*Ibid.*, p. 35.
[95]*Ibid.*, p. 35.
[96]*Ibid.*, p. 37.
[97]*Ibid.*, p. 76.
[98]*Ibid.*, p. 36.
[99]*Ibid.*, p. 106.
[100]*Ibid.*, p. 90.
[101]*Ibid.*, p. 71.
[102]*Ibid.*, p. 16.
[103]*Ibid.*, p. 118.
[104]*Ibid.*, p. 216.

CHAPTER SIX

NATIONHOOD AND ('MIXED') RACE CONSCIOUSNESS

In this chapter I shall examine *New Day* (1949) by Vic Reid and *Crown Jewel* (1952) by Ralph de Boissière. These two novels offer portrayals of the mobilisation of the working - class, whose demands for better working and social conditions formed part of a new era of anti-colonial resistance. Reid positions this evolution as beginning in the latter part of the nineteenth century, offering the 1865 Morant Bay Rebellion as the starting point of Jamaican nationalism. His family focused socio-historical novel places the 'mixed-race' person as central to the anti-colonial struggle. Ralph de Boissière, who focuses on the 1930s development of trade unions in Trinidad, places the 'mixed-race' protagonist as peripheral to this working class struggle, which he portrays as predominantly Afro-Trinidadian. His novel foregrounds the psycho-social development of the 'mixed-race' protagonist, who acts as a metaphor for the changing attitude of colonial Caribbean society.

The historical acceptance of 'mixed-race' people as part of the anti-colonial struggle has been problematic. In his introduction to Walter Rodney's *The Groundings with my Brothers* (1969), Richard Small's antipathy towards those of 'mixed-race' is apparent in his criticism of the Jamaican government for its desire to pay homage to a 'mulatto':

> They wanted to make the Mulatto, William Gordon, a National Hero and then they had to give in to the demand that it was the Black Paul Bogle who was the real hero of the 1865 Morant Bay Rebellion[1].

William Gordon was the 'mixed-race' son of a white attorney and a mother who had been a slave. He was self-educated and after becoming a landowner he became active in politics, and has been described as "[o]ne of Eyre's chief opponents".[2] Gordon and Paul Bogle both fought for the increase of social and political rights for the Jamaican people; according to Selwyn Cudjoe, Gordon "pursued independence through legislative means", whilst Bogle "used violent political resistance".[3] Although their methods may have been different, they were both persecuted and both killed as a result of their political involvement. Gordon had not been directly involved in the Morant Bay Rebellion, yet Small's objection remains one of racial 'pedigree' rather than a concern with the level of participation in the Morant Bay Rebellion. One is black and therefore deemed an acceptable icon, the other, as 'mixed-race', has no place being remembered in a black struggle against colonial control.

In his book, *The Colonial Legacy in Caribbean Literature* (1987), Amon Saba Saakana also appears to share reservations about the 'mixed-race' person's place in the development of Caribbean nationhood. Saakana criticises Vic Reid's *New Day* for its portrayal of a 'mixed-race' family at the forefront of Jamaica's anti-colonial struggle, and takes issue with Ralph de Boissière's *Crown Jewel* for what he sees as its emphasis on the personal identity crisis of its 'mixed-race' protagonist, at the expense of the novel's portrayal of the workers' struggle in the 1930s. It is this focus on 'mixed-race' people that, according to Saakana, undermines the success of *New Day* and *Crown Jewel* as anti-colonial novels. I shall argue that the mere positioning of 'mixed-race' people as protagonists in these novels does not in itself undermine their significance as 'anti-colonial' novels; and that, whether fundamental or peripheral, the place of the 'mixed-race' person within the politics of nationhood can offer an interesting account of colonial resistance.

The rise in racial consciousness

The first half of the twentieth century saw a new era of nationalism and race consciousness as Caribbean people sought to gain a greater voice through legislative changes, and there

was a rise in mass protest within the region as workers fought to change working conditions through the creation of trade unions. Malcolm Cross writes that the 1930s were, "throughout the anglophone Caribbean a decade of unprecedented working class struggle and resistance".[4]

Pan-Africanism and Black nationalism grew in the 1920s and 1930s and, according to Brereton, the "Ethiopian invasion [1935] stimulated race pride among many middle- and working-class blacks".[5] Indian race consciousness also grew and, as Brereton writes, "the development of race consciousness among sections of both major ethnic groups helped to make the 1930s a complex and turbulent era in the history of Trinidad".[6] Two other significant factors which influenced the rise in nationalism and race consciousness in the Caribbean were the First World War and the formation of the Marcus Garvey Movement. As Bridget Brereton points out, during the First World War, Caribbean men "were disgracefully treated by the military authorities, and their experiences helped to politicize them and to orient them towards radical political and labour movements on their return".[7] Their experiences of racism also led to an awakening of racial consciousness amongst them; Amon Saba Saakana writes that on returning to the Caribbean, these veterans

> disenchanted with the racism of the British, on whose side they fought, extended this racial consciousness to their brethren at home and pushed them to move against the limited opportunities of black people in their own societies.[8]

In 1914 Marcus Garvey formed what became popularly known as the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) which, although after 1916 was based in the US, still wielded a strong influence in the Caribbean.[9] Amon Saba Saakana writes that "[s]ome of the leaders of strikes in the Caribbean were associated with the Garvey Movement"[10] and, according to Tony Martin, the TWA (Trinidad Workingmen's Association) was said to be "a Garveyite stronghold in Trinidad".[11] The formation of the Marcus Garvey Movement had a major ideological impact on race consciousness and contributed to the pan-African fervour amongst the Afro-Caribbean population.

Marcus Garvey's fight against white racism and his aim to raise black consciousness were commendable, however, his ideology of racial purity was as equally corrupted as the white racial theorists' notion of white racial purity. By arguing racial essentialism Garvey had taken the then popular racial eugenic argument and subverted it for use in his own pan-African vision. He saw 'miscegenation' as an abhorrence which should be stopped, arguing that:

> We are conscious of the fact that slavery brought upon us the curse of many colors within our Race, but that is no reason why we ourselves should perpetuate the evil.[12]

Marcus Garvey despised people of 'mixed-race' and although he begrudgingly included 'mixed-race' people in America as part of the UNIA, he would not include them as part of the movement in the Caribbean. Garvey commented that:

> In the term "Negro" we include all those persons whom the American white man includes in this appellation of his contempt and hate... The contents of the term are much reduced in Jamaica and the West Indies.[13]

Garvey did not accept that in the Caribbean the 'mixed-race' person was also viewed by the whites with 'contempt and hate'. His reaction against the racial division created by colonial rule in Jamaica effectively turned what were social and political factors into a biological one.

Resistance and Nationalism in Reid's Jamaica: A New Day?

Born in 1913, Vic Reid reached adulthood at a time when the black population in Jamaica and the wider Caribbean were embracing their new sense of racial consciousness. In his

novel, *New Day*, Reid claims that he has not written a history of this period and that the Campbells are entirely fictional. In his Author's Note he writes that he has

> attempted ...to transfer to paper some of the beauty, kindliness, and humour of my people, weaving characters into the wider framework of these eighty years and creating a tale that will offer as true an impression as fiction can of the way by which Jamaica and its people came today.[14]

The passage of time in the last two parts of the novel contrasts dramatically to the first part; in the first part the actual time span is very short, but a large amount of detail is given, whilst in the latter parts a wider time span is covered, but far less detail is given. Thus, effectively, the book foregrounds the events of 1865 rather than the 'new day' of the title or the period leading up to it. Rather than focus on the period following the Morant Bay Rebellion, leading up to the 1944 'new day' of the title, Reid moves his protagonists to a fantasy island or 'cay'. Here, the narrator's brother, Davie, creates what is, initially, a successful self-governing co-operative, where "what you get for your bellies shall be no' gauged by the colour o' your skin or the weight o' your pocket".[15] However, he becomes engulfed by his own fanaticism and loses sight of the people's needs. He has turned into an oppressive patriarch and although once he "could no' stand being governed, ...now he is up in the saddle and is riding [them] all the way he wants to go".[16] The failure of the co-operative, and Davie's sudden death during a storm, act as a cautionary tale, and signal Reid's own nationalistic stance as one of 'gradualism' rather than of radical change.

In his Author's Note, Reid makes reference to continued protest after the rebellion, writing that "[f]rom 1886 on, there was continuing agitation in Jamaica for restitution of the representative government".[17] However, his decision to separate Davie, and the story itself, from Jamaican politics during this period acts to negate the historical process of change brought about by mass protest. The effect is to reduce the significance of this period, and make the 1944 'new day' appear to follow solely on the narrator's grand-nephew, Garth's emergence on Jamaican society. The mass protests and workers'

struggles of the 1920s and 30s are completely ignored, so that, as Selwyn Cudjoe points out, the novel "fails to perceive the traumatic reorganization in political and social relations that must take place if self-government is to mean anything at all".[18]

The title *New Day* refers to the new constitution brought into Jamaica in 1944 when:

> the single chambered Legislative Council was replaced by a bicameral legislature consisting of an entirely elected House of Representatives chosen on the basis of universal adult suffrage from single member constituencies, and a Legislative Council consisting of 3 officials and 10 nominated unofficials.[19]

In Jamaica the old representative system of government that existed after emancipation was made up of a Governor, a nominated Council and an elected Assembly which was "a representative body, its members elected by freeholders on a very restricted franchise. It exercised considerable power" in the interests of the plantocracy.[20] The year after the Morant Bay Rebellion, Crown Colony Government replaced the old representative system, under the recommendation of the notorious Governor Eyre.[21] Significantly, Governor Eyre of Jamaica was a member of the Anthropological Society of London, which was at the forefront of so-called 'scientific' racial theory. Eyre's atrocities, committed in response to the 1865 Morant Bay Rebellion, were, according to Peter Fryer, heartily supported by this society, and included: "dashing out children's brains, ripping open the bellies of pregnant women, and burning over 1,000 homes of suspected rebels".[22]

Crown Colony Government "consisted of a Governor and a Legislative Council of official and nominated unofficial members" which meant that "the elective element had been completely removed or drastically reduced to a small minority. The Crown through the Governor exercised complete control".[23] With Crown Colony Government the "basic change was that the Crown had the power to override all political opposition and dominated the colonial legislature which might be a purely nominated or partially elected body".[24] In Jamaica it was initially purely nominated, but after agitation by dissatisfied

white and coloured middle class Jamaicans... a measure of representation was reintroduced in 1884... Further reform in 1895 increased the number of elected members to 14, but they did not constitute a majority... [and] although Jamaicans continued to demand more representation after 1895, it was not until 1944, following the labour disturbances of the 1930s, that they experienced further reform.[25]

The novel opens on the eve of this 'new day' when the eighty-seven year old narrator, John Campbell, reflects on the sociopolitical and familial changes which have occurred since the 1865 Morant Bay Rebellion. As Louis James argues, John Campbell symbolises Jamaica:

> the country's sensibility is focused in on one person, who is also in some senses a nation. Johnny Campbell, like Jamaica, holds within himself African and European blood (his father was Afro-Scot)... and is continuously present through the making of a nation.[26]

The problem of locating the 'mixed-race' John Campbell as symbol of Jamaica is that it ignores the very real racial divisions that were a fundamental part of Jamaica's colonial history.

By interweaving an 'autobiographical' and family history with public history, *New Day* attempts to act as an alternative history to what Reid considered the colonially biased version taught in Caribbean schools at the time he was writing. He felt that colonial education had condemned the Jamaican people as criminals rather than the heroes they really were. However, Saakana argues that Reid's focus on the Campbell family is problematic because it "is chronicling this history from the perspective of the middle-class Campbells and thus the picture that we get of Bogle and the thrust for justice is a jaundiced one".[27] What is implicit in Saakana's comment about their 'middle-class' status is that he also means 'mixed-race'. This becomes apparent when he goes on to argue that:

Reid's characters, by the time 1944 arrives, can pass for white, having successfully passed through a determined treadmill of interbreeding to facilitate the climb to social grace. The mere fact that Reid's leading characters are not black-skinned points to a concealing of a racially conscious society. The novel, based on real events, and on real people, has to be understood not just as *fiction* but as a political statement about a society, history and its people.[28]

Saakana's concept of 'real' people does not appear to acknowledge that 'mixed-race' people were also part of these 'real' events depicted by the novel. If one accepts that the character Garth is loosely based on Norman Manley, Reid's chronicling of the Campbell family remains historically relevant, rather than 'concealing'. Norman Manley founded the People's National Party, and was described by Arthur Lewis, in 1938, as "Jamaica's leading barrister... [who] put himself unreservedly at the disposal of the working classes, offering to negotiate on their behalf".[29] Saakana's objection to the foregrounding of the 'mixed-race' Campbell's remains grounded in his refusal to accept that 'mixed-race' people are also part of Jamaica's history of resistance. As Arthur Lewis argues, although some 'coloureds' "sought to identify themselves with the ruling oligarchy others rebelled and sought through political action to secure for the Negro a higher status in society".[30]

Saakana's somewhat cryptic remark that "[a]dditionally, and perhaps psychologically, Pa Campbell... is a mulatto",[31] suggests that Pa Campbell's behaviour and his mentality are (detrimentally) determined by his 'mixed-race'. Pa Campbell's 'mixed-race' is signalled by the description of his "[b]lue eyes [and] ...brown forehead".[32] We are told by the narrator that "when Father is vexed he looks more like white man than brown. When he is at peace, there is softness in my father's face".[33] The narrator informs us that his sister "Ruthie says it is because Scotchmen are always warring and brown people are always singing, so that when Father is vexed he looks like his Scottish sire, and when at peace like his mother who had brown blood in her. Must be true it".[34] It is significant that Reid's linking of behaviour with race offers us a positive image of an African heritage contrasted with a negative image

of a European heritage. However, the implication that Pa Campbell's emotions are linked directly to his racial ancestry perpetuates the fallacy that a person's social or psychological traits are racially dependent and quantifiable, and suggests that Reid has been influenced by ideas of racial determinism.

Although Pa Campbell does not see himself as racially superior, he does see himself as *socially* superior, distinguishing himself from the 'street Arabs'. His tentative allegiance to the wider black population is expressed by his comment that whilst "sympathy is no 'in my heart for law breaking, ...Stoney Gut people are *my* people all the same" (my emphasis).[35] Pa Campbell is portrayed as divorced from the reality of the Jamaican poor by his misguided faith in British justice and religion. His allegiance is to the Church of England which, through Pastor Humphrey, colludes with the white colonial oppression of the black population. Pastor Humphrey preaches "the wisdom of a civilised submission to authority" and tells his congregation that "only in hard work, lies the redemption of a race which for centuries has lived in sin and savagery before Almighty God".[36] According to Saakana, most Jamaicans were Baptists, Methodists or Moravians because these churches were more empathetic with the poor. If one accepts that this was the case, Pa Campbell's allegiance is, perhaps, unlikely, if he is taken literally. However, Pa Campbell is not meant to be read simply as an individual, but rather as a symbol of the indoctrination of an oppressed nation. His apparent 'madness' reveals Reid's condemnation of the Church's role in the subjugation of the Jamaican people.

When Aaron Dacre asks Pa Campbell to sign a petition for the poor because he is "'most *buckra* white but more than that, a man o' influence in our district",[37] it is implied (somewhat ironically, as later events show) that Pa Campbell's 'mixed-race' and his class make him 'natural' leadership material. Pa Campbell refuses, choosing to follow his Bible away from confrontation. However, it is his blind faith in his church, expressed by his claim that "[t]he English will no' make war on Christians", that actually leads to his death and, therefore, highlights the danger of such false ideals.[38] There is no justice offered by the colonial authorities as families are slaughtered, most of their friends killed, Johnny's friends

tortured, and the leader of the rebellion, Bogle is hung, as well as the propertied (and 'mixed-race') William Gordon who "is a-kick at air too".[39]

Pa Campbell and his son Johnny (the narrator) represent the changing attitude of a nation. Pa Campbell is the old Jamaica, falsely looking to the protection of colonial rule, whilst, as Louis James argues, Johnny feels that "[a]s his father dies, so does all possibility of accepting a paternalistic Britain. Johnny, and a nation, begin to stand on their own feet".[40] In this way Johnny acts as a metaphor for the awakening nationalism of Jamaica. The narrator's older brother Davie, like their father, views the poor as 'my people', but unlike their father he takes a more active stance against the injustice he sees. Davie instils a sense of national identity in his younger brother Johnny when he tells him:

> our family are no' badly off, for near-white we are, even if poor, and ha' been landowners for three generations, and now Father is an estate headman. But no'-the-less, Johnny, and listen well to me, we are all Jamaicans - six o' one and half dozen of t' other to the *buckra* English".[41]

Davie identifies with the black peasantry and is acutely conscious that his 'mixed-race' might alienate him from black people; he tells Johnny that because they are so fair-skinned they could be seen as "playing like *buckra*".[42] Saakana argues that Davie is politically 'jaundiced' because of his colour and class; however, Davie's portrayal within the novel shows him to possess an astute awareness of the reality of colonial oppression. Although Davie's support of Bogle's goals is limited by his opposition to what he sees as Bogle's violent actions, this reflects Reid's own non-violence stance, rather than indicating a division based on Davie's 'race' or colour. It is he, firstly as the admired older brother, and secondly, as substitute father, who develops Johnny's sense of injustice by the colonial authorities. When asked to give evidence to the 'British Commission', set up to look into the events of 1865, he is mistrustful of so-called 'British justice'. He argues that the British government were responsible from the beginning for Eyre's actions:

> Down on other people go the hounds o' Britain, running without leash, savaging, and mauling the poor ones who have been sinful 'cause they talked for freedom. Then when we bowels ha' been ripped out, Mother England plays like soft and begin to holler that she did no' want it so; that the well-trained hands she has sent out ha' only gone mad because they scented blood.[43]

Davie gives evidence in support of the 'rebels' and argues in favour of self-government. This surprises the Commissioners who thought that because of Davie's colour and class he should have been on the side of the ruling class rather than the rebels.

Women are portrayed in the novel as weak and politically peripheral. However, according to Swithin Wilmot, "in the immediate post-slavery period, issues that affected the broader community of labourers also attracted very impressive female responses".[44] Wilmot argues that the lack of acknowledgement over women's participation in the Morant Bay Rebellion is a conscious omission on the part of male authors (historians and otherwise) and "does not reflect an absence of information about them".[45] In fact, women were part of Paul Bogle's 'organisational network' and "were among those directing the attack on the men who had taken refuge in the court house".[46] Wilmot reveals the ambivalent relationship between black and 'mixed-race' people when he cites one such woman, a Sarah Johnson, who reportedly proclaimed that "every mulatto was to be killed as well as every white man".[47]

This ambivalence over the position of 'mixed-race' people is shown in the novel through the experiences of the 'mixed-race' and 'near-white' Lucille Dubois. Although both Selwyn Cudjoe and Amon Saba Saakana refer to Lucille as white, in the novel she declares herself as 'mixed-race', telling Johnny, "I am not *buckra*, I am like you and - Davie".[48] Lucille claims that her family's experience in Haiti was that because they looked white they were automatically seen as the enemy of the revolutionaries, even though they supported Touissaint L'Ouverture. She tells him that the reason her family fled Haiti was because the revolutionaries "killed anyone who *appeared* to be white" (my emphasis).[49] Significantly, her fear that she might be viewed with hatred by the black community is realised as the

'rebels' do indeed go to burn her residence and would have killed her if Davie and Johnny had not rescued her. Like Johnny, she supports 'gradualism' and tells him, "I am on your side, but I don't want our side to move along too fast".[50] She wants change but does not want violent change. However, despite her (fairly passive) support of Bogle's aims, she is portrayed as lacking political sincerity, when later, in contrast to Davie, she is able to fit in at a dinner party where the white elite express their support of Eyre's actions.

Lucille is the first to become dissatisfied with life on the Cays and, oppressed by Davie's tyrannical behaviour, she declares he "is not my husband. He is my overseer".[51] Her dissatisfaction is trivialised through the narrator's portrayal of her as a woman who cannot survive life without beautiful clothes and men to admire her. Given the confines of this sexist paradigm, it is perhaps not surprising that her character is then written into prostitution, first in Cuba and then in Kingston. So it is that, as with other Caribbean male authors, Reid has chosen to use the stereotype of the 'mixed-race' woman as sexual deviant. She is rejected by the adult John Campbell, and dies in the 1882 great fire in Kingston, as a drunken 'whore'.

John Campbell is the only member of the family to live through both the 1865 rebellion and the eve of a new constitution. He becomes a wealthy man through Davie and Lucille's son, James Creary, who, John Campbell informs us, has no empathy with the "[h]istory o' our people". [52] James' reactionary stance is blamed on a colonial education system that has denied him a positive Jamaican identity; "for no place has been found in their English history books for the fire that burnt us in 'Sixty-five. Men ha' forgotten".[53] James Creary and his wife die in a smallpox epidemic, paving the way for their son Garth to be brought up by John Campbell (presumably with better effect than the his upbringing of James). Garth's boyhood and part of his manhood are glossed over in a few pages, and, somewhat paradoxically, we learn that Garth is sent to England to study Law, so that like his grandfather he can "talk strong but [now] with reason before the King's Bench".[54] Garth recognises that his background has been privileged: "I grew up a *buckra* boy... Really I grew up *among* my poor friends, but not *with* them".[55] He asks his uncle John the truth

behind the rebellion as he feels "[w]e have been taught in our history classes that Gordon and Bogle were devils while Eyre was a saint who only did what he did because it was necessary".[56] John replies that he was too young to know all the rights and wrongs but feels they achieved nothing " 'cause we went too far too quick".[57] Once again, John Campbell emphasises the 'virtues' of gradual rather than revolutionary change, as he believes that a better deal for Jamaicans will be won by intellectual rather than physical force, and he looks to the educated Garth as "the safety valve".[58]

Garth appears to share his great uncle's belief in 'gradualism'. Using the metaphor of 'wings' to symbolise liberation from colonial rule, he argues: "we lost them. We flapped too heavily, so mother bird clipped them. For our own good, she said. She was probably right. They would have flapped us into trouble".[59] His attitude contrasts radically with Davie's earlier 'speech' made to the Commission, and it is tempting to conclude that Garth's position reflects Reid's own attitude. Such a conclusion would support Saakana's view of Reid's *New Day* as an 'apology' for 1865. Saakana argues that "[a]t best Reid is a liberal, at worst he is a reactionary and traitor to the history of Jamaica and to its people".[60] I would argue that the fact that Reid focuses so intensely on the brutality of the British and their injustice during the rebellion, to some extent, counteracts such a simple conclusion.

However, Garth is the only character whose leadership is portrayed as successful. Gordon is hung and both Pa and Davie are symbolically destroyed as they lead their family or community wrongly. Reid's only portrayal of black leadership is also that of ineffectiveness when Bogle is shown to have lost his control of the rebellion: "Deacon Bogle is running up with his coat a-flap behind him and a-shout for quietness. But quietness is not here today".[61] Garth thus takes on heroic proportions as "a man for the glory" in the multiple roles of lawyer, trade unionist and political leader.[62] In contrast to the Rebellion of 1865, John Campbell claims that "Garth will no' fight his battle with sword, yet the victory will be longer for it".[63] Reid places Garth in the role of racial 'buffer', able to recognise the needs of both (white) owner and (black) worker. He, somewhat amazingly, convinces the estate owners in his parish that peaceful formation of trade unions is in their interests for

stabilised production, telling them that "[t]hese are days of capital and labour, not master and servant".[64] He then paternalistically goes on to organise a trade union on his own estate, thus reducing its leader's role to that of puppet.

Reid uses what is clearly semi-nationalistic comments to deny racial division within Jamaica. Particularly in the third part of the novel, when Garth exclaims: "They are my people, all of them, regardless of the colour of the skin. We are all Jamaicans - in the sun on high places or in the deep valleys heavy with life!"[65] He says, "My life is mortgaged to this dream - this dream of seeing our people what they ought to be".[66] According to Garth, the English manager for an absentee landlord, Garfield, reveals his racism because, "[h]e does no' know that here men are no' measured by the quantity o' daylight under their skins".[67] This false sense of unity is also reflected in the aged Timothy's (Johnny's childhood friend) comments about 1865 to two white radicals: "Black like me, white like you, everybody who were no' *buckra* planterman got the cat that day, for cat and the rope are made for the poor whether they be black or white".[68] Ultimately, Garth's opinion that "in our island we have proven that race is but skin-shallow and that we are brothers in the depth of us"[69] is rather more idealistic than realistic. Reid claims that in writing the novel he wanted to challenge the colonial bias taught in Caribbean history, but Reid, himself, is not an objective outsider, free from this indoctrination - whilst he may challenge it, he remains a product of it. Reid's novel testifies to his own bias towards intellectual debate, and acts as a denial of the importance of mass (and sometimes violent) protest as part of the anti-colonial struggle.

Anti-colonials and Trade Unions in the Jewel of the Crown

Like Reid's *New Day*, Ralph de Boissière's *Crown Jewel* foregrounds the anti-colonial struggle of the Caribbean population, but unlike *New Day* the period covered is the 1930s, with the explosion of workers' unrest and the beginning of trade union formation. The novel, which was started in 1935 amidst the struggles on which the novel focuses, was

rewritten in 1938 just after the novel's events have finished, then again during 1939 and 1944 and finally rewritten after Ralph de Boissière had migrated to Australia in 1950.[70] Ralph de Boissière was born in Trinidad in 1907, a descendent of French settlers who had come to Trinidad in the late eighteenth century. He is described by Amon Saba Saakana as coming "from a functionally white middle-class family of French descent".[71] Although Saakana highlights de Boissière's privileged background to suggest his separation from the anti-colonial struggles of the 1930s, according to Frank Birbalsingh, de Boissière was actively involved and "was victimized for political activities during the late 1930s, when he found himself destitute".[72]

As well as telling the story of the turbulent 1930s workers' fight for a better standard of living and a voice through truly recognised trade unions, *Crown Jewel* also tells the story of André de Coudray, a very fair-skinned middle-class privileged 'mixed-race' man, and his place within the political turbulence. It is de Boissière's foregrounding of André that Saakana takes issue with. He argues that:

> de Boissière was clearly not anti-colonialist or anti-imperialist in this novel, but his focus on the social events of the 1930s which occupy a great deal of the novel helps to create confusion in the mind of the critics, and to deflect from the principal, motivating thematic preoccupation: the attempt to come to terms with his place in a colonial society.[73]

André does become - somewhat peripherally - part of the movement for nationalism in the public sphere, whilst in the private sphere he searches for an identity as a Caribbean man, feeling alienated from those he seeks solidarity with. André's family,

> [l]ike many another old and well-to-do French family ...revolved like a satellite about the English sun. With one difference: that in the distant past the de Coudrays had got themselves a slave ancestor and their revolutions were as a result confined to an outer circle - they revolved in the moonlight rather than the sunlight.[74]

In fact, we learn that it was only André's great grandmother who was a 'mulatto', and who, according to his aunt, was "very uneducated, a mere peasant, hail-fellow-well-met with all the niggers, talking just like them...a dreadful person".[75] Her derogatory comments about her own grandmother reveal that the family have been able to disassociate themselves from their black heritage. André alone, the darkest of his family, has developed a sense of himself as 'West Indian'.

In the novel 'mixed-race' is shown to encompass more than just black and white. However, the main 'mixed-race' characters are either of African and European ancestry or ambiguously "a Spanish"; a term used in the novel to describe Popito and, to a lesser extent, his sister and his niece Eléna.[76] According to Aisha Khan this term is used by Trinidadians as a 'safe' description that is 'non-ethnic' and non-political.[77] A 'Spanish' is seen variously as a person of differing 'racial mixture' - African, Indian, European etc. - depending on the person describing. Thus, 'a Spanish' is not a static descriptive but a 'mutable' term. De Boissière's portrayal of a multi-racial Trinidad is still overwhelmingly one of an 'ethnically' divided society. Malcolm Cross argues that "[i]n Trinidad, class-based unity in the 1930s appears to have been strong enough to bridge the racial divide between Afro-Trinidadians and Indo-Trinidadians".[78] Brereton, on the other hand, points to the high level of racial antagonism revealed by the L.R.C. (Legislative Reform Committee), who chose to retain a wholly nominated council rather than "introduce Communal representation [which] would weaken the influence of the coloured and black professionals, while strengthening the middle-class Indian leadership".[79]

Trade unions were to play a major role in Trinidad's history of anti-colonial struggle. In 1894 the T.W.A. (Trinidad Workingmen's Association) had been formed.[80] Even after the 1919-20 unrest when T.W.A. leaders were victimised, the Association remained strong, and by 1921 it was "the sole representative organisation of Trinidad workers, recognized as such by the British Government and, reluctantly, by the local officials".[81]

Indian labourers faced appalling working conditions, and as Bridget Brereton writes:

> [o]n the estates, the barrack ranges provided miserably insanitary and overcrowded housing. Diseases were rife, especially debilitating ones like malaria and hook worm infestation; and low wages meant that the Indians' diet was nearly always inadequate.[82]

However, it was not until after the abolishment of Indian indentureship in July 1917 that resistance by Indian labourers against these terrible working conditions was made more possible.[83] According to Bridget Brereton, "rural Indian workers did take part in the general unrest in 1919-20",[84] and in the 1920s, although remaining a predominantly black organisation, the "TWA gained important Indian members".[85] The division between black and Indian workers is symbolised in *Crown Jewel* by the image of a lone Indian 'mowing' (cutting with a cutlass) the grass in the Savannah whilst the (black) marchers pass by; and "[t]he calmness of that scene, the indifference of the Indian to their demands irritated the crowd".[86] Later in the novel the Indians are again portrayed as the enemy of 'the (black) people' when they are the ones hesitant to give food to the marchers, and someone exclaims: "Give the people food, you stingy coolie!"[87] De Boissière's portrayal of the workers' struggle as solely black (Afro-Trinidadian) does not acknowledge the Indo-Trinidadian contribution to the workers' struggle. The involvement of Indo-Trinidadians in labour unrest has been discussed by Malcolm Cross, who writes that:

> As early as July 1934, retrenchment of labour and tasks made harder by abnormally dry weather had prompted labour unrest amongst the mainly East Indian workers on the Caroni, Esperanza and Brectin Castle estates. On 20 July 400 labourers marched in protest to Port of Spain and three days later the field manager and overseer at Esperanza were attacked and badly beaten.[88]

In stark contrast to de Boissière's image of the Indian as 'indifferent', Indians were involved in disturbances, and violence erupted spontaneously by those close to starvation.

According to Brereton, the "unrest was a watershed in Indian participation in labour movements in Trinidad, preparing the way for the 1937 riots, and it marked the beginning of radical labour politics in the second half of the 1930s".[89]

The novel's realism is highlighted by the obvious parallels between the characters and real people; André representing de Boissière and Le Maître loosely based on the workers' leader Uriah Butler. The title of the workers' organisation led by Le Maître is initially called the 'Negro Welfare'. Joe Elias, a Syrian, points out that 'Negro Welfare' is a racist title for a workers' group, and that there is a need to unite all races. Le Maître agrees to some extent, but feels that the title is justified because the workers *are* predominantly black. In fact, it was not that 'workers' *per se* were predominantly black, but that certain areas of work, such as the oil industry, were so. In contrast, agricultural workers were predominantly Indian at this time, following a lengthy period of Indian indentureship, which had brought workers in to the cane fields. In 1930s Trinidad although "oil accounts for 60% of the value of the island's exports... the number of workers in the industry is relatively small, sugar and cocoa between them employing seven times as many people as oil".[90] Trinidad was unique within the Anglophone Caribbean because of its oil industry, but like the rest of the Caribbean, it was still predominantly agricultural at this time. It is, therefore, significant that de Boissière has chosen to focus on the mobilisation of the oil workers who were predominantly black.

In March 1935 oil workers, led by Uriah 'Buzz' Butler and John Rojas, went on strike and organised a hunger march to Port of Spain to voice their grievances over "low wages, long hours, wage deductions for late-coming and poor conditions".[91] The hunger march, which is featured in *Crown Jewel*, saw Butler emerge as the new leader for dissatisfied workers. Brereton writes that an attempt to arrest Uriah 'Buzz' Butler led to national riots and strikes and the "unrest cut across race lines, and affected every sector of the economy".[92] According to Malcolm Cross, his attempted arrest also led to Constable Carl 'Charlie' King being "beaten by the crowd ... [and] while he lay injured, someone threw a paraffin lamp on top of him with the result that he was burnt to death".[93] This incident is also brought out in

Crown Jewel, with the police officer, Duke, representing King. In the novel, the violence surrounding the workers' fight for basic rights increases and the evil Duke, who murders Popito and beats Cassie until she miscarries, is burnt to death by the crowds. De Boissière expresses his opposition to violent action through Le Maître's response to Duke's murder: "[t]hey burned the man alive. It was a terrible thing!... [he was] A bad human being but still not a stray dog".[94] The narrative's abhorrence at such violence is similar to that shown in *New Day* when the narrator's opposition to all violence is expressed after Johnny sees Stoney Gut men wearing militiamen's helmets and exclaims "God o' mercy, is believe, I believe I did no' feel the horror before as now when I see that some o' them are wearing militiamen's helmets".[95] Later in the novel, de Boissière's characterisation of Le Maitre shows similarities to Reid's characterisation of Paul Bogle. When Le Maître calls for peace, he finds the movement has grown to such an extent that he can no longer control the people, whose hatred for all whites develops into violence. The British military forces are brought in, killing more, until eventually the starving strikers are forced to return to work.

In *Crown Jewel* the workers' struggle, as well as being primarily portrayed as a male sphere, becomes linked to the black workers' pan-African fervour. The black workers look to Africa as a spiritual 'home' because, according to the narrative, their African identities have been raped:

> They were reduced to accepting Britain's image of themselves, submitting to it and laughing at their nakedness. ...But what sort of man was he who accepted the thought that he was nothing? Under the laughter, in the ashes of the past, the sparks were smouldering. Behind every Chinese, every Indian, lay timeless accretions of wisdom and culture their hands could fondle and the spirit relish; but behind every Negro lay the barren windswept earth and the ghosts of a time too long vanished, too long forgotten to nourish the soul. Britannia ruled. Ruled with the chains that didn't clank, the slave mind fashioned to make men hate their own and turn from themselves in terrible disquiet.[96]

The claim that African identity has been lost is contradicted elsewhere in the novel by the reference to African-rooted religion. The above quotation does, however, show that in developing a 'mixed-race' identity for André, de Boissière feels that André's choices are between a European sense of self or a sense of himself as 'West Indian' rather than African. In the prologue de Boissière refers to the eighteenth century 'mixed-race' immigrants to Trinidad as "free men neither black nor white but somewhere in between".[97] In describing the later civil rights abuses by the British, whereby they forced the 'coloureds' to carry a lamp after dark, de Boissière points to the colonial efforts to divorce the growing 'mixed-race' population from their African heritage in order to alienate them from the black population: "[t]hus from the beginning did they [the British] urge them to rid themselves of the shadow of Africa that darkened their skins".[98]

De Boissière does not equate 'mixed-race' to middle-class, because he also portrays other 'mixed-race' characters as working-class, including Popito, his niece Eléna and Eléna's mother Aurelia. Popito, a Venezuelan, is portrayed as insecure, powerless and always struggling just to survive. Shortly after the novel opens he is sacked after hitting the English manager Brassington, whom he believes has insulted him. Popito, now unemployed, is drawn to the charismatic workers' leader, Le Maître and joins the 'Negro Welfare'; united by his unemployed status, if not his by his colour or 'race'. Highlighting the tenuous position of 'coloureds' in the job market, Le Maître tells Popito that "[i]t is no use to hope for favours as a brown-skinned clerk".[99] Popito agrees that "many clerks, who looked so superior and well-to-do, were forced to borrow on next month's pay to live".[100]

The 'mixed-race' Aurelia is clearly not privileged in any way, and must constantly struggle for survival. A self-employed seamstress, she lives in poverty with her daughter Eléna. Aurelia is exploited by the rich whites for whom she works; unable to afford her rent, she is constantly threatened by the bailiffs, who eventually clean out most of her belongings. She does not position herself politically, preferring to focus her attention on her daughter's education and her marrying 'successfully', rather than to directly challenge their

dependence on the white ruling class. Eléna, although relatively educated, has limited employment options because the banks and larger companies only employ white women. She is forced to take any job she can find and, as such, is exploited at her workplace by her Chinese employer Hoo. She tries to find a better job, but no one will hire her because she is 'coloured'. Neither Aurelia nor Eléna move far out from the domestic sphere and it is only the black Cassie who becomes involved in the workers' movement, firstly through Popito, and then more forcefully on her own, later becoming emotionally involved with Le Maître.

The main examination of 'mixed-race' consciousness is shown through the portrayal of the wealthy 'creole', André. André's internal agonising over his relationships with three women, one white, one black and one 'mixed-race', acts as an allegory for the evolution of a Caribbean identity. André's confusion over his choice not only reflects his identity crisis, but symbolises the development of a Trinidadian identity and nationhood. Association with the white Gwenneth gives him status, but paradoxically lessens his sense of confidence, as he is all too aware of her family's antipathy towards him as 'coloured'. André is fairly well-to-do and therefore has some amount of social - albeit peripheral - acceptability, but he is 'coloured' and therefore not fully part of the white Trinidadian society. He feels that he must adopt a persona, yet "all the time while going through his performance he was conscious that he was a coloured man and everyone knew it".[101] His social marginalisation by white society indicates the extremity of 'colourism', because although primarily of white ancestry André is still perceived as 'coloured'. It is only after the well-to-do English Gwenneth Osborne pays him attention that others are prepared to acknowledge his presence. Invited to the Osborne's, André reflects on his chameleon-like role:

> How could one live on two levels? It necessitated insincerity, downright dishonesty, from which he shrank. How could one, on the one hand, espouse the cause of black workers and, on the other, ingratiate oneself into the company of one's British rulers and command their respect.[102]

André's relationship with Gwenneth is a power-struggle, and she symbolises the colonial ruler: "[t]o him she was not only Gwenneth, ...she was that entire class, hard and cold, that did not understand it was crushing hearts and warping minds".[103] Gwenneth cannot comprehend André's nationalistic ideals and is offended at his anti-British stance. André's response is a damming testament to the psychological damage inflicted by colonisation on the colonised:

"I don't hate *you*, I love you and I wish I didn't! Every day you lord it over us, here, Africa, India. You hold us in contempt, you bomb us, you bayonet us, you suck us dry. You keep the top jobs. You educate us to despise and fear ourselves, to fall down before you, to speak with your accent. We go abroad to study and come back squeaking with the accents of governors and heads of departments. Those who do that are neither Englishmen nor West Indians, they're less than men-apes, puppets!"[104]

He feels that if he were to move to England as his parents wish, he would "be a spiritual nonentity, a man without identity".[105] As a 'mixed-race' man it is imperative for him to have a Caribbean identity otherwise he merely mimics others. The black Cassie warns André: "don't take on dese white people, they goin' to shit on you".[106] Through developing a relationship with Gwenneth, André seeks the easy path socially, but he begins to feel that she "was alien to his own spirit or that a void was there - this was bitter. Into his love crept a taint of hate".[107] The rise in Caribbean nationalism is, thus, metaphorically symbolised by his increasingly embittered relationship with Gwenneth. He cannot divorce himself from his affinity with the workers, and he recognises that "Gwenneth's love would not last because she was the product of a hostile world, and he could not altogether tear himself from Cassie and Eléna".[108]

Through his sexual relationship with his friend's black servant, Beaulah, André feels that there is "a giving and receiving, a oneness".[109] However, his relationship with Beaulah is also affected by a power dynamic. André feels more dominant in his relationship with her:

"[t]his black girl was the first he had touched. It was not as it had been with the coloured ones before her. Now he was all-powerful, among the gods".[110] Beaulah represents for André a connection to his African ancestry, and yet, within the confines of racist colonial society, to him, she remains socially taboo:

> Both knew a kinship beyond colour, class, beyond St Clair and all his education. Now he was torn up by the roots. She was a forbidden self that frightened him but which he longed to cherish.[111]

His dilemma over relationships mirrors his dilemma over his identity as a 'coloured' person, in a society segregated by race, where he must search for the possibility to be a whole person. He is drawn by Ben Le Maître's words which "were like rain on parched earth".[112] However, unsure of his role,

> André found himself turning his back on it all; crushed by his own pitiful insufficiency in the midst of a life so endlessly varied, so brutal, yet so alluring; so intoxicating at one moment, so horrifying the next. Where was the connection between *this* and *himself*?[113]

Although André is committed to the idea of workers' rights, his own sheltered and privileged upbringing means he is conscious of lowering his social status by associating with Eléna. Despite his reservations, André's relationship with the 'mixed-race' Eléna is far more rounded than his relationship with either the white Gwenneth or the black Beaulah. Yet it is not until near the end of the novel that André, feeling alienated from both family and friends, begins to see Eléna again. Saakana views this as André's opting "for middle-class security and an unresolved relationship of the black secret part of himself with the brown-skinned Eléna".[114] However, it could be more positively read as an acceptance of himself as 'mixed-race', because he has now rejected his initial self-consciousness "at being seen in public on such terms with a girl so coloured".[115]

André's nationalistic ideals link him to the workers, but his place amongst the workers' struggle is a tenuous one, and often he is mistrusted by the workers who feel he is a spy. Even Le MaÎtre, who recognises his loyalty, does not fully accept him and always views him as marginal to the struggle. When he enters a bar with fellow demonstrators, the other workers are curious about his place in their world so that, paradoxically, "[u]nder their scrutiny André felt conscious both of his unworthiness and his superiority to them".[116] André finds Clem Payne's antagonism towards him unbearable; "to be mocked publicly by this black worker was almost more than he could bear... [but] behind the dislike he felt for Payne at that moment there lurked an unwilling feeling of admiration for him, and respect".[117] André respects how Le MaÎtre talks to his employers as equals without being humble and looks to Le MaÎtre as someone who can "give us West Indian pride".[118] André wants a united 'West Indian' culture but, born into an elite class, is uneasy about black power over himself, and as Saakana argues, André remains "entrenched in his ambivalence and dichotomy".[119]

André's position at work enables him to gain and pass on information to Popito on strike-breakers, and when he is asked to break a strike himself he adamantly refuses. Although his refusal indicates his sense of unity with the workers, he is still not fully accepted. André feels that "Le MaÎtre's words seemed to indicate he had no right among them".[120] Popito, backed by Joe, dismisses André because of his class: "Your life is not our life, you can't live like us".[121] Later, André colludes with Le MaÎtre to exclude Joe. Le MaÎtre tells Joe, "If you had been born a negro or a coloured man it would have been different... [André adds] When you're inside, in the fire, it's different. You understand too much".[122] Le MaÎtre is 'one of the people' because of his own poverty, shown by his cramped conditions in a barrack yard; its sparseness juxtaposed with the opulence of André's home. Although Le MaÎtre and André get closer, Le MaÎtre still sees André as alien: "You could never tell with these people, they lived in a different world".[123]

André has not taken any great role in the political events of Trinidad and to some extent, as Saakana argues, the "portrayal of the struggles of the working-class and the meaning of the

struggles of the 1930s are incidental to an understanding of Andre".[124] André feels cut off from his class, but *because* of his class not completely connected with the workers; "[h]e learned once more that the loneliness suffered in being solitary is not to be compared with the spiritual isolation one might suffer from being too different".[125] André's nationalistic outlook is suggested by his comment to Eléna, that: "We belittle what is ours. They tell us all the good things come from England and America, and we believe it".[126] However, he too is a 'victim' of colonial acculturation, symbolised by his choice of Tolstoy in favour of Caribbean writers and his privileging of (European) classical music whilst he is with Gwenneth. At a party playing calypso (a music form indigenous to the Caribbean) "André stood against the wall, of it yet not with it, agitated, excited but not knowing how to take part, unable to throw off all that had bred him and let go".[127] He speaks out against the social barriers which prevent him from bringing people home, like black workers Clem Payne and Cassie; and rhetorically asks "[f]or how many more years will we be divided up like this, unable to communicate, speaking incomprehensibly or with enmity to one another?"[128] The only way André finds that he can make sense of his 'mixed-race' identity is to see himself as an indigenous 'product' of the Caribbean; neither European nor African, he argues for nationhood as the way forward.

The argument that the anti-colonial stance of *Crown Jewel* is weakened by de Boissière's focus on the identity crisis experienced by André is valid if one views André literally, because he is shown to be peripheral to actual political change. However, André is not meant to be seen as literal, but as metaphorical. What both novels have done is to use the 'mixed-race' person as a metaphor for an emerging nation, which must forge a new but also indigenous identity. André, like Johnny, shares an African-European ancestry, and his personal search for identity symbolises the growing nationalism of 1930s Trinidad. However, neither country is exclusively made up of African and European heritages. Trinidad particularly, but also Jamaica, incorporate multi-'racial' rather than bi-'racial' heritages; and whilst de Boissière reflects this through his wealth of characters, neither of the two novels acknowledge this as an important factor in their use of metaphor. Furthermore, it remains problematic to use the 'mixed-race' character metaphorically, when

in reality underneath the veneer of Caribbean nationhood lie societies divided by 'ethnic' pluralism.

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[88]Malcolm Cross, 'The political representation of organised labour in Trinidad and Guyana: A comparative puzzle', *op. cit.*, p. 286.
[89]Bridget Brereton, *A History of Modern Trinidad 1783-1962*, *op. cit.*, p. 172.
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[118]*Ibid.*, p. 88.
[119]Saakana, *The Colonial Legacy in Caribbean Literature*, *op. cit.*, p. 87.
[120]Ralph de Boissière, *Crown Jewel*, *op. cit.*, p. 211.
[121]*Ibid.*, p. 57.
[122]*Ibid.*, p. 294.
[123]*Ibid.*, p. 317.
[124]Saakana, *The Colonial Legacy in Caribbean Literature*, *op. cit.*, p. 83.
[125]Ralph de Boissière, *Crown Jewel*, *op. cit.*, p. 344.
[126]*Ibid.*, p. 52.
[127]*Ibid.*, p. 314.
[128]*Ibid.*, p. 277.

CHAPTER SEVEN

AFROCENTRICITY REPLACES EUROCENTRICITY? - THE PROBLEM OF RACIAL ESSENTIALISM

Independence was achieved by Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago in 1962 and in Barbados and Guyana in 1966.[1] This period has been referred to as a 'climactic' time in Caribbean history because "the independence decade of the 1960s... saw the break-up of the British Empire in the Caribbean, the achievement of independence by four former British colonies and the passing of political power to preponderantly black and brown communities".[2] Whilst the weakening of colonial shackles through independence was indeed 'climactic', it is important to remember that this process of decolonisation did not end the colonial legacy of racial division. In this chapter I shall examine marina ama omowale maxwell's *Chopstix in Mauby* (1996) which, set against the back-drop of the working-class struggle and the emergence of the Black Power movement, focuses on the division between Afro-Trinidadians and Indo-Trinidadians. I will also examine Jan Shinebourne's *The Last English Plantation* (1988) and *Timepiece* (1986), both of which problematise racial and cultural pluralism within Guyana from the beginnings of decolonisation in the late 1950s to the political and racial turmoil of the 1970s.

The three novels chosen for discussion in this chapter challenge the functioning of plural society within the Caribbean. They reveal that within this framework of racial segregation little or no allowance has been made for the position of the 'mixed-race' person, and whilst race continues to be seen as something concrete and immutable the 'mixed-race' person must adapt and mould themselves to fit into the rigidity of this essentialism. These novels have specifically been chosen because their protagonists' racial 'mixture' is other than

African and European. As such, they reflect the multiplicity of racial heritage within the Caribbean; a reality often neglected in Caribbean literature, which, when it has portrayed 'mixed-race' characters has tended to only portray the so-called *mulatto*. Indeed, the racial plurality of the Caribbean region has often been reinforced within the literary sphere. According to Jeremy Poynting, Afro-Caribbeans write about Afro-Caribbeans and Indo-Caribbeans tend to write about Indo-Caribbeans, both marginalising the other, or writing 'Other' in negative stereotypes, so that "Caribbean fiction tends to reproduced existing ethnic polarities".[3]

With a specific focus on the growth of the Black Power movement, and its significance to the multi- 'ethnic' Caribbean population, I will look at the cultural development of Afrocentricity within the Caribbean region. Stuart Hall argues that "[i]t is the presence/absence of Africa, in this form, which has made it the privileged signifier of new conceptions of Caribbean identity".[4] This certainly seems to be the case in the British construction of the Caribbean as solely Afro-Caribbean, as indicated by British 'ethnic' monitoring in which Caribbean identity has been confined to Afro-Caribbean, and this over-simplification has also been repeated within the academic realm.

Black Power in the Caribbean and the reinforcement of racial essentialism

Stuart Hall argues that the significance of the 1970s period to contemporary Caribbean identity is critical because:

> It was only in the 1970s that this Afro-Caribbean identity became historically available to the great majority of Jamaican people, at home and abroad. In this historic moment, Jamaicans discovered themselves to be 'black' - just as, in the same moment, they discovered themselves to be the sons and daughters of 'slavery'.[5]

Although the look to Africa and the positive celebration of an African ancestry is portrayed in the literature prior to the 1970s, it is true that with the influence of the Black Power Movement, the idea of a positive *black* identity became more focused in the 1970s. However, one also needs to recognise the significance of the much earlier Marcus Garvey Movement, which, as discussed in the previous chapter, was also Afrocentric in focus. The rise of Afrocentrism within the Caribbean region grew in response to the colonial imposition of a Eurocentric cultural hegemony. As Kenneth Ramchand writes:

> In the first half of the twentieth century, a number of broadly social and political movements took place in the Caribbean and in North America. Mutual influences cannot be ruled out, but what is impressive about these movements is the way they spontaneously coalesce around a common interest in Africa and how in each case the interest in Africa arose because New World Negroes [sic] were not at ease in societies to which they belonged, but in which they were at the squalid bottom of the socio-economic ladder[6]

Much of the rhetoric of Black Power was Afrocentric and, therefore, addressed the need during the 1970s to reclaim a non-European identity (and power base) within the Caribbean; but, because of its Afrocentric focus, the ideology of Black Power can be seen as problematic within a 'multi-ethnic' Caribbean. Writing within the American context Stokely Carmichael and Charles V Hamilton define Black Power as

> a call for black people in this country to unite, to recognize their heritage, to build a sense of community. It is a call for black people to begin to define their own goals, to lead their own organizations and to support those organizations. It is a call to reject the racist institutions and values of this society.

The concept of Black Power rests on a fundamental premise: *Before a group can enter the open society, it must first close ranks.* By this we mean that group

> solidarity is necessary before a group can operate effectively from a bargaining position of strength in a pluralistic society.[7]

The question is how one defines the boundaries of this group. In America, Black Power challenged the white hegemony, starting with the re-construction of black identity within the context of the majority white Anglo-Saxon culture. As Carmichael and Hamilton write, "[w]hen we begin to define our own image, the stereotypes - that is, lies - that our oppressor has developed will begin in the white community and end there".[8] Looking towards an Afrocentric heritage, they argue that "[i]t is absolutely essential that black people know this history, that they know their roots, that they develop an awareness of their cultural heritage".[9] Carmichael and Hamilton go on to qualify this by arguing that "[t]he ultimate values and goals [of the Black Power movement] are not domination or exploitation of other groups, but rather an effective share in the total power of the society".[10] Whilst there was also a need within the Caribbean to challenge the Eurocentric control of cultural transmission, the replacement of Eurocentric values with an Afrocentric framework did not recognise the need to encompass all 'ethnic' groups within the society.

The Guyanese historian, Walter Rodney, argued that 'race' or skin colour was the most fundamental factor in defining group identity:

> Black Power is a doctrine about black people, for black people, preached by black people. I'm putting it to my black brothers and sisters that the colour of our skins is the most fundamental thing about us. I could have chosen to talk about people of the same island, or the same religion, or the same class - but instead I have chosen skin colour as essentially the most binding factor in our world. In so doing, I am not saying that is the way things ought to be. I am simply recognising the real world - that is the way things are. Under different circumstances, it would have been nice to be colour blind, to choose my friends solely because their social interests coincided with mine - but no conscious black man can allow himself such luxuries in the contemporary world.[11]

Although he initially includes 'sisters', it is interesting to note that he later refers only to 'man' and 'himself', and therefore reinforces the patriarchal bias of the Black Power movement. Walter Rodney's own patriarchal stance indicates why he can so easily *choose* skin colour as the most 'binding' factor without also acknowledging the significance of gender. Rodney appears to encompass all non-whites in his definition of 'black', claiming a common point of discrimination. However, he goes on to argue that a further sub-division can be made "with reference to all people of African descent whose position is clearly more acute than that of most non-white groups".[12] This exclusivity is highlighted in his reference to Marcus Garvey: "one of the first advocates of Black Power... He spoke to all Africans on the earth, whether they lived in Africa, South America, the West Indies or North America".[13] Within this reference the 'black' of Black Power remains fundamentally African.

In his discussion of the emergence of Black Power within the Caribbean, Walter Rodney argues that it "can be seen as a movement and an ideology springing from the reality of oppression of black peoples by whites within the imperialist world as a whole".[14] He later writes that Black Power in the Caribbean means, amongst other things, "the cultural reconstruction of the society in the image of the blacks".[15] This is problematic, as Rodney has not yet made it clear whom he actually defines as 'black'. At times his definition of 'black' is anyone who is not white. However, he then adds that

> it is obvious that the West Indian situation is complicated by factors such as the variety of racial types and racial mixtures and by the process of class formation... Nevertheless, we can talk of the mass of the West Indian population as being black - either African or Indian.[16]

Here his definition of who is to be included as 'black' covers not only the African, but also the Indian, although he admits that there "seems to have been some doubts on the last point, and some fear that Black Power is aimed against the Indian".[17] This he strongly denies, and argues that once you are *recognisably* African or Indian you are included within

the Black Power movement. Presumably, if you are light-skinned 'mixed-race' or indeed of any other non-white 'race' you are, therefore, excluded. Indeed, he goes on to categorically *exclude* Chinese because, as he claims: "[w]hatever the circumstances in which the Chinese came to the West Indies, they soon became (as a group) members of the exploiting class".[18] He argues, therefore, that they must prove themselves (to black people?) before "they can be re-integrated into a West Indian society".[19]

Rodney further argues that because some 'mixed-race' people behaved oppressively towards Marcus Garvey it was 'natural' that Garvey should reject *all* those of 'mixed-race'. Rodney's own inclusion of those of 'mixed-race' is tenuous. He posits that the "West Indian brown man is characterised by ambiguity and ambivalence", and condescendingly continues, "but there is nothing in the West Indian experience which suggests that browns are unacceptable when they choose to identify with blacks".[20] The statement is somewhat ironic, given that it is Rodney who is doing all the *choosing*, whether it is the Indian, Chinese or 'mixed-race'. His denial of racial exclusivity in his definition of the Black Power movement remains weak:

> it is not for the Black Power movement to determine the position of the browns, reds and so-called West Indian whites - the movement can only keep the door open and leave it to those groups to make their choice.[21]

What a welcome! In Rodney's opinion Jamaica is a 'black society' (meaning African) because "[a]part from the mulatto mixture all other groups are numerically insignificant.[22] His argument that only the majority are 'significant' treads dangerously towards the fascistic. He concludes that because Britain, with its white majority population, is not a multi-racial society, Jamaica (or by implication, the Caribbean) need not develop as one either. Had he been allowed to live longer[23] he would, perhaps, have appreciated that for those so-called 'minorities' living in Britain, it is crucial that the majority 'racial' group do not retain complete 'racial'/cultural control.

Not surprisingly, other non-Afro-Caribbean people have viewed the Black Power movement sceptically. In Sam Selvon's opening address at a conference on 'East Indians in the Caribbean', held at UWI, Trinidad in 1979, he criticises the divisive behaviour of Caribbean people:

> When Black Power came into vogue, it widened the gulf and emphasized the displacement of the Indian. Black Power was never for the 'coloured' races as such. It was for the black man only. Like the White Bogey, we now had the Black Bogey to contend with. And once again, the strategy of keeping people apart, of creating division, came into operation. The wheel of history groans and squeaks as it repeats itself, but the process is everlasting, for the lesson is never learnt.[24]

In the attempt to develop a postcolonial identity, he argues that the yearning for 'roots' fails to recognise an indigenous and heterogeneous Caribbean identity. According to Selvon:

> Suddenly every man and his neighbour want to trace his ancestry, and it is not enough to say that one's forbears came from Africa or India, we have to know the exact location, and which tribe. People are finding out that they been thinking the wrong thoughts, living in the wrong place, christened with the wrong name, following the wrong creed, and want to metamorphose themselves.[25]

Sam Selvon's use of humour to get his point across should not lead one to conclude that he was not all too aware that the issue was a serious one. Selvon, in an interview with Jean-Pierre Durix, says: "[h]umour is a national character of the Caribbean people. I can't ignore it. And this, with irony and satire, compose the best medium for me in describing the tribulations and hardships of black people".[26] In terms of the Caribbean 'quest for identity' cultural and literary paradigm, Selvon argues that it has been dominated by the two main races; and that

[t]he question of identity has assumed greater importance, and in the context of the Third World the inhabitants seem to be thinking of themselves not as Trinidadians or Barbadians or Jamaicans, but as East Indian or African. I mention these two predominant races because like the Whites, God alone knows what is happening with the Chinese and Portuguese and the other elements that are sandwiched between them.[27]

Selvon, whose own parentage was mixed (his mother was Indian and white), argues that the focus on the two main racial groups' quest for an ancestral identity denies the presence of other races within the Caribbean sphere. Equally so, or even more so, this quest for a racially specific ancestral identity must also peripheralise the person of mixed ancestry, who cannot lay claim to *one* ancestral home. Selvon's frustration with the situation is indicated when he finishes off his address by criticising the fact that a Caribbean conference on the 'East Indian kept a 'low profile', saying "what that means to me is that we best hads don't talk too loud before we antagonise the black people and cause further botheration".[28]

Syncretism or Division

The 1970 Census showed Trinidad to be fairly evenly divided between Africans and Indians, with Africans making up 42.8% and Indians making up 40.1% of the population.[29] At this time university students in Trinidad, along with sporting and cultural associations, youth groups and trade unions protested against imperialism "under the banner of the National Joint Action Committee (N.J.A.C.)".[30] According to Susan Craig, the majority were of "African descent who sought to bridge the traditional suspicion, hostility and ignorance between Africans and Indians".[31] However, as Susan Craig argues, their rhetoric of Black Power and emphasis on an

> African identity was not an issue with which Indians could identify under the label of 'blackness'; and the willingness of the sugar workers to participate in the major demonstrations planned for April 21 came only out of their *class* struggle, as workers, against oppression.[32]

Solidarity amongst the working-classes, therefore, tended to cut through 'ethnic' divisions to a greater degree than in Guyana, and is perhaps the reason why racial tension and division never erupted into violent racial conflict as it did in Guyana. However, the stance of trade union organiser and leader, Tubal Uriah Butler, who argued for "working class solidarity between Africans and Indians", was not reflected within the political sphere.[33] The People's National Movement (P.N.M.) which, under the leadership of Eric Williams, came to power in 1956, had little support from East Indians and, according to Susan Craig, "said (and did) nothing to foster" it.[34] Indians responded with the formation of the People's Democratic Party (P.D.P.), which later became the Democratic Labour Party (D.L.P.) and

> [w]ith adult franchise and political de-colonization, Trinidad and Tobago's electoral politics became based on a two-party system in the 1960's, which helped to reproduce and reflect the cleavage between Indians and Africans.[35]

Although in Trinidad these same two dominant racial groups have not resorted to the racial warfare or the parochial 'ethnic cleansing' which occurred in Guyana in 1964, racial tension is still apparent in the history of Trinidad and, according to Kevin A Yelvington, "widespread ethnic violence" was, in fact, only narrowly averted.[36] This racial cleavage is portrayed by marina ama omowale maxwell in her novel *Chopstix in Mauby*, in which maxwell juxtaposes the 'birth' of the (patriarchal) Black Power Movement in 1970s Trinidad with that of spiritual womanhood, offering us a spiritual solution to racial division. The metaphor of birth is used in the novel, as the spiritual 'birth' or awakening of the black woman protagonist, Djuna, is used to represent the 'birth' of a Caribbean cultural identity. The novel reveals the inadequacies of the Black Power movement's Afrocentric stance as it failed to embrace all those who wanted to join in the struggle against a 'post-colonial' legacy of Eurocentricity,

and offers the death of the 'mixed-race' Prakesh/Alan as a testament to its failure. Despite the implausible heralding of the 'mixed-race' person as a panacea for racial division, the narrative thus offers a cogent argument against racial essentialism.

The ideal of a diversified but unified Caribbean culture is celebrated but revealed to be illusionary within the novel. One occasion which expresses this superficiality is the Jour Ouvert celebrations. Jour Ouvert is initially described by the protagonist, Djuna, as: "that mysterious annual compulsion, that birthing, that journey of the cauldron and the well, the crucible of the subconscious, back to and into and towards ourselves".[37] During Jour Ouvert, society is portrayed as a cultural 'melting pot' and, as the people celebrate their Caribbean 'birthing' en masse, it appears as if Trinidad has a united population:

> In our thousands, mixed, with each other and with visiting gurus and gunmen, pushers and pilferers, white searching foreigners, dancing hosay moons, bembeh and tassas, flutes and fools, syrians and chinese, greek, god and polyglot, we are all mulattos in the dark before dawn, all made douglas by the night, all reaching for creole.[38]

However, maxwell's imagery of a culturally and racially 'mixed' and utopian unity cannot be read as something solid, as the image is intentionally fractured by the implication that it is but a transitory experience 'in the dark before dawn', when 'diversity' will become division and separatism once again. Thus, the ideal of the Caribbean as a racial 'melting pot' remains just that, whilst in reality the rigidity of a pluralistic society continues intact the following day.

The seeming racial harmony at the Orisha Shango feast, where "Black faces mixed with brown, Chinese and Indians, Creole and Spanish and all colours of the rainbow people from which she came",[39] is also undermined by Djuna's own mistrust of the Indians' presence at the ceremonies. She "wondered if they were really part of the compound on orisha duties as workers or if they just got paid for the work".[40] According to James Houk,

the Orisha religion draws its main roots from Africa but has been shaped within Trinidad by elements from Catholicism and Protestantism. He goes on to say that:

> More recently... Hindu deities and paraphernalia were borrowed by *Orisha* worshippers and incorporated into their shrines and their worship. This has been accompanied as well by a significant influx of Indians into the religion. While it is true that *Orisha* worshippers have a great respect for Hinduism and tolerate Indian involvement, this relatively recent development has been met with passive resistance in the form of a nativistic revitalisation that seeks to 're-Africanise' the *Orisha* religion by emphasising its Nigerian roots.[41]

Djuna's initial inability to let herself have a relationship with Alan Hosein (Prakash) - whose double naming not only points to the colonial legacy of suppressing Indian cultural retention, but also to his 'mixed-race' status - reflects the racial tension which has ultimately undermined the coming together of Afro- and Indo- Trinidadians within the apparent eclecticism of the Orisha religion. She initially sees Alan/Prakash as an Indian, despite his obvious 'mixed-race', indicated by the description of his "Rast-Indian locks flow down his dougla shoulders".[42] Although they share an immediate spiritual and sexual connection when a "silver sliver of spark jumps between them",[43] Djuna experiences conflicting feelings because of his race. He is alien to her:

> But he was a Indian. Djuna was so aware that this man, with strange, slanting eyes, with Rasta locks of African and Indian dougla hair was still ah Indian, another race, another kind, though they were Orisha together, but he was basically a Indian.[44]

Race is the primary factor in defining a person so that, despite the shared sexual chemistry and spirituality between Djuna and Alan/Prakash, their racial division is fundamental. Race is thus, seemingly, insurmountable because he is 'Other' and his inner being or his 'essence' is not hers. Djuna, however, gradually begins to question her own racism, which

is described as a "deep tearing fear of slant-eyed Alan, shaking her life out of its plane, an Indian, maybe playing Rasta, she who had grown up being taught they were never really to be trusted. And yet, and yet...".[45] Still somewhat aloof,

> She held herself a little away from him, turned oblique sideways, for he was still a kinda question. Not a true, true Indian whose world she had deeply entered too with Ma Juba, but a mix-up Trini, local rasta Indian. A question, a question... But she looked out for him with a kind of joy.[46]

Djuna remains suspicious of his 'mixed-race' identity. She no longer sees him as an Indian, but now recognises him to be racially 'mixed'. As such, she feels he is *more* unknown, racially ambiguous; she is unsure how to categorise him because as 'mixed-race' he does not fit neatly into the racial 'pigeonholing' of a racially plural society. As Djuna begins to accept Alan/Prakash and become emotionally involved with him, she begins to wonder how others will react. Djuna's fears are realised when a group of black men start cursing her and Alan. The racism comes from both Afro- and Indo-Trinidadians; and, as Alan's mother tries to part them, they find that their love for each other must resist the pressures of external racism: "[t]ogether they were a meditation. But the world out there was fuckin' them up"[47].

Race is portrayed within the novel as the overwhelming factor in identity formation and one's actions are explicably based on this. The politics of rebellion against colonial oppression becomes racially rigid and essentialist:

> charging the AFRO-SAXON elites with selling dem out, charging the BLACKS who hate themselves and want to play white to stop playing mas', charging some of the INDIANS with materialism and racialism[48]

The racial stereotypes allow for no other role than that described, and even class politics is denied as everyone's behaviour is put down to their innate biological 'essence'. Djuna's

concern that spiritual signs may mean "she was to turn back to her own work more seriously and to her own kind of black people"[49] indicate that despite her love for Alan/Prakash, Djuna still thinks in terms of absolute racial 'types' or, as she puts it, her 'own kind'.

It soon becomes apparent that Alan/Prakash is more politically aware than Djuna, so that whilst she is spiritually cast as his mentor, it is he who informs her about the politics of their island. He argues that geographical differences in Trinidad affect attitudes to 'race' and tells Djuna:

> In the towns and de city dey had more prejudice, for the hayfe civile high brown and black people treat Indian selling milk and rice like dawg and so Indians dere stay away by themself, but down in the country we worship together since so much was the same thing, and some even married.[50]

Although Djuna is dominant spiritually, on a political level she is the novice; thus, her crucial relationship with the black and Indian 'mixed-race' Alan/Prakash is critically a complementary one in which each has their own strengths and weaknesses and nurture the other as two parts of a whole. As the Black Power movement grows it is Alan/Prakash who involves Djuna on a political level, and she

> understood why Prakash had to be there; such a pure idealistic man could only be political. He was so simply clean, believing that every single person should have a chance in life.[51]

Prakash challenges the racial 'purity' of the Black Power movement. His intellectual and humanitarian qualities are uncontaminated by racial division, in contrast to the ideology of racial 'purity' within the Black Power movement that, within the Caribbean, fails to fully encompass the plight of the poor and the powerless, whatever their 'race'. He foregrounds

the fact that because Trinidad has a racially diverse population, the fight for economic control must be for all, not just a replacement of one elite with another; "[t]he island had been bred in African slavery and Indian indenture and had to change itself now to serve all the descendants of pain".[52] It remains unclear within the novel as to the position of 'mixed-race' people of African and European descent, and whether they too are included in Alan/Prakash's reference to 'descendents of pain'. The 'mulatto' is described by one ardent Black Power spokesperson in derogatory terms: they "drained the country dry, sucking up to the rich whites with money and land, backing the government".[53] To the odious Jammer Green these so-called "Afro-Saxons and Honorary Whites... should all be dead".[54] However, his view is not supported by the narrative and is undermined as it is expressed by a man who had sexually molested Djuna.

Alan/Prakash's involvement in the Black Power struggle leads to his imprisonment, where he tries to teach fellow inmates the value of unity, and "[f]or some he was jes a stupid coolie taxi-driver playing black. Some were his brothers for ever".[55] As a result of beatings by the (black) police, Alan/Prakash ultimately dies for the cause. Djuna, who with Alan/Prakash had become a spiritual whole, nearly dies through grief, and feels complete again as a spiritual being and as a woman only because she is pregnant with his child. She gains strength from her knowledge of herself as woman, giver of life; "[y]es. She could now stand up. She would be lotus not stone. Her river was endless".[56] Her faith gives her strength as she proclaims: "black beginnings to this and to the birthing of the world".[57] Djuna believes that:

> It was what now was in Oya Tara to make the next trodding on of the journey, mixed forever from Prakash, who is called Light, and from Djuna Nuit Yemanja Shakpana, who is called Nut, the night sky of all beginnings, all sun energies, all moon energies of the two greatest energy centres, mixed forever and for ever.[58]

We see, therefore, that Djuna has moved from her initial antipathy towards those of 'mixed-race' to celebrating it; and it is in her child's 'mixed-race', as analogous to a racially 'mixed'

and syncretic society, that she sees the ultimate way forward for Trinidad. *Chopstix in Mauby* thus appears to hold up the 'mixed-race' person as a solution to racial hatred in much the same way that white liberal sociologists of the 1960s erroneously heralded the development of an increasing 'mixed-race' population as a solution to racism within Britain. Alan/Prakash is both African and Indian and clearly identifies with both, but he is marginalised by others and dies as a result of racial hatred. He, as 'mixed-race', cannot solve the problem of racial essentialism and neither can his unborn child. The idea that the 'mixed-race' person can somehow 'heal' the racial divide is impossible, whilst 'race' itself remains fundamental.

Indentureship: assimilation or 'alienism'

In examining racial essentialism within the Caribbean, Guyana and Trinidad are particularly significant because their large Indian populations challenge the view of the Caribbean as historically bi-racial. Given that little attention has been paid to the multiplicity of 'racial' heritage, one would be forgiven for believing that the Caribbean was populated solely by those of African and/or European ancestry. However, during the post-Emancipation period, motivated by economic greed, the plantocracy sought a new form of cheap controllable labour and began to bring in indentured labour from China and from India. This form of immigration was primarily to affect Guyana, Trinidad, and Jamaica, the three largest British controlled territories. On the smaller islands, where land was mostly under the control and cultivation of the sugar monopoly, ex-slaves had little choice but to remain on the estates and so these territories were less in need of a new form of cheap servile labour. However, to a lesser degree the smaller islands, with the exception of Barbados, where there was no Asian immigration, were also recipients of indentured labourers. In Guyana, Trinidad and Jamaica there was ample land available, and this gave rise to the possibility of ex-slaves becoming independent farmers and creating a gap in the plantation labour force. Because Trinidad and Guyana were late colonial acquisitions for the British, there had been less time to build up the slave population and, therefore, planters argued that they were in

greater need of a new labour force. In reality indentureship, by creating cheap surplus labour, was seen as a way of crippling the ex-slaves' economic bargaining power.

Chinese immigration started in the mid-nineteenth century, but lasted for only a short period: "In all a total of 17,430 Chinese came to the British West Indies between 1853 and 1884 - 13,533 to Guyana, 2, 645 to Trinidad, 1,152 to Jamaica, and 100 to Antigua".[59] Because Chinese were not seen as good agricultural labourers, Indian labour was preferred, and by the cease of Indian immigration in 1917 "a total of 429,623 [Indian] immigrants had entered - 238,909 in Guyana, 143,939 in Trinidad, 36,412 in Jamaica, 4,354 in St. Lucia, 3,200 in Grenada, 2,472 in St. Vincent and 337 in St. Kitts".[60] It has been estimated that more than a million people were brought into the Caribbean during this period.[61]

Although not all migrants remained in the Caribbean, a significant majority did, so that indentured labour, along with a smaller degree of voluntary migration from Madeira (Portuguese), Syria and Lebanon, created new levels of stratification. However, this important change in the 'racial' make-up of the Caribbean has often remained hidden in the Caribbean fiction. There are very few Anglophone Caribbean countries which have remained exclusively bi-racial in their population. Despite popular assumptions, Jamaica cannot make this claim, as the third largest recipient of indentured and migrant labour, predominantly from Asia. However, Verene Shepherd argues that "[u]nlike in Trinidad, Guyana and Suriname, the presence of Indian settlers in Jamaica did not change the essentially bi-racial nature of post-slavery society where inter-ethnic relations involved primarily whites and blacks".[62]

According to Shepherd, the evolution of the Indian community in Jamaica was different from that of Guyana and Trinidad; one reason being that the smaller numbers of indentured labourers were dispersed over a wider area. Shepherd argues that such a demographic difference had the effect of prohibiting the development of large Indian groupings or Indian 'villages', which developed in Guyana and Trinidad and, therefore, led to a greater level of

assimilation amongst Indians within the wider society. Additionally, Shepherd writes that any moves by the Indian community to maintain an Indian cultural identity was opposed by the Jamaican government, who argued that if the Indians wanted to remain in Jamaica they must become a part of the greater society.[63] According to Shepherd, during the 1930s, the majority of Indians were not involved in trade union movement and labour unrest as were the Afro-Jamaican population. When some Indo-Jamaicans wanted to join trade unions they were given a poor reception due to their initial lack of interest. Shepherd writes that:

> These developments contributed to the already acute racial hostilities in Jamaica in this period, particularly over the issue of 'alienism'. The view was widely expressed that simply being born in Jamaica did not entitle one to be called a Jamaican.[64]

It is interesting to recognise the similarities between the concept of 'alien' in Jamaica during this period, with the experience of both black and Asian immigration to the UK in the 1950s/60s where the host (white) population did (does) not accept the migrants as British and were (are) particularly hostile to those who overtly displayed a cultural difference.

Jamaica's importation of Indian indentured labourers amounted to a total of 37,027.[65] A small number compared to Guyana and Trinidad, and "despite an ordinance stipulating a ratio of 40 females to every 100 males and the higher commission paid for the recruitment of females... [t]here were few years (1892 and 1893 were exceptions) when the obligatory number of women was obtained for emigration.".[66] Thus, Shepherd argues, the "continuance of an imbalance in the ratio of men to women... led to a far higher incidence of mixed marriages than in Trinidad or Guyana".[67] Although there was a reluctance amongst Indians to marry outside their race, Shepherd writes that:

> Indian males more frequently chose partners from the Afro-Caribbean population than did Indians in Trinidad or Guyana where such unions were very rare. In a few cases in Jamaica, Indian-Chinese unions were also formed. In Jamaica these alliances were very rarely legalised according to governmental regulations, but

> remained at concubinage status.... Such relationships, legalised or not, played an important role in the process of assimilation, particularly as the progeny of such unions, called Indian coloureds, tended to demonstrate a greater preference for things 'Jamaican' than things 'Indian'.[68]

Although Shepherd argues that in cultural terms 'post-slavery' Jamaican society remained 'bi-racial', she refers to the increasing secularisation of Hindu festivals and the greater involvement of the wider (black) population. This involvement was not always welcomed, as revealed by an article written in *The Indian* newspaper in 1940:

> ...one of the largest Tazeah, in size but not in support, was 'Headed' by one who knew nothing about the Indian customs; one who was just a semi-negro and had no right to interfere with East Indian celebrations. It is a known fact that 20 or 30 years ago, no other 'race' could have mingled with East Indian affairs.[69]

The 'semi-negro' is presumably a 'mixed-race' person of Indian and African descent. As 'mixed-race' the Indian journalist argues that they have no 'right' to be a part of the celebration much less to head it, because only someone of full Indian descent can be seen as *truly* Indian. The rejection of 'mixed-race' people (of black and Indian ancestry) by the Indo-Caribbean population also prevails in Guyana. An example of such racial exclusivity occurred during the 1987 Hindu festival celebrations of Diwali, where the inclusion of 'mixed-race' women as contestants in the Diwali (Beauty) Pageant caused controversy amongst the Indian population, many of whom believed that the pageant should only be for so-called 'real' Indians.

Decolonisation or divided and ruled?

In Guyana, through the divide-and-rule tactics of the colonial authorities and the cultural antipathy between Afro-Guyanese and Indo-Guyanese (the two dominant racial groups) a

massive fissure has developed within Guyanese society. Decolonisation came about after a turbulent period in politics which became increasingly defined by racial antagonism. Following the eruption of violence in 1962 and 1964, a State of Emergency was declared twice and British troops were sent in. The colonial legacy of 'divide and rule' tactics used in Guyana, according to Gordon K Lewis, meant that "[t]he society... was more divided vertically along racial-cultural lines than it was divided horizontally along class lines".[70] The 1950s period leading up to the complete breakdown of Guyanese pluralist society, as the struggle for decolonisation becomes hindered by racial division, has been foregrounded in *The Last English Plantation* by Janice Shinebourne. Whilst Jan Shinebourne critiques the essentialism of 'race' as a divisive factor in Guyanese society, the novel also emphasises the division in Guyana between town and rural life, between middle and working class and between Hindu and Christian upbringing.

Shinebourne writes of increasing racial segregation and the division of rural communities which were once (albeit tentatively) mixed communities of African and Indian families who "had lived like one large family in spite of their differences".[71] However, according to Gordon K Lewis, there never was an acceptance of racial and cultural diversity between the two groups. He argues that "[w]hat some Guyanese nostalgically remember as the 'good old days' of racial harmony was frankly, a 'harmony' only made possible by the physical separation of the races".[72] Significantly, the portrayal of racial mixing in the novel exists on a socially superficial level rather than on a personal one, and the two predominant African and Indian groups in the small villages remain primarily endogamous.

The suggestion that interracial relationships were rare in the rural environment is reinforced when June, the 12 year old protagonist, first goes to the urban environment of New Amsterdam to start her secondary schooling. Here she is faced with a 'new world':

> The other races and other mixtures were so few in Canefields they were rare. Not here. There were many European mixtures - Lucille called them 'coloured', many European children too, some perhaps Portuguese, and several Chinese children.

> June's only previous contact with other Chinese children had come on the rare occasions she had gone shopping with Lucille in New Amsterdam.[73]

The fact that June sees the Chinese children as 'Other' marks an interesting point - that her father as 'mixed-race' Chinese and Indian, living in a largely Indian (and African) environment, chose or was forced to take on the identity of an Indian man to such a degree that his own daughter does not identify with his Chinese heritage, or indeed her own. In contrast to the urban environment of June's school, the Indian and Chinese 'mixed-race' Cyrus has been treated as an Indian within this community, despite his lack of racial 'purity'; thereby suggesting that where interracial relationships did occur, their 'mixed-race' offspring were subsumed into a relative mono-racial cultural affiliation, as a way of preserving 'racial' demarcations. June's 'mixed-race' identity is further complicated by her mother's attempts to Anglicise her daughter's cultural development. Her mother, Lucille, like the Indian urban middle-class, tries to overcome the Eurocentric discrimination against Indians by denying her own Indian cultural heritage. She constantly chastises June's use of creole and "when Nani [a sort of honorary Hindu grandmother] began to teach her how to perform morning puja, Lucille stopped her visits there and sent her now only on necessary errands".[74]

In the urban school environment 'race' becomes the primary descriptive. The narrative describes the children in exclusively racial terms, and in this way the school acts as a microcosm of Guyanese society, where one of the first questions a Guyanese will ask about someone is 'what sort of a person he/she is?' By which is meant, what *race* are they; so that however well or not they may relate to each other, they are still (initially and crucially) defined by 'race' as the primary and essentialising factor. According to Maurice St. Pierre, "the historical legacy of social and cultural pluralism in Guyana, created a framework which bred inter-ethnic jealousy and rivalry".[75] The seemingly cosmopolitan nature of New Amsterdam is peeled back to show us the division between the children, whose ultimate form of abuse towards one other is racial, and "[i]t was getting worse by the minute. One by one, they were sucked in, throwing around every racial abuse they knew, everyone

becoming a victim".[76] Janice Shinebourne argues that this section of the novel is repeatedly taken out of context by critics, "and ignores the point that after that initial conflict the kids actually settle down and relate to each other".[77] However, the impact of this section *is* so strong as to give the impression that 'race' remains crucial to identity formation.

There is no accommodation made for June's 'mixed-race' and, in contrast to her father's racial inclusion amongst the rural Indian community, she is marginalised from those who can claim a 'mono-racial' heritage. June is described as a "Chinky chinee" despite her own lack of a Chinese identity.[78] She asserts her Indianness, declaring: "I am Indian too!",[79] but feels alienated by her own 'mixed-race':

> No, she was not Indian like them, not the country girls, or the town girls, not what they called 'pure' Indian. This was what Rita Bachan was telling her, by stroking and showing off her long, clean bushy pony tail.[80]

One of the middle-class Indian parents, like Lucille, believes that education is the panacea for ending racial and cultural division:

> She said there was a lot of racial misunderstanding in the country but education could solve the problem, for example, Hindus were not backward and superstitious - she herself practised yoga and meditation and found it very satisfying spiritually; the Caribbean was a multi-racial place, it was important to respect each other's cultures.[81]

However, through the teachers' lack of interest in the divisions caused by race and class in the school, it becomes apparent that any education about racial and cultural unity is not going to take place within school hours. The teachers' own 'race' is not always explicit within the novel, but one teacher, Mr. Sylvester, is discussed derisively by the middle-class

Indian girls in the class. They describe him as: "a 'douglah', [and] a drunk... The way they talked, they seemed [to June] to feel they were superior to him".[82]

The novel depicts Guyanese society as explicitly and implicitly divided on racial lines, and each individual is expected to remain only within the boundaries of their own race or what constitutes the predominant racial make-up of that family. When June's father, Cyrus, is asked by the white overseer if June could come and play with his daughter, Cyrus' friend, Boysie, sucks his teeth and declares: "You is Chinese and Indian mix and you wife is pure Indian. How Beardsley could ask you? He should ask he own mati".[83] His comment points to the racial division within the society, whilst also pointing to a local antipathy towards the colonial class. The crossover between race and politics is expressed later in the narrative after Cyrus' wife, Lucille, comments that Boysie is "racial" (meaning racist) because he is opposed to social contact with the whites. Cyrus replies that he thinks Boysie "was really talking politics. You know how people always mix up the two. He was only reminding me Beardsley is an overseer".[84]

Guyana is portrayed as being in a state of transition as the workers become more militant in their calls for the end of colonial exploitation. The Indian plantation worker, Boysie, is determined to make the plantation he works on the 'last English plantation'; and this desire for decolonisation becomes realised by the impending departure of the white Beardsley family. With the symbolic withdrawal of the white planter class, the story ends on a positive note with the celebration of Diwali:

> On this one night of the year, the darkness was completely banished from New Dam and power of the lights gave a feeling of hope and happiness which she felt the more for the feelings of loss and dramas of the year.[85]

Diwali traditionally symbolises hope and renewal, and is often linked with the Hindu New Year, a time for making fresh starts in all areas of life and community. Within the social context of the novel it must remain the wishful dream of a young child, as Guyanese history

has made clear. Through the experiences of the young 'mixed-race' protagonist, June, who tries to come to terms with a positive sense of herself as a 'mixed-race' individual in a racially essentialised society, Jan Shinebourne successfully highlights the problem of entrenched racial division in Guyanese society.

Racial Warfare

The racial polarisation of Guyanese society became enmeshed within the decolonisation process and, according to the British Secretary of State for the Colonies, Mr Duncan Sandys, "the root cause of British Guiana's troubles lay in the development of political parties along racial lines".[86] Not surprisingly, he ignores the history of colonial tactics used specifically to create just such a division within Guyana. Maurice St Pierre, in his analysis of this period, argues that:

> the cause of the disturbances was rooted in the plural nature of Guyanese society, which produced the occupational and geographical location of the major ethnic groups and also reinforced mutually negative stereotypes between East Indians and Blacks.[87]

He goes on to argue that a change in Guyana's plural framework precipitated the disturbances, as Indo-Guyanese began to leave the sugar estates, where they had been indentured, and moved to urban areas where they now competed for jobs with Afro-Guyanese. He writes that between 1921 and 1961 the percentage of Indian estate workers fell from 41.8% in 1931 to 25.5% in 1961, whilst the percentage of Indo-Guyanese living in urban areas rose from 6.2% in 1921 to 13.4% in 1961 and the percentage of Afro-Guyanese living in urban areas increased from 29.1% in 1921 to 43.3% in 1961.[88] Colin Baber and Henry B Jeffrey cite the actual physical separation (ethnically separatist villages) of the two main racial groups as a major obstacle to integration within Guyana.

Additionally they argue that "religious difference has been important in helping to create and maintain the various groups as distinctive entities with specific values and interests".[89]

Between 1962 and 1964 there were numerous violent outbursts and racially motivated rioting, making this period of Guyanese history

> of extreme significance, not merely because it constituted another violent stage in the process of de-colonization, which immediately preceded the attainment of political Independence in 1966, but because much of the violence was directed by members of the colonized against each other".[90]

Maurice St. Pierre argues that "[t]he party's leaders had failed to remember that the divide-and-rule tactic in colonialist exploitation has always pre-disposed colonial people to fight amongst themselves rather than to combine against the colonizers".[91] Cheddi Jagan and Linden Forbes Sampson Burnham had not forgotten, they capitalised on this fact. One example of this occurred during the 1957 elections with Jagan's People's Progressive Party's (P.P.P.'s) use of the political slogan '*apanjaht*' (meaning 'support your own race').[92] Whilst Jagan went down the political path of communism, according to Baber and Jeffrey, Burnham's move towards a co-operative Republic "fitted in well with the argument of a section of the radical Black Power movement of the day which denounced Marxism/Leninism as irrelevant to the Third World and called upon the new Black leaders to adopt ideologies more relevant to their cultural context".[93]

Janice Shinebourne's novel, *Timepiece*, focuses on the late 1960s to 1970s, after the coming to power of Forbes Burnham and the People's National Congress (PNC) in Guyana. Within a polarised society the position of the 'mixed-race' person and problems of allegiance are foregrounded. The story centres around the 'mixed-race' Sandra Yansen's move from rural simplicity to what is described as the urban chaos of Georgetown, Guyana's capital city, where she goes to make a life for herself away from the limited possibilities of the cane fields. The opening, which has Sandra at a much later date

returning to a virtually non-existent Pheasant (her childhood village), signals the death of the rural community she had grown up in; a colonial past of sugar estates, where the struggle was still focused on the injustices of colonial rule. As a young adult, in Georgetown, Sandra faces a society in turmoil - politically and socially - where the old structures of class and colour are in question and where political affiliation has taken on (insidiously) a more important role. This is reflected in the symbolic ousting of the (old) senior reporters at the newspaper where Sandra works, and the bringing in of (new) inexperienced junior reporters, who either collude overtly with the new political censorship or passively accept it as the new reality.

The novel's portrayal of censorship within the media makes reference to the 1970s period in Guyanese history when the PNC, through nationalisation "gained control of 90 per cent of the mass media", whilst, according to Baber and Jeffrey, opposition and church owned newspapers were "kept on a tight rein by the regime which control[led] the distribution of newsprint".[94] One of the reporters, Paul Morgan, recognises that 'race' is an artificial construct, used politically to divide people, and created into a 'natural' or religious phenomenon, as now "[r]ace is God's word, not the doing of a pack of scamps anymore".[95] On first reading, it appears as if Paul recognises that both the main political parties, the People's Progressive Party (PPP) and the People's National Congress (PNC) are capitalising on old colonial antagonisms to win support for their respective parties, and that this is dividing people on racial grounds. However, on a closer reading, it appears that the 'scamps' he refers to are only the PNC. Morgan warns Sandra:

> You be careful what you say. You see all that violence that went on in Georgetown? The people who cause it are in power now. I not ashamed to say I frighten of them bad".[96]

Because no alternative perspective is offered by the narrative, the novel appears to portray only the PNC - the primarily Afro-Guyanese supported political party - as corrupt, and not the PPP - the primarily Indo-Guyanese supported party. Whilst the novel portrays

characters of various 'racial' backgrounds, 'mixed' or otherwise, there does not appear to be a balanced portrayal of events, and only one perspective is allowed for.

The early rural life of the protagonist is portrayed as divorced from the harsh realities of racial devision, "so that the world which raged outside, the present of race riots, local political intrigue and power struggles were viewed as fictions".[97] However it was in Wismar (a rural community) where atrocities are said to have occurred during the race riots of the 1964. It is here that, according to the narrative:

> at Wismar women had held down women to be raped - Afro-Guianese women held down Indo-Guianese women to be raped in revenge for their men preferring them, revenge against their men too. Violence was always a weapon used by one sex against the other sex, so it was inevitable it would be used by one race against the other...[98]

> the newspapers had carried explicit news and photographs about the atrocities which took place: women raped and murdered, including pregnant women whose wombs were disgorged of foetuses which were flung into Wismar River. It was said that the river was strewn with bodies and dismembered limbs; men and boys were castrated; even the aged were not spared. The newspaper spoke of genocide and decimation of the East Indian race at Wismar.[99]

This offers us one example of the blurring between fictional and historical 'reality'. Although fiction, the novel's political setting of racial division that culminated in riots is part of Guyana's history, therefore making it unclear as to whether the above is poetic licence, rumour turned gossip, or actual historical events. Significantly, although 'race riots' suggests no one aggressor over another, in the above quotation it is implied that the aggressors are solely Afro-Guyanese as the 'decimation' of only the East Indian race is referred to. Sandra is warned by her friend T that Georgetown is too dangerous for her:

He was going to remind her of Wismar 1963, what happened to Indo-Guinanese women there; he was going to tell her that they would kill her in Georgetown, like the people who were killed in the race riots there. Those fears did not bother her. If you lived by race in this country it killed you one way or the other - you either stifled in your own narrow inwardness or you engaged in conflict. There had to be another way.[100]

What is certain is that the events of 1964 have caused untold damage to racial unity within Guyana. Violence was perhaps inevitable in a political environment in which both Burnham and Jagan were content to fight their political battles using the 'racial' weapon; as Roy Arthur Glasgow writes, both were guilty of making "inflammatory speeches".[101] According to Glasgow, escalating violence led to the killing of an Afro-Guyanese couple by Indo-Guyanese in Buxton and resulted in retaliation from the Afro-Guyanese community.[102] After a black senior civil servant and his seven children were killed, and a boat full of black people was blown up, a State of Emergency was declared by the Governor, but "[v]iolence continued in the country, however, and in McKenzie, Africans drove all Indians out of the Wismar-Mackenzie area".[103] Jeremy Poynting cites only the "dreadful racial savagery largely suffered by Indian women and girls during the Wismar disturbances of 1964".[104] Simultaneously, the PPP were calling for complete relocation of Indians. According to Roy Glasgow during 1964 a total of 136 people were killed, including 34 on the boat, and 779 were injured.[105] Both sides of the racial divide were clearly involved in the 1964 'racial warfare', and yet this is not made clear in *Timepiece*.

It is probable that the actual events which occurred during this time will never be fully elucidated. Whilst some argue that police were unorganised and outnumbered and were, therefore, unable to prevent the violence in Wismar, others argue that the (largely Afro-Guyanese) "police and Special Volunteers looked on passively [while] the Afro-Guyanese engaged in an orgy of violence against the Indian community, involving rape, arson, beatings and murder".[106] Maurice St. Pierre refers to the apparent unwillingness of the British Governor to quell the violence and the "inability and/or unwillingness of the

predominantly Black police force, to intervene against Blacks.[107] Thus, as Gordon K Lewis argues:

> the very nature of Guyana itself - [is] seen by the opposing sides in completely different ways, so that while a Negro analyst can see the events after 1961 as evidence of a deliberate Indian plan of racial genocide the PPP Marxist sees them as evidence of imperialist subversion.[108]

Given the events of 1964, it seems apparent that the narrative's description of the recent (rural) past as an idyllic image of cultural retention in an environment of mutual respect suggests that the consequent racial violence was politically motivated and led, rather than something coming from the people. Race is portrayed as inexorably tied into the politics of Guyanese history and as Paul Morgan argues, "[t]hey just say Guiana has race problems. Is politician problem we have".[109] Sandra claims that along the Canje river;

> The Afro-Guinanese who remained were as close to their slave past as the Indo-Guianese to their indentured past. They still knew the names of the ships which had brought them to British Guiana. Africans and Indians shared each other's customs in a way that would be unthinkable elsewhere, and that was probably no longer possible after the race riots.[110]

However, it is worth noting that whilst customs were shared, the reference to distinct national/racial awareness of the two 'ethnic' groups implies the continuation of an endogamous pattern and a pluralistic framework for Guyanese society. The novel reveals that such an environment of 'mutual' respect is tenuous. Sandra's colleague, Paul, remembers the terrible violence and he tells Sandra:

> People want to forget it. But I tell you, worse going to happen if we don't remember how Guianese massacre one another. I don' know why they don' have a Remembrance Day for all the people that get killed in Georgetown and Wismar,

> when we observe a minute silence. It would do this country good to remember. And they should insert a clause in the constitution to say that any form of racism or racial exclusiveness is a crime. Race will destroy this country."[111]

In Georgetown, class is also shown to define identity; thus, Stamp and Bradley, who are two of Sandra's 'mixed-race' colleagues, because of their working-class backgrounds, "could not be part of the white and coloured professional and commercial middle class, although they themselves were coloured".[112] The narrative goes on to suggest that Stamp's racial admixture gives him a chameleon-like identity, one that could change 'colour' or political motivation, so that he "could play black or white as he liked since he was both".[113] The idea that the 'mixed-race' person can choose to change their racial affiliation is somewhat ironic because this affiliation to a large degree is dictated by the values of the society rather than the individual.

The paradox of racial division within Guyana is emphasised by the narrative's assertion of Guyana as a nation of 'mixed-races'. Sandra feels alienated from those born in the town; "she was an outsider, ... she came from 'coolie country', the sugar plantations".[114] Sandra's boyfriend, Son, feels that the act of defining racial inheritance is degrading; however, he then tells Sandra he is of Indian, Chinese, Dutch, African and Amerindian heritage. Race he claims is never an issue until one has grown up and sees it as a means of defining a person's being:

> My maternal grandfather was Hindu, his wife was Chinese. My paternal grandfather was Dutch and African and his wife was Amerindian. It didn't use to be an issue what race you are except when it was a jibe and it hurt, and then your mother and father, if you lucky to have one, would soothe it like so with a kiss. Later it makes your blood run cold - when somebody look at you funny and ask you what nation you are, as a condition to something. I used to be called 'Buck' at school. It make you wonder what the blasted hell it is to them. And you soon find out that it to reduce you to a little fish in the ocean - to dispense with you with one

> greedy gulp. Look at that on a mass scale. What whole races and people get overrun for.[115]

Although the novel problematises the racially essentialising bigotry of political division in Guyana, the narrative falls into the trap of defining some 'mixed-race' characters as racial stereotypes. One example of this is the narrative's description of Bradley as the 'tragic mulatto' figure:

> desperately over-sensitive, made that way because he was so unappreciated. It was easy to sit outside of him and judge him, but only he knew what he felt. People would think him strange, self-absorbed, and he was, but it was not because he did not care about others, it was because he was *battling so desperately with himself*.[116] [my emphasis]

The possibility of increased racial division is implied by Sandra's response to Son's question as to whether being of 'mixed-race' confused her, when she replies, "Not yet. But I wonder if one day it will."[117] Her response may also refer to her intended later migration from Guyana. She feels that as 'mixed-race' she is not seen as a whole person now that she is in Georgetown, and she feels that her Indian identity "is alien and [she] can't be that part of [her]self here".[118] However, she feels that she is seen as an *individual* - outside of racial definition or limitation - which to some extent empowers her. Son, in contrast, says that Georgetown does not make him "feel free as an individual. It doesn't make [him] feel any racial part of [him] is free either".[119] Sandra concludes that *race* is so significant in Guyana because "we have so many races and we don't have a philosophy to accommodate all of us".[120] Guyanese people do not fully identify themselves nationally, but rather racially and thus, according to Gordon K Lewis, "[o]n a more general level, what has taken place is in fact the disintegration of national consensus".[121]

Racial and cultural pluralism has led to division rather than mutual acceptance and respect, where the 'mixed-race' person must attempt to act the chameleon (like Stamp) in order to

survive as an 'individual' in a culturally/racially purist environment of mutual distrust between 'races'. Sandra argues that there is a difference between the urban environment and the rural, she claims that "skin colour matters in Georgetown, not in Pheasant. Class differences are very strong here".[122] The countryside is constantly held up by Sandra as a pastoral idyll, whilst Georgetown is an urban nightmare where "Georgetown people see Guiana as two countries too: the high-colour 'fair-skin' middle class and the swarthy or 'dark' working class..... I don't feel I come into it at all. I feel an outsider in Georgetown all the time. I will never belong here."[123] To Sandra, her 'mixed-race' identity as Indo-Chinese is not recognised and, thus, she feels that Georgetown will always be a 'mulatto' town. Trapped by this enforced racial ambiguity and peripheralisation, she must assert herself as an individual in a country which reinforces 'race' as the paramount signifier of a person's identity. Her complete sense of alienation is revealed when she tells Son that it "frightens me not to belong anywhere".[124]

Gordon K Lewis argues that by the time of his writing (1968) Guyanese society had become completely 'polarised'. He writes, somewhat derogatorily, that this created an environment ripe for the development of

> racial or neo-racial organizations, as each ethnic group, feeling itself defenceless in the face of near anarchy, feels compelled to build up new defence-mechanisms, which in turn feeds the habit of sectionalism. Hence the United Force as an alliance of Portuguese wealth and Amerindian 'backwardness', Sydney King's African Society for Cultural Relations with Independent Africa, the Guyana All Indian League, the Maha Sabha (Hindu) and the Anjuman (Muslim). Rudy Luck's effort to teach Cantonese at his high school indicates a possible Chinese development; while even a Black Muslim movement, which looks like a half-plausible solution in an Islamic-Negro Christian society, gets started.[125]

The aversion to multiple ancestral national identities, at the expense of a local and collective one, is expressed in *Timepiece* by the metaphorical caustic comments made by Mark Lewis about Son's artwork:

> "Drum? Sound exotic. Back to Africa or India or whatever. What next? Back to China? Back to Portugal? We got to start peddling out the trash fast for the art consumers, girl. Herd art I call it."[126]

Mark Lewis ridicules what he considers to be false national loyalties, and the displacement felt by those of 'mixed-race' serves to highlight the need for a new national identity, that would unite the population and take the place of the existing plural framework of Guyanese society which has created a stasis in which racial essentialism allows no evolution of the society as a whole.

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[1]J H Parry, Philip Sherlock & Anthony Maingot, *A Short History of the West Indies* Fourth Edition (London & Basingstoke: Macmillan Publishers Ltd., 1987 [1956]), pp. 266-268.
[2]*Ibid.*, p. 265.
[3]Quoted in Patrick Taylor, 'Ethnicity and social change in Trinidadian Literature', in Kevin Yelvington (ed.), *Trinidad Ethnicity* (London & Basingstoke: Macmillan Press, 1993), p.255.
[4]Stuart Hall 'Cultural Identity and Diaspora' in J Rutherford (ed.), *Identity: Community, culture, difference.* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1990), p. 300.
[5]*Ibid.*
[6]Kenneth Ramchand, *The West Indian Novel and its Background* (London: Heinemann Educational Books ltd., 1983 [1970]), p. 132.
[7]Stokely Carmichael & Charles V Hamilton, *Black Power: The Politics of Liberation in America* (London: Jonathan Cape Ltd., 1968), p. 44.
[8]*Ibid.*, p. 37.
[9]*Ibid.*, p. 38.
[10]*Ibid.*, p. 47.
[11]Walter Rodney, *The Groundings with my Brothers* (London: Bogle-L'Ouverture, 1969), p. 16.
[12]*Ibid.*, p. 17.
[13]*Ibid.*, pp. 20 - 21.
[14]*Ibid.*, p. 24.
[15]*Ibid.*, p. 28.
[16]*Ibid.*, p. 28.
[17]*Ibid.*, p. 28.
[18]*Ibid.*, p. 29.

[19]*Ibid.*, p. 29.
[20]*Ibid.*, p. 29.
[21]*Ibid.*, p. 29.
[22]*Ibid.*, p. 30.
[23]Walter Rodney was killed in a bomb explosion on the 13th June 1980. The Working People's Alliance and the United States State Department, amongst others, believed that the Government of Guyana was implicated in his death. It is significant that no public enquiry was held.
[24]Samuel Selvon, 'Three Into One Can't Go - East Indian, Trinidadian, Westindian' in David Dabydeen and Brinsley Samaroo (eds.), *India In The Caribbean* (London: Hansib Publishing Limited, 1987), p. 18 - 19.
[25]*Ibid.*, p. 19.
[26]Jean-Pierre Durix, 'Talking of *Moses Ascending* with Sam Selvon' in *Commonwealth Essays and Studies* (Vol. 10, No. 2, Spring 1988), p. 12.
[27]Samuel Selvon, 'Three Into One Can't Go - East Indian, Trinidadian, Westindian', *op. cit.*, p. 23.
[28]*Ibid.*, p. 24.
[29]Susan Craig, 'Background to the 1970 Confrontation in Trinidad and Tobago' in Susan Craig (ed.) *Contemporary Caribbean: A Sociological Reader,* Volume Two (Trinidad and Tobago: Susan Craig [printed by The College Press, 1982), p. 399.
[30]*Ibid.*, p. 392.
[31]*Ibid.*, p. 393.
[32]*Ibid.*, p. 394.
[33]*Ibid.*, p. 388.
[34]*Ibid.*, p. 391.
[35]*Ibid.*, p. 404.
[36]Kevin A Yelvington 'Introduction: Trinidad ethnicity' in Kevin A Yelvington (ed.) *Trinidad Ethnicity* (London & Basingstoke: Macmillan Press Ltd., 1993), p. 13.
[37]marina ama omowale maxwell, *Chopstix in Mauby* (Yorkshire: Peepal Tree Press, 1996), p. 71.
[38]*Ibid.*, p. 71.
[39]*Ibid.*, p. 88.
[40]*Ibid.*, p. 101.
[41]James Houk 'Afro-Trinidadian identity and the Africanisation of the *Orisha* religion' in Kevin Yelvington (ed.), *Trinidad Ethnicity* (London & Basingstoke: Macmillan Press Ltd., 1993), p. 161.
[42]marina ama omowale maxwell, *Chopstix in Mauby*, *op. cit.*, p. 98.
[43]*Ibid.*, p. 98.
[44]*Ibid.*, p. 99.
[45]*Ibid.*, p. 125.
[46]*Ibid.*, p. 148.
[47]*Ibid.*, p. 168.
[48]*Ibid.*, p. 75.
[49]*Ibid.*, p. 153.
[50]*Ibid.*, p. 100.
[51]*Ibid.*, p. 161.
[52]*Ibid.*, p. 162.
[53]*Ibid.*, p. 163.
[54]*Ibid.*, p. 163.
[55]*Ibid.*, p. 201.
[56]*Ibid.*, p. 224.
[57]*Ibid.*, p. 224.
[58]*Ibid.*, p. 224.
[59]Dookhan, *A Post Emancipation History of the West Indies*, *op. cit.*, p. 49.
[60]*Ibid.*, p. 51.
[61]Eric Williams, *From Columbus To Castro: The History of The Caribbean 1492-1969* (London: André Deutsch Limited, 1970), p. 350.

[62]Verene Shepherd, *Transients To Settlers: The Experience of Indians in Jamaica 1845-1950* (Leeds: Peepal Tree Books, 1993), p.249.
[63]*Ibid.*, pp. 18 - 19.
[64]*Ibid.*, p. 144.
[65]*Ibid.*, p. 34.
[66]*Ibid.*, p. 50.
[67]*Ibid.*, p. 205.
[68]*Ibid.*, p. 209.
[69]*Ibid.*, p. 174.
[70]Gordon K Lewis, *The Growth Of The Modern West Indies* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1968), p. 276.
[71]Janice Shinebourne, *The Last English Plantation* (Yorkshire: Peepal Tree Press, 1988), p. 37.
[72]Gordon K Lewis, *The Growth Of The Modern West Indies*, *op. cit.*, p. 277.
[73]Janice Shinebourne, *The Last English Plantation*, *op. cit.*, p. 61.
[74]*Ibid.*, p. 34.
[75]Maurice St. Pierre, 'The 1962 - 1964 Disturbances in Guyana' in Susan Craig (ed.) *Contemporary Caribbean: A Sociological Reader, Vol. 2* (Trinidad & Tobago: Susan Craig [printed by The College Press], 1982), p. 291.
[76]Janice Shinebourne, *The Last English Plantation*, *op. cit.*, p. 74.
[77]J. Shinebourne, personal communication, 26 July, 1999.
[78]Janice Shinebourne, *The Last English Plantation*, *op. cit.*, p. 73.
[79]*Ibid.*, p. 73.
[80]*Ibid.*, p.73.
[81]*Ibid.*, p. 120.
[82]*Ibid.*, p. 76.
[83]*Ibid.*, p. 12.
[84]*Ibid.*, p. 16.
[85]*Ibid.*, p. 182.
[86]Vere T Daly, *A Short History Of The Guyanese People* (London & Basingstoke: Macmillan Publishers Ltd., 1975), p. 305.
[87]Maurice St. Pierre, 'The 1962 - 1964 Disturbances in Guyana', *op. cit.*, p. 281.
[88]*Ibid.*, p. 283.
[89]Colin Baber and Henry B Jeffrey, *Guyana: Politics, Economics and Society* (London: Frances Pinter (Publishers) Limited, p. 47.
[90]Maurice St. Pierre, 'The 1962 - 1964 Disturbances in Guyana', *op. cit.*, p. 281.
[91]*Ibid.*, p. 283.
[92]Vere T Daly, *A Short History Of The Guyanese People*, *op. cit.*, p. 303.
[93]Colin Baber and Henry B Jeffrey, *Guyana: Politics, Economics and Society*, *op. cit.*, pp. 32 - 33.
[94]*Ibid.*, p. 122.
[95]*Ibid.*, p. 125.
[96]*Ibid.*, p. 77.
[97]*Ibid.*, p. 26.
[98]*Ibid.*, pp. 16 - 17.
[99]*Ibid.*, p. 84.
[100]*Ibid.*, p. 48.
[101]Roy Arthur Glasgow, *Guyana: Race and Politics Among Africans and East Indians* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1970), p. 29.
[102]*Ibid.*, p. 129.
[103]*Ibid.*, p. 129.
[104]Jeremy Poynting, 'East Indian Women in the Caribbean: Experience and Voice' in Dabydeen & Samaroo (eds.), *India In The Caribbean* (London: Hansib Publishing Limited, 1987), p. 249.
[105]Roy Arthur Glasgow, *Guyana: Race and Politics Among Africans and East Indians*, *op. cit.*, p. 129.
[106]Latin American Bureau (Research and Action) Ltd., *Guyana: Fraudulent Revolution* (Latin American Bureau (Research and Action) Ltd., 1984), p. 43.

[107]Maurice St. Pierre, 'The 1962 - 1964 Disturbances in Guyana', *op. cit.*, p. 304.
[108]Gordon K Lewis, *The Growth Of The Modern West Indies*, *op. cit.*, p. 284.
[109]Janice Shinebourne, *Timepiece* (Yorkshire: Peepal Tree Press, 1986), p. 125.
[110]*Ibid.*, pp. 54 - 55.
[111]*Ibid.*, p. 79.
[112]*Ibid.*, p. 71.
[113]*Ibid.*, pp. 71-2
[114]*Ibid.*, p. 71.
[115]*Ibid.*, p. 152.
[116]*Ibid.*, p. 135.
[117]*Ibid.*, p. 153.
[118]*Ibid.*, p. 153.
[119]*Ibid.*, p. 153.
[120]*Ibid.*, p. 153.
[121]Gordon K Lewis, *The Growth Of The Modern West Indies*, *op. cit.*, p. 284.
[122]Janice Shinebourne, *Timepiece*, *op. cit.*, p. 153.
[123]*Ibid.*, p. 154.
[124]*Ibid.*, p. 154.
[125]Gordon K Lewis, *The Growth Of The Modern West Indies*, *op. cit.*, p. 283.
[126]Janice Shinebourne, *Timepiece*, *op. cit.*, p. 156.

CHAPTER EIGHT

DIASPORA WRITING: 'NO PLACE FOR IN-BETWEENS'

During the latter part of the twentieth century migration from the Caribbean to Britain and America led to the emergence of Caribbean Diaspora writing which, shaped by new experiences of racism, has played a significant part in the development of Caribbean literature. This chapter looks at the way in which racism in these so-called metropoles has affected 'mixed-race' people and whether the racism experienced by those of 'mixed-race' in Britain and America has altered the way writers of the Caribbean diaspora portray the characters of 'mixed-race' people within their novels.

Racism in Britain: 1950s to 1970s

Barbara Tizard and Ann Phoenix argue that during the eighteenth and nineteenth century "attitudes to people of mixed parentage in Britain did not differ from the prevailing attitudes to people with two black parents".[1] However, in this thesis it has been shown that racism specifically targeted at people of 'mixed-race' can, in fact, be traced back as early as the eighteenth century. These specific racist views about people of 'mixed-race' are revealed in the writing of Edward Long. Long spent twelve years as a judge and planter in Jamaica but, like many plantation owners, became an absentee planter. In 1774 he wrote his *History of Jamaica*, in which, as Peter Fryer writes, he "summed up the plantocratic ideology of race for consumption in the home country".[2] As seen in chapter two of this thesis, Long's racist diatribe posited specific notions about the abnormality of 'mixed-race' people; although these notions did not necessarily argue that those of 'mixed-race' were

more undesirable than black people, people of 'mixed-race' were clearly categorised distinctly by Edward Long. According to Peter Fryer, Long's views were crucial in the development of British racism and, therefore, it seems probable that his arguments about 'mixed-race' people were disseminated by his contemporary readership in Britain. Furthermore, as discussed in chapter two of this thesis, arguments for tighter controls on immigration to Britain were grounded in an obsessive fear of 'miscegenation' and the pollution of the white population as early as the eighteenth century. This undermines Tizard and Phoenix's argument that it was the

> rise of the eugenics movement... [which] seems to have led to people of mixed parentage being seen for the first time in Britain as having characteristics distinct from, and even more undesirable than, those of black people. According to a pre-Second World War writer... it was thought that they were 'the work of the devil, that they inherit the vices of both parents and the virtues of neither, that they are without exception infertile, unbalanced, indolent, immoral, and degenerate'.[3]

The rise of the eugenics movement in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century no doubt contributed to white racist attitudes towards those of 'mixed-race' but, despite the apparent loss of appeal for eugenic theories after the brutal realities of Nazi eugenics during the Second World War, 'mixed-race' people remained stigmatised in a racist Britain. Tizard and Phoenix write that studies carried out in the 1940s "suggest that mixed-parentage people at that time suffered not only from the same double stigma as people with two black parents - that of colour and low social class - but also from the additional stigma of having a [white] mother who was considered depraved".[4]

Although, according to Tizard and Phoenix, 'scientific' racism was discredited by many scientists in the 1950s:

> The belief that black people belong to a different and inferior race, and that 'interbreeding' would harm the white race, lingered on in popular consciousness,

> and white-black marriages continued to be strongly disapproved of by many white people. A Gallup poll in 1958 found that 71 per cent of respondents disapproved of mixed marriages, and only 13 per cent approved.[5]

George Lamming, who migrated to England in 1950, wrote in *The Pleasures of Exile* (1960) that the then British Secretary of State for the Colonies, Mr Duncan Sandys, who was invited to mediate (impose colonial order) over Guyanese politics during the 1950s/60s, "would later speak contemptuously of the threat of 'half-castes' becoming an undesirable presence in an increasingly racist Britain".[6]

According to Barbara Tizard and Anne Phoenix, little research has been conducted on black people's attitude to interracial marriage or to 'mixed-race' offspring, although they do cite one researcher, writing in the 1950s, who "reported that the women recently arrived from the West Indies objected to the mixed relationships which they found in Britain, on the grounds that the white women involved were of low class and dubious morals".[7] This chapter, through the analysis of how Diaspora writing portrays the person of 'mixed-race', and through the use of personal testimonies from 'mixed-race' people themselves, aims to redress this imbalance.

Sam Selvon: writing the Diaspora experience

As Kenneth Ramchand writes, "[s]ince 1950, most West Indian novels have been first published in the English capital, and nearly every West Indian novelist has established himself [sic] while living there".[8] This first phase of Caribbean Diaspora novelists wrote seemingly removed from their immediate surroundings, and as Ramchand argues, "[t]he characters and settings of most novels by West Indians in England are drawn from the native islands they remember or imagine; the novels deal, moreover, with issues that are of immediate relevance to the West Indian people".[9] With such a focus on the Caribbean location, the diaspora experience tended to be precluded.

One exception to the above was Sam Selvon, who was born in Trinidad and was of Asian and European extraction. In his novel *The Lonely Londoners* (1956) he foregrounds the migrant experience in the cold, bleak and polluted setting of late 1950s London, where the newly arrived had to survive both racism and poverty. Selvon does not highlight the racial background of his characters, except for Bart who is singled out as 'mixed-race', and is described as not having a strong identity; "[t]hat is to say, he neither here nor there, though he more here than there".[10] According to the narrator, Moses, in defending himself against British racism, Bart "like a lot of other brown-skin fellars who frighten for the lash, he go around telling everybody that he is a Latin-American, that he come from South America."[11] In Bart's attempt to 'pass' (not as white, but somebody other than West Indian) he tries to separate himself from the 'boys' if they are "too black", but when his attempts at passing fail, and he receives the same racism from whites, "Bart boil down and come like one of the boys".[12]

Although in *The Lonely Londoners* only the 'mixed-race' character is portrayed by Selvon as trying to hide his 'ambiguous identity', in Selvon's 1979 opening address at the *'East Indians in the Caribbean'* Conference, he makes several comic references to 'passing' as a survival technique. He refers to the Indo-Trinidadian, who couldn't get a room in England until he pretended to be from India. Then he points to the Indians who, after the Notting Hill riots, "started to sport saris and turbans in case they were mistaken for Blacks. Ironically enough, when the scapegoat changed later on from the immigrant to Paki-bashing, some of them forsook their national garments in favour of collar and tie".[13] When the English started to blame "the poor Jamaican for everything... small-islanders were no longer shame-faced to say they were from St. Kitts or St. Vincent, and some suddenly remembered that they were not from an island at all but one of the Latin-American countries".[14] Selvon concludes that "the greatest irony was that to the English, as long as you were not white you were black, and it did not matter if you came from Calcutta or Port-of-Spain".[15] His conclusion is shared by Anne Wilson, author of *Mixed Race Children: A*

Study of Identity, who argues that "the white/non-white distinction was the *primary racial categorization* of British society".[16]

Selvon recognised that white racism was directed towards all non-whites, whether 'mixed-race' or not. White racism towards those of 'mixed-race' is referred to towards the end of the novel, when Moses talks about the 'mixed-race' children of one of his friends who, from the time they are old enough to go to school, must face the racist abuse of white children "calling them darkie".[17] After Bart's engagement to a white woman, she takes him to meet her family but her father throws him out of the house; despite Bart's attempts to pass for Latin American, the father still rejects him. Significantly, the father's racism stems from his fear of having 'mixed-race' children as part of his own family; thus, we are informed by Moses that the "father want to throw Bart out the house, because he don't want no curly-hair children in the family".[18]

Fears of interracial mixing and the resultant offspring have remained at the core of twentieth century racism, and according to Susan Benson, during the late 1950s and 1960s the British press became an arena for these anti-'miscegenation' feelings. Much coverage was given to:

> those of the various politicians who, between 1964 and 1968, deployed a fear of miscegenation in their argument for tighter immigration controls.
>
> Newspapers were also prepared to publish gloomy letters from the public on the same theme. Such epistles, often combin[ed] popular interpretations of the doctrines of scientific racism with a crude and unreflective chauvinism.[19]

In 1963 the Assistant Secretary to the British Medical Association was reported to have urged against interracial unions in order to remove "the fears of mixed marriages resulting in children of mixed blood that are becoming an increasing problem".[20]

In *Moses Ascending* (1975), Sam Selvon's sequel to *The Lonely Londoners*, Selvon continues his narrative about life in Britain. Set in the 1970s, it foregrounds the Black Power movement and makes reference to the new influx of Asian migrants to Britain. The protagonist's own antagonism and reluctant cynical support of the Black Power movement reflects Selvon's own hesitancy about the movement, mentioned in the previous chapter of this thesis. Moses' reduced number of sexual exploits with white women is perhaps indicative of the times in which *Moses Ascending* was written. When, according to Tizard and Phoenix, with the rise of the Black Power movement in the 1970s, "many black people considered that sexual relationships with white people represented a denial of black identity, and the issue was much debated in the black press".[21] However, in this novel there is a complete absence of comment about the position of 'mixed-race' people, despite the fact that by the time of Selvon's writing, following the first wave of post-war Caribbean settlers in the 1950s, there was a growing minority of 'mixed-race' children.

Sam Selvon completed his Moses trilogy with *Moses Migrating* (1983). The story focuses on Moses' disillusionment with his life in London, and his half-hearted return to his birth place, Trinidad. Selvon casts Moses as an ironic 'patriot' of the 'Motherland', whose genuine attempts to support Britain in his representation of Britannia at the carnival are, of course, ironic, and his success is due to the audience's belief that Moses is mocking, rather than loyally supporting, Britain. The ironic treatment is completed by his re-entry to Britain, his home of nearly 30 years, with British immigration querying his right to return.

During Moses' sojourn in Trinidad he falls 'in love' with Doris; an orphan like himself, she is also raised by his "Tanty" in the slums of Port of Spain. Moses revels in her beauty, which is seen by him as a direct result of her mixed heritage. He muses:

> I will say one thing for the pot-pourri mixtures of races that populate the island, sometimes out of the brew you get a species call high-brown, and the females of that concoction is some of the most beautiful creatures in the world, a glorious

> composition of sperms and ovaries that create the best of the first, second and third world.[22]

Doris thus exists as a metaphor for the Caribbean, as a supposed 'melting-pot' of racial and cultural influences, and Moses' apparent love for her symbolises his love of an idealised Trinidad where racism and racial difference play no part. His love of both proves to be short-lived, and shortly after his almost colonial 'conquest' of Doris, he returns to England.

Although Selvon broke the mould of 'looking back' with his Moses trilogy, his first novel *A Brighter Sun* (1952), published shortly after his arrival in Britain, is set solely in Trinidad against the backdrop of the Second World War and the 'invasion' of Americans to 1940s Trinidad. Reference is made to Trinidad as a multi- 'ethnic' country in which Indians, Chinese, Blacks (creoles) and whites live. But rather than a Trinidad idealised as a harmonious 'melting pot' through the expatriate rose-tinted vision of Moses, in *A Brighter Sun* racial division is ever-present. Racism is primarily shown by Tiger and Urmilla's Indian families' opposition to their growing friendship with their black neighbours, Rita and Joe. Urmilla's mother's racism is so virulent that she cannot even bear for Rita and Joe's adopted son, Henry, to touch her grandchild:

> "Is I who pinch him, that is why he cry," Urmilla's mother said. "Nigger boy put he black hand in my *betah* baby face! He too fast again!"[23]

The inherent racism in Trinidadian society is revealed by the school children's name calling. Rather than challenging the racism of their parents and the wider community, their part in the racial abuse of one another reinforces racial stereotypes and their learned sense of otherness:

> "Chinee does eat can an' dog!"
>
> "Nigger does smell stink wid persperation!"
>
> "Coolie people does eat wid dey hands!"

> It became a general shouting fray. Everybody put their hands to their ears to express indifference to what the others said. A white-skinned girl, dressed neatly with a blue ribbon in her hair, was called, "Whitey cockroach!"
>
> She retorted, "Black tar-baby!"[24]

Tiger's Indian friend Boysie and his black girlfriend are confronted by the racial antagonism of Trinidadian society and must defy the "stares of the deep-rooted Indians":

> "Look at dem," he used to say, "dey so stupid, is as if Ah committing ah crime. Girl, yuh happy?" and when Stella nodded- "Well, I happy too. Is why everbody can't live good together?" ....and whenever he saw a couple of different nationalities he used to hail out to them and tell Stella that that was they way to live, especially in Trinidad.[25]

Boysie's call for an increase in interracial relationships possibly reflects Selvon's own views, as a result of his experiences of racism in 1950s London, when the relationships between the predominantly male influx of Caribbean migrants and white English women were particularly targeted by white racists. However, Selvon, even prior to his move to England, felt part of a racially mixed environment and as Susheila Nasta writes, "[f]rom an early age, he identified with the multi-racial world of modern Trinidad".[26] It is significant that in Selvon's first novel, set entirely in Trinidad, racial divisions are highlighted, whereas in his following Moses trilogy, which includes, *The Lonely Londoners, Moses Ascending* and to a lesser extent *Moses Migrating*, the racial division between the Caribbean men is of less significance. This is particularly so in the first two novels of the trilogy, and reflects Selvon's recognition that in Britain all West Indians were equally discriminated against, so that the colonial legacy of any colour hierarchy in the Caribbean meant nothing in Britain.

Racism in Britain: 1980s to 1990s

According to the research carried out by Phoenix and Tizard, white British attitudes towards interracial relationships by the 1980s and early 1990s had changed little. In 1987 the British Social Attitudes Survey found that 50 per cent of white people were still opposed to interracial marriage. Participants in the survey were asked whether and how much they would mind if a close relative was to marry someone of West Indian origin, 27 per cent minded 'a lot' and 23 per cent minded 'a little'.[27] A Runnymede Trust survey carried out in 1991 seems to show less opposition, with 31 per cent of white people agreeing that 'people should marry only within their own ethnic group' and 58 per cent disagreeing.[28] However, it is important to note the significant difference in the question posed in the 1987 survey to the 1991 survey. The first survey appeared to reveal more opposition by white people because the question was not generalised; it specifically asked about objections to interracial marriage within their *own family.* Therefore, the 1991 survey did not reveal a percentile improvement of attitudes, although it did reveal that younger people were far less likely to oppose interracial marriage, than those aged fifty-five and over.[29]

When 'mixed-race' people are given a voice it appears that (certainly in the 1980s) nothing much has changed in terms of their experiences of racism. Testimonies highlight the fact that for 'mixed-race' children racism was not limited to the wider community but often came from their immediate (usually white) families. One such testimony asks poignantly: "What can you do when half your family's white, and none of them wants to know you?".[30] Her sense of isolation is further compounded with her experience of rejection from the black community, and even her black friends refer to her as a "half-breed".[31] Thus, for her and her siblings, the quest for identity becomes a difficult balancing act between the polarised cultures of Black and White.

In *The Heart of the Race*, Beverley Bryan *et al*, writing in the mid 1980s, seem optimistic about the end of division amongst people of African heritage. They argue that:

> Already we have begun to demand redefinitions of our understanding of blackness, rejecting divisive terms like 'half-caste' and challenging the confusions which still survive in our community about mixed race.[32]

However, they provide no evidence to support their optimism, and the personal testimonies provided by 'mixed-race' people in their book would suggest otherwise. One such testimony offered by a 'mixed-race' woman refers to the double-edged racism experienced by 'mixed-race' people in England:

> You've got the racist attitudes of your so-called family - in my case, my mother's own unacknowledged racism - and all the self-hatred that can lead to... And if you're around Black people, there's the labels like 'half-breed' and 'half-caste' which single you out as someone who doesn't really belong there either, even if you've got all the physical credentials".[33]

She feels, however, that despite the fact that white racism encompasses all black people, whether 'mixed-race' or not, to Black people (who are not 'mixed-race') colour is still a divisive issue. She argues that "what that means for people of mixed race is that you often have to 'prove' your blackness because I suppose other Black people suspect you of having mixed loyalties".[34] She goes on to argue that, although in the Caribbean 'mixed-race' people may have been used "as a kind of buffer by the whites and allowed to move up in society", in Britain, "if you're not white in this society, no matter how fair you may be, you are going to have to deal with racism".[35]

New Diaspora writers in Britain

The simplified version of Caribbean history, discussed in chapter four of this thesis, has filtered down to inform popular conceptions of the 'mixed-race' person, who has continued to be stereotyped as the oppressor of black people within colonial society, and often

remains defined by this myth within contemporary Diaspora writing. From the 1980s there has been a dramatic increase in (published) writing from Caribbean women, some of whom have lived outside the Caribbean since the 1950s and, therefore, have substantial experience of racism within Britain. In this section I shall begin with a look at Vernella Fuller's novel, *Going Back Home* (1992). This will be followed by an analysis of three of Beryl Gilroy's novels; *Frangipani House* (1986), *Boy-Sandwhich* (1989), and *In Praise of Love and Children* (1996). I will finish this section with an examination of two novels by Joan Riley; *Romance* (1988) and *The Unbelonging* (1985). In all of these novels the diaspora experience is centralised, and there is a particularly strong focus on the theme of families divided by migration.

In *Going Back Home,* Fuller explores the diaspora experience of two generations of one family. The father longs to return to Jamaica which, despite his migration, he still feels is his only home. The mother, in contrast, believes that they have fought for a right to remain in England, the birthplace of their two daughters. The older daughter, Joy, sides with her father; after visiting Jamaica she also sees it as her 'true' home, and the novel ends with her return there. The younger daughter, Esmine, does not share her sister's sense of belonging to Jamaica, and feels England is her only home. In each case, their respective closeness to one parent has affected their sense of place.

In addition to the experiences of Esmine and Joy the novel also tells the story of the 'mixed-race' Janet who slips into apparent madness after her sense of self worth is totally destroyed by her tyrannical father. She, with the help of Esmine and Joy, must find her own space in the world in order to escape from her father's oppression. Janet occupies an odd space within the novel; she is neither central, nor is she completely peripheral, as five chapters are seen, albeit within the constraints of an omniscient narrative, through her frame of reference. Her mother's racial identity is implied as 'mixed-race' in the description of her having "plump red skin".[36] However, Joy links Janet's physical appearance to her father, and "Joy could see where Janet got her pale complexion and grey eyes, but that was where the resemblance ended".[37] Janet's father is portrayed as cruel and devoid of

paternal feelings. As a Pastor he is driven by his own narrow view of what is good and what is sinful and will not allow his daughter her own identity. Joy, who instantly dislikes him, primarily bases her dislike on her perception of his status as 'mixed-race'. She decides that *because* of his "pale complexion" he would automatically have had an easier life than her own father:

> He would have been proud of his fair skin. But he should be rejecting what his paleness stands for. All it proved was that a foremother had been raped by a slave-owner. How *could* he *feel* pride in her degradation and shame? They should *remember*, Joy thought - be angry and militant. But instead they boast. How *backward* they are.[38]

Joy's assumptions about his 'mixed-race' identity are grounded in the premise that his being of 'mixed-race' proved an ancestral rape. In fact, given the seemingly modern context of the novel, despite Joy seeing herself as black and Janet's father as 'mixed-race', they are equally likely to share a similar history. His 'pale complexion' does not *prove* anything other than that he is of 'mixed-race' - which could have resulted from an immediate heritage rather than a distant one. Joy further extends her assumptions about Janet's father to all 'mixed-race' people, for it is 'they' whom she goes on to refer to, making a sweeping assertion that all 'mixed-race' people are somehow corrupted and 'boast' about themselves *because* of their 'mixed-race'. In Joy's opinion 'mixed-race' people should forever carry the so-called 'degradation' and 'shame' of their ancestry as 'mixed-race' people. She thus places the 'mixed-race' person in an impossible position in which they are not allowed to have any sense of self worth, for to feel 'pride' in themselves as individuals is to collude with a brutal colonial history. Joy's assumptions about 'mixed-race' people are never challenged within the narrative, so that, coupled with the portrayal of Janet's father as an odious character, a stereotyped image of the 'mixed-race' person is perpetuated. The image of Janet's father as fixed in colonial history becomes even more apparent during his sermon when he tells *his* congregation "I have a responsibility as your pastor and *overseer*" [my emphasis].[39] His almost demonic and violent behaviour towards

Janet, interpreted through Joy's image of him, becomes inexorably intertwined with his racial heritage. Neither Janet nor her mother offer us a positive alternative to the cruelty of Janet's father. Janet's mother silently colludes with her husband's oppressive behaviour, whilst Janet herself fulfils the stereotypical role of the mentally unstable 'mixed-race' person.

Beryl Gilroy, like Sam Selvon, George Lamming and other writers, migrated to England in the 1950s, but her first novel, *Frangipani House* (1986), was written much later than theirs. Like many Diaspora writers, she foregrounds the Caribbean; however, her focus on the personal effects of migration, clearly mark *Frangipani House* as a Diaspora novel. Gilroy effectively unravels the complexity of the migration experience and examines its impact on the Caribbean family. With a particular focus on the mother/daughter relationship, she tells the story of Mama King, who is placed in the stifling confines of an old people's home by her migrated children. Beryl Gilroy writes about the loss of family and family division, as daughters migrating must leave grandmothers and aunts to care for their children, only to return and reclaim them and thus cause further separations.

Beryl Gilroy writes that Mama King "expresses herself in a series of virulent ravings against the Matron and Frangipani House".[40] Mama King's relationship with the owner of Frangipani House thus exists on a purely oppositional level; and Gilroy's portrayal of the 'mixed-race' Olga Trask becomes significant because in this role she is effectively cast as a form of modern day overseer, whose harsh and dictatorial approach to running the home prevents Mama King from existing as a free woman within its confines. The narrative describes Olga Trask as a

> honey-brown predator of a woman, short and crisp, with blue-grey eyes and a full head of course black hair. True to history there had been a rampant European among the women of her tribe and it showed in the shape of her nose, and in the eager, seeking hands that would confiscate the copper pennies on the eyes of a corpse.[41]

As a racially 'mixed' woman she, like Janet's father in Fuller's novel, is biologically fixed in history - the conqueror/colonial 'trait' for greed has been inherited and her personality is defined and restricted to her 'racial' identity; she is "insatiable for power".[42]

The initial portrayal of Olga Trask as inherently evil is softened later in the story when the narrative reveals that she was born out of her mother's desire to 'whiten' her family-line; a mother who then sold her daughter into a loveless marriage for her own financial gain. The narrative becomes more sympathetic towards Olga Trask, who now appears lonely and depressed. Mistrustful of men's intentions towards her as she feels that they are only interested in her colour:

> Bubble Elder admired her body - mostly its golden colour....She was sure that he would like to lick her the way the dog did. That way he would worship the colour of her skin.[43]

Despite the fact that the narrative gradually begins to empathise with Olga Trask, she is still defined completely by her 'mixed-race'. Firstly, as a symbol of Guyana's oppressive colonial past and, secondly, she is stereotyped as the 'mixed-race' person born from an 'unholy union'; ultimately she is fixed as a tragic victim of her mother's greed. Olga Trask is trapped by her body, by her colour and by her 'mixed-race', unable to let herself be loved, she is convinced that men desire her only as some sort of sexual/racial fetish.

In Beryl Gilroy's second novel, *Boy-Sandwich* (1989), themes of age and loss of independence are again effectively explored, as are the experiences of migrations between the Caribbean and the so-called 'motherland'. The story opens in Britian, with the narrator's grandparents surrounded by racist thugs and police as they are forcibly evicted from their home and must enter the limbo of an old people's home, where they become dependent on the often negligent and cruel 'carers'.

The narrator, Tyrone, informs us that his grandparents were the only Caribbean people there; the other inhabitants are all white, with the exception of

> Belladora, a woman of mixed race who would change anything that would 'guarantee the extraction of coloured blood from my veins!' Those were her own words.[44]

Later, after singing a jazz song Belladora disowns jazz as too 'black' for her, angrily telling Tyrone:

> They forced me into blackness. I wanted to be a person. First they made me an issue. Then they made me a problem.[45]

The portrayal of Belladora, as a British born 'mixed-race' woman, contrasts with the image of the Caribbean 'mixed-race' Olga Trask in *Frangipani House*. This contrast reflects a shift in how 'mixed-race' people are characterised within the Diaspora novel, where there is a recognition that 'mixed-race' people are also 'victims' of racism. We learn that Belladora's mother was English, her father an African sailor, and that "[s]he experienced a great deal of racial prejudice. At school, at work. In life".[46] We also learn later in the novel that she had been abandoned by her own mother. Belladora's experiences of racism, including that from her own mother, reflect the personal testimonies by 'mixed-race' people quoted in Bryan *et al, The Heart of the Race: Black Women's Lives in Britain* (1985). Like Tyrone's grandparents, she has been confronted by a large degree of racism from the wider white community; in addition, she has faced racism from her own (white) family, which has led to self-hatred, expressed through her constant attempt to deny her own black heritage. Beryl Gilroy manages to highlight the double racism experienced by many 'mixed-race' people born in Britain; however, Belladora's portrayal as doomed by her own *psychological* difficulty in accepting her 'mixed-race' remains a stereotype of the 'tragic mulatto' figure, whose self-hatred is rooted in a biologised notion of 'blood'.

As well as facing racism from white people, 'mixed-race' people growing up in Britain have also cited experiences of racism from Black people. Black racism towards those of 'mixed-race' is foregrounded in Beryl Gilroy's *In Praise of Love and Children*. The protagonist, Melda Hayley, arrives in 1950s Britain to discover that her brother, Arnie, has a white German girlfriend. Horrified by this, she warns him against an interracial relationship which produces 'grey' children, angrily telling her brother "[w]e are black. Black and white make grey."[47] Her use of the term 'grey' reminds us of the 'grey' toto in Vic Reid's *The Leopard*, (see chapter two of thesis). Melda remembers her own 'mother' disliking a 'mixed-race' boy, and later when she finds out that Arnie's girlfriend, Trudi, is pregnant, she is furious with Arnie: "[a] child! Arnie, you mad? A child with Trudi. A child who will hate its black half?".[48] Melda's presumption about the child's identity reflects the stereotype of the 'mixed-race' person as unable to accept their black identity.

Through Melda's childhood memories, we learn of the 'mixed-race' Mr Walker who is portrayed as a lecherous and paedophilic man; he is described by Melda as a "lizard... while his face portrayed the worst features of the races which he contained".[49] We learn that he attempted to rape Melda; it is, therefore, not surprising that he is vilified by the protagonist. However, although his racial heritage should be seen as unconnected with his misogynistic actions as a rapist, it *is* linked when, after his attempted rape of Melda, he is described by the yard women, as a "red dog!"[50] Coupled with Melda's description of him as 'containing' the 'worst' of each race, one is given the impression that his depraved behaviour is as a direct consequence of his 'mixed-race'.

Being of 'mixed-race' is only portrayed as problematic when resulting from black and white parentage. It is not until half-way through the novel that we (and the protagonist, Melda) learn that her father is 'half' Indian. This is treated as unimportant, and is only mentioned by the father as he traces his daughter's features. In contrast to the *mulatto* Mr Walker, who represents the 'worst' of each 'race', Melda's father says "I got blessings from both - my bones from my pa and my flesh from my ma".[51] This dichotomy reflects the theories of hybrid degeneracy which posited that close racial 'crosses' were sometimes desirable,

whilst those of so-called disparate races – read African and European – were prone to degeneracy. However, the notion that those of 'mixed-race' inherited racial 'faults' is also reiterated in Beryl Gilroy's novel, *Gather The Faces* (1996) when reference is made to the early death of the mother of the protagonist's fiancé. We are told "[b]eing half-Amerindian and half-African she had, they said, a 'weak' side".[52]

Melda becomes a full-time foster mother, and very briefly cares for a 'mixed-race' baby. She is told by the social worker:

> Her father won't have the wee black thing in the house. It's like it was Beelzebub himself. The girl's mother said that touching it was like touching a monkey. I'm sure they'd kill it, given half the chance.[53]

Melda's black fostered son, Boscoe, is glad when the baby leaves and tells Melda: "I'm glad he won't be staying with us. This is a house for black people. Only his hair is black".[54] Melda herself, full of hate for white people, whom she indiscriminately holds responsible for the loss of her father through economic hardship, also rejects 'mixed-race' children. Her hatred is felt by her brother's 'mixed-race' children, who ask: "[w]hy do you hate us?... You don't look very nice in your eyes".[55] Trudi accuses Melda of racism: "You are prejudiced! You have colour in your head like a disease! You are sick with hatred of those of us who are white".[56]

In speaking about her reasons for writing, Beryl Gilroy says: "I am content to think that I have drawn a good enough picture of contemporary reality. I write fact-fiction."[57] One can argue that Melda's admission that she cannot accept Trudi or her children reflects the testimony offered by 'mixed-race' people about their experiences of a double-edged racism and, therefore, fulfils Beryl Gilroy's claim. However, apart from the voices of the white Trudi, and briefly of Trudi's 'mixed-race' children, Melda's racism towards those of 'mixed-race' remains unchallenged within the novel, and therein lies the problem. Although the narrative refers to Melda's experience of abuse by the 'mixed-race' Mr Walker, it is not

made clear within the novel as to whether this has caused her psychological damage and directly affected her attitudes to 'mixed-race' people in general. Furthermore, because the novel is written in a seemingly sympathetic first person narrative, Melda's prejudices against those of 'mixed-race' are given a certain legitimacy. The problem, therefore, is whether Gilroy's novel is merely reflecting 'contemporary reality' or, by omission, creating it.

Contemporary reality and the Caribbean migrant's experience of racism in Britain are explored in the novels of Joan Riley, who positions the experiences of Black women centre stage as they struggle to find a positive identity for themselves and overcome the racism and sexism that are a daily part of their lives. The sense of realism is heightened in Riley's novels by what Isabel Carrera Suárez refers to as their 'contextual explicitness'; interweaving real events and real places into the lives of her characters. These protagonists are argued by Suárez to be "paradigmatic of the experience of West Indian immigrant women in England".[58] However, in looking at *Romance* (1988) and *The Unbelonging* (1985), two novels written by Joan Riley, it seems that the myths generated about those of 'mixed-race' within the Caribbean context have been retained by those migrating. As such, Joan Riley, as Caribbean Diaspora writer, writes not only within the contemporary space of white racism, but also through a maze of learned fallacies, passed down through the generations, about the biologised 'mixed-race' person. Through the use of both omniscient and first person narratives the novels discussed in this section all in some way perpetuate stereotypes of 'mixed-race' people. Although it is often difficult to determine whether a novel's narrative reflects the views held by the novelists, because the stereotypes of 'mixed-race' people remain unchallenged within the novels, the impression is given of authorial endorsement; fiction or 'fact-fiction', as Gilroy refers to her writing, becomes (a fantasised) *fact*.

The theme of black hatred towards whites, and opposition towards interracial relationships, is explored by Joan Riley in her novel *Romance* (1988) in which she writes about the experiences of Desiree and Verona, two black sisters living in south London in the 1980s. Desiree is staunchly anti-white; a response to the racism of British society which still

oppresses black people, criminalises her friend's son, and prevents her husband from receiving deserved promotion. Verona, having been raped by her sister's black boyfriend when only thirteen, hides herself in her fat and maintains only brief and furtive sexual relationships with unsuitable white men. Unable to deal with the trauma of her rape, she lives her world through romance novels, and weaves fantasies around the (inadequate) white men she is with. When she becomes pregnant, it is only through her white boyfriend Steve's violent and racist response that her 'eyes are opened'. He assaults her and tells her:

> 'I don't want no black bastard calling me Dad,' he had told her with cruel frankness, digging his fingers into her scalp through her short hair".[59]

His attitude represents the hypocrisy of a racism that accepts a certain level of social interaction between the so-called disparate 'races' and yet rejects the idea of the 'Other' as part of one's own self or family. Verona feels isolated because she knows that her own family and friends are also against racial 'mixing':

> Des and Mara were always talking about mixing the races and how bad it was, and Verona agreed that black people shouldn't be forced to take sole responsibility for the children just because white people rejected them.[60]

Verona hides herself away from her sister Desiree, and it is through their mutual friend Mara that they are brought back together, but when "Verona picked up the child with a defiant look ...Desiree stifled the sharp dismay she felt".[61] The painful image of rejection from Desiree towards her nephew solely because of his 'mixed-race' is portrayed when Desiree reluctantly holds her sister's baby:

> Desiree couldn't condemn her or the child, and, in time, maybe she might even learn to accept it, conquer the sharp sense of disillusion so strong in her just now.[62]

Her response epitomises the view held by herself and her friend, who both see the 'mixed-race' child in purely negative terms, as something barely tolerable, but which should not really exist. Desiree accepts her sister's 'failing' only by viewing it as a response to her rape by the black Ronnie. Verona chose white men as a psychotic reaction to her rape by a black man; when her white boyfriend assaults her, Verona can acknowledge that violence against women is not racially specific and she swears never again, as she is released from her unreal desire for white men. The conclusion drawn, therefore, seems to reflect Frantz Fanon's argument that black and white people do not 'naturally' relate to each other; interracial relationships are thus pathologised, and by extension so also is the 'mixed-race' offspring.[63]

In her first novel, *The Unbelonging* (1985), Joan Riley writes about the experiences of Hyacinth, a young black girl brought to England by her abusive father. One of only a few black children at school, she finds herself isolated from the other black children because of her accent, and the butt of racial abuse from the white children. One of the children is 'mixed-race' and is referred to by the omniscient narrator as "half-caste".[64] We are told that:

> Margaret White was someone [Hyacinth] had been afraid of from the day she entered the school. A mixed-race child adopted by white people, she seemed to hate the black kids even more than the whites did.[65]

The stereotype of the 'mixed-race' person alienated from the wider black community and from their own black heritage, has repeatedly been used within Caribbean literature. Like Belladora in Beryl Gilroy's *Boy-Sandwich*, the British born 'mixed-race' Margaret White seems to be in complete denial about her own black heritage, indicated by her calling Hyacinth a "nigger".[66] When Hyacinth retorts that she cannot call her that because her own father is black, and adds that the white children "laugh you to scorn behind your back", Margaret's response is to try to physically attack Hyacinth.[67] Margaret is tolerated by the whites only so long as she rejects her blackness and disassociates herself from all black

children. Behind her back she too is despised by the white children. Hyacinth is more openly dismissed by the white children, and she in turn dismisses and dislikes Margaret. As a result of their respective upbringings, each child has learnt to reject the other solely on the basis of perceived racial difference. Hyacinth had:

> heard stories about red people at home, could still remember her aunt declaring to the neighbour 'Well, you know how red neaga stay, dem is ignorant from dem born till them dead'.[68]

However, rather than the tension between these two school-aged children being used to symbolise the history of 'divide and rule' tactics deployed by white colonial rule in the Caribbean, it appears to be used only to reveal Margaret's inherent unpleasantness. Because the behaviour of 'mixed-race' people is fixed by their 'hybridity', Hyacinth had *expected* Margaret's behaviour, and Margaret, complies neatly to the biologised myth. Any reference made by the narrative to a social cause for their division is undermined by Hyacinth's memory of her aunt's conversation in which 'red' ('mixed-race') people are referred to as inherently "ignorant". Although it is Hyacinth's views that are expressed in this instance, the view is not counteracted within the novel. Whether Hyacinth's views are held by the author or not, ultimately what remains is an uncontested fallacy about those of 'mixed-race'.

The American experience

George Lamming argues that the cultural impact of migration has differentially affected the writing of Caribbean writers, so that if "the West Indian writer had taken up residence in America - as Claude Mackay did - his development would probably be of a different, indeed, of an opposed order to that of the man who matured in England".[69] In discussing differences in cultural phenomena, Walter Rodney posits that "[i]n the USA if one is not white, then one is black; in Britain, if one is not white then one is coloured; in South Africa,

one can be white, coloured or black depending upon how white people classify you."[70] As such, the construction of 'mixed-race' identity remains dependent on the whims of various cultural-political structures.

This section looks at Michelle Cliff's *No Telephone To Heaven* (1987), which juxtaposes the significance of race in America, (to a lesser degree) in England, and in Jamaica. Jamaican society is portrayed as corrupt and, still tied into the system of a colour hierarchy, Jamaica is divided into two worlds between the rich ('coloureds' and whites) and the poor (blacks). Cliff, herself a 'mixed-race' woman, was born in Jamaica, raised in America, and spent time studying in London. The protagonist, Clare, mirrors the author in that she begins her childhood in Jamaica, and is then brought up with her father in the US, later travelling to London and around Europe and ultimately returning to her birthplace. As Cliff writes, Clare "is an amalgam of myself and others, who eventually becomes herself alone".[71] *No Telephone To Heaven* is examined because it addresses some of the issues of 'mixed-race' identity being variously defined by others, and because it challenges the idea of identity as inherent. In *No Telephone To Heaven* the 'mixed-race' protagonist, Clare, journeys both physically and spiritually in search of her true self, but finds that she is constantly defined and redefined by others.

The story opens with a group of Jamaicans travelling on a truck on which is written *No Telephone To Heaven*. Amongst these black Jamaicans "A light-skinned woman, daughter of landowners, native-born, slaves, émigrés, Carib, Ashanti, English, has taken her place on this truck, alongside people who easily could have hated her".[72] Thus, this woman, whom we later discover to be the protagonist, Clare, is at the same time part of the group and yet not part of the group as she is separated by her 'mixed-race'. It is through her involvement with this group of black 'freedom fighters' that Clare attempts to reclaim her African heritage; and this reclamation is symbolised by her bartering at the local shop, "[b]asket on head, resting on a cotta, bought years ago in Knightsbridge, a gallery specializing in African art, carried as a talisman. Now being put to use, its true properties recognized".[73]

In Michelle Cliff's portrayal of Jamaican society the term *white* is used metaphorically to represent power and the oppressor class. To the poor and black there is little difference between those of 'mixed-race' and those who are actually white. The black servant angered and frustrated by his employer's attitude to the poor black masses suggests to them that it is time for them to migrate as things will not be easy for whites. His employer responds:

> 'We are not white, Joshua, so we are not worried'. The mistress taking pity on the houseboy and deciding that his words come from benign concern. Flattered nonetheless that even this hignorant countrybwai did t'ink she white. Not understanding his use of metaphor.[74]

The predominantly white or 'mixed-race' rich youth are portrayed as decadent, and we are told one 'mixed-race' young man, Paul H., "[h]as never been concerned about a mess in his life. He and his surroundings have been tidied by darker people".[75] Thus, after driving home in his Porsche and finding his family brutally murdered, it is the mess, rather than their actual murder, which becomes his focus and even with that he requests that his black boyhood friend help him clean up, unaware that it is this same young man, Christopher, who has committed the murder. The attack is described in gruesome detail, their throats cut, his father's penis cut off, his mother with a broken bottle shoved up her vagina and his sister "legs spread wide and she was bloodied".[76] The maid's body has been "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".[77] Paul, however, feels no pity for her, only 'inconvenience'; he then blames her, concluding that the attacker was someone she had brought home. He is oblivious to the hatred felt towards his privileged family. When Christopher arrives, carrying his machete, Paul is not suspicious, because the thought of Christopher hating him or his family has never entered his head. Ten years earlier they had been friends, but class and race has divided them. Christopher kills Paul.

Cliff does not allow for simple moral conclusions to be drawn from this gruesome murder. The details shock, but then she follows this scene by describing Christopher's early life, brought up in the shanty towns of Jamaica, and alone from the age of eight. One cannot condone his brutality but one is given an understanding of the life that led him to that point. In his act of murder and then mutilation of their bodies, Christopher intended to "end them absolutely".[78] To him they are the enemy both economically and, perhaps more significantly, spiritually, as we learn that as a small child Christopher was influenced by a sermon in which the black preacher told him that Jesus was black. The sermon demonises those of 'mixed-race':

> ones who mixed, de ones who talk 'my white grandmother' or 'my English father' - dese ones carry Satan in dem blood. Jus' so...jus' like dem would carry typhoid...cancer...for it wat at dem. Dem cyaan help demselves, but dem is tainted. Jus' like in Jamaica. Is because you under dem control dat you cyaan see Jesus as him is.[79]

Through his sermon, the black preacher expresses his belief in an essentialism of *race*. In his view it is the biology of race which predetermines the behaviour of those of 'mixed-race' and causes them to act as oppressors, rather than a direct result of colonial history.

The story switches to Clare's family migrating to the US in 1960 when Clare is fourteen. Her father, "[y]ears later ...would remark on the wisdom, nay foresight, of his decision - when he heard how Charles and his family had been chopped by some gardenboy, a few among other sudden deaths".[80] Their family name, Savage, can be seen to symbolise their status as migrants to a racist America, so that however 'privileged' they may have been in Jamaican society, through American eyes they are 'savages'. Cliff also writes that she intended her use of the name 'Savage' to be ironic; "mocking the master's meaning; turning instead to a sense of non-Western values which are empowering and essential to survival, her survival, and wholeness, her wholeness".[81] Clare's father, Boy (the name again

symbolising his inferior status in America), sees America as the 'promised land', and is taken aback by the first white motel keeper's response to them and the ever present spectre of the Ku Klux Klan in the South. Boy, afraid of the white man's racism, passes himself for white, "[g]lad that the black car with his slightly darker wife and mango and guava daughters was parked out of sight".[82] The revulsion felt by whites towards 'miscegenation' and their fear of the resultant blurring of racial boundaries is represented by the motel keeper. He is suspicious and thinks to himself "it was a tricky business. You could not relax for a moment. Someone might slide by. Sometimes it felt to him like the *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*. Who was real, who was not? Niggers were slick."[83]

Clare's maternal relatives, already living in America, advise them to "[p]ass if you can".[84] When a few months later Boy breaks off contact with his wife's more obviously black family, they accept his rejection as a necessary survival mechanism. For Boy, so determined to belong to this dream he has of America, passing for white is fairly easy:

> Boy had no visible problem with declaring himself white. It was a practical matter, he told his wife. There was no one to say different. And he said it in not so many words. He told people he was descended from plantation owners - and this was true. Partly. With each fiction his new self became more complete.[85]

G. Reginald Daniel argues that 'passing' is/was not always a form of 'selling out' but can be seen as a subversive form of resistance "that seeks to best oppression at its own game by subverting both the comportment line between dominant and subordinate and arbitrary line between White and Black".[86] However, the denial of part of one's Self exacts a price; as Daniel also argues, "[o]ne of the most difficult things a person can be faced with is saying farewell to family and friends".[87] The portrayal of Kitty reflects this point and, in contrast to her husband, she becomes more and more introverted, and suffers from a gradual mental breakdown brought on by the suppression of her sense of self. Her only release is the discovery of a Jamaican shop selling familiar foodstuffs; but even the act of cooking must be disguised with foul smelling chemical 'air fresheners' to mask the smell of curry that will

give the clue to their true identity. Determined to 'pass', Boy tells her not to go any more, "[s]ilent in his mestee/sambo/octoroon/quadroon/creole skin".[88] Kitty is now forced to suppress her identity in her (patriarchal) home. Without her husband's knowledge, she continues to go to the shop, but less often, and not able to bring back any food, "[s]he lived divided, straining to adjust to this place where she seemed to float".[89] She has no sense of belonging; the white world rejects her as alien, whilst the black, symbolised by the two black women she works with at the laundry, who are bonded in their blackness, excludes her as *other*. Unable to cope with her enforced voicelessness she begins to add her own words on the sanitised messages sent out with the clean laundry. Finally she colours the pink face of the woman on the card black and writes "HELLO. MRS WHITE IS DEAD. MY NAME IS MRS BLACK. I KILLED HER".[90] But, with unfortunate irony, her act of resistance results in the loss of jobs for the two black women, because the boss cannot believe that Kitty could have been responsible. Ashamed that she has caused their unemployment, and unable to deal with the loss of her identity anymore, Kitty returns to Jamaica with her youngest, and darker-skinned daughter: "the one who favored her".[91] Later, after her mother's death, Clare's sister returns to America only to become a junkie.

Although Clare is lighter-skinned she has not been able to follow her father into his pretend white world; at thirty-six she is described as an "albino gorilla moving through the underbrush... Not speaking for years. Not feeling much of anything, except a vague dread that she belongs nowhere".[92] Cliff says that Clare's name signifies "light-skinned" and argues that as such Clare "stands for privilege, civilization, erasure, forgetting. She is not meant to... be a critic of imperialism".[93] Despite her pale complexion, as a child in America, Clare is still seen as black, shown by the school administrator's anger over Boy Savage's protestation that they are white. She tells him that in the US there is "[n]o place for in-betweens".[94] As Clare grows up her father still "counsels his daughter on invisibility and secrets. Self-effacement. Blending in. The uses of camouflage".[95] Ironically, her later use of camouflage is expressed in her khaki clad body as she joins the black freedom fighters in Jamaica.

On a visit to Jamaica in her twenties, Clare develops a friendship with a transsexual named Harry/Harriet. Although the 'race' of his father is not specifically mentioned, it is implied that his well-to-do father is (probably fair-skinned) 'mixed-race'. His mother, a black maid, was dismissed shortly after giving birth, and Harry/Harriet is brought up in his father's home "on sufferance".[96] Harry/Harriet's transexuality is used to mirror the idea of racial duality. After Clare and Harry/Harriet make love, he asks her whether she finds him strange, and she responds:

> 'No, I don't find you strange. No stranger... no stranger than I find myself. For we are neither one thing nor the other'.
>
> 'At the moment, darling, only at the moment.'
>
> 'What do you mean?'
>
> 'I mean 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'.[97]

Clare, unable to cope with American life and not ready to return to Jamaica, goes to England to study. Her time there is brief, but is significantly isolated. She feels alienated from her white fellow students, who cannot understand why a march by the National Front would make her feel so upset. One tells her "But you needn't take it personally... you're hardly the sort they were ranting on about".[98] Clare is not convinced about that, and does not want to be excluded from their hate because it would just be another form of 'passing', a suppression of her self as a 'mixed-race' woman. Her experiences of racial invisibility in London contrast with her Black status/identity in America. The fact that the same woman's racial identity can be perceived so variously highlights the way in which 'race' is a subjective, dependent on the cultural differences between these two countries.

Clare leaves England, travelling around Europe with a Black GI who has deserted after his horrific experiences during the Vietnam War. Their relationship is a tenuous one, and she "had a sense he didn't trust her in her skin, somewhere he didn't believe she was what she said she was - why should he?".[99] Unhappy with her 'mixed-race', she tells him "[y]ou are

lucky, Bobby. So lucky... to be one and not both".[100] More and more uneasy about her identity as a 'mixed-race' woman she returns to Jamaica where she wakes up in a hospital bed to discover that an infection has caused her to become sterile. "She took this in. All that effort for naught. Lightening up. Eyes for naught. Skin for nought. Fine nose for nought. Mule - most likely".[101] Her thoughts refer to the history of black people in the Caribbean and America trying to 'lighten' their children in order to give them a better chance in a society which discriminates on the basis of colour. When Clare calls herself 'mule' it appears that she has to some extent internalised the scientific myths about 'mixed-race' people as abnormal or unnatural because it was believed that they were biologically unable to produce offspring.

Clare's involvement with the black freedom fighters, first in the role of benevolent benefactress when she offers her inherited land for their use, and finally as a fighter, leads ultimately to her death. Cliff sees Clare's death not as tragic but a positive end to the cycle of Clare's life, and in "her death she has complete identification with her homeland".[102] Yet, in that identification with the landscape of Jamaica itself, Clare is never actually allowed to express her Self as a 'mixed-race' woman. The black freedom fighters insist that she prove her allegiance to the cause of ending a system which allows so many to suffer. She is made to prove her 'blackness' and is interrogated by the black freedom fighters in order to satisfy them that she is a Black woman, thereby precluding the possibility of expressing her identity as 'mixed-race'. When she tells them "I have African, English, Carib in me" they ask "Can we trust you".[103] She must be either white or black and, as her friend Harry/Harriet has told Clare, one must choose. However, in reality choice is not always an option. When the main protagonist, Clare, is told that there is 'no place for in-betweens', after rejecting the white world which her father tries to belong to, she seeks her identity by tracing her maternal line back to her African heritage. Despite attempting to assert her 'mixed-race' identity, which includes Carib as well as African and English, she is forced to conform to a sense of Self as a Black/African woman rather than one who can claim a multi-heritage.

[1] Barbara Tizard & Anne Phoenix, *Black, White or Mixed Race?* (London: Routledge, 1993), p. 15.
[2]Peter Fryer, *Staying Power: The History of Black People In Britain* (London: Pluto Press Limited, 1984), p. 134.
[3]B Tizard & A Phoenix, *op. cit.*, p. 21.
[4]*Ibid.*, p. 22.
[5]*Ibid.*, p. 23.
[6]George Lamming, introduction to *The Pleasures of Exile* (London: Allison & Busby, 1984).
[7]B. Tizard & A Phoenix, *op. cit.*, p. 24.
[8]Kenneth Ramchand, *The West Indian Novel and its Background* (London: Heinemann Educational Books Ltd., 1983 [1970]), p. 63.
[9]*Ibid.*, p. 74.
[10]Sam Selvon, *The Lonely Londoners* (London: Longman Caribbean Writers Series, 1985 [1956]), p. 61.
[11]*Ibid.*, p. 61.
[12]*Ibid.*, p. 63.
[13]Samuel Selvon, 'Three Into One Can't Go - East Indian, Trinidadian, Westindian' in David Dabydeen and Brinsley Samaroo (eds.), *India in the Caribbean* (London: Hansib Publishing Limited, 1987), p. 18.
[14]*Ibid.*, p. 18.
[15]*Ibid.*, p. 18.
[16]Anne Wilson, *Mixed Race Children: A Study of Identity* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1987), p. 31.
[17]Samuel Selvon, *The Lonely Londoners*, *op. cit.*, p. 131.
[18]*Ibid.*, p. 63.
[19]Susan Benson, *Ambiguous Ethnicity: Interracial Families in London.* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), p. 10.
[20]*Ibid.*, p. 10.
[21]B Tizard & A Phoenix, *Black, White or Mixed Race?*, *op. cit.*, p. 24.
[22]Sam Selvon, *Moses Migrating* (Essex: Longman Group Limited, 1983), p. 87.
[23]Sam Selvon, *A Brighter Sun* (Essex: Longman Caribbean Writers, 1985 [1952]), p. 47.
[24]*Ibid.*, p. 56.
[25]*Ibid.*, p. 79.
[26]Susheila Nasta (ed.), *Critical Perspectives On Sam Selvon* (Washington: Three Continents Press, 1988), p. 3.
[27]B Tizard & A Phoenix, *Black, White or Mixed Race?*, *op. cit.*, p. 23.
[28]*Ibid.*, p. 24.
[29]*Ibid.*, p. 24.
[30]Beverley Bryan, Stella Dadzie and Suzanne Scafe, *The Heart of the Race: Black Women's Lives in Britain* (London: Virago Press, 1985), p. 232.
[31]*Ibid.*, p. 232.
[32]*Ibid.*, p. 233.
[33]*Ibid.*, pp. 233-4.
[34]*Ibid.*, p. 234.
[35]*Ibid.*, p. 234.
[36]Vernella Fuller, *Going Back Home* (London: The Women's Press, 1992), p. 169.
[37]*Ibid.*, p. 156.
[38]*Ibid.*, p. 156.
[39]*Ibid.*, p. 160.
[40]Beryl Gilroy, 'Frangipani House' in Joan Anim-Addo (ed.) *Framing the Word: Gender and Genre in Caribbean Women's Writing* (London: Whiting and Birch Ltd., 1996), p. 197.
[41]Beryl Gilroy, *Frangipani House* (London: Heinemann Educational Books, 1986), p. 2.
[42]*Ibid.*, p. 2.
[43]*Ibid.*, p. 91.
[44]Beryl Gilroy, *Boy Sandwich* (Oxford: Heinemann International, 1989), p. 4.
[45]*Ibid.*, p. 56.
[46]*Ibid.*, p. 56.
[47]Beryl Gilroy, *In Praise of Love and Children* (Leeds: Peepal Tree Press Ltd., 1996), p. 21.

[48]*Ibid.*, p. 33.
[49]*Ibid.*, p. 49.
[50]*Ibid.*, p. 52. The term 'red' is a popular Guyanese (Caribbean) colloquialism used to describe those of 'mixed-race'.
[51]*Ibid.*, p. 82.
[52]Beryl Gilroy, *Gather The Faces* (Leeds: Peepal Tree Press Ltd., 1996), p. 17.
[53]Beryl Gilroy, *In Praise of Love and Children*, *op. cit.*, p. 98.
[54]*Ibid.*, p. 98.
[55]*Ibid.*, p. 118.
[56]*Ibid.*, p. 118.
[57]Beryl Gilroy, 'I Write Because....' in Selwyn Cudjoe (ed.), *Caribbean Women Writers: Essays From The First International Conference* (Massachusetts: Calaloux Publications, 1990), p. 200.
[58] Isabel Carrera Suárez, 'Absent Mother(land)s: Joan Riley's Fiction' in Susheila Nasta (ed.), *Motherlands: Black Women's Writing* (London: The Women's Press, 1991).
[59]Joan Riley, *Romance* (London: The Women's Press Ltd, 1988), p. 214.
[60]*Ibid.*, p. 203.
[61]*Ibid.*, p. 222.
[62]*Ibid.*, pp. 227-8.
[63]Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks* (London: Pluto Press, 1986 [1952]).
[64]Joan Riley, *The Unbelonging* (London: The Women's Press, 1985), p. 17.
[65]*Ibid.*, p. 18.
[66]*Ibid.*, p. 20.
[67]*Ibid.*, p. 20.
[68]*Ibid.*, p. 18.
[69]George Lamming, *The Pleasures of Exile* (London: Allison & Busby Limited, 1984 [1960]), pp. 24-5.
[70]Walter Rodney, *The Groundings with my Brothers* (London: Bogle-L'Ouverture Publications, 1969), p. 16.
[71]Michelle Cliff, 'Clare Savage as a Crossroads Character' in Selwyn Cudjoe (ed.), *Caribbean Women Writers: Essays From The First International Conference* (Massachusetts: Calaloux Publications, 1990), p. 265.
[72]Michelle Cliff, *No Telephone To Heaven* (London: Methuen, 1988), p. 5.
[73]*Ibid.*, p. 12.
[74]*Ibid.*, p. 20.
[75]*Ibid.*, p. 22.
[76]*Ibid.*, p. 27.
[77]*Ibid.*, p. 28.
[78]*Ibid.*, p. 49.
[79]*Ibid.*, p. 38.
[80]*Ibid.*, p. 53.
[81]Michelle Cliff, 'Clare Savage as a Crossroads Character', *op. cit.*, p. 265.
[82]Michelle Cliff, *No Telephone To Heaven*, *op. cit.*, p. 55.
[83]*Ibid.*, p. 56.
[84]*Ibid.*, p. 61.
[85]*Ibid.*, p. 62.
[86]G. Reginald Daniel, 'Passers and Pluralists: Subverting the Racial Divide' in Maria Root (ed.), *Racially Mixed People in America* (California: Sage Publications, Inc., 1992), p.92.
[87]*Ibid.*, p. 94.
[88]Michelle Cliff, *No Telephone To Heaven*, *op. cit.*, p. 75.
[89]*Ibid.*, p. 75.
[90]*Ibid.*, p. 83.
[91]*Ibid.*, p. 84.
[92]*Ibid.*, p. 91.
[93]Michelle Cliff, 'Clare Savage as a Crossroads Character', *op. cit.*, p. 265.
[94]Michelle Cliff, *No Telephone To Heaven*, *op. cit.*, p. 99.
[95]*Ibid.*, p. 100.
[96]*Ibid.*, p. 129.

[97]*Ibid.*, p. 131.
[98]*Ibid.*, p 139.
[99]*Ibid.*, p. 152.
[100]*Ibid.*, p. 153.
[101]*Ibid.*, p. 169.
[102]Michelle Cliff, 'Clare Savage as a Crossroads Character', *op. cit.*, p. 265.
[103]Michelle Cliff, *No Telephone To Heaven*, *op. cit.*, p. 189.

CHAPTER NINE

CONCLUSION

This thesis has examined the extent to which Caribbean literature has contributed to an essentialist and biologically determined representation of the 'mixed-race' person. In the introduction four main types were highlighted as recurring stereotypes used in the Caribbean novel to portray the 'mixed-race' person. Firstly, that the 'mixed-race' person is inherently evil, cruel and oppressive; secondly, that they are (somewhat paradoxically) weak and pitiable; thirdly, that they are sexually deviant (particularly women); and, fourthly, that they are mentally unstable and biologically abnormal. This thesis has argued that these stereotypes are all rooted within the arguments and discourses of European and North American racial theory which has created the myth of 'hybrid degeneracy'.

The late nineteenth and early twentieth century English novels which focused on the Caribbean relied heavily on stereotypes in their portrayal of the 'mixed-race' person; so it was perhaps not surprising to find that one of the earliest Caribbean novels proper, *Jane's Career,* written by Herbert de Lisser in 1914, should use the same form of stereotyping. The 'mixed-race' character is fixed one-dimensionally as inherently cruel and oppressive, an unnatural creation who is both biologically abnormal and 'ungodly' as the "devil mek" the person of 'mixed-race'. The emphasis on the sexual deviancy of 'mixed-race' women becomes the focus of Alfred Mendes, writing two decades later, and in *Black Fauns*, he perpetuates the stereotype of the sexually deviant 'mixed-race' women, whose hybrid degeneracy is so destabilising that it leads to the collapse of social relations within the community of the yard which he fictionalises.

During the 1950s, after the UNESCO's disavowal of 'hybrid degeneracy', Edgar Mittelholzer was still wrestling with internalised concerns about his own racial 'mixture' and, as Michael Gilkes argues, his "outward-looking, Europe-orientated attitude to culture and racial pedigrees, acting upon his own inner awareness of a 'mulatto' condition, worsened a division of consciousness which is clearly and fatally reflected in his work".[1] According to Gilkes, Mittelholzer's attempt to come to terms with himself in a Caribbean environment, where everything European was privileged, was to "consciously identif[y] himself with the European side of his ancestry".[2] Gilkes argues that to Mittelholzer,

> his 'Germanic' European blood represented his 'strength' while his 'West Indian' blood revealed a 'weakness'... For Mittelholzer, strength and weakness, good and evil were qualities unalterably fixed at birth. By relating these qualities to an exclusively *genetic* source, the question of one's own individual responsibility is neatly dodged and 'blood' becomes an acceptable external agent of control.[3]

Mittelholzer's notion of inheritable traits which were 'unalterably fixed at birth' is pursued in his *Kaywana* saga in which 'mixed-race' inheritance is portrayed as corrupting the 'pure' white lineage, converting the person into savage dimensions. Mittelholzer believed that genetic factors were completely responsible for the development of the individual; thus, by ignoring environmental and sociological factors, he "was unconsciously reinforcing a personal, self-destructive myth, that of racial 'impurity' as an indication of the lack of psychic integrity".[4] Clearly influenced by theories of 'hybrid degeneracy', his novel *Sylvia* portrays the 'mixed-race' protagonist as sexually deviant because of the bad 'blood' inherited by her mother and, as Michael Gilkes argues, the "irrevocable influence of 'blood' re-appears in novel after novel, running through the work like a frenzied *leit-motif*".[5] 'Mixed-race' identity has always been inextricably linked with the idea of 'blood'; according to Ashley Montague:

> A 'half blood', in contradistinction to a 'full blood', or 'pure blood', is supposed to be half of one 'race' and half of another [....] What is actually implied is that while a

> full blood or pureblood may claim relationship through both parents, a half blood may claim relationship through one parent only [....] In practice, it often works out that the half blood is not fully accepted by either of the parental groups, because of his 'adulterated blood'.[6]

The writer Lorna Goodison, being interviewed in 1991, makes it clear that the biological connotations of 'race' remain intact, when she says that Latin Americans in America "use mulatta in the real sense of the term, for a person of mixed *blood* [my emphasis]".[7] Thus, 'blood' as an absolute marker of racial difference is seen by Goodison to be 'real' and those of 'mixed-race' remain biological hybrids.

Each period of history reconstructed within the social realism of the Anglophone Caribbean novel has overwhelmingly found the 'mixed-race' person portrayed as an essentialised racial stereotype. These twentieth century Caribbean novels have often formed an indigenous challenge to colonial history, but the stereotypical treatment of the 'mixed-race' person in each historical moment testifies to the inability of this body of literature as a whole to challenge the myth of a biologically pre-determined 'mixed-race' identity. As Kenneth Ramchand has argued:

> In an area like the West Indies where many races live side by side, and where vested political interests thrive on racial divisions or misunderstandings, the common use, in works of fiction, of racial types rather than characters ... is a creative failing of considerable social consequence.[8]

Although the examination of the Anglophone Caribbean novel between 1914 to 1998 has revealed shifts in the way the 'mixed-race' characters are contextualised, there remains a very essentialist view or construct of the 'mixed-race' character whose thoughts, feelings and actions are completely and intrinsically biological. The representations of 'mixed-race' people that appeared in the late nineteenth century novel have not been totally eradicated. The repeated representation of 'mixed-race' identity as racially inherent becomes

mythologised and is ultimately viewed as historical 'reality'. This then feeds into new writing, which in turn perpetuates the cycle, making it difficult for the reader (or writer) to discern fact from fallacy and leading contemporary writers, such as Joan Riley and Vernella Fuller, to base their descriptions of 'mixed-race' characters on sociohistorical fallacies tied in to the legacy of a pseudo-biological premise. In these novels the 'mixed-race' characters are usually not central and as such have been viewed externally; their constructed identities are based on assumptions made by either the main characters or the omniscient narratives written in by /black/ authors. The treatment of the 'mixed-race' character, however peripheral, remains entrenched in a biologised concept of 'mixed-race' identity as pre-determined and absolute and, ultimately, as inherently flawed.

It was found, however, that the stereotype of the 'mixed-race' person as a biologically fixed entity, unable to overcome their degenerate 'hybrid' status, was beginning to be challenged in the 1980s and 1990s. Significantly, this change has been spearheaded by 'mixed-race' writers themselves, suggesting that unlike Mittelholzer, who was tormented by his own negative perception of himself as 'mixed-race', 'mixed-race' writers are more recently claiming a positive identity for themselves and finding new ways of articulating this positivity whilst challenging the racial essentialism of 'hybrid theories'. Of the novels examined this is particularly evident in the work of Frederick D'Aguiar and Michelle Cliff. Jan Shinebourne also highlights the problems of racial essentialism in her two novels, challenging the racial divisiveness of an 'ethnically' fixed plural society; however, as a testament to the pervasiveness of racial stereotyping, her references to a homogenous 'coloured' class in *The Last English Plantation* remains limited. In *The Longest Memory*, Fred D'Aguiar offers us an alternative to the stereotype of the 'privileged' mixed-race slave, whilst what is foregrounded in Michelle Cliff's *No Telephone To Heaven* is that 'mixed-race' identities are not inherent or indeed singular, but are variably forged in a world polarised between Black and White. Through her portrayal of the 'Savage' family the idea of a fixed racial type is countered by the varied responses of its 'mixed-race' members to the racism that confronts them. In so doing, Cliff has placed the construction of 'mixed-race' identities firmly where it belongs – in the social arena, rather than the biological.

It is clear that there needs to be a conscious effort amongst both writers and critics to, in the words of Pragna Patel, "resist constructions of our identities which fix us in immutable and essentialist moulds".[9] However, what this thesis has found is that the discourse of racial scientific theory remains inextricably tied in to the perception of writers and critics so that, perhaps unwittingly, they continue to use the currency of nineteenth century notions of 'hybridity'. Thus it is that when Michael Gilkes argues that Derek Walcott "represents, one feels, that aspect of West Indian writing which involves the acceptance of 'mongrelism' as a means towards a deliberately catalytical art: an art which, facing both ways, can make creative sense of both worlds of Caribbean and European sensibility",[10] he does so without concern over the implication of a 'pure' race from which the concept of 'mongrelism' derogatorily stems from. This argument for 'the acceptance of "mongrelism"' has tended to be described by postcolonial and cultural theorists alike as the *hybridization* of culture; but to accept the term 'mongrel' or 'hybrid' in modern discourse is to affirm that 'race' actually exists as something biological rather than as a sociohistorical construct. Postcolonial discourse has not succeeded in addressing the fallacies of racial theories on 'hybridity', so that now, as Paul Gilroy argues, the "attempt to articulate blackness as an historical rather than as a natural category"[11] is urgently required in order to look specifically at the legacy of racist theories on 'hybridity'.

It has been posited that the signification of 'race', in modern times, has been "de-biologized".[12] To argue that 'race' has been 'de-biologized' is to assume a narrow frame of reference based within the various academic discourses which intellectualise the end of biological racial essentialism, when the wider community still retains these biological signifiers of 'race'. No amount of cultural cloaking will change the fact that *race* retains its biological connotations. Race as biological difference remains insidiously within the realm of science just as it remains in the minds of the general population; let us recognise that a two year old baby did not end up with a nail through its brain in the recent nail bombing attack in Brixton "because of the recognition of the meaninglessness of race".[13] Indeed, even Barkan, who argues that scientific racism has ended, acknowledges that "as a social

category which refers to a supposedly recognizable entity based on primordial biological properties, notions of race sustained its popular appeal and is still widely invoked".[14] Stokely Carmichael and Charles V. Hamilton posited in 1968 that "while color blindness *may* be a sound goal ultimately, we must realize that race is an overwhelming fact of life in this historical period".[15] The historical moment continues.

In 1950 UNESCO stated "that there was no scientific justification for race discrimination" and "that no evidence for biological deterioration as a result of hybridization existed".[16] This statement was claimed to represent the majority within the scientific world and, thus, according to Elazar Barkan, who has written on the decline of scientific racism in the twentieth century, "biological explanations [were] replaced by cultural analysis" of race after 1950.[17] Barkan argues that a move away from scientific racism was inevitable, but that the atrocities carried out by the Nazis during World War Two speeded "the decline and repudiation of scientific racism in intellectual discourse".[18] He posits that up until World War Two 'race' was still "perceived primarily as a scientific concept, a perception which was itself a legacy of the nineteenth century",[19] but that after this point in time "scientific opinion reject[ed] the usefulness of race as a classificatory tool".[20]

During the actively imperialistic period of British history in the eighteenth and nineteenth century the construction of absolute difference and the formulation of 'race' as fact served to meet the needs of imperialistic force and colonial control and, as has been discussed in chapter two of this thesis, was supported by the racial theories of the biological and social sciences. Despite the so-called retreat of scientific racism there remains a (possibly more covert) view within medical discourse of biological difference between 'races'. The 'race policy environment' of the 1990s, referred to by Naomi Pfeffer, is argued to be "stimulating research into whether, how, and when racism and race, ethnicity, or culture influence susceptibility to disease".[21] This may occur through the seemingly benign interest in pathological differences i.e. sickle cell anaemia amongst those of African and Asian descent or cystic fibrosis amongst those of European descent; or, for example, medical research which sets out to "identify ethnic differences in the incidence of first ever stroke".[22]

Nevertheless, it remains a form of coding absolute 'racial' difference. The authors conclude that because:

> excess incidence of stroke among black people compared with white people was not explained by social class, age, or sex [that] [d]ifferences in genetics, physiological, and behavioural risk factors that may account for ethnic differences in stroke incidence require further elucidation.[23]

Such a conclusion thus leaves the way open for further 'ethnic' based research into pathological difference. This sort of research into the 'ethnic differences' of pathology, however benign, suggests that 'race' and 'racial difference' re-worded as 'ethnic difference' remains a contemporary issue within the realm of medical/biological science. The medical classification of identity is, Pfeffer argues "based partially on phenotype, a method of aggregation which suggests that some shared biology is a valid method of organising people into social groups".[24] This form of ethnic/racial essentialism is problematic, and as Pfeffer argues, in

> trying to explain why some people are more susceptible to disease, health researchers propose that one clear, essential set of characteristics is shared by everyone in a category.... [H]owever, essentialism supports scientific racism, which proposes that people can be allocated to racial groups on the basis of a shared biology, and that some racial groups are superior.[25]

In the realm of psychiatry a focus on 'ethnic difference' becomes even less benign where "patterns of diagnosis reveal a strong bias towards defining the Black community as psychotic".[26] In Britain black people are frequently diagnosed as schizophrenic and are at least three times more likely than whites to be admitted for schizophrenia.[27] According to Philip Rack:

> psychiatric epidemiology strongly implies that races are biological divisions of humankind demonstrating different mental capacities. [Thus]... psychiatry constructs its notions of schizophrenia in ways which pinpoint Afro Caribbean communities for particular attention.[28]

Because of the disproportionate diagnosis of schizophrenia among black people, some psychiatrists are trying to argue that the higher rate means black people are genetically more prone to schizophrenia than white people.[29] Methods of psychiatric control or 'treatment' indicate that the notion of racial difference remains strong as "psychiatrists not only argue that only certain races have the intellectual capacity to benefit from psychotherapy, they are also arguing that different races respond differently to drug treatment".[30] Suman Fernando, a Consultant Psychiatrist at Chase Farm Hospital, posits that the "term 'race' is usually used in psychiatry with a biological meaning carrying the implicit assumption that people are different genetically on the basis of their colour".[31] He goes on to argue that the "social construction of race is seldom, if ever, appreciated in psychiatric circles".[32]

Pfeffer posits that "the terms race, ethnicity, and culture are sometimes still used interchangeably in defining characteristics of research subjects, which suggest that they mean the same thing.[33] Sidney Mintz's attempt to separate 'race' and 'ethnic' fails because he still relies on an essentialist definition of 'ethnic'. His argument is that:

> It is the assumptions about inheritable physical differences that underlie and support social behaviors having to do with what is called 'race'.
>
> In contrast, ethnicity has to do with culturally-determined features, such as language, dress, cuisine, and like aspects of social behaviour, which are not determined by physical difference[34]

'Biologically-determined' is simply replaced by 'culturally-determined'; it remains essentialist in that the person is still rigidly defined and limited by 'cultural' features just as they were by physical. Paul Gilroy recognises the cloaking implications of the term 'culture' which, as he argues, "has expanded to displace any overt references to 'race' in the older biological sense of the term. Culture is reductively conceived and is always primarily and 'naturally' reproduced in families".[35]

Recently, cultural critics, such as Paul Gilroy, Henry Louis Gates, Jr., and Kobena Mercer, have begun the process of disentangling 'race' from rigid concepts of biological determinancy in order to debate its metaphorical status. Kobena Mercer posits that in the 1980s:

> [w]hen various peoples - of Asian, African, and Caribbean descent - interpolated themselves and each other as /black/ they invoked a collective identity predicated on political and not biological similarities. In other words, the naturalized connotations of the term /black/ were disarticulated out of the dominant codes of racial discourse and rearticulated as signs of alliance and solidarity among dispersed groups of people sharing common historical experiences of British racism... which thus engendered a pluralistic sense of 'imagined community'.[36]

Although Mercer argues that to some extent a unified 'black community' was created, as shown in chapter eight, personal testimonies reveal that those of 'mixed-race' still felt rejected by the wider black community. It has been argued that terms such as 'race', 'ethnicity' (or, indeed, class) "can only be fully understood in the context of political power and social status".[37] However, this has become increasingly difficult in an era of so-called *multiculturalism* which defines and limits "'ethnic minority communities' [as] homogenous entities, without internal divisions, acting in complete unison in the face of racism".[38] Samir Shah, an editor for BBC TV News and Current Affairs, problematises such simplistic constructions of collective identity. He argues that programmes that define Black and Asian people solely on the basis of their being non-white and their experiences of racism are

extremely negative.[39] Such reductive parameters fail to acknowledge the multitude of experience within such communities.

Despite attempts by Kobena Mercer and others to shift the parameters of 'race', rigid 'ethnic' (racial) groupings within medical classification leave no space for the person of 'mixed-race' as 'ethnically' one is still required to be one or the other; and if 'race' and 'racial difference' are still seen as fundamentally biological the 'mixed-race' person remains a biological *hybrid*. This 'hybrid' status cannot be welcomed as a positive self-definition when we see that it reinforces the myth of the 'mixed-race' person as biologically unsound; as Anne Wilson concludes in her 1987 study of 'mixed-race' children in Britain, "[b]ooks, newspapers and television programmes all tend to reinforce the image of mixed race people as misfits".[40] Although the 'ethnic' categorisation of 'mixed-race' differs between Britain, America and the Caribbean, where Franklin W Knight posits that "throughout Latin America and the Caribbean mestizos and *mulattos* are considered to be generally accepted ethnic categories",[41] the increase in Caribbean Diaspora writing in recent years, and the perpetuation of stereotypes of 'mixed-race' people within these novels reveals that the influence of European and North American theories on 'hybridity' remain intact.

Paul Gilroy points to the fact that ideas of racial purity are part of contemporary Black Afrocentric ideology and "the ideal of racial purity, the appeal of phenotypical symmetry and the comfort of cultural sameness have never been more highly prized attributes of black social life than they are today".[42] Recent cross-disciplinary work on 'mixed-race' identities and the 'mixed-race' experience in the U.S are beginning to open up the debate; however, their conclusions do not make for optimistic reading. Naomi Zack argues that cultural definitions of 'diversity' in the U.S remain entrenched in (pseudo) scientific notions about race. Whilst in Freda Scott Gile's examination of the 'mulatto' stereotype in twentieth century film and television, she concludes that "in the ebb and flow of attitudes towards race and issues of race, in the evolution of racial imagery, the view of the mixed-race character appears to have remained remarkably constant."[43] Naomi Zack's own search through American literature, she informs us, "is not for literary values but for images in texts

with which it would be liberating or in any way constructive for a person of mixed-race to identify".[44] She concludes that this remains impossible when writers such as Toni Morrison "perpetuate the tragedy of genocidal images of mixed race."[45] Zack further argues that Zora Neale Hurston's identification as black proves problematic:

> Hurston illustrates all too well how morally good American identities of mixed race collapse into black racial identities. Such black identities may be admirable, but they are not logically or in fact identities of mixed race.[46]

Zack's argument is that, in contrast to the negative images of 'mixed-race' people, any positive image of 'mixed-race' people is hidden by their treatment as (monoracial) black. Such selective invisibility becomes relevant to this thesis when one takes the example of Fred D'Aguiar's literary re-examination of the slave experience in *The Longest Memory*, that when adapted to film, finds the 'mixed-race' Chapel replaced by a black (monoracial) actor. Certainly, contemporary affirmations of multi-heritage are often received with overwhelming hostility, as seen recently by the controversy caused when American professional golfer, Tiger Woods, proclaimed himself to be "Caublinasian", affirming his mixed Caucasian, Black, Native American and Asian ancestry.

In acknowledging Kobena Mercer's argument, "that identities are not found but made; that they have to be culturally and politically constructed through political antagonism and cultural struggle",[47] it is my hope that such debates that are now beginning will continue growing, and that this thesis will act as part of the global re-examination of 'race' and 'mixed-race' as something socially constructed rather than biologically determined. In the words of Naomi Zack, the "reality of mixed race needs to be written and talked out before the illusion of race itself can be dispelled".[48]

[1]Michael Gilkes, *Racial Identity and Individual Consciousness In the Caribbean Novel* (Guyana: Ministry of Information and Culture/National History and Arts Council, 1975), p. 9.
[2]*Ibid.*, p. 7.
[3]*Ibid.*, p. 7.
[4]*Ibid.*, p. 10.
[5]*Ibid.*, p. 7.
[6]Ashley Montague, *Man's Most Dangerous Myth: The Fallacy of Race* (London: Oxford University Press, 1974 [1942]), pp. 303 - 304.
[7]Wolfgang Binder, 'An Interview with Lorna Goodison' in *Commonwealth* (Vol. 13, No. 2, Spring, 1991), p. 57.
[8]Kenneth Ramchand, *The West Indian Novel and its Background* (London: Heinemann Educational Books Ltd., 1983 [1970]), p. 41.
[9]Pragna Patel, 'Multiculturalism: The Myth and the Reality', in *Women: a cultural review* (Vol. 2, No. 3, 1991), p. 213.
[10]Michael Gilkes, *Racial Identity and Individual Consciousness In the Caribbean Novel*, *op. cit.*, p. 44.
[11]Paul Gilroy, *'There Ain't No Black in the Union Jack': The cultural politics of race and nation*, (London: Routledge, 1987), p. 226..
[12]Kobena Mercer, '1968' in Grossberg *et al*, *Cultural Studies* (London: Routledge, 1992), p. 430.
[13]Elazar Barkan, *The retreat of scientific racism: Changing concepts of race in Britain and the United States between the world wars* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p. 430.
[14]*Ibid.*, pp. 3 - 4.
[15]Stokely Carmichael and Charles V. Hamilton, *Black Power: The Politics of Liberation in America* (London: Jonathan Cape Ltd., 1968), p. 54.
[16]E Barkan, *The retreat of scientific racism*, *op. cit.*, p. 341.
[17]*Ibid.*, p. 342.
[18]*Ibid.*, p. 1.
[19]*Ibid.*, pp. 1 - 2.
[20]*Ibid.*, p. 4.
[21]Naomi Pfeffer, 'Theories of race, ethnicity and culture' in *BMJ*, (Vol. 317, 14 November, 1998), p. 1381.
[22]Judith A. Stewart *et al*, 'Ethnic differences in incidence of stroke: prospective study with stroke register' in *BMJ*, (Vol. 318, 10 April, 1999), p. 970.
[23]*Ibid.*
[24]Naomi Pfeffer, 'Theories of race, ethnicity and culture', *op. cit.*, p. 1382.
[25]*Ibid.*
[26]Melissa Persaud, 'Psychiatry, Colonialism and Racism: A Study of Psychiatry as a Continuum of Social Control'. Final Year BA Honours Dissertation, 1992 (unpublished) p. 18.
[27]Maurice Lipsedge and Roland Littlewood, *Aliens and Alienists: Ethnic Minorities and Psychiatry* (London: Unwin Hyman Ltd., 1989), p. 100.
[28]Philip Rack, *Race, Culture, and Mental Disorder* (London: Tavistock, 1982), p. 183.
[29]Glynn Harrison et al, 'A prospective study of severe mental disorder in Afro-Caribbean patients', *Psychological Medicine* (18, 1988).
[30]Melissa Persaud, 'Psychiatry, Colonialism and Racism: A Study of Psychiatry as a Continuum of Social Control', *op. cit.*, p. 26.
[31]Suman Fernando, *Race And Culture In Psychiatry* (London: Croom Helm Ltd., 1988), p. 155.
[32]*Ibid.*, p. 155.
[33]Naomi Pfeffer, 'Theories of race, ethnicity and culture', *op. cit.*, pp. 1381 -2.
[34]Sidney Mintz, 'Ethnic difference, plantation sameness' in Gert Oostindie (ed.), *Ethnicity in the Caribbean* (London & Basingstoke: Macmillan Education Ltd., 1996), p. 41.
[35] Paul Gilroy, *Small Acts: Thoughts on the politics of black cultures* (London: Serpent's Tail, 1993), pp. 63-4.
[36]Kobena Mercer, '1968' in Grossberg *et al*, *Cultural Studies* (London: Routledge, 1992), pp. 426-7.

[37]Franklin W Knight, ' Ethnicity and social structure in contemporary Cuba' in Gert Oostindie (ed.) *Ethnicity in the Caribbean* (London & Basingstoke: Macmillan Education Ltd., 1996), p. 112.
[38]Pragna Patel, 'Multiculturalism: The Myth and the Reality' *op. cit.*, p. 209.
[39] Speaking on Isaac Julian's 'television, memory and race 1968 – 1992' part of the BBC's *Black and White in Colour: Part 2 Series.*
[40]Anne Wilson, *Mixed Race Children: A Study of Identity* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1987), p. 199.
[41]Franklin W Knight 'Ethnicity and social structure in contemporary Cuba', *op. cit.*, p. 111.
[42] Paul Gilroy, *Small Acts: Thoughts on the politics of black cultures* (London: Serpent's Tail, 1993), pp. 63-4.
[43] Freda Scott Giles, 'From Melodrama to the Movies: The Tragic Mulatto as a Type Character' in Naomi Zack (ed.), *American Mixed Race: The Culture of Microdiversity* (Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 1995), p. 78.
[44] Naomi Zack, *Race and Mixed Race* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1993), p. 127.
[45] *Ibid.*, p. 140.
[46] *Ibid.*, p. 147.
[47]Kobena Mercer, '1968', *op. cit*, p. 427.
[48] Naomi Zack, *American Mixed Race, op. cit*, p. x.

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