

“Hosanna! We buil’ back we house”:

Sylvia Wynter’s Dramatic Restorying, for Human’s Sake

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Abstract

I seek, with this recovery project, to historically contextualize one of the most important figures in twentieth- and twenty-first-century discourse, highlighting the questions she raised about what constitutes anticoloniality with her earliest work and the ways she troubles the academic borders between what is considered creative fiction and theory, as demonstrated through a selection of her earliest creative writing.

A key figure in Caribbean anticolonial cultural and political mobilization and a foundational Caribbean literary critic, Sylvia Wynter began her performance, political, and academic career in the late 1940s. Her efforts to establish liberatory cultural frameworks and intellectual practices reverberate throughout the Black diaspora. As such, her thought is fundamental to any consideration of the literatures and politics of the Black World. Although scholars increasingly attend to Wynter's extensive body of work, her early creative expression had tended to be considered as distinct from and less important than the academically-housed intellectual work that followed. In my dissertation, *"Hosanna! We buil' back we house": Sylvia Wynter's Dramatic Restorying, for Human's Sake*, I bring Wynter's body of work together to argue that her earliest creative and critical work played a significant role in her theorizing radical anticolonial politics.

This dissertation initiates the scholarly study of some of Sylvia Wynter's earliest available but as yet unpublished creative expression. I center the unpublished radio plays she wrote and broadcast in the short period from 1958 to 1964, suggesting that she radically repurposes earlier forms and contemporary models to reveal and either counter or amplify their politics.

In the first chapter, I situate Wynter in her historical and literary context, suggesting how her answers to the questions being asked about identity, representation, and self-governance paralleled or parted from her contemporaries' responses. In the second and third chapters, I investigate Wynter's play, *Under the Sun* (1958), as one exemplar of Wynter's revisionary intellectual praxis at the

level of a text. In particular, I suggest that through her restorying of the canonical honor play, Wynter reveals how patriarchal/White supremacist empire developed partially through codifying racialized religious oppression and camouflaging it within the gender disciplining mechanisms of the honor play. Wynter accomplishes this symbolic decoding and recoding by versioning two plays, García Lorca's *Yerma* and Shakespeare's *Othello*, that had already subverted the honor play genre. Her version attends *simultaneously* to sex, class, race, and religion, allowing her to begin reconceptualizing the Human outside frameworks of hierarchy altogether.

In my short interludes between chapters, I examine Wynter's attention to songs to suggest that song, like dance, is intrinsic to her knowledge-making. I argue that while also validating Black culture, using songs allowed Wynter to evoke radical messages that could not safely be voiced in her dialog.

My fourth chapter moves from Wynter's radical revising of older canonical texts to examine how this playwright restories *Brother Man*, the novel by her anticolonial contemporary Roger Mais. Her adaptation, begun during the short-lived Federation of the West Indies and finished post-formal Independence, shifts the emphasis from putatively religious commitments to more explicitly pan-African mobilization for land and repatriation.

Thus, I argue that long before she wrote, in her famous 1984 essay, about the sixteenth-century transumption through which gender was overtaken by race, Wynter had already demonstrated in her plays how these two hierarchies of domination—and by extension, all hierarchies of domination—must be unmade. Wynter conceptualized the Human as capaciously inclusive rather than delimited by Enlightenment imperatives and called on the colonized of the Black world to refuse White supremacy by revaluing their Black Being and committing to an egalitarian reorganization of society.

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Prologue

In traumatic times like ours, when reality itself is so distorted as to have become impossible and abnormal, it is the function of all culture, partaking of this abnormality, to be aware of its own sickness. To be aware of the unreality . . . of the so-called real is to *reinterpret* this reality. To *reinterpret* this reality is to commit oneself to a constant revolutionary assault against it.

—Sylvia Wynter, “We Must Learn to Sit Down Together,” 1968

Let me story you this opening to a study on the work of an extraordinary storyteller, teacher, and rhetorician. This tale involves reinterpretation and one of her earliest publications—nonfiction, but like her fiction, not much read and therefore not appreciated for the scope of its accomplishments. In 1958, a decade after the *Empire Windrush* voyage that launched record waves of migration from Britain’s Caribbean colonies into England, *Vogue* commissioned an article by Sylvia Wynter. The assignment was something of a coup for Wynter, who had not yet broadcast, staged, or published a major work outside of the critical edition she had produced in her graduate studies. She had come to Britain in 1947 to pursue a higher education with the aid of a coveted scholarship offered only to the “top” students and, since graduating, had worked more as a dancer and actor than a writer.¹

Despite her newness to the terrain, the *Vogue* editors readily called this as-yet-unpublished playwright Writer and vested her with the authority to teach its readers.² In the ten years since the British Nationality Act passed, thousands of citizens from Commonwealth countries had come to live and work as citizens in Britain. With the looming federation of the British West Indian colonies

¹ The first bachelor’s degree-granting college based in the Caribbean was a branch of the University of London. Built on the grounds of a World War II military and refugee camp beginning in 1948, the University College of the West Indies at Mona did not welcome its first Arts students until 1950.

² Of course, she *was* already a writer, despite having little in print before this *Vogue* article. I discuss Wynter’s many productions for the BBC in the introduction. However, this BBC work had largely been issued through programs targeting a British West Indian (home and abroad) audience, so she could well have been unknown to *Vogue*’s readers.

as pretext, the editors sought an explanation for the apparently sudden emergence of Caribbean literature, hoping to help their readers “[understand] the West Indians who are living with us in this country” (“Strange” 96).

Wynter engaged the teaching task thoughtfully, steeped as she was in the literature of the conquest of the Americas. Charged with supplying British readers with the history of these “Strange Presences,” as the title put it, Wynter gamely reinterpreted reality, offering *Vogue’s* audience a cultural and political history/future that was as much theirs as her own. The development of a Caribbean literature, she asserted, had not begun recently. It dated back to Amerigo Vespucci’s early 16th-century publication of his mostly fantastical letters about the “New World.” According to Wynter, Vespucci’s fiction masquerading as fact emerged as the “first best-seller of modern times” (“Strange” 97). However, his fiction also catalyzed the greed for quick riches that led to the conquest of the Americas, an extractive economy based first on seizure of indigenous lands and bounties, then slavery and colonization. The conquest thus led to the British welfare state that *Vogue’s* readers enjoyed at the expense of those who remained in the colonies.

In this one short but scoping article, Wynter achieves several critical shifts. First, she identifies in literature a force powerful enough to definitively alter history and traces its reverberations into the present day—on a global scale. In other words, literature is not simply ornament or entertainment; it changes the world. This assumption is crucial for her critical practice—minus such power, reinterpreting or re-presenting this literature would be mere intellectual exercise.³ Second, Wynter structures Vespucci as a Caribbean writer, thereby establishing

³ She was later to cite Geoffrey Hartmann as identifying modern literature as occupying a position in the modern world parallel to that occupied by the Bible in the medieval (presumably Judeo-Christian) world (and thus equating literary criticism to Biblical exegesis). She argued, via Foucault, that the values maintaining/generating any particular culture would create and thus be decipherable in that culture’s literature. As importantly, she proposes here that literature that “counter-signifies” against the cultural order can alter that order. See Wynter’s “Rethinking Aesthetics: Notes Toward a Deciphering Practice,” also discussed in the Introduction, p. 23n22.

Caribbean literature—the very existence of which was still largely denied or ignored by critics and educators throughout the British Empire—as the *first* modern literature. Third, flashing forward to her present and bringing in other current Caribbean writers, she rhetorically positions the nascent Caribbean theatre in London (hers included) as heir-apparent to both that first modern “best-seller” and to that first, world-changing Caribbean literature. The implication? The literature she and her Caribbean co-conspirators were producing could not only be widely popular (and profitable for those who dared publish it). Theirs, too, could change the world.

At the same time that Wynter represents Caribbean literature as having a long history and bright future, she recalibrates the presumed relationship of cultural and financial patron (British) to beneficiary (Caribbean). The latter people, declared by philosophers and poets to be without history or culture, are suddenly, via her pen, the progenitors of both. As such, she disrupts the idea that the British citizens already residing in the metropole are both superior and primary, while the West Indians laying claim to their rightful Commonwealth citizenship are deficient and tertiary at best, if they counted at all. Furthermore, far from exhibiting the “haunting anxiety of a black ‘cultural void’ in which only mimicry can be born” (Scott, “Agonistic” x) that has been described as the quintessential concern of the colonial Caribbean artist and intellectual of that era, Wynter instead subtly threatens “colonization in reverse,” as her compatriot Louise Bennett would later laughingly put it.⁴ Again, she forces the awakened reader to confront a map whose cardinal points are in

⁴ The process of “coloniz[ing] in reverse” claimed by Bennett and Wynter differs significantly from Homi Bhabha’s concept of reverse appropriation, or mimicry. Their framework addresses a different direction in the cultural encounter, in which the colonized (or previously colonized) insert or assert aspects of their cultures within the cultures of the colonizer, thereby transforming them. (And in making her claim, Wynter does not admit for consideration the question of whether those from the colonial power welcome or reject that move.) No evidence points to Wynter reading or corresponding with Suzanne Césaire, the important theorist of Antillean surrealism whose published writing precedes Wynter’s by more than a decade. However, Césaire similarly works to demonstrate how the cultures of the colonial power had “been irrevocably altered and pluralized by its colonial relationships, [. . . rendering] the Caribbean agent of change, rather than victim of it” (Rabbitt 544). Laura Belcher’s concept of discursive possession offers an interesting adjacent theorization of the reversed direction of transformative cultural impact, which she elaborates in *Abyssinia’s Samuel Johnson* (2012). She writes that, rather than suggesting that the colonizer autonomously seizes another culture’s “goods,” as implied by the term appropriation, “This new model enables us to recognize how Europe’s others were not

radically different places than they had previously thought. In other words, in what appears to be Wynter's first written address to the British residents of her "host" country, this scholarship kid insistently, brilliantly, steps out of "her place."

Wynter's refusal to provide the *Vogue* audience with either insider ethnography or superficial human-interest journalism—her determined inhabitation of a position and function outside of and beyond any of the parameters established by the venue or its audience and her consistent counter-signifying against the cultural order they inhabit—remain emblematic of her insurgent practice in the critical-imaginative as well as creative-critical and -theoretical work she undertook throughout her career. In this article and throughout her critical-imaginative work, Wynter turned to existing literature—sometimes ancient, sometimes new—and unsettled notions of what value(s) it held for continued consideration. Hers was a Sankofa project. I hope that this dissertation proves to be, too—that in examining this history, it helps to recover, not just for stage and page, but for living, that which can revivify and embolden an emancipatory ethic, ensure our survival, and shimmy our joy—us Black people, us Blackwomen, us walking and us rooted people, here, and everywhere.

Let us return to the beginning.

merely an ingredient of European representations, not merely the exploited subjects of the European gaze, but also the producers of discourse that has co-constituted European representations" (1).

Introduction

The Theory Before

Hosanna, I build my house oh, ha, ha! / . . .
 The breeze come blow it down, ha, ha! / . . .
 But if my house fall down I can build it up
 Can build it up right from the ground, ha, ha!

—Jamaican folk hymn, adapted for *Under the Sun*

The West took over the world theoretically, and we have to take it away from them theoretically. And so theory is not [. . .] to be despised. The question is how you use it.

—Sylvia Wynter

Tear off yuh dress and open yuhself
 And dance like you mad [...]
 Pull down a star
 Burn till you bleed
 Far Far.

—Martin Carter

A key figure in Caribbean anticolonial cultural and political mobilization, Sylvia Wynter began her performance, political, and academic career in the late 1940s. Laboring inside and far beyond the academy, Wynter has both theorized and produced culture—understood as constituting social, political, and aesthetic being.¹ Her efforts to establish liberatory cultural frameworks and intellectual practices reverberate throughout the Black diaspora and, as such, are fundamental to any consideration of the literatures and politics of the Black World. A formative critical theorist in cultural studies, literatures in English, and Black, Caribbean, and other genres of Being, Wynter

¹ Wynter also proposed fundamental changes in Spanish language literature scholarship as far back as the 1970s. She had participated in a push that developed comparative and cross-historical approaches to literatures in English. Mervyn Morris, then a UWI–Mona faculty member, remarked that their department “used to be called the Department of English, and is now the Department of Literatures in English. The difference is important, and there is a story to be told” (2). However, I don’t know whether a similar change occurred in the Spanish literature department, where the demand would have originated.

anticipates a long list of later scholars who, as Aliyyah Abdur-Rahman puts it, “expose antiblackness as endemic to the very project of modernity” (362n2). Wynter’s thought and practice are foundational to Caribbean Studies and Black Study (à la Crawley). They have influenced cultural and literary studies; theory generally and within particularized social/geographical locations; feminist theory; Black feminist theory; critical pedagogy; history and historiography; psychology; sociology; rhetoric, and literature itself. Wynter’s most recent theoretical propositions and cultural criticism are increasingly operationalized and studied in the academy and beyond.

The explosion of recent interest in Wynter’s thought attends most closely to her theorizing an expansively imagined and transformative Humanity, which she understands to be a mode of Being constituted through both biology and story, or bios and mythos, regionally unbound. However, at the beginning of her career in the middle of the twentieth century, Wynter focused more pointedly on Being in the “ex-slave archipelago” (*Human Being* 5). Joining with subjects of British Empire hailing from throughout West Indies, she helped to bring into being a new form of critical interrogation, which dissected the assumptions undergirding critical methodology and creation alike, using the lens of a particular Caribbean history and social organization, its cultural expression included. Therefore, she played a central role in reimagining what it meant to be West Indian, helping delineate a particularized Caribbean identity and conceptualize the responsibilities of cultural creators and critics for achieving an independent and equitable Caribbean. Indeed, Brown and Rosenberg call her “the most revered female cultural critic of the 1960s and 1970s” (9).

This identification, “cultural critic,” should be understood within the context of the incipient criticism Wynter was helping bring into being. Without this context, the term can paper over the political import of cultural criticism in the colonial context. Wynter’s incipient criticism was not the arms-length cultural criticism of the 21st-century academy, commenting on artifacts or performances outside their process of becoming. Hers was part of the foundational work of

distinguishing a people as *people* who, what's more, had created themselves and their art within the maw of colonialism. Wynter does not imagine that cultural labor is sufficient to liberate, but insists that cultural labor is necessary for liberation. Do the students in the multiple disciplines now reading Wynter, outside of Caribbean studies, perhaps outside of African diasporic and postcolonial studies, grasp the significance of this context, beyond the label? Put differently, can people who haven't "lived that era" and therefore cannot existentially recall the colonial experience understand what it was to have one's entire Being derided and suppressed—language, music, dances, religions, all? Indeed, Norval Edwards identifies Wynter's contributions more broadly than cultural criticism, referring to her as "a foremother of Caribbean cultural studies in the tradition of radical humanists like C. L. R. James and George Lamming" ("Insurgent" 107). These relationships lend more texture to the descriptor "cultural critic." James's own assessment was less gendered, less genealogical, and more openly political; in a letter to Wynter in 1974, James declared that her "position [. . .] represent[ed] politically the most advanced thinking in the Caribbean" (1).

It is not incidental that Wynter arrived in London to pursue a degree in Modern Languages at King's College in 1947, a critical moment in anticolonial movement. This was the year that India gained its Independence, heralding the beginning of the end of the British Empire. Already on the scene when Wynter arrived were many whose essential contributions to anticolonial theory and praxis in the Black World have since been widely acknowledged.¹ These included West Indian

¹ I use the term Black World to accentuate the pan-African sentiment and collaboration that coalesced around struggles first to escape and abolish slavery and then to resist the "Scramble for Africa" and colonization. I don't mean to negate the shared goals and cooperation cross-regionally and -racially amongst internally and externally colonized people from Asia, Africa, and the Americas. Evidence of such cooperation is attested to in the 1946 demand put forward in a conference organized by Padmore's Asiatic-African Front, which called for the "[f]ederation of the West Indian territories . . . as a pre-condition to the extension of self-determination" (*League of Coloured Peoples Resolution*). Other manifestations include the Bandung conference of 1955—which initiated the non-aligned movement and was attended by such US figures as Richard Wright—and extant organizations such as the Afro-Asian People's Solidarity Organisation, founded in 1957. Such inter-continental cooperation receives an extra-national articulation through the organization of Indigenous Peoples, who sought global representation as early as 1923. However, it is the struggles and cultures of African and African-descended peoples that Black writers and thinkers have linked most closely, including

thinkers such as C. L. R. James, Amy Ashwood Garvey, and George Padmore, along with emerging African and Caribbean political leaders such as Kenya's Jomo Kenyatta, the Bahamas' Lynden Pendley, Zambia's Kenneth Kaunda, and Ghana's Kwame Nkrumah, whom Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o has called "the single most important theoretician and spokesman" of the 1950s (61).

This burgeoning London community of Black intellectuals had begun to gather at the turn of the twentieth century, even before Mussolini fired off the first salvo of World War II by invading Ethiopia. Thus, in pre-World War II England, students were already seeking university educations as yet unavailable in their colonial outposts in the Caribbean. They struggled to make a life alongside dissidents and agitators sent into exile from British colonies in Africa and the West Indies.² As the South African/Jamaican author Peter Abrahams wrote, "London was the critical point of contact where Pan-African, socialist and anticolonial ideas were shared and enlarged" (Matera 2). Italy's invasion catalyzed even greater pan-African sentiment, support, and cooperation. Post-war, the number of migrants from around the Empire swelled. The influx from Asia, Africa, and the West Indies included former soldiers conscripted to defend the Empire who were as often defending the greater ideal of freedom from religious and racist surveillance, repression, and extinction instead. In 1948, Parliament passed the Nationality Act granting British citizenship to the residents of Britain's colonies (and, as with India, former colonies). This temporary expansion of rights meant the nation was also thronging with colonial workers. Among them were laborers Britain actively recruited to

those Black intellectuals in early Ethiopianist and other African-centered literary and political organizations. These were the linkages most present for Wynter during her years in England.

² William James reports that the colonial government first isolated "agitators" within the British West Indies, then routed them. These included Garvey, who arrived in 1935, and W. A. Domingo, who had been imprisoned without trial for 20 months before being expelled in 1941. Walter Rodney would be a later case, and one more likely to impact Wynter, since she was closely aligned with him at UWI when they both worked there. For a good overview of the comingling of political activists and intellectuals in Britain between the world wars, see Brent Edwards's *Practice of Diaspora*, and more generally, Priyamvarda Gopal's *Insurgent Empire*, and Marc Matera's *Black London*.

rebuild in the wake of World War II's destruction and people uninvited but of necessity fleeing partition, impoverishment, and widespread educational, social, and political neglect.³

Some of these workers, students, dissidents, intellectuals, and artists joined their creative energies together, striving to decolonize minds, politics, and lands. They studied the histories and cultures of their home regions, which had been almost entirely occluded in the colonial education system. With their new understanding of these elisions and exclusions, they debated the best directions and strategies for achieving self-governance and recognition of their full humanity. They planned and participated in actions in London and beyond.⁴ They persisted in singing their songs, inherited and new, and dancing their Carnival ceremonies, transplanted from Trinidad into the far less hospitable London landscape, come rain or snow. And they wrote. They penned lyrics, short stories, plays, poetry, novels, criticism, and theory, sometimes intended as separate genres but often interweaving criticism and theory throughout.

The lyrics, short stories, plays, novel, and criticism Sylvia Wynter produced during this period were developed through and participated in this enmeshment of anticolonial thought and action. Wynter's theoretical goal, according to Norval Edwards, was to demolish "the conceptual foundations of Western humanism" ("Talking" 13), including its delineating of "genres of Humans,"

³ See the BBC's 1998 *Windrush* documentary series' coverage of worker recruitment from the Caribbean, meant to supply the labor previously supplied by the half million British men killed in World War II. The laborers were sought most for public service jobs (e.g., driving buses and nursing), but also for construction, literally rebuilding British "homes [lost] to German bombs" ("Windrush Pt 1").

⁴ According to Jan Carew, Wynter's then husband and collaborator, the "activist community" to which they belonged "demonstrated almost every day" in the late 1950s and early 1960s, including a protest following Lumumba's assassination during which they "placed marbles on the streets to trip up the police's cavalry" (144). Another such "demonstration" was the experimental play, *Eleven Men Dead at Hola Camp*, mounted for one night in July 1959 at the Royal Court Theatre that had purchased Wynter's first play. *Eleven Men Dead* protested the March killing of prisoners, supposed Mau Mau collaborators fighting British imperialism, at a British concentration camp in Kenya. Carew was one of the improvisers (Wearing 654), as was the South African anti-apartheid writer Bloke Modisane (who later played "the African" in her *Brother Man*) and the Nigerian anticolonialist playwright, Wole Soyinka. Soyinka would later express his "intense disquiet" about the show, "exacerbated by the fact that the performance was taking place before an audience whom he considered collectively responsible for the events" (Nicholson 50).

a mechanism through which the enlightened West justified American colonization, Native American genocide, and Native American and African enslavement. Put more explicitly, the medieval order expelled some people from Humanity altogether and arrogated some rights exclusively to a European elite, as licensed by monarchs who claimed to be divinely appointed. This is a fundamental truss in the construction of Western thought. Building upon this foundation of exclusion, even as they (partially) changed the categories, the European Enlightenment philosophers and other designers of a supposedly degodded humanist era professed a “universal” humanity that nonetheless overtly excluded Black and other people from its universe.⁵ Edwards explains that Wynter committed her early essays to “the disruptive deciphering of the epistemological and cognitive categories that initiated and legitimized the West’s global dominance” (“Talking” 13), which is to say the European/American retentions of the White supremacy and patriarchy of medieval *and* Enlightenment thought and practice. The ongoing intellectual project Edwards has sketched rightly begins with the “disruptive deciphering”—dismantling conceptual foundations—and countertheatrics of the dances Wynter performed almost as soon as she arrived in England and the writing she broadcast on the British Broadcast Corporation (BBC) starting in 1953.

Accounts of Wynter’s critical thought have increasingly incorporated more or different arenas, but they have also tended to discount her role as a political actor and strategist rather than simply commentator at that pivotal moment in modern history. This flattening belies the historiography of her thought, hiding the fact that while she began conceptualizing the radically anti-exclusive Humanity necessary for planetary survival, Wynter was quite literally both organizing and dialoguing with other thinkers and doers intent on discovering and promoting new cultural,

⁵ Sala-Molins suggests, for their discussions of the Enlightenment “paradox” of universal human freedom and slavery, for example, C. L. R. James’s *Black Jacobins* (1938), Philip Curtin. *The Image of Africa* (1964); Richard Popkin, “The Philosophical Basis of Eighteenth Century Racism” (1973); Carmenella Biondi. “L’Afrique des philosophes” (1985); Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic* (1993); and Marie Shanti Singham, “Betwixt Cattle and Men” (1994).

epistemological, and political strategies for expanding Black freedom broadly and in the Caribbean.⁶ A survey of her writing from that period shows that Wynter intervened in knowledge-making about, for example, the origins of colonialism in the Americas, the structure and function of the enslavement of Africans there, and the tremendous creative production resulting from the interactions among imported European colonial, transplanted African, and syncretic “American” cultural, religious, and political forms. Its scope and subjects notwithstanding, Wynter’s foundational political and cultural work from this short period was, until recently, taken up only cursorily by most scholars over the years, when at all.⁷

If this neglect has begun to ebb, a lacuna still remains. In the last decade or so, working groups were convened, multiple dedicated journal issues were organized, and several volumes inspired by or dedicated to Wynter’s theoretical scoping were published.⁸ However, while Wynter and her work have come to be more widely studied, her earliest, formative, political, and cultural

⁶ Such thinkers included not only such renowned figures as C. L. R. James, but also the widely-read Walter Rodney, Kamau Brathwaite, and Stuart Hall, as well as the lesser-known historian Elsa Goveia. Wynter would also, almost certainly, have been in direct conversation Claudia Jones, who came to England in 1955 after having been expelled from the United States. Both were involved with organizing related to the White supremacist Notting Hill riots. However, I have not found any documentation of ways they may have collaborated. Wynter did not, for instance, write anything for Jones’s *West Indian Gazette*, unlike many of the writers associated with the BBC. Quite likely, Wynter was also in conversation with Ivan van Sertima. As Anne Walmsley writes, Van Sertima had been “drawn . . . directly into the national movement [of British Guiana] as the PPP fought for power” (Walmsley 24), a struggle Wynter and Carew were to be implicated in as well. Two of the sporadic London residents Wynter was unlikely to have been in direct contact with in England—even if she was greatly influenced by their ideas and actions through others, were Una Marson and George Padmore. Marson, the Jamaican and anticolonial activist and writer who had initiated *Caribbean Voices*, the BBC radio program that gave so many Caribbean writers their footing had already returned to Jamaica (see Glyne Griffith, Rhonda Cobham, and Peter Kalliney for this important history). The socialist George Padmore, James’s contemporary and friend, died in 1959 and had been in Ghana for some time previously, so it’s unlikely Wynter met with him directly.

⁷ One imprecise, if useful measure demonstrates how the work of this “most revered . . . cultural critic” has received bare mention: a search for the influential cultural theorist Stuart Hall on Google Scholar garners over 140,000 hits (representing citations as well as his own work), while a similar search for Sylvia Wynter offers up fewer than 9000, (noting that this number has doubled since I first conducted the search in 2015.) See Appendix A for a different comparative tool that represents the citational disparity visually.

⁸ These include the 2010 collection *After Man*, edited by Anthony Bogues, which came out of a conference on her work by the same name, the 2015 reader on which Wynter collaborated with Katherine McKittrick, *Sylvia Wynter: On Being Human as Praxis*, and the 2015 collection *Black Knowledges/Black Struggles: Essays in Critical Epistemology*, to name but three, along with a 2016 dedicated edition of the flagship Caribbean Studies journal, *Small Axe*.

work still attracts little scholarly attention. (I propose some possibilities for this neglect in Chapter 1.)

The body of work in question constitutes a small portion of Wynter's overall production, but is nonetheless significant enough to warrant consideration. (See Appendix E for a comprehensive bibliography of Wynter's writing.) Like many of the fellow West Indian writers, she wrote and produced for several BBC programs, including its highly influential literary magazine, *Caribbean Voices*. Under the BBC's auspices alone, Wynter authored and produced three radio plays, several short stories, and several poems and co-authored one radio play later adapted as a television drama.⁹ After returning to Jamaica, she wrote or co-wrote at least six more dramatic works. However, none of this embodied or unpublished written work, and the ways it might inform the written and published, has been explored.

Furthermore, even the published dramas have been understudied. For example, as of early 2023, I have located only five published studies of the two published plays. These include Keith Walker's article arguing that Wynter theorizes culture as a process through *Maskarade* (2001); Ron Canfield's chapter using *Maskarade*, "Theatralizing the Anglophone Caribbean" (2001); Carole Boyce Davies's chapter "From Masquerade to *Maskarade*" (2015); Imani Owen's article, "Toward a 'Truly Indigenous Theatre'" on one act of *The House and Land of Mrs. Alba* (2017); and Danielle Bainbridge's deployment of critical fabulation focusing on *Maskarade* in her short article, "Sylvia Wynter, *Maskarade* and Performing the State" (2022). The pace of increasing attention has certainly

⁹ The BBC's role in developing Caribbean literature is well treated by Rhonda Cobham, Glyne Griffith, Amanda Bidnall, and Julie Cyzewski. Wynter also participated in the development of radio in Jamaica, at the not-yet-privatized Jamaican Broadcast Corporation (JBC). The BBC had sent one of her producers, Robin Midgely, to Jamaica to help develop regionally-run radio production in preparation for regional independence. Wynter first adapted *Brother Man* for the JBC, only later revising it for BBC broadcast. In addition, she was later on the board of the JBC. During a short prior stint in British Guiana during Cheddi Jagan's first administration, Wynter had done similar work to help establish radio and film. This work was abruptly curtailed when ethnic tensions exploded in the colony and she returned to Jamaica.

accelerated; however, one can't help but note the almost 30-year gap from the first publication of *Maskerade* to any scholarly discussion and the almost 15-year gap that followed the first.¹⁰

The near-complete blind spot has largely persisted even though Sylvia Wynter herself has repeatedly identified her “imaginative” work as primary. Furthermore, where the early work *has* been addressed, readers of Wynter have tended to bifurcate her career into pre-thinking aesthetic and post-creative theoretical.¹¹ This timeline doesn't hold up to scrutiny, since Wynter was already dancing every moment she could when she was writing her master's thesis, a critical edition of a Spanish Golden Age play with which she began to theorize the effects of liminality and the role of religion in producing race. She had also started writing short stories while learning the philological method of literary criticism in secondary school. In other words, for Wynter, aesthetic and intellectual expression, the practices of body/mind, had always comingled. Even if much of her equally imaginative analytical and more abstractly theoretical work emerged later, with “*Hosanna! We buil' back we house*”: *Sylvia Wynter's Dramatic Restorying, for Human's Sake*, I suggest that Wynter's corpus can more accurately be conceived of as unified, with the early creative and critical an integral part of the whole.

How might we go about reconstituting this whole? Nijah Cunningham's line of inquiry into critical approaches to Wynter's unpublished monograph *Black Metamorphosis* could be read to suggest that we locate in her critical-imaginative work, as well, the “aspects that fall outside of the horizon of

¹⁰ This attention results from the decades'-long effort to bring more scholarly attention to Wynter's important work; (at least) three of these pieces come from scholars who are part of that loose collective of people whose “founding” members never lost sight of Wynter's work or its significance. Walker's article, “Not to Exist Without Interpretation of Meaning,” appeared in a *Journal of the West Indies* special volume edited by Wynter's student, Demetrius Eudell. Owens did her doctoral work at Columbia University, where David Scott is on the faculty. Boyce Davies wrote her chapter for the 2015 collaboration between Wynter and Katherine McKittrick, *Sylvia Wynter: On Being Human as Praxis*.

¹¹ See, e.g., Norval Edwards, who identifies Wynter's theoretical “phase” as emerging second, after her anti-formalist essays. If one subscribes to the notion of phases in Wynter's work, the theoretical would have to be counted third, taking into account the early creative-critical and critical-imaginative as well.

[Wynter] critique” (“Resistance” 121). Carole Boyce Davies likewise asserts that although Wynter’s creative works have “remained outside the frames of analysis of the Wynter intellectual trajectory for too long,” these forms are nonetheless “central to understanding what has unfolded as the larger theoretical contributions and interventions for which Wynter is now primarily known” (“From Masquerade” 205). They need not remain outside. It is true that, given the absence of any known extant recordings of her plays or dance performances, the historical embodied creations that preceded the written will likely remain entirely inaccessible.¹² However, the bulk of Wynter’s artistic expression has not only been preserved, but was long ago cataloged. It sits in aging folders in their tallied boxes, awaiting us; this disappearance of Sylvia Wynter’s earliest imaginative acts can be reversed.¹³

My dissertation participates in this collective political-theoretical project of recovery and restitution of Wynter’s work as part of a more comprehensive ongoing collaborative project to reintegrate the creative and productive with the analytical and theoretical in radical Black diasporic literature and scholarship more generally. Audre Lorde argued in 1984 that creative theorizing through fiction and poetry is needed to provide “the skeleton architecture of our lives” that “lays the foundations for a future of change” (38). Shortly after, in 1988, Barbara Christian decried the “race to theory” that was increasingly dominating scholarship across the humanities, particularly a Western-centric vein of theory that depended upon a Cartesian logic splitting body/feeling from

¹² As explained to me first by Glyne Griffith and Julie Cyzewski, the BBC’s practice at in the early years of radio, particularly for programs receiving less funding, was to re-use tape reels until they were no longer useable. The staff of the BBC Written Archives Centre confirmed this practice, as did the librarians at UWI–St. Augustine and the librarians at the British Library Sound Archives, as well as the enthusiasts at the Sutton Elms Society, which collects old radio dramas. See also Chapter 1, note 5.

¹³ Indeed, at least one of the plays, *Under the Sun*, has now been professionally voiced, if not staged. Readings were performed in Austin, Texas in May 2019 and London, England in July 2022. See Appendix C. Katherine McKittrick, in attendance at the 2019 performance, called it “a brilliant celebration of the research and writing of Sylvia Wynter [. . .] [e]ntering through her creative text [. . .] and illuminating her ongoing demand for a re-enchanted humanism” (Twitter, 18 May 2019).

mind/reasoning. Christian wrote, “people of color have always theorized—but in forms quite different from the Western form of abstract logic” (68). She maintained that our storytelling, in all its forms, produces knowledge and that when a literature privileges rather than ejects the sensual, the embodied, and the felt, it acknowledges the intelligence of the body/mind that knows.¹⁴

Indeed, having danced as a student and professionally, Wynter used her embodied experience to inform her understanding of how people know, how they create and assert their Being, and how they might resist being negated conceptually by others. She has described how dancing “destroys the whole Cartesian thing,” asserting that dance, particularly African dance, does not just perform; it conceptualizes, enabling one to “think against a lot of formal knowledge” (*Interview*).¹⁵ Boyce Davies contends that “the creative/theoretical split” enacted by the academy often proves insufficient for examining the literature of Caribbean writers, whose “theoretical work is intimately connected to the imaginative” (“From Masquerade” 205). Wynter herself had already argued in 1985 that imaginative literature “enables us to see some of these meanings in which we live enmeshed,” which “help us to perceive reality in a certain way, and therefore act upon reality in a certain way.” Furthermore, she asserted that this informed action could “help change and transform these meanings when [...] necessary” (*Dance and Wynter* 277). As discussed above, Boyce Davies asserts not only that some Caribbean writers have theorized through their imaginative work but also that Wynter is among them.

¹⁴ If B. Christian appeared to be contesting the place of “theory” proper in the study of Black literature, bell hooks mounted a rather different defense of the potential of imaginative expression. hooks maintained that the boundaries of what counts as theory must be expanded, but that “theory” proper, trimmed of its “highly abstract, jargonistic, difficult to read” language, still had an invaluable function in the struggle to expand (Black) life (4).

¹⁵ Wynter elaborated on this theory over several days of conversations and interviews, including interviews 21 and 25 July 2017. See Appendix B.

Although historically Wynter's creative work has rarely been considered alongside her extensive critical and theoretical corpus, her early dance and fiction praxis inaugurate her exhaustive theoretical endeavors toward an epistemological shift that could lead to a boundless and actualized, rather than partial, exclusive, and merely potential Human Being.¹⁶ This shift necessarily involves a decoupling from Empire and imperial modes of governance and thought. In the aughts, several other critics had identified the play of theory in Wynter's fiction, attending with care to ways her 1962 novel conceptualized the distribution of status, power, and material wellbeing in a post-Empire Caribbean. For instance, in her 2008 essay, Shirley Toland-Dix writes that Wynter employs the novel to theorize "insights and concepts that she later develops in stunningly brilliant and erudite theoretical essays," among them an "engagement with the role of groups most marginalized or liminal within societies" (58). For Toland-Dix, then, the throughline between the early expression and the later abstraction is abundantly clear. Similarly, Kelly Baker Josephs argues in 2009 that, since Wynter "has a significantly more prominent position as a theorist than a novelist or playwright," criticism must perforce attend closely to how she "work[s] out some of her theories through fiction" ("Determining" np). More recently, Imani Owens has carefully considered Wynter's *The House and Land of Mrs. Alba*, one act of which appeared in 1968 with a prefatory essay in the cultural journal Wynter had helped to found. In her 2017 essay, Owens also responds to Boyce Davies's argument. She concludes that "Traversing [the] theoretical divide is especially rewarding in the case of Wynter, whose work as a dramatist served as fertile ground for her burgeoning theories" (51). The work of each of these critics calls for greater attention to Wynter's critical imaginary.

¹⁶ Although there is still too little critical attention to Wynter's creative work, some significant criticism contending that Wynter's fiction does theory precedes this study. It includes, for example, the keen and essential analyses by Shirley Toland-Dix (2008), Kelly Baker Josephs (2009), Anthony Bogues (2010), Demetrius Eudell (2012), Nijah Cunningham (2015), and David Scott (2016), in their discussions of *The Hills of Hebron*, which receives the bulk of all criticism of Wynter's imaginative corpus.

Such a call demands a response. This dissertation initiates the scholarly study of some of Sylvia Wynter's earliest available yet unpublished "creative" expression. I center the plays she wrote in the short period from 1958 to 1964, work I call critical-imaginative here to insist upon its theorizing "in forms quite different from . . . abstract logic." In "*Hosanna! We buil' back we house*": *Sylvia Wynter's Dramatic Restorying, for Human's Sake*, I propose a different framework for reading these yet-to-be-published critical-imaginative texts. Addressing the need for theory in the service of building liberatory practice, bell hooks writes that "Theory is not inherently healing, liberatory, or revolutionary" but that it can "[fulfill] this function . . . when we ask that it do so and direct our theorizing towards this end" (2). From the beginning of her career, Wynter asked her texts to fulfill this function, defining the writer's role as inherently political. She consistently describes her early critical-imaginative work as participating in anticolonial movement.¹⁷ My reading of Wynter's early dramas explicitly assumes, rather than attempting to locate, the anticolonial. Embracing the precept that Wynter's fiction and drama are central rather than peripheral to her critical and theoretical formulations, I investigate the texts to discern the anticolonial politics and critical versioning practice she was developing.¹⁸ This framework also takes seriously the forms she adopts and the plots she alters to consider what her "restorying" of the precursors fashions. Finally, I contend that drama and fiction allowed Wynter to be more daring than did her "abstract" critical and theoretical work (which I identify as creative-criticism and creative-theory to insist on the continuity and imbrication of these forms of thought and expression). In this narrative arena, Wynter unambiguously articulated

¹⁷ See, for example, the introduction to the 2010 relaunch of *The Hills of Hebron*, where Wynter declares that the novel was "anticolonial," not "nationalist" (xi), and her interview with David Scott, in which he reflects that the novel sought "to imagine a kind of cultural-political community that is not on the agenda of the nationalist movement" ("Re-Enchantment" 134).

¹⁸ See Wynter, "How to Read" for her use of "versioning." Other critics have also used the term, which comes out of a dub musical praxis. Most notable in this context is Evelyn O'Callaghan, who theorizes the ways women writers deploy the practice in their literature. See O'Callaghan's *Woman Version* (1993).

a radically inclusive politics that demanded space not only for Black people generally but also for Black women specifically, as Humans and as leaders.

In addition to creating her own literary and dramatic texts, Wynter also elaborated critical methods that reoriented the objective, rather than the object, of analysis, exhorting readers to determine how a text could work on the world rather than whether it was aesthetically pleasing or performed expertise with verbal acuity, realism, or inherited forms. Applying Wynter's critical methods to her critical-imaginative texts allows us to recuperate more fully the anticoloniality she envisioned. "*Hosanna! We buil' back we house*" continues the work of restoring to the theoretical and critical body those imaginative parts that had been amputated.

Methodology

Mine: Find the Work, then its Form and Function

For the 2010 re-issue of Sylvia Wynter's foundational novel, *The Hills of Hebron* (original 1962), Demetrius Eudell contributed an afterword whose promise is explained through its subtitle: "Reading *The Hills of Hebron* in the Context of Sylvia Wynter's Later Work." The subtitle does not categorically separate the "work" through which he reads the novel. I now suspect this is because Eudell would admit of no actual or "natural" separation between the theoretical and the creative, but at the time, I thought he meant reading the novel through the properly "theoretical." However, when I came to the work, I was familiar with neither; not only was the "Later Work" of his subtitle all but unknown to me, but so was the "Theory Before" of my own. Nonetheless, Wynter *had* already been framed for me as a writer against Empire when I learned that she had a large body of

creative work that merited attention, and I was encouraged to join a collaborative effort to recover that work.¹⁹

Thrilled to encounter the expansive visioning of this Caribbean/Blackwoman writer that had begun in the 1940s, I soon found myself confronting a trove of unexamined critical-imaginative texts—alongside a mountain of the creative-theoretical that followed. What to do? I had read the foundational essays she wrote on criticism, first “The Novel and History: The Plantation and the Plot” (1971), which set out her political priorities for me, then the earlier pair of essays from the *Jamaica Journal*, which cemented them. I decided to turn my lack of familiarity with Wynter’s work to my advantage. Rather than *reading into* her imaginative literature what I had already gleaned from the abstracted theory, my uninitiated entrance would allow me to see what was there first, only to be read against the theory later.²⁰ Therefore, my methodological approach has been twofold. First, I have read historically and genealogically; that is, I have read the stories and forms that Wynter versioned against their (anti)models. She has long maintained that “to understand everything about our present order, we’re going to have to actually look at the kind of literature that is being written and to see what the changes are” (*Interview*). Of necessity, then, in addition to prioritizing only work that is publicly accessible, to “see what the changes” are wrought in her anticolonial literature, I have also centered the early plays that most clearly reinterpret either a preceding (studied) author or an existing form. Second, I have attempted to align my critical method with one of the strategies Wynter began to lay out explicitly with her 1968 critical essays. That is, entirely setting aside any critical desire to determine absolute or relative beauty or generic efficacy, I explore what the

¹⁹ See the Coda in this dissertation for my discussion of the role I play in the wide and multi-celled project of collecting and making available all parts of Wynter’s wide-ranging oeuvre.

²⁰ See Nijah Cunningham’s 2016 essay on Wynter’s *Black Metamorphosis* for his discussion of a similar attention to what this text does and reveals on its own, careful not to read through the lens of later theory and thus circumscribe or misread the earlier text.

literature *does* rather than *means*, reinterpreting it within the context of the text and the author, while considering them within their “proper time and place.”

Hers: Decode and Dismantle, then Re(con)figure and Recalibrate

Wynter founded her critical method in philology. She revisited literature from previous periods. She determined what that literature was doing, the changes it wrought, or the values it produced and reinforced. Laying bare these values undergirding the founding myths of colonial Europe, she exploded them and then built them up from the ground.²¹ This dual operation of exposure/ unmaking and then refiguring/ remaking, the writer’s particular capacity, is described by Foucault in 1966 as the ability “to literally reveal and creatively reorder the underlying cultural codes of the symbolic” (Jackson 583). This dual operation is at the heart of Wynter’s decolonizing method.

Yasmeen Daifallah explains that since colonization executes “cultural (psychic, epistemic, ideological), [and] political and economic domination,” unmaking colonization entails attending to all of these domains. Amongst the techniques this requires are “a thoroughgoing critique of the effects of colonialism, an unearthing of the modes of life it eradicates or distorts, and a provision of alternative visions for social and political life” (1). Analyzing Wynter’s novel, Shirley Toland-Dix refers to a similar practice, theorized by Edouard Glissant as a two-part process. One part is *demythification* or “desecration, [. . .] whose purpose is to dismantle the internal mechanism of a given system, to expose the hidden workings, to demystify.” The other is the *hallowing* that “serves to reunite the community around its own ‘myths, its beliefs, its imagination or its ideology’” (Glissant, qtd. in Toland-Dix 59). Eudell puts this another way, clarifying the concept in relation to Wynter’s

²¹ To be clear, there’s no evidence Wynter was claiming that revolution could be waged entirely through rhetorical strategies or that attaining a “voice” would be sufficient. She appeared to hold, rather, that the revalorization of Black epistemologies, expression, and aesthetics were a necessary *part* of revolutionary, and thus anticolonial, struggle. In this she joined such thinkers as Frantz Fanon, Aimé Césaire, Léopold Sédar Senghor and innumerable others. Many scholars have treated this line of thinking. Later, Wynter would assert that the necessary revalorization could not happen at all within the frame of the patriarchal White supremacist bourgeois order of knowledge/feeling/being/power—that instead a new humanism would have to be brought into being. See her map essay, (Wynter, “On How”).

particular practice. Colonizing literature sutured the signifiers of symbolic death (evil) onto the various aspects of the colonized peoples' Being ("modes of life")—religion, dance, music, aesthetics, and so on. Wynter detached those death signifiers and reattached their Being instead to symbolic life ("Afterword" 326).²² Wynter employs this decolonizing method throughout her writing.

Many West Indian artists embraced this challenge of defining a people and representing them newly to themselves and others. To paraphrase Marley (paraphrasing Garvey), they aimed to free the colonized from mental slavery—thus clearing the path to material and spiritual emancipation as well.²³ It was to this mission that Wynter applied herself for the long run. She answered the question "Who are we?" by taking into consideration the often ahistorical and pessimistic notions projected by others onto the Caribbean people, but also the present- and future-oriented conceptions of Caribbean people themselves, in order to "[provide] alternative visions for social and political life" (Daifallah 1).

Surfacing current elements of the repurposed African past, Wynter ruptured the Eurocentric present. However, Wynter's earliest dramas told these new/old stories not to enthrone the African but to reveal an alternative Being, one neither subject to European definition nor tied to African traditions, but a hybrid, "New World," Being, incorporating and surpassing its progenitors.²⁴

²² Wynter describes her critical method in several essays, including her 1992 chapter, "Rethinking Aesthetics: Notes Toward a Deciphering Practice." Here, she calls for a "*post-deconstructionist* [. . .] practice [that] is able to 'uncover' the workings of [. . .] counter-practices" with the express intent, following Nietzsche, of uncovering and altering values ("Rethinking Aesthetics" 238–40, emphasis mine). I note here, however, that the deciphering practice that can be seen in operation in her 1958 *Vogue* article and early plays pre-dates Derrida's 1967 definition of deconstruction. Her practice also mirrors the decolonizing method of other (pre-decolonization) anticolonial thinkers. Daifallah traces "the role that interpretive methods play in generating the emancipatory sensibilities envisioned by decolonial thinkers," determining that their methods operate through "disconnection, reconnection, and praxis" (1), albeit in Daifallah's case the disconnection under discussion is from pre-colonial rather than colonial webs of signification.

²³ As Wynter herself would put it in 1980, "The real revolution of our times . . . is the revolution by which man will free himself from the grip of an unconscious thought system which thinks man whilst he thinks that he is thinking it" ("Eventide" 3).

²⁴ I use hybrid as popularly defined here. Wynter imbues this term with a more particularized meaning in later writing, related to a hybrid form of being she identifies as quintessentially Human—a combination of *bios* and *mythos*, or both genes and culture (biology and storytelling). Wynter refers to the human "mutation" into a hybrid form of being as the

Decode, dismantle, refigure, and recalibrate according to an emancipatory rather than a domination metric. This reinterpretation or restorying was one of the tasks of decolonization she demarcated in her “Strange Presences” article, then demonstrated in the literature that followed. These anticolonial endeavors constituted her critical and creative practices.

Eventually, Wynter was to redefine not just “we” as West Indians in London or the world as (a) people but also a more capaciously inclusive Being. To actualize that We-ing, she insists, will require dismantling all hierarchies of domination and the knowledge-making apparatuses they have brought into being. The second part of this proposition is the Wynterian articulation that most excites many academics, theorists, teachers, and activists. It is not simply that she calls for us to recognize that a “genre-bound” concept of the Human still reigns in most academic disciplines and throughout popular society. Nor is it that we must reorient the boundaries of the Human to include all genre-bound forms (“can’t we all just get along?”). She is asserting that to fundamentally balance asymmetrical relationships of power, we must refuse to take as our starting point the previous exclusionary form of what it means to be Human, along with the methods used to sustain that form of Humanity. It would not be possible, she argues, to ground freedom, as had the European Enlightenment founders of this modern Humanity, on a plantation economy and culture, designed to extract life from a thingified people. Instead, we must reconceptualize Humanity and the methods for sustaining it entirely.²⁵

“Third Event,” beginning with a 1996 lecture, “The Third Event: Africa, Laws of Culture, and the Invention of the Human.” See Wynter’s further articulation of this hybrid form of life in “The Ceremony Found” (2015) and Jason Ambrose’s engagement of the term in his 2018 essay “On Sylvia Wynter’s Darwinian Heresy of the ‘Third Event.’”

²⁵ Despite post-Human studies eagerly appropriating this idea, Wynter herself nowhere cosigns on the dethroning of the Human or on rejoining the Human with the non-Human animal. Her project precedes and is in tension with post-Human projects. How do we incorporate the other-than-Human into a notion of expansive Being without first having expanded a notion of the Human category to be absorbed into this larger Being? More important than the philosophical ramifications, what politically comes from the notion of a de-centered Humanity when so many forms are denied the most basic of freedoms? Gayathri Goel helpfully problematizes this “post-Human” turn.

The period in which Wynter wrote or broadcast the work under study here is relatively short. The plays I consider in depth were first written within the span of two years, 1958–1960, with both adapted or revised within another four. However, Wynter’s more expansive call for a radical reconceptualization of the Human clearly enters the frame during these few early years. I begin with Wynter’s first original play, broadcast on the BBC in 1958, and its pre-independence preoccupations. I end with Wynter’s theater adaptation of the novel Roger Mais wrote pre-Independence, *Brother Man*. She had also written and staged this adaptation in Jamaica before Independence, but she revised and broadcast it in 1964 on the BBC for a *post*-Independence audience. Both plays think through what is needed for the post-Independence community, centrally taking into account all who reside in the region and sometimes demonstrating the perils of ignoring that full emancipation mandate.

However, between the two plays, one can also see a shift in emphasis in the thought exercises staged. *Under the Sun* addresses the problems within, insisting that the coalescing community must center women. The architects of that new community are a dispossessed Black people and neo-Maroons, who could thus also be read as Rastafari. Her *Brother Man* addresses the problems within *and* without, not only commenting on the divisiveness of the displaced urban poor but also decrying the continued state-sponsored brutalization of the Rastafari and society’s marginalization of their persons and political desires. Wynter’s version differs most from Mais’s in its emphasis on the Rastafari demand for “repatriation” to (a) land of their own, and, more particularly, to an Africa ruled over by a divine Black sovereign. It is thus that Wynter doubles down on ideas of pan-African solidarity and broad religious inclusivity as necessary for successful emancipation post-Independence, even as Wynter’s advocacy more broadly can be understood to incorporate all elements of society whose acknowledged members exclude or “deselect” them.

Although Wynter's later dramas innovated forms as well as telling new stories, the earliest were Christmas schemes; each filled the old colonially constructed skins with new anticolonial stimulants. Norval Edwards has explained that Wynter begins her critical career with a "scorched-earth" approach to cultural criticism. She sought to displace the dominant critical mode that feigned disinterest in its politics while locating the highest value in form ("Insurgent" 103). Given this apt characterization of her early creative-critical essays, the first of which appeared in 1967 in the *Jamaica Journal* that she helped found, one might assume that Wynter would have inverted the schema, "seeking to displace the dominant mode" by instead eschewing interest in form. However, the critical-imaginative work that preceded that first *Jamaica Journal* essay by nearly a decade found its transformative force not in rejecting historical *forms* but rather in reinterpreting history itself and imbuing its forms with new meaning. The *Jamaica Journal* was also such a Christmas project, the adaptation of a recognized and popular form for new religious, or in this case political, purposes.²⁶

The first of the forms she adapts for her political purposes is the honor play, an Early Modern genre she continues to deploy throughout her writing career. This becomes apparent when one follows the throughline of Wynter's creative-theoretical from her first critical study of the Spanish *comedia*²⁷ to her most recent conceptual essay, "The Ceremony Found" (2015). Wynter has remained committed in her critical-imaginative and creative-theoretical work to exposing and dismantling the Early Modern assumptions produced in and reproduced by that genre and the

²⁶ Wynter explains that "the decision to borrow the name of *Jamaica Journal* from an earlier planter class journal was deliberate . . . to keep a continuity with the past, but . . . at the same time to transform the *conception* of that past" (Scott, "Re-Enchantment" 147). See also Imani Owens's article, "Toward a Truly Indigenous Theatre," where Owens theorizes Wynter's adaptations as "strategies" for anticoloniality. Another case of such disruptive continuity may well be evidenced in Wynter's first play. *Under the Sun* was also the title of one of H. G. DeLisser's novels, published in 1937. DeLisser was an established novelist and imperial apologist who also could and did use *The Gleaner*, which he edited, as his bully pulpit. Might Wynter have copied the name to displace his novel that turned on color prejudice against his protagonist, surnamed Brown?

²⁷ The Spanish *comedia* is not, despite the false cognate, comedy (although it can have comic elements). The term designates the secular drama that developed into a popular dramatic form out of the liturgical dramas and miracle plays.

actions that must, of necessity, proceed from those assumptions. As such, while the timeline within which the works under study here were *written* is conscribed, the chronological scope of the study is much longer—far longer than I had ever anticipated confronting in my short study. In the case of *Under the Sun*, Wynter’s chosen form had begun to flourish over four centuries ago. As an undergraduate, Wynter commenced her study of theater in the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century drama of England and Spain at the Universities of London and Madrid. This early academic exploration led to postgraduate archival research in Spain’s rare collections, which made it possible for her to write the foundational critical edition of a Spanish Golden Age play by the *converso* playwright Antonio Enríquez Gómez, *A lo que obliga el honor* (*What Honor Requires*).²⁸ Belonging to the subset of the honor play genre known as wife-murder drama, this *comedia* presents the popularized scenario in which the cuckolded husband kills the cheating wife. Wynter’s extended consideration of Enríquez Gómez’s *comedias* and other Spanish Golden Age literature led me to look more closely at honor plays. This alerted me to their echoes in her critical-imaginative work. In other words, it is attention to form, identifying *Under the Sun*’s deployment of the canonical themes of the honor play, that reveals it to be an honor play revision.

Elizabeth Maddock Dillon attends closely to such repurposing of historical forms. In a study of the Jamaican religious/theatrical practice of Jonkonnu in the eighteenth century, Dillon (2014) highlights a countertheatrical tradition that was already in place in Jamaica and other parts of the African diaspora well before the mid-to-late twentieth-century period more recognized as anticolonial. She demonstrates that the Jonkonnu players were already “performing back” against Empire in this eighteenth-century period. Indeed, by “mis”-ordering the scenes and mandating that

²⁸ Glen Dille cites Wynter’s thesis in his scholarship on this play. Following this breadcrumb led me on a fruitless search for the thesis in university libraries. Fortunately, in our work with Wynter’s archive, I located a useable copy and Esther Kim had the book scanned, printed, and sent to King’s College, where it is available to scholars again.

the slain king exuberantly return to life, their subversion of Shakespeare's *Richard III* "serve[d] to undermine, confuse, and/or dilute the force of the narrative concerning lineage embedded within" (Dillon 206). Evelyn O'Callaghan identifies this "interrogation and unmasking of European 'pretexts'" (73) as an element that much of the anticolonial literature of the 1950s and 1960s shared.

Performing similar work of "confus[ing] [. . .] the narrative concerning lineage," Wynter's authorial versioning of the honor play, therefore, joined that of her contemporaries in their "writing back against Empire," while also continuing a longstanding Black Radical (Jamaican) tradition of textual subversion.²⁹ Wynter would later take this already countertheatrical form one step further by incorporating it into her Jamaican "Panto," *Rockstone Anancy*, recuperating a genre that had, over time, been voided of its symbolic meaning.³⁰ This pantomime re-asserts the crucial role of women in politically and spiritually transforming the Caribbean; *Rockstone Anancy* also reads as a still-timely (and hilarious) send-up of materialism, Eurocentric education, and loss of faith in Marxist-leaning revolution in the Caribbean. Honor Ford-Smith asks, "What happens to someone who consumes manufactured images of himself or herself?" (101). *Rockstone Anancy's* balm yard occupants extend

²⁹ Wynter's work has other aged creative confederates; she borrows from the medieval mystery plays, particularly the Coventry Shearman and Taylors' Corpus Christi cycle. These community-wide theatrical productions had been seized upon by the African-descended population of the Caribbean, who interleaved them with the African dramatic and dance traditions that comprised Jonkonnu theatrics. Wynter's own plays *A Miracle in Lime Lane* (1959), *Shb . . . It's a Wedding* (1961), *Rockstone Anancy* (1970), and *Maskarade* (1973) all incorporate elements of this syncretized genre of European and African theatrical forms. However, most of Wynter's earliest plays, including *Under the Sun* and *Yerma* (1958), *Brother Man* (1959), and *University of Hunger* (1960), and some of the later ones, including *1865—A Ballad for a Rebellion* (1965) and *The House and Land of Mrs. Alba* (1968), may integrate *some* African-derived theatrical elements, but in large part follow more recognizably European-derived dramatic traditions. Despite its connections with this enduring dramatic tradition, then, Wynter's BBC plays do not participate in the Jonkonnu distancing from realism demonstrated by the players Dillon discusses, or indeed that later Wynter dramas do. Wynter refers to this estrangement technique as Brechtian ("Extract"). I would argue that the centuries-old symbolic technologies of Jonkonnu make it Brechtian before Brecht.

³⁰ Wynter co-wrote this Jamaican Pantomime with one of the co-founders of the culturally, politically, and historically important *Jamaica Journal*. It was received so well in its moment that it went on to be staged several times in Jamaica and elsewhere in the Caribbean. As with its British predecessors, the Jamaican Pantomime was originally a kind of vaudeville show performed only on Boxing Day. Since its transplantation, dramatists have more fully developed the Pantomime, which could now be considered an "indigenous" theatrical form.

this question to ask: What happens to people who consume the images they had manufactured of themselves to be consumed by others?

Most importantly, this repurposed dramatic form enacts a confrontation with problems of White supremacy, money elitism, male dominance, corruption, materialism, and spiritual and material poverty that continue to “downpress” the Caribbean and the wider world today. Likewise, her Jonkonnu-based play *Maskerade* (1973) surfaced the political function of carnival reversals and disrupted the form to demand that power not fall back into its typical pattern at mas closing. The pageants enabled their audiences to question “the black truth of [their] condition” and “commit... to a constant revolutionary assault against it (Wynter, “Learn Pt. 1” 24). As such, even if the critical-imaginative work I examine in this dissertation emerged within a condensed timeline, the temporal reach of the literature and politics Wynter traces in her critical-imaginative expression is much longer, spanning from hundreds of centuries ago into the present.

Those familiar with Wynter’s critical and theoretical work note her continued investment in the epistemological transformations she charts along this long timeline. She has helped to explain the ramifications of transformations from medieval to early modern/ Renaissance/ Enlightenment thought and then Darwinian biological supremacy, the move from a religious to a liberal humanist to a positivist order of knowledge production/creation. Studying Spanish literature activated and enabled a comparativist mode. Utilizing her comparativist knowledge and decolonial methodology, she could delineate among and between the various European nationalist literatures (N. Edwards, “Insurgent” 101). In so doing, she discovered these radical ruptures in thought that reflected and supported revolutionary changes in European governance and “symbolic life” or culture. Like the fourteenth-century cultural revisionists who reached back to Greece and Rome for the different approaches and knowledge believed necessary to transform society from its entrenchment in

conservative Christian dogma, she was searching for the means to disrupt the entrenched (colonial) codes and thus produce an altered (decolonial) reality.³¹

As I will demonstrate, when we fail to account for Wynter's early critical-imaginative work, including its attention to form and the plot points she emphasizes, revises, and extends, we underappreciate her analysis of race as a "foundational category generating the rule-governed matrix of cultural and semiotic codes that validated the post-Columbian global order" (N. Edwards, "Insurgent" 105). This analysis, grounded in communal anticolonial agitation, anticipated by many decades the theories on coloniality proposed by academics such as Anibal Quijano, Walter Mignolo, Maria Lugones, and Nelson Torres Maldonado. Furthermore, setting aside the critical-imaginative as a legitimate object of theoretical study leads one to misapprehend the trajectory of her concerns. The erasure helps to elide Wynter's crucial, and underappreciated at the time, insistence upon what would now be termed intersectionality, even as the imbrication that Wynter spoke to went far beyond the law's recognition of harm—just as it had in the conceptualizations of other Black thinkers who preceded her in the region, including her compatriots Una Marson and Amy Bailey.³²

Chapter Synopses

The first chapter will be most helpful for those readers of Wynter less familiar with Caribbean literature and its historical concerns. In it, I provide some historical and biographical context to situate the writer, suggesting how her answers to the questions being asked about identity, representation, and self-governance paralleled and parted from her contemporaries' responses. In addition, I explore some possible causes and ramifications for Wynter's isolation as a writer and the

³¹ While *Under the Sun*'s scope was narrower than C. L. R. James's, her project thus parallels James's. He began the work on *Louverture and the Haitian Revolution* with his play, then moved to nonfiction historical exploration.

³² Not having *Under the Sun* as the exemplar of Wynter's theorizing of a matrix of dominations also allows critics to conclude even more expansively that she "erases gender from the heuristic frame" ("Insurgent" 106).

disappearance of her early work, including her “Aretha Mode.” Finally, I assess that early work within the Caribbean literature of the period.

In the second and third chapters, I investigate Wynter’s play, *Under the Sun* (1958), as one exemplar of Wynter’s revisionary intellectual praxis at the level of a text. In particular, I suggest that through *Under the Sun*, Wynter reveals how patriarchal/White supremacist empire developed partially through codifying racialized religious oppression and camouflaging it within the gender disciplining mechanisms of the honor play. Furthermore, I demonstrate how Wynter disrupts the culture’s ideological underpinnings in patriarchal/White supremacist empire. She deciphers, dismantles, and recalibrates that code in order to restore value to those Black and female and poored people whom the culture and its reinforcing institutions had dehumanized.³³ Wynter accomplishes this symbolic decoding and recoding by versioning two plays, García Lorca’s *Yerma* and Shakespeare’s *Othello*, that had already subverted the honor play genre. Her version demonstrates her imaginative conceptual vision, radical then and now, of a lived freedom based in the survival, dignity, and interconnection of *all* of humanity. With her “versioning,” in other words, Wynter does not simply reverse objectification or domination orders, merely adjusting the previous models, or adopt other such modes of countering or resisting. For, as Benita Parry argued later, to “displace the received narrative [. . .] written by ruling-class historiography and perpetuated by the nationalist version, the founding concepts of the problematic must be refused” (28). Instead, taking the preceding models apart and holding up their parts for examination, Wynter reveals the values at their core. Replacing the exploitative with the generative, the exclusive universalism with the ecumenical, she adds what is missing in order to construct something entirely new. That is to say that through the play and her

attention *simultaneously* to sex, class, race, and religion, Wynter begins to reconceptualize the Human outside frameworks of hierarchy altogether.

In some senses, just as I address Wynter's deployment of older genres for her conceptual work, these chapters also examine another versioning—that of Wynter's own play to her novel. Wynter quickly adapted *Under the Sun*, celebrated when first broadcast in 1958, into *The Hills of Hebron*, published in 1962. As one of the few early novels by Caribbean women and the best-known of Wynter's critical-imaginative texts, *Hills* was eventually recuperated by critics for closer study, including many more than those I have referred to above. The play Wynter expanded upon to craft the novel should animate as careful attention. Although I treat the novel only briefly in these chapters, my examination nonetheless demonstrates how any reading of Wynter's corpus is enriched by recuperating the novel's radical inauguration in the play *Under the Sun*. Returning to the original—before Wynter had added a different religious sect with closer ties to Africa, a pair of charismatic and problematic prophets, and the complicated relationships those would-be prophets have with worshippers and the world—clears away the accretion of themes.³⁴ The less complexly articulated structure and more straightforward plot allow us to see that Wynter's original version focalizes poored women, the most liminal people in this society. Her adaptation of the form, therefore, refuses the brutal logic at the heart of the wife murder play and opts, in the end, for reunification—of women and men, of people across constructed races, of the wealthier with the poorer—the reunification and elevation of all rather than the extinction and debasement of some. Thus, my attention in these chapters is to form.

³⁴ The clearing I'm suggesting is for analytical purposes. I do not mean to suggest that the novels "accretions" are negative. Although Wynter's (mostly male) contemporaries panned *The Hills of Hebron* for attempting to address too much, the novel is no more excessive than many of the celebrated novels of "postcolonial" literature. Furthermore, its "excesses" are essential for its expansive critique, rather than stylistic or exhibitionist. As has been suggested elsewhere (see, e.g., Barnes), the critique leveled by colonialist, nationalist, and mostly male critics was more likely a reaction to the text's (and author's) political demands than to its execution. See also Chapter 1.

In my short interludes, or *entremeses*, between chapters, I enact a more narrative mode to make the lived history present, and explore Wynter's attention to songs to suggest that song, like dance, is integral to her knowledge-making. Just as Wynter began with dance and song in her critical-imaginative work, she also commenced with dance and song in her recognized theoretical work and has repeatedly invoked them since.³⁵ Throughout her work she has located possibilities for building reciprocal relationships through music and, most fundamentally, its underlying rhythms. Quoting the saying, "Rhythm holds up the universe," she has asserted that rhythm both constitutes and unifies us, "because the only time you see people really coming together is when they're dancing to the same rhythm" (*Interview*). Dancing thus becomes an equalizing experience, with all being moved at the same time and to the same pulse. Elsewhere, Wynter spoke to this equalizing characteristic of music as a property of jazz more specifically (246). However, her attempted discussions of the generative role of dance and song in her own thought have largely not found their footing. For example, David Scott—who produced an otherwise thorough and thoughtful history of Wynter's development through his essential interview with her—vaults over Wynter's description of herself as embedded within a vibrant pan-African and anticolonial political culture *by virtue of* her singing and dancing, to speak instead to her part in a "Caribbean intellectual upheaval . . . [in] a circuit of Caribbean *writers and scholars*" ("Re-Enchantment" 129, emphasis mine).³⁶

³⁵ I am thinking here of her explicit exploration of the dance/music underpinnings of African philosophical and spiritual traditions in "Jonkonnu in Jamaica" (1970) and *Black Metamorphosis* (c1971–1981); of sport with "In Quest of Matthew Bondsman" (1981); and of her reinforcement of the symbolic work of dance in her controversial essay on (the equally symbolic, she argues, work of) female circumcision (1997), but also of the "ceremony" of species reunification, a ceremony "strange, with never before heard music," which Wynter calls for in "The Ceremony Must Be Found" (1984), and "The Ceremony Found" (2015). Also, perhaps not incidentally, the name of the character she creates in 1958 and carries through three other works, "Gatha," in Sanskrit means "song."

³⁶ If Scott missed his chance to follow up on the importance of music, rhythm, and movement in the interview, he appears to be rectifying the omission; of the next-generation critics taking up these topics, several appear to be his students. Wynter credits the dynamic of the interaction with Scott with enabling her to surface and explain conceptualizations and connections that would otherwise have remained only suggested (*Interview*).

Notwithstanding this critical gap, one can also see how song brought together Wynter's embodied and written creative practices, for early in her performance career, she was writing some of the songs she performed. The BBC archives document this early practice, revealing that before Wynter broadcast stories, poems, plays, or criticism, she had written and arranged songs for performance. One note explains that Wynter "knows a great deal about Calypsos," the catch-all term of the moment that substituted for the Jamaican-specific mento that Wynter had "actually written" and "broadcast in Sweden" the previous year (Hamilton). Not all the songs were her own. When she brought song into her early dramas, she also incorporated Jamaican Maroon and folksongs.³⁷ For example, several scenes incorporate the Maroon hymn "Edoh, Edoh," accompanied by the "monotonous" drumming that marks the style. Not having been commercialized, the particular rhythm could not be mistaken the way the mento was; it would have irrevocably identified the play's setting as Jamaica and suggested the characters were somehow related to the Maroons. Similarly, for one song in *The Barren One*, the characters sing to the tune of the wholly Jamaican folksong "Rookambine," even if Wynter had faithfully translated García Lorca's lyrics (*Interview*).

Furthermore, the songs Wynter used in her dramas weren't all traditional, thus backward-looking and soon to be consigned to the historical dustbin. In fact, one of her songs from *The Barren One* has lived into the present, even if the tune has been lost, for Bob Marley was later to adapt Wynter's lyrics for his song, "Talkin' Blues."³⁸ The lyrics from another song, written with poet

³⁷ See, for example, *Under the Sun* Programme-as-Recorded (PasR), "All music traditional, with lyrics revised and arranged by Sylvia Wynter" (np). She continued to write original songs for her dramas after she returned to Jamaica, getting support from celebrated artists and poets such as Fitzroy Coleman, Carlos Malcolm, and Anthony McNeill to hone them. Referring to rehearsals for one of Wynter's plays, a reviewer in Jamaica's *Daily Gleaner* wrote that those who had the opportunity to hear the "lyrics and tunes . . . originated by the author" "have found themselves immediately caught up in the magic of song" ("Magic").

³⁸ Wynter characterized this adaptation as part of Marley's particular genius, an illustration of his capacity to find inspiration in unexpected places (*Interview*). Her lyrics, for a song clearly in a blues mode, go, "Your bed is the hard rockstone, / Your nightshirt soaked with the dew; / The grey reeds of morning's mist, / Wraps darkness thick round 'bout you" ("The Barren One" 9). Marley's versioning starts, "Cold ground was my bed last night / And rock was my

Anthony McNeill for *Rockstone Anancy*, could be the headline for an exposé on the lives of the present-day rich and famous; they mockingly cajole the nouveau riche to contribute to the nation's economy by dying—but first buying “two coffins for every corpse.”

Wynter's early attention to the interaction of rhythm and lyric in song attuned her to the ways that Caribbean rhythms and cadences manifested in their speech. Perhaps even more fundamentally, she came to understand and make use of the attitude, ethics, and metaphysics of storytelling that Black music and movement embodied and the contributions they made to Caribbean critical narrative and thought. Diane Taylor has argued that “We learn and transmit knowledge through embodied action, through cultural agency, and by making choices. Performance [...] functions as an episteme, a way of knowing, not simply an object of analysis” (xvi). Wynter may have incorporated song in her performance partially to revalorize the islands' internal cultural production and to remind her audience “that oral culture is an integral part of [. . .] political and popular movements across the Caribbean” (Saunders 538). However, I argue that some of the songs also allowed her to learn and taught her to evoke radical messages that could not safely be voiced in the dialog.³⁹ The embodiment of performance is what would differentiate these radio dramas from other texts we can experience only through reading. We have lost the performances as embodied in the voices of the actors and singers who recorded the plays mid-century, but traces of the songs they sang remain in the scripts. We ought not skip over them, as if they were incidental or mere devices for bridging scenes. “Listening” anew to some of these songs enriches our understanding of how Wynter's complex and wide-ranging theoretical projects initially emerged through her embodied

pillow, too,” continuing the rhyme scheme of Wynter's “dew” and “you.” His song wraps up with “Cold ground was my bed / Rockstone, rockstone, rockstone was my pillow.”

³⁹ See Entremeses 2 and 3 for discussion of this semantic subvocalization.

engagement of dance and song. The acts of playing, dancing, and singing simultaneously presented, produced, and transformed political and cultural knowledge.

With the fourth chapter of the dissertation, I move from Wynter's versioning of older canonical texts that I explored in Chapters Two and Three to examine her revision of one of her most admired contemporaries, the iconically anticolonial Roger Mais. Mais had been widely acknowledged as siding with the povered and advocating for inclusionary self-government through his journalism, agitation, and party organization. His 1954 novel, *Brother Man*, emphasized the profound immiseration of Jamaica's urban povered. Some critics have suggested that Mais created his Christ-like title character to intervene in widespread indifference or hostility to the plight of the burgeoning Rastafari community in particular on the part of people and policies at the highest levels of government to those inhabiting the urban shantytowns.⁴⁰ I contend that Wynter reads Mais somewhat differently than had many of her contemporaries, and that she restories the novel, in part, to reveal the more radical politics at its core. Although the question of righteous leadership may have been at the heart of Mais's original, Wynter is less interested in leaders' qualities than in their aims. Her adaptation, begun during the short-lived Federation of the West Indies and finished post-formal Independence, shifts the emphasis from putatively religious commitments to more explicitly pan-African mobilization for land and repatriation. This recalibration less ambiguously asserts a triple mandate for an independent Caribbean: recognition of the rights and humanity of the Black majority, more equitable distribution of the region's wealth, and reconsideration of all aspects of political culture, rather than a simple transfer of existing power and power/money relationships from imperial center to decolonized periphery.

⁴⁰ See, for example, Evelyn Hawthorne's 1988 article, "Power from Within: Christianity, Rastafarianism, and Obeah in the Novels of Roger Mais"; and Kwame Dawes's 1997 article, "Disarming the Threat of Rasta Revolution in Mais's *Brother Man*."

Conclusion

Contracting the narrated world of Mais's novel to fit into radio play boundaries means that Wynter's scope also shrank. Her shift from emphasizing the necessarily entangled matrix of hierarchies in *The Barren One* and *Under the Sun*, to appearing to focalize only male-issued political demands in the later play seems to support the longstanding Black feminist critiques that Wynter prioritized a supposedly gender-blind (tacitly masculinist) nationalism. Indeed, while the contraction *to drama* required by the format minimizes women's roles in this play, the expansion *from drama* that she performs with her own novel in the same moment overshadows women's significant roles in turn.

To suggest that this movement away from centering her refusal of gendered repression (alongside racialized and class repression) in her critical-imaginative work is trajectory rather than exigency, however, is to misjudge it. Both *A Miracle in Lime Lane* (1959) and *Shh... It's a Wedding* (1961) reinterpret the miracle play to restore "fallen" women to a place of dignity and support in the community rather than upholding "respectable" Victorian ideals of chastity and matrimony. At the same time, Wynter was also working to revise a play Jan Carew had originally authored alone, *The University of Hunger*. The radio drama version was first broadcast on the BBC in 1960 and later adapted for television broadcast on ITV in 1961. This story retells the attempted jailbreak of a prison intellectual and his protégé, plotting their escape into the hinterlands of Guiana in a modern reimagining of maroonage. Although, as far as I know, there is no extant script of the single-authored version Carew had already pitched to the BBC, we know from later interviews with the writer that Wynter had noted the absence of any female characters and created them. The amendment is significant. Wynter created one female character who is broken by her encounter with a colonial Christian society that offered her no dignified work then judged her for trading sex for

survival.⁴¹ However, she also created another, more central role. Dolly, the love interest of the central male figure, Sutlej, refuses to reinstate the family trio he desires.⁴² This female lead represents women's determination to enact an expansive futurity, rather than allowing recourse to an imagined and necessarily constraining history. Taken as a *collective* body then, these six plays written within the span of half a decade, from 1958 to 1964, imagine a society grappling with its contradictions and failures but continuing to theorize less divided futures capable of supporting all their Black Being.

Despite the relative lack of support for and failure to preserve them, Sylvia Wynter's earliest dramas nevertheless participated in founding a new theater, with the first written at the dawn of Black drama in England and its renewal in the Caribbean. They figure in the collective effort to be heard in the metropole as well as develop a distinctly Caribbean theatrical tradition at home. Their history helps us see that theatrical moment's promise and limitations. When the young dramatist returned to Jamaica in 1962, one of her first acts was to co-found an "indigenous" theater company, using her own musical to launch the venture.⁴³ Although the company proved unsustainable, Wynter went on to write and produce at least six more plays before she was forced to leave the unnecessarily

⁴¹ See Wynter's 1972 essay, "One Love—Rhetoric or Reality," for similar assessments of the double-bind with which Caribbean culture constrained women, and my discussion of her exploration of the same in Chapter 1.

⁴² One script also includes a male character who acknowledges his female partner's right to more than one sexual/romantic liaison. This character didn't make it in to the film, *The Big Pride*, developed out of the play.

⁴³ Errol Hill had argued, in 1953, that a viable indigenous theater must make use of the cultural forms found in its own region, including its music, dance, and Carnival traditions and innovations (34). Wynter also locates her "indigenous" or national theater framework as originating with her work on the Jamaican Tercentenary Celebrations (Jamaica 300) in 1955, which impressed on her "the deep hunger of Jamaican audiences for entertainment at all levels" ("New Folk Theatre" 9). She wrote a commentary about this experience for the BBC in 1958, asserting that the most powerful moment of the evening had been when some children presented their own play accompanied by folk songs. Speaking to her British audience and contrasting this festival contribution with the more common offerings of British poetry recitations, she asserted that the celebration, "in spirit had been ... a people paying tribute to themselves and to all that made up the rhythm of their lives" (8).

narrow confines of her discipline at the University of the West Indies in 1973. Happily, she landed in a place more open to her expansive thought and radical pedagogy.⁴⁴

At that point, Wynter began to orient most of her intellectual energies toward teaching, criticism, and theorizing, on paper and in person, in the US-based intellectual career for which she is best known. However, there was never a total rupture. Although Wynter did not go on to publish or produce new dramatic material for a wider public, she did continue to experiment with drama.⁴⁵ For example, in a script for a film documentary on classical literature and art, Wynter confronts the Enlightenment claim to the “Classical” civilizations of Greece and Rome. If Western civilization truly bases itself on these cultures, which embraced or rejected Africans not as fundamentally different—nonhuman—but as other humans like themselves, then the White supremacy of modern Western civilization cannot be supported as historically congruent. Pick one, her work challenges. Either you inherited from the classical civilizations and must reject racism. Alternatively, you inherited nothing other than the stagnation of a xenophobic medieval Europe. She hoped that revealing the contradictions inherent in the supremacist project and disproving their central claims would make it possible to undermine and ultimately abolish their project; understand, reinterpret, explain, transform.⁴⁶ Her continued use of drama to serve political and pedagogical goals testifies to its importance in helping her to ask critical questions and attempt to address them.

⁴⁴ Wynter has repeatedly affirmed that she did not regret retiring her emphasis from the imaginary or fictive in writing because she found to be all-absorbing the tasks of teaching, establishing appropriate curricula, and transforming departments to attend to the intellectual needs of the actual students before the faculty and administration of UWI—Mona (*Interview*). While at UWI, she helped to found Caribbean Studies and establish literary studies as distinct from language studies, while also strengthening connections with the discipline of history.

⁴⁵ I also noted among Wynter’s personal papers a completed film treatment of Columbus’s first voyage to the Americas, and a partial script of a theater documentary on Black prison writing, along with an argument for increasing such use of theater, rather than or alongside film, to provoke discussion on key historical moments in Black diasporic life.

⁴⁶ The problem with this approach was that it didn’t account for the ways belief is based not on fact but on narrative and structures of feeling that are capable of absorbing contradictions without resolving them. This later understanding would lead Wynter to develop her argument that people are *constituted* by story as well as biology. See also note 24.

Restoring the completed corpus of Wynter's earliest work for consideration aids in the recuperation project to which Sylvia Wynter herself committed. Throughout her intellectual praxis, Wynter has sought to revalorize the embodied, creative theorizing of African cultural praxis. She deployed this practice as a method of reconceptualizing the Human in a way founded upon, rather than explicitly excluding, Black and other colonized people. She also used and taught this practice as one way to make available—for the larger project of achieving the emancipation of first the African-descended and then Humanity at large—the knowledge/ attitude/ strategies embedded in the stories that undergird our lives. Of Rastafarite religious songs, Wynter asserts, “While the song lasts . . . in the aesthetic space created, the partakers experience Zion. When it ends the memory remains, constituting a radical desire for a realization of happiness” (*We Know* 42). The song here and the dance, as she explains elsewhere, indeed, the performance of the roles in the plays as well, all allow participants to enact strategies for liberation that, having been enacted in the “unreal” space of the imagination, then become available as strategies to assault oppressive reality. The embodied or voiced action is no less significant than abstracted thought, and is fundamental for reinforcing it.

Scholars, activists, and educators are increasingly engaging the portion of Sylvia Wynter's corpus recognized by the academy as theoretical or critical.⁴⁷ However, it is through her early dramas, including their songs, that she first attempted to answer the question she had engaged as a

⁴⁷ As previously noted, most of the critical-imaginative texts that are part of this corpus remain unpublished. The play *Maskarade*, the novel *The Hills of Hebron*, one act of the three-act play *The House and Land of Mrs. Alba*, several poems, and one short story, “Bat and Ball,” are the exception. This lacuna is to be addressed through the publication of *The End of Exile: Sylvia Wynter's Creative Works, 1956–1983*. Wynter published her creative-theoretical work more widely, albeit almost entirely in academic journals and other periodicals. Recent efforts by various editing collectives have collected many of these previously published texts. Peepal Tree Press has been invaluable in this effort; in 2022 they issued the long awaited *We Must Learn to Sit Down Together and Talk About a Little Culture: Decolonizing Essays 1967–1984*, edited and with an introduction by Demetrius Eudell. Another anticipated volume collects the later essays, and is to be titled “*That the Future May Finally Commence*”: *Essays for Our Ecumenically Human's Sake, 1984–2015*, slated to come out on Wesleyan University Press. Finally, a graduate student/faculty collaborative at Brown University under the direction of Anthony Bogues will be publishing *Black Metamorphosis*, likely through Duke University Press. A *wealth* of other creative-theoretical writing produced for talks or slated for publication that didn't materialize has already been accessioned by the John Hope Franklin Research Center for African and African American History & Culture at Duke University, which is preparing its Wynter collection and should open it for use by 2026.

dancer, singer, actor, and writer in community with others dedicated to anticolonial struggle through actively revalorizing Black humanity. This question she posed more formally in her magnum opus, *Black Metamorphosis*: “What does it mean to achieve Black liberation?”⁴⁸ The question still pertains. If we find Wynter’s theory to be instructive for attacking the challenges of the current moment, we should return to the dramas through which she first thought through and verbalized her notions of the Being required to decouple from Empire. Those notions were broadcast into the very homes of the Black (and other) colonized and dispossessed in England and the Caribbean. One of the discoveries, through *Under the Sun*—that people cannot be successfully made into “homo economicus,” living only to produce—has been well heeded. Another discovery, through *Brother Man*, that “liberation” cannot be achieved while *any* people are singled out for extinction, exploitation, repression, or merely exclusion, has yet to be realized.

⁴⁸ This as-yet-unpublished work, a telescopic manuscript of over 900 pages, was recently the subject of a dedicated issue of *Small Axe*, and was previously engaged by Derrick White in both his 2004 doctoral dissertation and a 2010 essay in the *C. L. R. James Journal*, in which White argues that the magnum opus is “prelude” to the theory of the human for which Wynter is now most known and studied. (See, however, Cunningham’s critique in the *Small Axe* issue of this framing of the early work as mere “incubation” for later work.) Written between the early 1970s and 1980s, *Black Metamorphosis* begins to expand upon the ideas first broached in her critical imaginative work for the BBC and elaborated upon in multiple venues since. The Institute of the Black World initially sought to collaborate with Wynter in developing much-needed theoretical support to move the Black freedom project beyond agitation for civil rights. White argues that, in failing ultimately to incorporate the insights of *Black Metamorphosis* into its analysis, the Institute of the Black World thus missed the opportunity to move “beyond Liberalism, Nationalism, and Marxism” (225). White’s assessment of the significance of this work is anticipated in a letter by an unidentified author who calls the manuscript, “brilliant in analysis and eloquent in presentation,” and proclaims, “You are doing in your field what Wallerstein has done in his. My only regret is that only a few will read this when its published. You could have a great impact if you applied your analysis to the whole of Black culture in the New World, and then wrote it up for the man in the street” (Letter to Sylvia Wynter, nd). The rediscovery of the manuscript by White, a former student of Demetrius Eudell who was himself a student of Sylvia Wynter, has enabled a new generation of thinkers on Black emancipation to engage the text, most recently through that issue of *Small Axe* and, Gods willing, the manuscript’s forthcoming publication through a cooperative reference and editorial project of students under the direction of Anthony Bogues at Brown University.

Entremés 1

Guerrilla Poetics¹



Still from the film Thunder on Sycamore Street, broadcast on ITV Television Playhouse on 11 Oct. 1957. William Marshall (of Blacula fame) as Joe Blake; Sylvia Wynter as Anna Blake.

Picture this. It is 1957, and you're in Britain. Little more than a decade has passed since the second great war had ceased. The relief that you'd felt mere years ago—the humanity you saw reflected back at yourself in other peoples' eyes—their gratitude for the great service your countrymen had done them—that was changing. With shared rations and shared foxholes beginning to be forgotten, the glances on the street are not so friendly now. You have stopped taking those evening walks you'd

¹ This interlude is a fabrication (minus the critical). When I discovered Wynter's poem slipped into the *Caribbean Voices* programme-as-broadcast (PasB), page numbering off and unannounced at the broadcast's start, I imagined that she had engaged her guerilla poet so that she could be heard. The PasB transcription, capturing her act, allowed her to be paid as author, not just "talent." It *feels* true, especially given all the lines I've seen excised from other scripts, most criticizing England, somehow, or English values. As told, however, the story lacks strictly factual grounding, even if it contains some facts.

loved, coming home from the recording studio, the hall where you rehearsed, or Cunelli's scientific academy, where you were learning how to treat your instrument more gently.²

Perhaps you feel a bit differently than you did in those earlier school years, too, because you have another someone to look after, someone whose life does depend on you. So, instead of the long way around, if the sun has begun to set, you go straight home as quickly as you can, and you place your script in your bag instead of reading as you go along the streets as you once did. You don't want another encounter, like when those boys surprised you, rehearsing lines as you strolled.

What was it you were rehearsing at that time? It couldn't have been *Thunder on Sycamore Street*. That would be too much like life imitating fiction. Their sizzling anger and your studied disdain as they plucked the script from your fingers then, taking each leaf, balled up the pages and threw them into your startled face, one by one. You would not show them your fear, which angered them more, and they began to close in on you. One had pulled a small bat from behind him where, you supposed, it had been lodged in the back of his pants. It *was* that *Thunder* piece, though; now you remember. That's how you mustered your courage. You performed it—pulled on the camera courage you'd learned to show when the mob was at the door on Set 3, and you were given the cue.

It hadn't been your performance that saved you from those errant knights, though. Out of nowhere, two of your friends from the studio had appeared. One, a tower of a man, came thundering up the block, shouting, "Oy! Don't you *touch* her!" and the boys had scattered.³ You drew blood from your lip, so fiercely were you biting it, as you retrieved the torn and dirty pages of the script, smoothed them, and put them in order in the dim lamplight. They had escorted you home

² "Centenary."

³ Carew 131. Also, interview in appendix.

then. You had needed an escort after dark ever since. You don't want to trouble your friends too much, though, so you always try to step out before the disappearing sun catches you on the streets.

You get home alright this evening, and early enough. But when night comes, you have a hard time sleeping. It's not that the baby is restless—she's sleeping unusually soundly. But you? Words keep coming—you can't banish them. The memory of being confronted by those Teddy Boys; that's what you saw in her eyes. You must write. Carefully, though. The people of this host country who grant you that guinea here and there, who are quite happy to employ your lovely voice and face and manner? They won't much like it if you condemn them directly. You'll have to figure out how to signal your protest without appearing on the radar of these descendants of Eyre. Your pen scratches in the dim. "In the deer garden," you write.

Weeks on, you've labored over the words enough. The editors have not yet accepted any of your poems. But you have a plan. Your voice, they'll employ, as long as it's voicing someone else's words. They booked two of the stories set back home, but they didn't take to the one that criticized the missionaries.⁴ You'd had to sneak that one in, too. Tomorrow, you'll go back to the studio to record a few pieces by that Trinidadian poet, the one with the rhyme like bongos.⁵ Reading is not nearly as satisfying as acting, but the little pieces help. A few guineas here and there—they keep coal in the grate. You need these gigs.

Your throat closes up a bit when the announcer says, "And now, we'll have Sylvia Wynter reading some poems by Knolly La Fortune." At the mic, you smile and nod. You begin. You make your way through the two poems without a gaffe, using your perfect West Indian elocution—not

⁴ "Gwana." I noted that this story and the only piece, other than "Elegy to a Black Girl," that Wynter had set in Europe, didn't appear on the original *Caribbean Voices* script list made for the archive. This made me wonder. However, many other authors' works were also missing, so no intended censure can be inferred.

⁵ "Commentary." *Caribbean Voices*, BBC Radio, 8 June 1958, 23:15-23:45 GMT. BBC WAC.

even a hint of Jamaican patwah to which, the producers report, some listeners object. And then, just as the announcer is about to move to the next part of the program, you speak again. “Elegy to a Black Girl,” you say. Mittelholzer looks up, startled. But the tape is rolling, and, if one is truthful, he’s a bit afraid of you. He doesn’t interrupt. You swallow and begin again.

“Elegy to a Black Girl”

[...]

[...] Of how you first came here and why

You came to flaunt your blackness

Stark against this northern sky,

I am ignorant.

Only this I can tell: That last night

Before you died, (by your own hand as the papers say),

In the night-club cellar across the space

Of several tables I saw your face,

Quiet against the noise, and I thought:

“A black Madonna serene at meditations.”

And then I saw your eyes.

[...]

Outside, rank urine seeps from ancient cobbled streets,

And in the Djurgården where deer graze or used to do,

[...]

No miracle of birth, [...]

No white wonder, no black Magnificat.⁶

When you voice the word, Djurgården, you see the announcer relax. You are talking about some European city far from here. Guineas safe; his London, more home than New Amsterdam, is not on trial.

⁶ Sylvia Wynter. “Elegy to a Black Girl.” *Caribbean Voices*. Prod. Ulric Cross. BBC Radio. 20 Oct. 1957, 23:15 GMT. Radio. CV script 1266, BBC WAC.

Chapter 1

Situating Wynter for This Study

Readers [of García Márquez] in most countries tend to either forget his Colombian national origin or attach no particular significance to it: he becomes simply a Latin American writer or a truly “universal” one, even though reading García Márquez without reading the complexities of Colombian historical and social experience leads to a rather thin reading, indeed.

—Aijaz Ahmad, “Show Me the Zulu Proust”

What must be done is to restore this dream *to its proper time* [. . .] and *to its proper place*.

—Frantz Fanon

[Her singing] . . .made the listeners rip their clothes with the same rhythm as do the blacks of the Antilles . . . in the “lucumi” rite.

—Federico García Lorca,
“Theory and Function of the Duende”

Chorus: “And we will dance ‘til de whole ah we foot bottom peel.”

—*Rockstone Anancy*

A political theorist recently wrote a parody that referred to the sudden surge of attention Wynter’s texts have received in the last decade, calling Sylvia Wynter the “most amazing philosopher of the *early twentieth century*” (emphasis mine). The writer was imagining a future iteration of his discipline, looking back. Since biographical details are often reported incorrectly at a historical remove, it’s hard to tell whether this temporal error is purposeful. If we take the less generous view, that the writer is simply wrong, then the imagined tongue-in-cheek commentary becomes all the more indicative of a sort of blind reverence without any understanding of the contexts in which Wynter developed and produced her analyses. Reflecting on criticism on Roger Mais, Wynter noted a similar blindness to context, writing that “because of this evasion” of the confrontations between colonial and

anticolonial demands, the critic “chooses to see Mais’ work as some sort of ‘inexplicable magic’ understandable only in terms of Mais’ peculiar genius” (“Learn Pt. 1” 24).

While one might well classify Wynter’s thinking as genius, that thinking nonetheless also unfolded in response to and through sustained engagement with those political confrontations. Her thought cannot simply be plucked out of its context and operationalized for whatever purpose the “theorist” can confabulate (like the positing of political agency on the part of animals enacted in the parody described above). My aim with this chapter is to situate Wynter for those less familiar with the contexts out of which her thought developed. As such, this chapter will be less useful to the Caribbeanists who were part of the same struggles or inherited them. However, I hope that it can provide helpful grounding for the many who are encountering Wynter outside the context of Caribbean cultural criticism or certain branches of Black study.¹

My priority, even outside the academy, has been to make space for ideas and material that have not otherwise found a hearing, whether through publishing or criticism. Many scholars have already engaged—to explain, extend, and operationalize—Wynter’s *published* creative-criticism and creative-theory, if not attending to the *unpublished* work I focalize in this study.² With “*Hosanna! We buil’ back we house*”: *Sylvia Wynter’s Dramatic Restorying, for Human’s Sake*, I attempt to remedy the historical and continuing blindness to a wealth of her work that either has already been available to the public for decades, or soon will be, rather than discussing the parts of her body of work that are

¹ On terminology: I use “West Indian” where it seems more historically appropriate, as with her work at the BBC, where the focus was on the Anglophone Caribbean. Otherwise, I use “Caribbean.” See “Black Caribbean Writers” for their debate on the two terms.

² Wynter’s spoken explorations also offer helpful guidance for understanding how to read her propositions. As such, her interview on the National Endowment for the Humanities Center radio program, *Soundings*, provides a good entry into her thought. Her *Small Axe* interview with David Scott is also invaluable. Likewise, the *ProudFlesh* interview with Greg Thomas and the interview/dialogue in Wynter’s collaboration with Katherine McKittrick, the extended attention to her work given by Boyce Davies, Thomas, Bagues and Eudell, and the *Small Axe* journal dedicated to *Black Metamorphosis*. See also Zimitri Erasmus’s 2020 essay.

better known. In addition, having helped Wynter to organize her papers for transfer to a university archive and produce a comprehensive bibliography of her completed published and unpublished work, I have had unprecedented access to her life's work and the correspondence that attends it. I therefore have a wealth of information to transmit. This makes for a perhaps burdensome level of footnoting. I have retained as much as I felt I could to make the information more quickly available to Wynter scholars as we await the opening of the Wynter collection at Duke's John Hope Franklin Research Center for African and African American History and Culture. I hope the documentation will help to alert such determined investigators to the plethora of material available and the new directions that material suggests.

Hypervisibility and Disappearance

Despite the historical erasure of Wynter's mid-twentieth-century creative acts, the aggregate of the archival materials at the BBC and other repositories supports the conclusion that Wynter was already understood to be an important cultural creator, critic, and political analyst at this pivotal moment in the history of British and Caribbean art and politics. These archival sources demonstrate that Wynter's significance to Caribbean literature had been established more than a decade before the 1968/69 publication of such foundational essays as her two-part analysis of West Indian literary criticism, "We Must Learn to Sit Down Together and Talk About a Little Culture."³ One amusing example can be found in the BBC transcript of a broadcast celebrating West Indies federation. The broadcast features V. S. Naipaul's apparently bitter (but likely comedic) "reporting" on being sidelined in the events, with Wynter taking center stage. The BBC elected Wynter as reporter and emcee for the celebration featuring other Caribbean writers, organizers, and dignitaries, including

³ This early analysis has just been re-published in Wynter's Peepal Tree Press collection, which shares its title.

writers now much better known for their creative work than Wynter. In April of 1958,⁴ Wynter was one of seven “British Caribbean writers” discussing West Indian literature in a radio forum convened by Stuart Hall, a program also rebroadcast in at least Canada and Jamaica.⁵ The panel also included Jan Carew, Errol John, George Lamming, Edgar Mittelholzer, V. S. Naipaul, and Samuel Selvon, each of whose authorship book publishers had already validated.

Wynter had not yet obtained the holy grail of *print* publication, but she was fully involved in broadcast “publication.” She had already acted in the productions, both stage and radio, of many of her fellow Caribbean writers, voiced her own and other writers’ stories and poetry for the BBC, and frequently offered reports and analysis of literature and social and political issues impacting West Indians in Britain and the islands. Wynter’s vantage point within the BBC afforded her intimate knowledge of the intellectual, cultural, and political work other Caribbean and African writers were shouldering, at home and abroad, participating as she did not only in the BBC’s on-air literary magazine in the somewhat ghettoized *West Indies Service* but also in its vaunted *Third Programme* and the *Home, Overseas, Schools*, and *West African Services*. As such, it is no wonder that her profoundly thoughtful analysis of the social, cultural, and political scene was ultimately sought by the BBC, as well as important print periodicals in England and beyond.

⁴ This year saw the Federation of the West Indies and marked the end of the BBC’s *Caribbean Voices* radio magazine. See Glynn Griffith’s detailed discussion of *Caribbean Voices* in his 2016 monograph. I note that, as much as the BBC played a role in helping to consolidate “national sentiment” with the objective of “enabling” its colonies to assume the autonomy first demanded by those in its colonies, the imperative to cede control of its colonies apparently also drove its policy of withdrawing support from cultural programming that had been critical to the fostering and promotion of Caribbean artists. This fact is on full display in the BBC archives. Cobham-Sanders began the conversation about the program’s role in *promoting* regional (or territorial) literatures in 1986 with her article on *Caribbean Voices*, with, e.g., Peter Kalliney and Glyne Griffith contributing significantly to this discussion since. However, unlike its efforts to consolidate (often read as imperial) Caribbean identity and arts, the BBC’s policy of *withdrawal* has yet to be thoroughly examined and merits further attention. See Amanda Bidnall’s article on Edric and Pearl Connor for her important contribution in this vein.

⁵ The audio for this broadcast was preserved by the Canadian Broadcast Corporation (CBC). I thank Michael Eldridge, a calypso enthusiast at Humboldt State University, for informing me about this archive. I wasn’t able to prevail upon the archivists to search for preserved recordings of any Wynter-authored dramas, but perhaps a Canada-based researcher walking into the offices would have better luck.

In fact, although admittedly better known now for her theory than her theater, it is not a stretch to assert that Wynter played a vital role in establishing Black British and Caribbean drama. It had been in 1948 that the famed voyage of 400-some West Indians on the *HMT Empire Windrush* signaled a previously unprecedented escalation of Caribbean migration to Britain in response to post-World War II labor recruitment (and increased immiseration at home). Just a decade later, Wynter's first play was bought by the English Stage Company, newly formed and under the direction of George Devine. The mission of this now-renowned producer was to make space for experimental, rather than commercially-proven, theater. In the service of that mission, he had also brought to the Royal Court Theatre John Osborne's now-famous *Look Back in Anger*, widely credited with infusing new life—and a radically different ethos—into British theater. Although Wynter's Royal Court play was ultimately not staged, in the years that followed, Wynter adapted it for radio and wrote two other radio plays that were rapidly snapped up by the BBC's elite series, *The Third Programme*.⁶ One of these radio plays was later picked up for adaptation on television.⁷ The fourth of her radio plays for the BBC was broadcast in a less vaunted but still coveted spot on the BBC's

⁶ Because the work emerged during an experimental period in British theater and then disappeared, it would be easy to dismiss its production as amateur. However, her drama was treated quite seriously. The BBC radio production of *The Barren One* employed the famed jazz singer, Cleo Laine, new then to acting, along with other superlative practitioners of their art, such as the jazz guitarist, Fitzroy Coleman, who accompanied Wynter herself in many of her voice roles for the BBC. The Danish version of Wynter's radio play *Under the Sun* was treated with similar gravitas, as the Danish radio archivist who located an audio recording of that production emphasized. The cast, musicians, director, and producers, he wrote, were all professional and well known. This assertion is borne out by the quality of the production still evident in the digitized recording. The Danish adaptation is the only known performed version of Wynter's work from that period that survives. It is held in the Radioteater Databasen Danmark. (See the interview in the appendix for Wynter's impressions of this adaptation of her work.) Similarly, although she and others bemoaned the lack of a professional theater company in Jamaica, professional talent was not lacking. Carlos Malcolm, famous for his band, Carlos Malcolm & His Afro-Jamaican Rhythms, would direct the music for at least two of her Jamaican Plays, *Sbb . . . It's a Wedding* and *Rockstone Anancy*. The renowned poet Anthony MacNeill collaborated with Wynter to write some *Rockstone* lyrics. And she cast some of the best-known actors in the country in her plays, including Sagwa Bennett, Louise Bennett, and her own mother, Lola Parkinson, known in Jamaica for her long-running role as Birdie in a radio soap opera.

⁷ Stephen Bourne rediscovered the film in the archives and convinced the British Film Institute to restore and screen it. He identifies Wynter as “the first black female writer to contribute to British television drama.”

Home Service. Thus, Wynter's early contributions to Black drama as well as centrality to Black diasporic thought are amply displayed in the archival materials.⁸

Scholars frequently present that centrality as continuous and undisputed. For instance, Alison Donnell asserts that although twenty percent of the contributors to *Caribbean Voices* were women, "only Louise Bennett's and Sylvia Wynter's names can be found in *canonical accounts of Anglophone Caribbean literary history* alongside those men whose literary careers the program is known to have helped advance" ("Rescripting" 83, emphasis mine). References to Wynter's early imaginative work may abound (although here Donnell is likely referring more to the critical than the imaginative). However, analysis of the imaginative is scant to nonexistent. Despite ostensibly ready recognition of her contributions then and now, over half a century after her last BBC play was produced, I was the first researcher to have seen, let alone examined, some of the archival materials.⁹ This disinterest in readily available material suggests that Wynter's early critical-imaginative work has been overlooked, even grossly undervalued, and that considerable scholarship on this formative period in Caribbean letters and British drama remains to be accomplished. Even as Wynter's *name* is one of the few that survived the erasure experienced by numerous other Caribbean writers whose work initially received visibility through the BBC, in large part, Wynter's critical *importance* in mid-

⁸ Her possible influence on British arts and politics has not been explored, outside a few mentions by Stephen Bourne of her co-authoring of the television movie *The Big Pride*, produced by ITV in 1961 and recently the focus of a British Film Institute retrospective. (The BFI has also restored *Thunder on Sycamore Street*, for which she was the female lead in 1957.) Wynter was in England for a relatively short time—roughly 1946 to 1961, during which she also spent several extended periods in Spain, Italy, Sweden, Norway, and Jamaica. However, she continued to be courted for her commentary even after she'd left (consulting, for example, on a BBC documentary in 1971). In 2018, students and faculty at King's College, Wynter's alma mater, waged a successful campaign to get her acknowledged as an important alumna by the College, which gave her an honorary doctorate and featured her in its Strand Street window gallery of notable alumni. This will likely bring necessary scholarly attention to her impact in Britain beyond her school years. I have focused, in this dissertation, more narrowly on Wynter's role in developing anticolonial criticism and literature centered on the Caribbean.

⁹ Notation on some folders for the Wynter-relevant BBC files indicated they had been reviewed and first opened to research the week before I arrived at the Written Archives Centre in May of 2016.

century Caribbean thought and cultural production has been simultaneously genuflected to and disappeared.

Ephemeral Forms

The near erasure of Wynter's early thinking/creation might be due to her emergence as a thinker/creator through non-written media.¹⁰ Since her first commitment to revalorizing Black people as Human took the form of achieving and displaying prowess in dancing, acting, and organizing, her practice was oral, embodied, and largely unrecordable.¹¹ She was not known, like the Selvons and Lammings, *first* as a writer, arriving in the metropole with a manuscript in her grip. When she did begin to write, it was mainly for the radio. Bénédicte Ledent has asserted that radio dramas are a neglected genre in general and particularly where "postcolonial" productions are concerned.¹²

On the other hand, scholars and other writers as early as 1950 had begun culling from the same collected records of the BBC that did hold Wynter's earliest written work.¹³ They sought to define Caribbean literature and establish its canon by producing anthologies and single-author collections. Nor has the interest these extant written archives hold for Caribbean literature scholars

¹⁰ Filmmaker Louis Massiah has lamented the "emptiness that comes after a broadcast," when the hard work and creative energies that went into producing it "disappears over the airwaves" (qtd. in Beckman 17).

¹¹ The photos of a costumed Wynter dancing around Rome with her Katherine Dunham-trained partner, Benjamin Turpin, although necessarily two-dimensional, nevertheless manage to convey the dancers' enacting of a particularly Caribbean story, along with their physical prowess. (See Appendix D.)

¹² See, in particular, her 2018 essay, "Radio Drama and Its Avatars in the Work of Caryl Phillips." I hope to engage with Wynter's radio plays more extensively within their generic context outside the dissertation.

¹³ Those writers who acted thus in an editorial role include Vic Reid, Ernest Carr, G. R. Coulthard, O. R. Dathorne, Andrew Salkey, John Figueroa, and Kenneth Ramchand. Another early anthology, titled *The Independence Anthology of Jamaican Literature*, was produced in 1962 in collaboration with Cedric Lindo, who famously selected poems and stories to forward to *Caribbean Voices*, and introduced by Peter Abrahams, the South African writer who later settled in Jamaica.

ever abated.¹⁴ However, Wynter's London-era writings have barely been discussed. Except for one story recovered in 2012, none have been collected for publication. Similarly, the considerable work Wynter produced after she returned to the Caribbean was not adequately preserved, let alone maintained as a living wellspring for other creative production and commentary in the ways that, for example, the plays of Derek Walcott have been.¹⁵

This failure to safeguard and continue to engage Wynter's wide-reaching early body of work could also be attributed to many factors beyond her beginnings as a dancer and her emergence on radio. One factor could be her emphasis on sharing the fruits of her intellectual creative labor as widely as possible. She wrote dramas for live production (and audio/visual recording), not for print publication. Moreover, appropriately for a popular community whose adult reading favored periodicals, Wynter often submitted her scholarly and poetic work to more ephemeral popular venues—newspapers such as the widely read *Gleaner* and journals such as the fledgling *Jamaica Journal*. Focusing on collaborative development and periodical distribution would not support enduring print publication. Furthermore, even when she was situated in the US academy, her work appeared almost entirely in academic journals, with her many essays remaining uncollected in book form until 2022. Pre-internet, it would have been difficult to access the essays over time, which would also tend to lead to her disappearance.¹⁶

¹⁴ For recent scholarship on the BBC's role in fostering Caribbean literature, see Glyne Griffith, Amanda Bidnall, and Julie Cyzewski.

¹⁵ Yvonne Brewster, who anthologized an updated version of Wynter's *Maskerade* in 2012, was able to recover the play because it had been published for the educational market during the post-Independence push to make locally-authored materials available to students. (Brewster published the version that Sandra Richards produced at Stanford in 1983, in close consultation with Wynter.) Wynter's commitment to literature for children went beyond the school market; she considered producing a literature in which children could see themselves and the concerns of their region reflected to be part of the work of decolonizing the Caribbean. (See interview in appendix.) In addition to adapting her own *Maskerade* and Jan Carew's novel, *Black Midas*, for this educational market, she also co-authored with her daughter several books for the children's illustrated series, *The Sea Star Readers*. The series was published by the Jamaican Publishing House in 1975; the National Library of Jamaica and Schomburg's children's collection, among others, retain intact copies.

¹⁶ Massive digitization sweeps might also contribute to a disappearance of writers marginalized over time, since such large-scale projects have tended to prioritize those objects already deemed of value in the dominant culture. Fortunately

Creative Praxis

One might also reasonably locate the impermanence of the record of Wynter's critical-imaginative production in her intellectual and creative praxis. She grounds this praxis in an African-derived musical and dance tradition that does not center performance for performance's sake but instead seeks to achieve aesthetic and spiritual breakthroughs. This mode deploys a "versioning" strategy (Wynter, "How to Read") that refuses both temporal and disciplinary boundaries, instead engaging, rehearsing, and staging ideas that are then brought back into workshop.¹⁷ Wynter explains that "thought has to be liberated" from getting "caught up in the legitimation of the world in which it lives" and she asserts that what one could dub the "Aretha Mode" allows this liberation, because it is outside of "logic." When "Aretha sings... [s]he goes from one thing to another and... [u]ntil she has gone there you couldn't have imagined" that's where she would end up. Wynter contends that the knowledge she is making is not just in the breakthrough: it is also "in the process of doing it" (*Interview*). Wynter's acts of playing, dancing, and singing were all simultaneously also presenting, producing, and transforming political and cultural knowledge.

Wynter's theoretical praxis in the more abstracted academic realm exhibits this same attention to a participatory knowledge-making that refuses shorthand and displays all the movements reaching toward breakthroughs not only in thought but in circumstance—the thought that can produce change. It is a fundamentally dialogic mode, which means it demands the

for Caribbean literature and life, projects such as the Digital Library of the Caribbean (dLOC) at Florida International; Kelly Baker Joseph's project at CUNY, the Digital Caribbean; and the collaboration at Columbia between Kaiama Glover and Alex Gil, *In the Same Boats*, among others, have mobilized against this disappearance.

¹⁷ See Wynter's explanation of how this mode functions in her theoretical work in a discussion of Aretha Franklin in her interview with Greg Thomas in his journal, *ProudFlesh*. Thomas describes this mode variously as "long-distance writing" and "Beyond" in his 2013 "Tribute" to Wynter and his 2016 *Small Axe* essay introducing Wynter's *Black Metamorphosis*. Nijah Cunningham productively extends this theorization of Wynter's praxis in his dissertation, *Quiet Dawn*, where he meditates on Wynter's description of her process as "groping for coherence." More broadly, Ashon Crawley addresses the Black objective of breakthrough or transcendence in his *Blackpentecostal Breath* (2017).

participation of other dancers, other players, other interlocuters—and requires that these collaborators be recognized. It conjures the way of doing/Being that can produce such delicious proverbs as “*Tey nga mën fecc, ba nga dee, ba tànki-bi damm.*” This Wolof phrase is sometimes reductively translated as “dance or die.” More literally, it means, “Today you will dance until you grasp it, or die, or break your leg.” Wynter’s *Rockstone Anancy* characters, the people of the Look Behind Village, sing “we will dance till de whole ah we foot bottom peel,” turning this declaration into a vow.

Such declarations recall in turn images of dancers in a circle, responding together to the drums’ rhythm, with individual dancers coming forward to salute the drum, gaining strength from each other’s participation, and dancing until they have reached another level or fallen back exhausted. It is the all-night Big Drum Circle Paule Marshall describes in *Praisesong for the Widow*, a practice that “collapses time and allows participants to know their ancestors” (Fulton 142n12). The dancers’ struggle toward transformation or transcendence is also akin to that quality or experience of the ineffable that García Lorca, inspired by Black music, tried to capture about *duende* (Mackey 196).

A similar ethic, some have argued, animates the pre-commercial songs of many cultures. For example, Marilyn Rouse describes some of the earliest recordings of Jamaican music, made in the “field.” She depicts sessions that “had no definite openings and endings,” with some numbers “continuing for however long the performers wished,” sometimes cutting off only after performers ran out of steam or “even ending when the whole ensemble gradually collapsed into laughter” (5).¹⁸ It is, as Wynter asserts, the “creative impulse which explodes” in every person when they discover “the truth that God” lives in them (“How to Read” 48), adhering to a logic that “interrupts linear

¹⁸ See Donald R. Hill’s *Calypso Calaloo: Early Carnival Music in Trinidad* for a similar point about pre-commercialized calypso, which would be “continuously performed... with one song blending into another” and therefore “lack[ed] a ‘beginning’ and an ‘end’” (115). Wynter also refers to Black music’s “subversive quality” in “freeing time from a market process” (qtd. in McKittrick 87).

temporalities,” as McKittrick would later put it (“Unparalleled” 88). Dance until you’re exhausted or have collapsed from the joy of it, rest and catch your breath, then start again.

Not surprising then, those plays not constrained by a strict radio format were often sprawling affairs requiring massive casts and considerable time adapted more for the sorts of periodic community-based celebrations exemplified in the traditional Jonkonnu fêtes—or the English folk mummers tradition they incorporated—than for the finite time/space of the classical Greek and modern European-derived stage traditions. From the beginning, Wynter’s poetry also refused to be constrained; her 1967 elegiac poem for Jamaican prime minister Donald Sangster, for example, had to be published in three installments by the *Gleaner*. When she was reading through some of the manuscripts for the BBC plays that she had set aside for half a century, Wynter often remarked, as if surprised, that they were “quite good.” But they *would* be, she explained, because they had to be compressed to fit pre-ordained lengths for the radio—a 30-minute slot, a 45, the rare 90 (*Interview*). Market time has reduced week-long play cycles to two-hour-with-an-intermission theatrical productions, with overnight calypso festivals and eight-day “Dinkies” compressed into 50-minute rented studio “hours.” The list goes on. We have lost something intangible and invaluable in the contraction.

Since the breadth of many of Wynter’s propositions makes it difficult to fit them within conventional academic vehicles, or even other intellectual vessels, her scholarly work followed the same pattern. How, within a 20-page journal article or even a 40-page chapter, does one make the argument that forms of domination construct a matrix from which one cannot extract one or another thread and meaningfully analyze it? In 1977, the *Gleaner* partially published Wynter’s commissioned biographical study of national leader Alexander Bustamante as a series of some 33 articles. The “brief, informative material” she provided to contextualize the projected 1973 *Jamaica Journal* publication of Bustamante’s letters had come in at over 40 pages (Hearne). Nor was this

mode arrested through exposure to the disciplining of the academy.¹⁹ Decades after Wynter had become a professor and was writing, as she explained, only “in the interstices” around teaching, California educator Joyce King requested that Wynter write a letter supporting her campaign against a historically inaccurate curriculum (*Interview*). When King received the letter, it was already 120 pages long, forming the basis for Wynter’s 1990 critique, *Do Not Call Us Negroes*.²⁰

When I think of Wynter’s writing, outside of the image of her quite literally cutting and pasting from reams of paper into other stacks, the image that comes to me is of a rock climber, reaching for holds, some of which are crevices that nobody standing on the level ground below would be able to see, others of which are well-defined outcroppings that could not be passed over, could not be ignored, in the reaching for the crevices. Wynter, in making her arguments, must reach for them all. This makes for an arduous climb, a slow and methodical climb, up treacherous mountain cliff faces. The view from the top is awe-inspiring, once one catches one’s breath. Mountains, cliff faces, rarely fit in chapter leaves.

Regardless of genre or venue, then, Wynter’s work has tended toward the uncontainable and, perhaps even more importantly, for many, increasingly unfathomable, in the best sense of the word. She has persisted in plumbing depths others failed to attempt or appreciate and producing texts that continue to “evade accommodation, not only to the canon but also to comfortable, transparent or appropriative readings” (Donnell and Welsh 15). However, the challenges of confronting Wynter’s

¹⁹ More recently, Carole Boyce Davies writes about process of editing Wynter’s foundational essay for the collection *Out of the Kumbia*, noting one scholar’s frustration that Wynter had not provided a “succinct” essay for the important volume (“Occupying” 838).

²⁰ Joyce King laughingly recounted this story, no doubt for the umpteenth time, at a May 18, 2019 celebration of Wynter at the University of Texas–Austin. *Black Metamorphosis*, which started off as an article, famously bloomed to a 900-plus page manuscript that Wynter set aside when publishing fell through. Her personal papers contain many such opuses.

“difficult” work (Josephs, “Determining”) neither justify nor explain its disappearance. Other celebrated writers of the period and region have made art and theory as famously difficult as hers.

Gendered Ghettos

It is tempting to proffer an even simpler explanation, locating the erasure in male chauvinism and boy’s club exclusion. Toland-Dix is among those who question whether Wynter sometimes wrote defensively, withdrawing from the battlefield where *intra*-community domination of Black female people is concerned, in the context of an overall body of work that demands attention to all the strands that make up the web of domination. She wonders whether Wynter absented herself so completely from such discussions in the hopes that it would prevent her critical thought from being disappeared into a gender ghetto (66) or what Valerie Smith might name a sort of “garreting” (qtd. in Spillers 77). Indeed, the BBC archives retain some documentary evidence of gendered boundary policing during her earliest BBC years. For instance, when Wynter first began recording for the radio soon after she had completed her Master’s degree in Modern Languages (Spanish literature *ici inclus*), producers tapped her to comment on fashionable headwear for Easter—not on literature, in any language. She recorded for such programs as “Women’s Magazine,” “Women in the World Today,” “Travel Talks for Schools,” and “Bedtime Story.” One producer’s letter even dispensed explicit instructions about the identity Wynter was to prioritize in her observations: “What we want from you is a woman’s point of view” (Pilgrim).²¹

Some compelling evidence also suggests that Wynter was not merely neglected but instead deliberately sidelined by the male “tastemakers” for the BBC—those who went on to produce (or

²¹ I use “identity” purposefully here. Seeking a woman’s perspective is not, in and of itself, a problem, as long as the reasoning is sound. However, one doubts Pilgrim’s intent was to provide a platform for an otherwise marginalized perspective, or more accurately, position. The broadcast transcript for her “Easter” commentary indicates that, after Wynter had read her piece, Pilgrim thanked her “for that breath of fresh air,” adding, “isn’t it pleasant to have a woman’s voice on Commentary” (“5 Apr 1958 Commentary”). Sadly, this limited role represented an improvement—her voice had been silenced entirely when, for her role in the Joan Collins/Jack Hawkins film, *Land of the Pharaohs* (1955) she sat sweating mutely at the feet of Pharaoh (*Interview*). At least at the BBC, she had “lines.”

catalyze the production of) the volumes of Caribbean literature that anchored its legitimacy. Donnell and Courtland, among others, refer to the web of professional connections built among (some of) the male contributors to *Caribbean Voices*, indicating that the women writing at the same time were locked out of this network and that their careers suffered as a result. Wynter's proximity to this network makes her exclusion from it all the more noteworthy. Even if many women then writing remained outside the increasingly defined male circle of writers that offered each other critique and material aid, Wynter was not among them. John Figueroa, a prolific writer and often-time producer at the BBC, had emceed Wynter's wedding reception. She was now married to and writing with Jan Carew, one of the ascendants who lauded *Caribbean Voices* producer Henry Swanzy for his material and creative support. Through this collaborator, she also knew Wilson Harris, who was married to Carew's sister. Naipaul selected her as an on-air editorial contributor, Stuart Hall held many documented conversations with her, and Edward Mittelholzer had introduced at least one of her contributions at the BBC. All of which is to say, they knew her, and not at a distance. And yet, in her preface to her 2022 collection, Wynter writes that she was located "on the fringes of a group of aspiring writers... [struggling] to give imaginative reality to our regional landscape" (9). Back in 1957, she had signified on the density of male sociality in a short story written for *Caribbean Voices*. Looking at these reflections alongside her other work, we can see a pattern of commentary on homosociality as female dispossession—the turning toward each other of men comes at the painful expense of the women outside the web.

Most notable is the apparent disregard of Andrew Salkey, who had performed with her in *her* 1958 play and voiced her Sharpeville massacre poem for the BBC in 1960. Salkey, famous for connecting other West Indian writers to mentors and publishers, seems to have withheld such support from Wynter. More damningly, when he had the editorial power to include her, he excluded her instead. One of his notable exclusions is from his 1960 West Indian short story anthology,

essentially cherry-picked from BBC scripts. He preempts criticism about this omission by asserting in the introduction that, while he admires Wynter's work, he lacks the space to include her.

Notwithstanding this supposed lack of space, however, he includes multiple stories from other authors such as Selvon, Mittelholzer, Lamming, Hearne, and Carew. Nor does his selection require already canonical status—the table of contents contains many unfamiliar names. Many indications lead one to conclude that, for whatever reason, Wynter had, indeed, been pushed to the fringe.²²

Political Commitments

It is also quite likely that there was more at play in this marginalization than gender.²³ Anna Snaith approaches the causes for exclusion more cautiously in speculating on historical silences surrounding Una Marson, another Blackwoman intellectual from Jamaica. Marson founded the BBC *Caribbean Voices* program that launched the artistic careers of so many Caribbean men. Snaith's observations about Marson's longstanding erasure from historical accounts of the BBC and effacement of the literature she authored furnish another possible reason for the ghettoization and disregard Wynter suffered. Snaith attributes the general failure of anticolonial archives and other historians to attend to Una Marson's contributions primarily to Marson's "consistently held dual focus on the politics of gender and race" (152) (to which we should also add wealth distribution). This analysis offers a counternarrative to the trope of the excluded biological body—that is, political

²² In a 2018 article re-engaging the foundational "Beyond Miranda's Meaning," Boyce Davies argues that this early marginalization and constraint continued. She writes, about the historic 1990 Caribbean Women Writers and Scholars Conference, that Wynter was "placed literally between two male scholars... to manage and interpret the complexity of her thought [in a]... recognizable attempt to restrain the full articulation of this black woman scholar" ("Occupying" 839).

²³ In fact, a woman, the British Jan Williams, wrote one of the stories Salkey collected in his previously mentioned anthology. Salkey professed simply to like all of the stories he chose. In Williams's case, one wonders why. Her tragic story, "Arise, My Love," trucks in the already-tired tropes of fallen women and fatal mixed-race intercourse, with the bonus of Blackmale fascination with and violence against White(ish) women, or in this case, girls. But then, Salkey did tend to be on the lookout for a quality of violence.

commitments.²⁴ The same reasons for “neglect” could obtain for Wynter. She, like Marson, addressed in her work the need to overcome not only gendered and racialized domination. She also highlighted the pooring of the Caribbean Black underclass by the White, Brown, and Black elite, part and parcel with the unchecked exploitation of workers and the environment. The critiques levied by Marson and Wynter against their “comrades” in anticolonial struggle could not be comfortably absorbed by any of the prevailing anticolonial ideologies nor cordoned off into the netherworlds of “women’s points of view.”²⁵

As such, alongside factors such as literary genre, form, and relative difficulty, we must also consider the possibility that in that historical moment, Wynter’s interlocutors simply did not like what Wynter was saying about any of them. Consider the fact that in 1958, Lorraine Hansberry, a radical playwright considered foundational to Black drama in the US, was still struggling to find a venue for her own now famous first play. *A Raisin in the Sun* dramatically enacted one Black family’s demand that they be accommodated in White supremacist America.²⁶ Launched that year, Wynter’s far more expansive story about communal Black self-determination—even if in the face of desperation—recounted how a marginalized Caribbean community survived the betrayal of several

²⁴ Invoking the biological body, or “gender anatomical distinction” as Boyce Davies terms it (“Occupying” 841), as reason enough continues despite determined critiques of essentialism. It bears repeating that it is dangerous to facilely equate identity categories with repression (or advocacy) without a political argument and evidence. Such practices help distance certain women from power while incorporating “women’s issues,” as Molaria Ogunidipe-Leslie has argued. On the opposite side, they can lead to the presumed legitimacy of the leadership of a Margaret Thatcher or a Hillary Clinton, despite the evidence that their policies would further diminish the life chances of or impoverish women across the globe and here at home. See, for a fuller discussion on the dangers of conflating positionalities and politics, see, e.g., Joy James (2000), pp. 243–248.

²⁵ See, for similar conclusions, Natasha Barnes’s 2006 study of Wynter’s *Hills of Hebron*. Also see the characterizations of reasons for neglect Eudell and Allen (2001).

²⁶ Wynter’s first play had been bought by an experimental and already prestigious theater, in the seat of Britain’s erstwhile Empire. However, unlike *Raisin*, the play was not staged. Fortunately, broadcasting allowed Wynter’s radio play to reach probably tens of thousands of listeners, far more than would have been exposed in the more exclusive world of the stage. One report estimated that, although shrinking, the listenership of the *Third Programme* in 1956 was 1.6 million (Witts). See Chapter 2, p. 119n54 for an exploration of possible reasons for the failure to stage the play. See Addyman et al. (2017) for listenership of the *Third Programme*.

generations of men. At the same time, it indicted the colonial government and local elite for creating the conditions for that betrayal. The latest of these betraying men had been the recipient of the resources its members had pooled to send him off to be educated in the colonial system (like so many of the writers in “exile” in England with Wynter), the better to lead. Instead, he absconded with their remaining cash during a drought that withered their food and market crops. Wynter’s version of *Brother Man* commented similarly on the men sponsored by women to go to England, only to abandon them, leaving families to their destitution. One of her early short stories, “Gwana” (1956), expressed a preference for (the colonist’s) naked hate over (the missionary’s) disdainful pity. Another, “Bat and Ball” (1957), depicted female capacity and willingness to negotiate traditional male power, along with awareness of the backlash that could be anticipated as a result of standing ground rather than quietly submitting. Her plays *Rockstone Anancy* (1970) and *Maskarade* (1973) laughingly but forcefully expressed (Caribbean) women’s refusal to allow men to sideline them, along with women’s understanding and assumption of their responsibility for reconnecting their communities to traditional and innovative sources of power. In the case of *Rockstone*, this resumption of African-descended ritual power played out simultaneously with the attempt of the already powerful (mostly men) subverting anticolonial and Black Power struggles for their neocolonial gain. Perhaps Wynter’s work was disappeared, then, because the tastemakers could not stomach the indictments of Wynter’s resolutely iconoclastic Black (ghettoized as) female pen. Those attempting to maintain the colonial status quo, those trying only to wrest the wheel from other drivers while leaving engines unchanged, and those attempting to establish a more egalitarian brotherhood, leaving the sistren aside, or otherwise invested in a zero sum game, would undoubtedly have perceived a threat in Wynter’s dramas, stories, poems, and commentaries. Hers was ever a position that dismantled existing conceptions before proposing new ones, always more expansive and inclusive.

Whatever the reason for Wynter's distancing, her writing and writing career likely suffered from a dearth of support for its development. For example, although she often provided commentary on other writers as a guest editor for *Caribbean Voices* and other broadcast venues and in print during the BBC years, she noticeably received no mentoring for or public commentary on her own writing. (Except for the almost uniformly negative contemporaneous reviews of *The Hills of Hebron*, particularly by critics from the region.²⁷) When Wynter applied in 1958 for a Guggenheim, which she intended to use to support her adaptation of Roger Mais's novel, her *Third Programme* producer, Robin Midgely, affirmed that she would make great use of other dramatists' tutelage. In his letter, Midgely suggested that Wynter needed "such encouragement and support as your fellowship can supply" while asserting his confidence that, with "the opportunity of studying other dramatists closely," she would attain the "compression" necessary for the dramatic form (Pennington 2). However, it is unlikely that she ever benefited from such an opportunity, since the Guggenheim bid failed, her stay in England was relatively short, and she needed to focus on making a living on top of other commitments while she was writing for the BBC (*Interview*).²⁸

During the few short years when she was in England, still producing work for the BBC (1953–1961), Wynter was also still dancing, acting, and traveling back to Jamaica and around Europe, including Norway and Sweden, not just France and England. Most importantly, just after Lumumba was assassinated in 1961, she left to lend her aid to Cheddi Jagan's party in their preparation for independence in what was then British Guiana, leaving all her scripts and correspondence behind. She never returned to England to live again, instead moving back to

²⁷ See Harrison's discussion of this reception in her 2014 book, *Difficult Subjects*.

²⁸ I hope to investigate this failed bid further outside the dissertation. See p. 11n5 in Introduction for examples of Wynter activities.

Jamaica to raise her two young children with family support.²⁹ This means that by the time the Caribbean Artists Movement (CAM) formed, then provided such significant support for other writers tied to the region, Wynter was already back home and largely isolated.

Locating Wynter within Anticolonial Literature

Of necessity, I have limited the geographic scope of this dissertation. I assert in the introduction that Wynter's work participated in and contributed to anticolonial mobilization, which suggests that her work should be read alongside its anticolonial comadres. We also know that Wynter began writing when England and Europe were bristling with anticolonial agitators and intellectuals from around the world. Understanding this intensely international context, I might expect to extend my comparison to the literature those groups of international migrants were producing. However, many scholars have argued cogently that the specificity of Caribbean colonialism, plantation systems, and cultures also suggests a particularized content and nature of the anticolonial literature produced by people in and from the Caribbean. Briefly, people in the Indian subcontinent, in other Asian colonies, and in Africa all had ancestral land bases, languages, and cultures, however disrupted, to which they could turn (and sometimes return) for political, cultural, and linguistic fortification, if not outright subterfuge and guerrilla warfare. Those in the Caribbean did not have such refuge to a continuous "ancestral archive" of strategies and forms. Instead, as Wynter put it,

because [our] ancestors existed as anonymous extensions of European civilization, [we] must piece together fragments of history from... lost centuries, refashion in a written form garbled oral myths handed down by Asian, African, and Amerindian ancestors, and accept the cultural strands of [our] European heritage while asserting [our countries'] creative individuality. (Pennington 2)

²⁹ Jan Carew notes that the move cost Wynter her own BBC program, to have been produced by Lord Mountbatten (173).

As such, for those seeking to re-establish themselves as Human within the terms promulgated by their colonizers—that is, possessed of their own living and viable cultures, ideas, and capacities for self-governance—the task was not to re-assert ethnic or tribal identities, but rather to identify and highlight a culture and capacity they could call their own, as distinct from whatever colonially-imposed norms would help achieve their goal of self-governance. Therefore, although her social, political, and intellectual community included African and Asian anticolonialists, I locate Wynter’s work within the more delimited archive of Caribbean anticolonial thought and expression for the dissertation.

I have already spoken to some of the imperatives of Caribbean literature at the time Wynter was writing her dramas. This period marked a turn away from attempting to establish Black and West Indian Humanity by demonstrating the capacity to mimic colonial models and toward the *countertheatrical* mode of popular theatre Elizabeth Maddock Dillon has discussed in *New World Drama*. To be sure, Wynter was among the many critical-imaginative Caribbean writers of the period who invested heavily in culture as a political vehicle. Nearly all expressed the need to delineate the boundaries of an identity and aesthetic that differed from that of a British subject in the metropole. She also shared their general preoccupation with the proposed choice between modernity and a “retour” that she—following Césaire—would say was impossible. However, for her, the task was to discover and enlarge the revolutionary potential in cultural rituals while still finding ways to connect to the “wide, wide world,” as C. L. R. James had put it. As such, even within this extraordinary moment of post-World War II transformation, Wynter’s attention to the world-changing potential of cultural heritage and innovation (rather than its ramifications for the consolidation of an identity or polity) is extraordinary.

This last point serves to highlight one difference in Wynter’s oeuvre that is not much remarked upon. Where Lamming and others extolled the virtues and bemoaned the deprivations of

exile, to the point that the Caribbean writer in exile has become one of the most recognized tropes of West Indian literature from the 1950s and 1960s, Sylvia Wynter began her writing career instead with a depiction of these times as “the end of exile.”³⁰ Although Wynter invoked the trope of exile as much as or more than the rest of the cadre, the bulk of her critical-creative work has been more interested in the enclosure within a “home” society, resulting in an exile that was not geographically based.³¹ If, as Brodber scholar June Roberts asserts, the male-authored Caribbean literature of the 1950s was “obsessed with [depicting] identity politics, cultural fragmentation, exile, and a sense of historylessness” (63), Wynter’s texts, in contrast, insisted upon reinserting history and reunification. In this period, her drama and short stories invested less in the condition of being separated from a community voluntarily left behind. Instead, they attended closely to people’s disconnection from themselves and their own creative capacities and potential, from the community wellsprings for spiritual and aesthetic grounding, and from the wider world.³² The different valance she brings to the word may be born of Wynter’s pan-African commitments and class location, which brought her into closer contact with dissident intellectuals who had been expelled than with economic migrants who had fled.

³⁰ See Scott’s interview, p. 133, for Wynter’s desire to title her novel *The End of Exile*. She used the same tentative title for her fictionalization of the life of Antonio Enríquez Gómez (unfinished) and a series of poems (unpublished).

³¹ The near unanimous adoption of “exile” as Caribbean metropolitan migrant’s self-identification merits further exploration. At the same time these migrants were arriving with their manuscripts, British imperial forces were persecuting people agitating for their rights in the colonies, imprisoning them without trial, and transporting them, this time *to* the metropole instead of away from it. Researching these coinciding movements, voluntary and forced, becomes more urgent when thinking about the BBC’s acknowledgment of its objective first to improve the sentiment of those in the colonies toward the Empire, and then to consolidate regional nationalist sentiment. I’m not disputing that these Caribbean artists’ options would have been constrained at home, but leaving to pursue intellectual or cultural interests instead of, say, staying home to be a barrister, doesn’t parallel silencing, imprisonment, and deportation. Whether consciously or not, the British broadcast and print media’s endorsement of the writerly cultural “exile” narrative enacted a double displacement of the forced political exile, with the possible result of diluting the anticolonial effort.

³² She continues to emphasize this point; her character Obadiah reconnecting to African artistic traditions through his carving represents an “end of exile” of Caribbean people from connection with a wider world (*Interview*).

Other biographical details also stand out in ways that are significant for thinking through Wynter's work. The tendency to group the many writers who produced material for the BBC at the time can flatten essential differences. Faith Smith has written insightfully about how the focus on Black London has obscured Anglophone Caribbean writers' critical experiences elsewhere in Europe.³³ Likewise, much of Wynter's earliest European tenure was spent in Spain rather than England. She was thus oriented to the world beyond Jamaica through the lens of a country still recovering from civil war and under the control of the fascist dictator, Franco.³⁴ One can easily gloss over such biographical details as if they don't matter—it's just another run of dates and places, all in Europe/England. I believe this elision is a mistake. Wynter resided in fascist Spain just after WWII. Those in England when she arrived were still celebrating the collective defeat of fascist Germany. A brief reprieve appeared possible at the time; people from the Caribbean and other British colonies were more optimistic about being able to join with the British people to forge a community unlike any that had come before it. As Wynter recounted, they had been equalized through the unexpected mechanism of rations; you got the same amount of sugar whether you were from Kingston, Wimbledon, or Bombay (*Interview*). But most Black colonial migrants (and US ex-pats) were landing in imperial England and France. Neither migrant nor visitor in Spain, Wynter was experiencing a post-civil as well as post-world war nation. This former empire had lost most of its colonies a century before (even if the subjects of those decolonized zones had not succeeded in eliminating domination by an elite). In contrast, Wynter was studying a historical period when Spain had been

³³ See Smith's 2015 chapter on Roger Mais's sojourn in France, which she argues was significant. Mais was in community with Richard and Ellen Wright there. In Dillon and Rosenberg, eds., *Beyond Windrush*.

³⁴ See Bidnall "West Indian Interventions" on the "short-lived" promise of that moment. In her essay on Wynter's adaptation of Lorca's *The House of Bernarda Alba*, Imani Owens begins to address the importance of this moment in Spain to Wynter's adaptation and translation work more generally. It seems to me that this aspect of Wynter's biography warrants further such study.

building its Empire, not losing it (*Interview*). What might comparisons of the rhetoric of an ascending empire to that of a defunct one have contributed to Wynter's understanding of the enmeshment of literature, ideology, and policy?³⁵

Her early experience residing in a declining Spain may also be one reason Wynter's critical imaginary remained far *less* concerned with the integration of colonial subjects in the seat of Empire than with the subjectivity of those desiring freedom from colonization and other modes of domination back at "home." Perhaps due to this general disinterest in the metropole, these early texts critique how race is constructed and operationalized instead of staging explicit racial conflict. For instance, in one of her few pieces set in Europe, the dramatic tension arises from the ways the raced woman is used to cement White male solidarity, not from overt racial animosities or frontal attacks. Her approach is extraordinary, given a political atmosphere growing ever more tense in the lead-up to Teddy Boys taking to the streets and Enoch Powell delivering his infamous speech.³⁶

There are other notable differences between Wynter's foci and much of Caribbean literature at the time. For instance, even if her plays never suggest a total abandonment of a certain decorum, neither do they invest in the respectability to which so many in her world were still genuflecting. In addition, as should be clear when she identifies fiction as a tool for revolutionary assault, these texts

³⁵ Reading Wynter's earlier decoding of medieval and Enlightenment ideology against Louis Sala-Molins's careful dismantling of Enlightenment pretensions suggests that such an inquiry would be fruitful. Sala-Molins, though located in the French academy, was a Catalonian who escaped Franco's Spain. His location as an outsider within, less likely to unequally vilify Spain's imperial designs while excusing France's parallel scheming, seems to enable a different analytical lens, as had Wynter's location three decades before him.

³⁶ Here, I am attributing the lack of open racial conflict in Wynter's BBC-era stories and poetry to Wynter alone. However, it is also quite possible that she was influenced by BBC editorial policy, which, in the 1950s still gave the impression that "in Britain color prejudice was not a serious problem and [. . .] where it existed, was due to the ignorance of individual persons, not a general societal flaw" (Rush 188). Furthermore, evidence that the BBC censored violent references is found in scholarship on Henry Swanzy, who had the greatest hand in determining the editorial policy of *Caribbean Voices*. Julie Czerwinski writes that Swanzy extolled Caribbean writers who "sought non-violent means to independence and emphasized universal values, which sometimes led to downplaying the history of British colonial exploitation, exclusion, and racism" (169), to which I would add—and British colonial violence. This may also be why Wynter's Fanonian anticolonial character appears in the guise of a lizard in her story, "Gwana." (Children stone the lizard to death.)

refused any investment in the detached intellectual or aesthetic commentator, much less the flaneur, and certainly not a Talented Tenth. As such, her critical imaginary avoids valorizing exceptional individuals. This means that there are no characters such as James's Toussaint Louverture, who he centers to the exclusion of the common Haitian people in his original play, if not in its expansion as the foundational history of modernity, *The Black Jacobins*.

However, Wynter's work departs most sharply from the commitments of most of her Anglophone Caribbean contemporaries when it considers women's lives and capacities—the sexual *compris ici*. In the last aspect, she is joined, among contemporaries, only by Austin Clarke.³⁷ Jan Carew offers an illustrative example of this failure to attend to women, as people in their own rights let alone leaders. On the occasion of a retrospective screening of *The Big Pride*, Carew explained that it had not occurred to him to write women into the original storyline of this play about seizing freedom and determining its contours (Bourne 70). As I argued in the Introduction, even as her

³⁷ It must be noted that Una Marson had already written a powerful and desiring female character into her play, *Pocomania*, which was first staged in Jamaica in 1938. (Wynter had likely seen the play before she began writing dramas herself; her mother, Lola Parkinson, acted in one revival, circa 1950, to local acclaim.) See Raj Chetty's 2016 essay in *Palimpsest* for more on Marson and *Pocomania*. Some critics have also argued that women had already been centered as autonomous subjects with legitimate political as well as sexual desires, rather than simply as functions or ciphers, in C. L. R. James's 1930s novel and some of H. G. DeLisser's earliest work from the 1920s to 1940s. (See, for example, Rhonda Cobham [2000] and Belinda Edmondson on DeLisser's many serialized novels and Barbara Paul-Emile on James's *Minty Alley*.)

Nonetheless, this work predates Wynter's by three decades, thus is hardly contemporaneous and emerged in a much different political moment. Furthermore, Curdella Forbes has argued that DeLisser constructed strong "working-class female protagonists" only to "ridicule [their] speech and behavior... suggesting an attempt to neutralize the perceived threat" (*From Nation* 31). For his part, James's unapologetic young working-class character is removed from the frame at the end of his novel, there being no place for her critique of power in the community. This distancing may be the result of what Raj Chetty reports as James's inability, during his early years in London, to see "black and brown women in [the Caribbean] functioning in the same way as the white women he encounters" (*Race* 73) in England, which is to say, as intellectually, socially, and politically autonomous or at least agential people. According to Chetty, this explains James's erasure of women as agents in the Haitian Revolution in the staged versions of the original 1936 play *Toussaint Louverture*, on which James built the later foundational study *The Black Jacobins* (*Race* 73). Notably, James had added a revolutionary female character when the play was staged in 1967. (See Raj Chetty's 2019 essay in *Small Axe* regarding James's versioning of this play.)

Paule Marshall provides a bare sketch of her character Suggie in her 1960 *Brown Girls* television play, only fully realizing her as an audacious sexually actualized character when she later expanded the play for her 1981 novel, several decades after Wynter's first story featuring a similar character. (Rosamond King details some of this history in "Sex and Sexuality in English Caribbean Novels—A Survey from 1950" in *The Journal of West Indian Literature*.) ("Brown Play"; Chetty, "Can"; King; Edmondson)

intervention in these texts did not militate against female sexual enclosure as forcefully as had *Under the Sun*, Wynter's participation in revising the story fundamentally changed the questions being asked and the alternatives the main characters were required to consider. Here as elsewhere, Wynter does not simply revise; she shifts the terrain. Repeatedly, it is Wynter's fundamental rethinking of the questions that must be asked and reframing of the options open to people struggling to assert themselves that produces a vision of decolonization that differed from the visions of less politically active writers.

The meaning of decolonization and anticoloniality were still being debated when Wynter began to write just after World War II. She would argue that anticolonial activity began with mutiny and maroonage on the slave ships and continued to be enacted through daily as well as monumental events, such as, in Jamaica, the 1865 rebellion and the 1938 strikes that had radicalized many in her generation, along with several before it. However, for many current readers, the end of acknowledged colonialism is a historical event. "Independence" may even have come during our grandparents' time. Absent a good grasp of global history, it is difficult to conceive of the many vying agendas for decolonization. This is particularly true since the word "decolonize" has now been elevated and simultaneously coopted almost to the erasure of any fixable definition. One can decolonize a diet, a syllabus, global health—everything, it seems, except the land, which remains resolutely colonized and occupied, as Eve Tuck and Wayne Yang rightly protest. In contrast, at the time that Wynter was engaging with the attempts to decolonize, the word was neither fixed nor empty; there were many hotly contested visions for the endgame of political re-organization. Before decoloniality as a concept had even gained a moniker, Wynter belonged to the group militating for an overturned order, encompassing political, economic, social, cultural, psychological, and educational arrangements.

However revolutionary, this anticolonial vision did not necessarily target total disassociation with the former Empire. Some continental Africans were arguing for confederation or Commonwealth status, fearing that breaking up into too-small units would handicap them. Félix Houphoët-Boigny of the Ivory Coast, for example, famously advocated for France's colonies to be incorporated into the "French Community." This arrangement succeeded in organizing the currencies of most of the former French colonies and pegging them to the French franc, therefore maintaining much closer financial ties than, say, the United States to Britain.³⁸

Closer to home, Aimé Césaire argued for Martinique and its Antillean neighbors to become overseas "departments" of France, with equal status to all other departments and the full rights of French citizenship. The departments were created, but equal status was, and still is, on the horizon. H. Adlai Murdoch argues that this decision may have "wrought as momentous a change in Martinican life as the Act of Emancipation that had preceded it" (7). Some in the Caribbean desired a less revolutionary break, working to keep arrangements precisely as they were while substituting the local White, Brown, or multiracial elite for the British government—the American model, if you will. Other proponents wished merely that local communities would develop and appreciate a regional culture with which to express their collective particularities without necessarily upending any of the existing culture's institutional structures.

My point is that what post-decolonization would look like was not at all a settled question at the time Wynter was writing; it was a debate. Saying that Wynter's earliest critical-imaginative writing participated in an anticolonial project, therefore, requires the gloss of metaphor she herself gave it: the point, for her, was not to exchange game pieces but to exchange the board, a move that would

³⁸ In 1957, Houphoët-Boigny wrote, "To live an oppressed and miserable life in a politically independent country does not make a man truly independent" (7). However, after France abruptly devalued the "African franc" in 1994, people starved.

require changed relationships among everything and everybody. Repeatedly in her plays, Wynter invokes not the nation-state, but alternative modes of organizing Black Being, including maroonage, Maroon settlement, and Rastafari “livity.”³⁹ Exploring how such invocations structure the plays allows us to see how her dramas participate in building the conceptual framework for the de-linking from Empire that Wynter envisaged, while leaving open questions of governance.

With “*Hosanna! We buil’ back we house,*” I contend that Sylvia Wynter’s critical-imaginative work began to limn a Caribbean subject and politics that she deemed necessary for decolonization. This subjectivity and politics, because profoundly egalitarian (and universal in ways that far surpassed realities in any of the states the Enlightenment had brought into being), were radical even as compared to the politics of some of her radical contemporaries—and her own nonfiction critical and historical writing. A decade or more before she released the academy-based creative-critical and creative-theoretical essays that began to hint at the same, she sought, with her plays and short stories, to transform notions of sexuality and kinship and with them relations of power along all axes, including gender, race, and wealth, in order to argue the necessity for broader social, economic, and political equity, and thereby mobilize action and support for an enlarged, decolonial future.⁴⁰ Eschewing narrow nationalism that obscured women and the jobless, landless, and poor; duppy mimicry of patriarchal colonial governance in local drag; and adherence to static images of “old

³⁹ See Jahlan Niah’s chapter, “Howell’s Philosophy of Rastafari Manhood,” in the 2015 collection *Leonard Percival Howell and the Genesis of Rastafari* for a discussion of the extra-national commune and “livity” begun at Pinnacle.

⁴⁰ When I argue that Wynter theorized through her early critical-imaginative work, I do not mean to suggest that the conclusions she came to could be represented by an unbroken line, either progressing horizontally from its fully realized beginning, or steadily ascending on the slant, initially naïve and progressively more mature or radical and far-reaching. My research does not support either thesis. What is supported is the notion that her early critical-imaginative work contributed to a particular vision of Human culture and co-responsibility that remains elusive and promising today.

world” cultures, whether African, European, or Asian, Wynter pursued the mechanisms and narratives that would transform lives rather than simply transferring power.⁴¹

⁴¹ Clearly, it is beyond the scope of the project to sketch all the different desired or attempted alternatives to colonization. However, we can think with the range here of the Ivoirian and Césairean proposals, as against the Guinean. In the Anglophone context, that meant the possibility of Dominion, Federation, or a closely tied Commonwealth. The latter arrangement was favored by those unwilling to allow the former Empire to abscond with the wealth made from their enslaved or indentured ancestors, as well as more recent colonial arrangements. It was opposed to a more total imperial divestment, with abandonment—or vengeance—implied. Nor was such suspected vengeance unfounded. Google “did the French really take the lightbulbs when they left Guinea.”

Entremés 2

“Brown Girl in the Ring”

In the States, ring games tend to be for children, so it’s easy for US readers to vault over the songs in these texts as functional—for setting the mood, locating a piece culturally or geographically, or perhaps reinforcing the plot—not meaningful. What happens if, rather than dismissing them as function or ornament, we consider what these songs do more seriously?

When my children were little, we inherited Cheryl Warren Mattox album called *Shake It to the One You Love the Best*. One of our favorite songs from the collection was “Brown Girl in the Ring.” Before they could talk, we would dance to its tune. After, we sang it together: “There’s a brown girl in the ring, tra la la la la, there’s a brown girl in the ring” again and again, ending triumphantly, “and she looks like the sugar in a plum, plum, plum.” The words seemed to celebrate a Black child’s beauty, validate their Being. When the lyrics sounded, “Show me your motion,” I heard them as an invocation or opening—show us what we know you can do because you are fabulous! I used the song game as a bulwark. It became one of the many songs of Black beauty I sang into their ears to forestall what I knew would be coming. (Sweet Honey’s “There Were No Mirrors” was another.) Some of the lyrics made no sense (how do you look like the sugar in a plum?), but the Brown Girl thing held me. It seemed to hold others, too. Of this song, I’ve never heard anything but celebration.

But. I was looking at it from my one-drop-rule location in the US, where the identity descriptors are binary, even if the measured reality is not. As in, dollar for dollar, as a group, just as White people out earn Black, lighter-skinned-but-not-considered-White people-with-some-African-ancestry out earn their deeper-skinned cousins. (And light-skinned women in the academy out represent dark. Don’t believe me? Look at some faculty web pages, especially in the humanities.) What happens when you take it back to Jamaica where the song comes from, the song comes from, the song comes from? Yes, I did that. That’s because the missing word from the “children’s” song is

rum. “She likes sugar, and I like rum.” There’s a tourist song somewhere at its origins, and behind that, the Triangular Trade. For sure. My point is that in the US, we have often read Brown (in older texts) as synonymous with “Black”—as in descendants of the enslaved, which is all that matters, no matter how removed.¹ And if your family doesn’t remind you that you’re Black no matter the shade, a yahoo in a Hummer will. However, the more I have read about Jamaica, the more I wondered about what this song produced there. The same pride and connection, the same bulwark?

When Wynter uses the song game in *Under the Sun*, she connects the song with a character raced Not-White-Not-Black and makes the game function more as sexual ritual, less as children’s game. Could it also be speaking to a different racial politics? The play *is* set in Jamaica, after all. Zora Neale Hurston describes a scene where light bright John Hope shows up and shocks the “census white” society. Those are the ones with African grandmothers in the closet, the ones the White settler system certifies and tolerates, the better to pacify them and turn their hides into a border wall. As far as these “census whites” were concerned, Hope was Whiter than they. But then, he started his speech at the ball organized to fête him with the words, “We negroes,” giving them vertigo and decalibrating their careful system (7–8). Different *sorting*. Similar system.

From the beginning, Wynter had written about a graded rather than a binary raced-colored-classed system (I’ll call it *rac* for short). However, she was thinking of it in terms of the status accorded to the differentially *rac*, not identity alone. In an interview with Daryl Cumber Dance, Wynter recalls that her first letter to a newspaper was about how “degrees of colour functioned as a kind of exchange value, just like money” (276). Previously, she had referred to the “imperial scale of values” in which “the ladder, economic and social, is still clearly marked; the whiter you are, the nearer to the top, the blacker, the nearer to the bottom” (“Impressions”). In the second short story

¹ That is, we did prior to the recent theorizations of “Brown” as signifying particular members of the “White” US American norm’s not-Black-but-still-racialized-not-White Others.

she had broadcast on the BBC, when her young female protagonist admires a woman “kept” in the neighborhood, her mother cries out, “You, with your colour and education, can get anywhere,” and warns her to stay away from that “half chiney wretch.”² The daughter’s attachment was threatening to unmake the progress that had come of “all the slave ah slave for you!” One factor, color, was already hers, although not necessarily “naturally,” since one could make alliances that “lightened up” the family, à la Capécia. The other factor, education, was as hard-won (“Paramour”).

When the New Believers in the church joke about reproductive capacity, read sexual prowess, they begin by assessing Rose, surnamed “Brown,” based partly on her color. Being “sambo” makes her more attractive. This is what Wynter had identified in 1965 as “the algebra of color” (“Impressions”). According to the math, there are two parameters Caribbean women up to that time could trade on. One was color; the other was class (or education, as a proxy). Rose has no class status, for sure. But she has color, which makes her a more desirable wife than, for instance, Miss Gatha (as Boyce Davies has pointed out, although the critic’s emphasis there is age, not color).

Wynter would play with this algebra again. In an unfinished drama, date unknown, one of her female characters, facing a choice between two prospective lovers, finally decides to latch herself to a “Black” man instead of a “Brown” one. She hopes to bolster the nation’s progress by helping rehabilitate the “Black” man’s reputation through skin mechanics, self-sacrificing in order to help this former wretched one gain status and self-esteem. Re-valuing the Black man here is a literal rather than symbolic act. Wynter abandoned this play, but she continued to work the problem.³ In

² Many of Wynter’s female characters found on the edges of the community are “half” or partially Chinese. They include this kept character in the short story, Rose in *The Hills of Hebron*, Minette in her *Brother Man* (who was played by Mona Chin in the BBC production), and in the same play, the young woman who was attacked in on Palisadoes Road, whose historic analogue seems to have been part Chinese, too.

³ Re-reading the unfinished play for the first time in decades, she dismissed it as underdeveloped politically and aesthetically, explaining that she’d been working through that math, but the drama didn’t work theatrically (*Interview*).

The University of Hunger, the main character reports that his nemesis will soon marry “into the oldest white family” in the area, explaining, “He is coal-black, but his money will wash him white” (“University” 11).

Let’s return to what the “Brown Girl in the Ring” song game is doing in *Under the Sun*. All the references to Rose’s color and the game allude to sex. One character jokes that Obadiah’s celibacy vow “couldn’t have been easy, for Sister Rose is sambo in colour and comely” (8, 1.1). Miss Gatha scolds that Obadiah had gotten mixed up with “a white man’s stray-shot [...] spawn” (18, 1.1). And when Obadiah finally gets to the song, it is to recall to “the Adulterer” the rhythm of sexing. “She is the brown girl in the ring, she is the rhythm in the ring, ring tight in between we [...] you remember the motion that she did motion for we?” (32, 2.2). In this context, “Show me your motion” is a sexual request—or demand. The working-class or pored light bright women in Wynter’s plays and stories, like the “brown girl in the ring” of Vernon Jackman’s poem, are coveted for their skin-to-skin, not for what they create with their brilliant body/minds.

I come back to my question. Can this song, which I had used to foster pride in self, love of others’ Black skin, mean the same in the Jamaican context? (“You got to love it, *yoi!*”) When Brown means access to (some) education and (some) wealth and Black means little or none, no, it can’t. I hate to ruin it for us all. And. In a multi-tiered rather than binary racial system, the song is colorist and therefore fundamentally White supremacist. It contributes to the “imperial scale of value.” But then, I don’t have to go too far back in the US context to see the same. If you’re White, you’re alright; if you’re Brown, stick around; if you’re Black, step back. Not so binary after all.

The song game in the play reinforces the notion that the degree of color in the skin determines the degree and tenor of desire. It points to the reality that “Out of many,” there are still many, not “One,” and they are valued very differently—not just on *rvv* lines, but gendered, too. Unity would have to be forged on all points; it could not be assumed.

Chapter 2

Restor(y)ing Honor, Ending Gendered Suppression

He's stone cold dead in the market (x3)
[But] I kill nobody but me husband.

—Popular Caribbean song, this version's authorship
claimed by Wilmouth Houdini

She saw a dust-bearing bee sink into the sanctum of a bloom; the
thousand sister-calyxes arch to meet the love embrace and the
ecstatic shiver of the tree from root to tiniest branch creaming in
every blossom and frothing with delight.

—Zora Neale Hurston, *Their Eyes Were Watching God*

This chapter and the next center Sylvia Wynter's first original play, *Under the Sun* (1958), as one instantiation of Wynter's decolonizing practice. I suggest that by reinscribing women's full humanity conjointly with Black life, Wynter demands that anticolonial energies be committed to more than achieving national liberation. Decolonization must also rupture all ideologies of domination that justify the exploitation or downright annihilation of those deemed "lesser" humans: the poored Black people relegated to an underclass, with women crucially comprising its majority.¹ My reading of the play also demonstrates Wynter's imaginative conceptual vision, radical then and now, of communal sovereignty based in the dignity, joy, and survival of *all* of humanity. That is to say that through the play and her attention *simultaneously* to sexing, classing, racializing, and religion, Wynter begins to reconceptualize the Human outside frameworks of hierarchy altogether. In this, I argue, *Under the Sun* models Wynter's dramatic, fictional, creative "theory before."²

¹ I prefer "poored" to "poor" as modifier of "people." The term reinserts relations of power within the adjective that otherwise is only a condition *inhabited* or owned by those whom global and local capital impoverishes. (It also works to return action and relations of power to the adjectives it accompanies). The coinage is *not* my own. However, I have not been able to track down the source in the long interim that has passed since I first encountered it. And I do believe it should be brought back into circulation.

² Wynter's extension of the honor play into a Black terrain also works to mirror the once-justified perpetual availability of the female body for extinction at the hands of "threatened" men. Her restoring denounces this always already

With *Under the Sun*, Wynter reads, reframes, and rewrites historical literature (as she had in her 1958 *Vogue* article) to intervene in its supremacist operations, this time pressing into service the centuries-old honor play. Traditionally, the honor play revolved around abrogation of a man's honor, detection of the offender, and violent rectification of the trespass purporting to restore honor. Most often, the genre targeted the offense of female sexual infidelity. In revising the Spanish Golden Age honor play thus construed, Wynter demystifies the popular genre, to “[expose] all the injustices inherent in [its] structure” (Legesse 217), then put entirely new flesh on its bones. Honor—a metonym for the proper organization of familial, community, and national relationships of affinity and power—is spine, heart, and lungs of the honor play. Wynter demonstrates through her drama that the concept of purity is equally paramount. Purity functions on one level to discipline gendered notions of appropriate sexuality, but on another, it functions as a cipher for religion and emerging concepts of race.³

As such, when Wynter rewrites the honor play with *Under the Sun*, she lays bare the honor play's foundational function in the Inquisition era: entrenching male supremacy *while simultaneously* masking, under the veil of gendered antagonism, the racialized religious domination that was later to be reorganized and mobilized more simply as White supremacy. In other words, Wynter's first drama, part of the theory before, spotlights the expansion from primarily-gendered to primarily-racialized subjugation. When we bring the play back into critical view, we can see that long before Wynter had penned “The Ceremony Must Be Found,” the iconic 1984 essay that explains the

potential violence. At the same time, it condemns continuing claims that mark Black bodies as always everywhere threatening and thus eligible for annihilation at the hands of anyone who professes to fear them.

³ Demetrius Eudell writes that Wynter identifies “the religio-monarchical concept of cleanliness of blood (*limpieza de sangre*), as a first form of proto-racial discourse” (“Afterword” 317) through her master's thesis. Eudell's important essay, the afterword to the 2010 edition of *The Hills of Hebron*, is one of the few to read Wynter's imaginative conceptual work *through* (rather than simply with) her later abstracted theory. Republishing this essay, along with the introduction by Anthony Bogues (“Introduction” ix–xxviii), would contribute substantially to scholars' ability to assess the total body of Wynter's work.

sixteenth-century transumption through which domination-justified-through-gender-supremacy was joined by domination-justified-through-racial-supremacy, she had already staged their necessary unmaking in her fiction.⁴ Put differently, through this play, she actively, publicly, and in a format most accessible to the broadest range of people, advocates a more thorough investment in the ongoing struggle for a living emancipation.⁵

At the time of its broadcasting, *Under the Sun* not only focused an urgently needed spotlight onto the enmeshed operation of systems of domination and the impossibility of assigning them to atomized spheres. It also explicated, in particular, the generating/subtending of notions of “race” and “gender” through the foundational literature of Western culture. Because of this capaciousness, narrow analytical lenses necessarily occlude some of the play’s primary contributions. Kelly Baker Josephs, one of the first critics to appreciate the ways that Wynter counteracted the erasure of women in Caribbean life and literature, supports this contention in her assessment of Wynter’s larger body of work. Joseph asserts that while some critics have questioned Wynter’s “positioning of race vis-à-vis gender,” her work “resist[s] this form of dissection” (“Necessity” 194). Furthermore, Josephs maintains that Wynter “reads the nation, race, and later the human, *through* women, without treating gender as additive” (“Necessity” 196, emphasis added). Similarly, in discussing *The Hills of Hebron*, Shirley Toland-Dix argues that the novel exemplifies the “pluri-conceptual model” that Wynter conceptualized in her essay on C. L. R. James’s critical approach. Wynter explains that within a pluri-conceptual model, “the dynamics of multiple modes of domination arising from such

⁴ Another important explication of this theory is found in her 1990 essay “Beyond Miranda’s Meanings.” There, Wynter argues that the imperial/colonial enterprise of the sixteenth century generated and was increasingly predicated upon a shift in primary division from man over woman to “man” as universalized Western subject over “native” as the Western Other. “In other words,” she writes, “with the shift to the secular, the primary code of difference now became that between ‘men’ and ‘natives,’ with the traditional ‘male’ and ‘female’ distinctions now coming to play a secondary—if none the less powerful—reinforcing role within the system of symbolic representations” (38).

⁵ See p. 62n26 for the reach of the *Third Programme* on the BBC and, e.g., Arthur Asseraf on the ubiquity and impact of radio in colonial societies.

factors as gender, color, race, class, and education are nondogmatically integrated” (“Jamesian Poiesis” 64). This integration or enmeshment of factors and modes of domination is integral to all of Wynter’s work. Nonetheless, for analytical purposes, in “*Hosanna! We buil’ back we house,*” I separate the strands, deferring to my exploration of the honor play’s racialization project. Here in Chapter 2, I focus deliberately on gender and sexing to emphasize Wynter’s radical remapping of this area she deemed requisite for decolonization.

To orient this discussion, I first offer a synopsis of the play’s plot and themes. Second, I briefly outline the honor play genre, so that readers can better understand how the variations I discuss here diverge from the canonical model, which prioritizes personal reputation and the preservation of the biologically-based governance and inheritance it reinscribed. Third, I explore another honor play refraction, García Lorca’s *Yerma*, which Wynter both directly adapted for her play, *The Barren One* (1958), and versioned further for her original drama, *Under the Sun*.⁶ García Lorca’s refraction of the honor play itself rejects female sexual containment. My examination here assesses how *Under the Sun* surpasses even García Lorca’s play, which denounced the circumscribed world that (Spanish) women inhabited. Having shown how *Yerma* subverts the paradigmatic honor play form, I investigate how *Under the Sun* achieves its additional refraction and what that refraction reveals. Through my close reading of a pivotal scene incorporating both violent assault and erotic possibility, I argue in this final section that *Under the Sun* offers not only an expanded arena for female fulfillment and creativity. The play also validates sexual expression and female desire themselves, thereby refusing the canonical honor play’s violent containment of female sexuality and its rendition of women and girls as eligible for extinction on suspicion or appearance alone. By

⁶ I develop my notion of Wynter’s “versioning” and “Aretha” modes in the Introduction.

extension, *Under the Sun* opposes the violent containment of (Black) colonial subjects more widely, along with any subordination of women's full humanity to further the national project.⁷

Production History and Synopsis of Wynter's Play *Under the Sun*

This three-act play was the first original drama Wynter completed. Bought by the prestigious English Stage Company in residence at the Royal Court Theatre and later adapted for the *Third Programme* at BBC radio, *Under the Sun* was first broadcast just months after the Federation of the West Indies was officially recognized in 1958 bringing Wynter's expansive story about a Black community's enactment of (vexed) self-determination in the Caribbean to international audiences.⁸ It continued to air over the next several years in Britain, the Caribbean, and North America.⁹ The play's inquiry into separatism, community development, and just leadership would have resonated with audiences on the cusp of independence and intent on advancing social, economic, and political enfranchisement for the formerly colonized around the world. Despite its historical importance, however, it has never been published. Furthermore, although there are extant copies of stage and radio versions in public archives, until now, *Under the Sun* has received no scholarly attention beyond its relation to the novel adapted from it, *The Hills of Hebron*, which was published four years later.

⁷ Note that throughout this chapter I use the term "sexuality" to refer to desire and activity, rather than either the direction of that desire or the "genres" of partners in the activity.

⁸ However, until recently, it was not staged. See last footnote on p. 40 for a more complete production history.

⁹ A Danish adaptation, *En bro til himlen* (*A Bridge to Heaven*), was also produced for radio and is preserved in the audio archives at Denmark's Radio Theater Database. Peter Andersen, one of the archivists, remarks enthusiastically, "When you listen to the play, you have to remember that this [was] made by the best actors at the time! It is not just some local radio station making a radio play, or children's radio . . . It [had] been worked with for weeks and weeks, lots of rehearsals . . . [before] they started to record. [It] [o]nly used the best actors and best [directors] and technicians. The radio theater department in Denmark Radio at that time was properly the best [in] Europe, and [in] quality at least on same level as BBC" (personal communication, 1 July 2017). Many thanks to Andersen for providing me with a recording to the show; it is the only extant audio recording of the play in any version or adaptation that any of the legions of us looking for her recordings have yet located

Substantive changes are made in the novel version; I will identify these changes in the footnotes as they become pertinent and address them more fully at the end of the chapter.

The drama unfolds in a historical Jamaica, understood to be post-Emancipation (1838). The story revolves around a community comprising displaced peasants and dispossessed urban exiles—Black tradespeople, wage workers, and shopkeepers. Before the story begins, they had been increasingly impoverished by the planter-controlled government that, like federal and local governments in the post-Reconstruction United States, took no responsibility for ensuring that the emancipated or their descendants had food, shelter, healthcare, work, or education, let alone land. In reaction, a small group chose to leave the city, Cockpit Center, and reconstitute themselves as an autonomous mountain community organized around providing their basic needs. This quasi-religious group, calling themselves the New Believers, ultimately come to ground their “new belief” in themselves.¹⁰ However, calamity strikes when a drought hits the island, drying up the community’s water source and killing their crops.

Many plot lines run through the play, each revolving around themes of fidelity, discovery, and repercussions. One involves a wife’s apparent failure to be loyal (sexually). Young Rose, wife of the much older leader of the group, is discovered to be pregnant, even though her husband Obadiah had renounced sexual contact a year before. The apparent adultery represents the punishable sexual misbehavior, or breach of faith, at the center of the honor play.

¹⁰ Although a full discussion of Wynter’s deep commitment to a broad humanism, or to Human Being, is outside the scope of this chapter, the “new belief” to which these adherents commit is undoubtedly at least partially an instance of this Being to which Wynter has attended over the course of her career. Particularly given the “turn” to humanism of the Renaissance—and the accompanying epistemological shift—that similarly captured Wynter’s attention, the “breakthrough” of a “new belief” cannot be trivialized here as merely a naming. One indication of this turn from supernatural to human agency is found in Obadiah’s closing monologue regarding holding “all that was God” in his hands (47, 3.2), a scene Wynter retained for the novel. Another is located in Wynter’s adaptation of Roger Mais’s novel, *Brother Man*, where she fundamentally alters several of Mais’s lines about divinity. While Mais writes “it was not the will of God that the world should be wracked with sickness and rent with pain” (Mais 130), Wynter’s version is “it was not the Will of Man that the world should be wracked by sickness . . .” (“Brother” 34).

The second line plots Obadiah's fixation on discovering the man responsible for his wife's pregnancy and punishing them both. This element likewise appears to represent the quest for rectification of honor. Obadiah's worldly focus leads him lapse in faithfully executing his duties as private and church (public) "breadwinner" and protector. However, Obadiah had felt compelled to abstain in the first place because a church member raised doubt about his commitment (or loyalty) to the group and, thus, fitness to lead it. Had his loyalty (faith) actually flagged, making his sexual abstinence an attempt at cure? Miss Gatha had raised the doubt in explicit connection to his clear and consuming sexual desire for his new bride. This would make the sexual trespass Obadiah's instead of (or as well as?) his wife's.

The third plot line regards Miss Gatha. Another founding member of the community, Miss Gatha is also the mother of Isaac. She is grooming him as a future leader, heir to the first leader of the New Believers, his father. While he's being prepared, however, Miss Gatha keeps faith with the community by stepping into the leadership void created by Obadiah's abdication.

The fourth plot line concerns Isaac's failure to be faithful to the social and sexual contract of the community that had supported him. For most of the play, the community waits for him to return and make good on their investment in him; ultimately, he not only violates community expectations of reciprocity but also commits an assault on the bodily integrity of one of its members. Finally, a fifth line revolves around a third co-founder, Aunt Kate, and her sustained (familial) loyalty to the memory of her daughter and to other family, alternatively construed. Taken together, these themes of faith kept or abrogated, of (in)fidelity, discovery, and repercussions, reveal *Under the Sun* to be the honor play's descendant.

The narratively-modified apple, however, falls far from the canonical tree. Not only does the prodigal son fail to return home, but his mother leads in his stead; the wife refuses contrite confession; and the dishonored patriarch embraces, rather than slays, his "whoring" wife.

Furthermore, Rose testifies to arousal rather than chaste piety, an act central to the recalibrated plot and Wynter's heresy. *Under the Sun* not only figures *all* those who *keep* faith as female and those who *abrogate* faith as male; the play also refuses to capitulate to the Christian Church's proscription of female erotic fulfillment. Moreover, it denies the deadly resolutions to perceived female transgressions demanded in the Golden Age and Renaissance precursors to Wynter's play. While this honor play revision centers the so-called trespass of Rose's desire, Wynter calls into question the very idea of this "trespass," thus fundamentally destabilizing the brutal logic of honor killings and radically revising the genre itself.

Locating New Honor by Restorying Old Plays

The radical restorying enacted by *Under the Sun* is better understood when one keeps in mind the simpler constituent parts of the Early Modern honor play. The Spanish Golden Age conception of *honra* located its warrant in a man's reputation as much as his deeds and character. Reputation represented an entitlement so sacrosanct that any who sullied it could be considered a just target of violence. Golden Age honor plays reflected this conception of honor. Furthermore, even though a man's reputation could be threatened in myriad ways, those honor plays that critics have most consistently engaged revolve around the (suspected) sexual liaisons of female family members deemed illicit. A kinswoman's alleged liaison with a man considered impure could tarnish her relatives' reputations, as could sexual attention paid to a man's wife by *any* other man, whatever his bloodline. A man's honor thus rested on his wife's sexual fidelity. Given that *honra* could be traded upon for benefits both intangible (titles, knighting) and tangible (commissions, land grants), women's unrestricted sexuality was construed as a potential danger to men's conceptual and material being. A woman's "chastity" was also considered (his) property, and therefore any offense against it was seen as "theft." In keeping with the honor play's logic, then, the male head of house must act quickly if he is to restore to himself the valuable possession of an untarnished name. Most often,

such restoration is achieved by annihilating the threat. Behavior deemed to be sexually transgressive was reason enough to trigger violent retaliation.¹¹

One subset of such honor plays, dubbed “wife-murder” dramas, features a husband who suspects he’s been cuckolded and kills the suspected wife.¹² In some versions of the genre, the suspected woman receives a chance to defend herself. However, should evidence of her innocence be found wanting, the woman and her would-be lover must be put to death.¹³ In other versions, whether or not the propositioned kinswoman reciprocates is immaterial; even suspected impropriety—regardless of its agent—serves to diminish the man’s standing in the eyes of his peers, and thus suspicion alone requires some remedy. This is a point I want to emphasize here. It will come into play again in the next chapter when I discuss the racialization performed by the honor play and its correlative re-attachment of suspicion and fear to Black bodies and Being.

In both variations of the scenario, kinswomen are figured as involuntary repositories of the purity necessary to maintain domestic order, and that purity belongs to the patriarch. Since the house is considered an extension of the state, and the male sovereign of the house figured as the domestic representative of the state sovereign, any failure of the patriarch to maintain or restore order in the home would also be seen as imperiling the state. By implication, in calling for the execution of women who threaten male honor (whether factually or not, whether willfully or entirely

¹¹ Although the literary genre I discuss here is centuries old, what Ryan Brown calls “honor cultures” still exist around the world and exert powerful and often destructive influence in people’s lives. See Brown’s 2016 book *Honor Bound* for how honor culture operates in the United States into the present.

¹² Lope de Vega, that most famous and prolific of the Golden Age dramatists, wrote many wife-murder plays, among them *El castigo sin venganza* (1631). However, Calderón’s are some of the most discussed, possibly because the most bizarre. The list includes *El médico de su honra* (1637) and *El pintor de su deshonra* (c1645). See Melveena McKendrick, Donald Larson, and Aaron M. Kahn on the honor play.

¹³ Arguing that failure to prove innocence was more likely than not, Glen Dille writes that “a person was considered guilty until he proved otherwise and, under these circumstances, any defense was difficult if not impossible” (7).

through another's actions), the "wife-murder" play validates the use of state violence for restoring state order more broadly as well.¹⁴

The Barren One: Husband-Murder Play

Having been introduced to the traditional honor play through her scholarship on Spanish Golden Age and Elizabethan British literature, Wynter went on to adapt several interpretations of the form, including Shakespeare's sixteenth-century *Othello* and, the subject of this chapter, a more contemporary Spanish reworking of the form, Federico García Lorca's play *Yerma* (1934). When the BBC licensed her drama *Under the Sun* for radio broadcast in 1958, she quickly pitched them an adaptation of García Lorca's play as well, which they accepted and produced the same year. Titling her adaptation *The Barren One*, Wynter recreated García Lorca's roughly contemporary agrarian drama in a corresponding Jamaican landscape, moment, and idiom.¹⁵ She went on to write "Brechtian" adaptations of García Lorca's *La casa de Bernarda Alba* and *Doña Rosita la soltera* (*Doña Rosita the Spinster*).¹⁶ It is clear that Wynter was generally inspired by the Spanish playwright and used his musical and lyrical models to train herself in the craft.¹⁷ However, Wynter's early employment of

¹⁴This linking of domicile to state traces back at least as far as Aristotle, but in the case of medieval Spain was more likely justified through explorations of Roman Catholic faith by theologians such as Saint Thomas Aquinas.

¹⁵Writing in support of Wynter's candidacy for a Guggenheim award, Robin Midgely, producer of *Under the Sun* for the BBC and later *Brother Man* for the JBC, wrote of *The Barren One* that Wynter's "transposition . . . seemed to me to keep all the poetry and the sensuous abandon of the original, and yet became an integrated West Indian play" (Pennington).

¹⁶Wynter's 1968 adaptation of *La casa*, which she versioned for both stage and television, is titled *The House and Land of Mrs. Alba*. One act of the three-act play was published in the *Jamaica Journal*, and subsequently staged by various school groups. To my knowledge, the whole play was never produced. Wynter also offered this adaptation to the BBC, but the editors rejected it, explaining that they didn't believe a "translation to the West Indian setting would help make the play any more meaningful to a radio audience" (Imison). See Wynter, "Extract from *The House and Land of Mrs. Alba*." There's no evidence that Wynter's adaptation of *Doña Rosita la soltera* (which she titled *The Spinster*) was ever produced, or even necessarily finalized; however, typescripts for Acts II and III are extant in her personal papers.

¹⁷That Wynter's self-executed apprenticeship to Lorca "took" is demonstrated by the echoes of Lorca that early critics found in Wynter's plays. For example, a theater critic for the *Daily Gleaner*, Jamaica's longest-standing newspaper, commented on apparent influences in a 1979 Carifesta production of Wynter's play *Maskerade*, noting, "not only are the

Yerma, in particular, was not incidental. While the traditional honor play, at its literal level, upheld male supremacy, García Lorca's twentieth-century version of the historical form invests in a reckoning of a different order. His "tragic poem" unequivocally condemns the capitalist imperative to produce and acquire at the expense of all other human activity. It also tacitly endorses a woman's title to live, fully and for herself.

At first, *Yerma* appears to adhere to the familiar honor play formula: suspected trespass and surveillance with the intent of censure. However, on closer examination, one can see it becomes clear that although García Lorca has certainly adopted parts of the traditional genre from his theatrical forebears, he also dramatically subverts the form. The canonical honor play's plot revolved around the reputation of the patriarch and *patrón*. Instead, García Lorca centers concern in *Yerma* on the "honor" of his female protagonist reconceived—that is, not her reputation, titles, or lands, but her life, the fulfillment of her creative potential, her joy. *Yerma* thus remains within the realm of gendered regulation but equalizes male and female entitlement to "honor," more widely construed.

The plot of *Yerma* is fairly simple. A young woman weds a man with some property, following her father's wishes, rather than the age-mate to whom she's attracted. Her husband spends all his time in the fields, using their yield to acquire more property. The marriage produces no children and, therefore, much anguish. She seeks a resolution that does not involve infidelity, finding some small measure of joy in walking the countryside. However, he demands that she stay home and brings his sisters into the home to ensure it. She finally realizes that her husband values his property over her happiness, which she believes can only be achieved through mothering her own child. The drama ends with her killing him, also killing her chance to become a mother.

usual African and English strains noticeable, but the Italian of Leoncavallo and the Spanish of Lorca" were remarkable, too (Milner, "Carifesta" I).

Lorca's play is often summarized as "the tragedy of the barren woman"—and indeed, "Yerma" translates as "barren." However, reading the tragedy more deeply, one can see that it involves more than biological incapacity. Furthermore, whatever incapacity exists, it is not located in the female character. The title character and her society certainly assume that responsibility for the barrenness belongs to her. But the script notes that her husband, Juan, also fails to make her "tremble when he comes near" ("Yerma: A Tragic Poem" 104, 1.2), as Yerma's wise woman advisor claims he should.¹⁸ According to her wisdom, which rests in a folk knowledge older than the Church, Juan's inattention to Yerma's sources of happiness and inability to arouse her signals that *he* owns responsibility for the couple's barrenness. "[T]here ought to be a God," the old woman declares, "to strike with lightning those men with barren seed who turn joyful fields to mud" ("Yerma: A Tragic Poem" 106, 1.2).¹⁹ In other words, community members invoke religion to constrain Yerma's behavior, but the same religion does nothing to regulate her husband's sexual behavior, beyond prohibition of extramarital sex and divorce.

Taken together, her husband's double incapacity and the church restrictions make it impossible for Yerma to perform the only productive role her society has made available to her, much less to experience joy. She cannot attempt to conceive a child by finding a new sexual partner, "legitimate" or otherwise. This God doesn't care about her joy. You'll recall that the traditional honor play involves redress for men's violated property rights. In García Lorca's play, the "property" transgressed upon is instead the woman's full capacity to enjoy her sexuality and reproductive potential. *Yerma* thus analogizes women's full sexual "rights" to the male honor upheld

¹⁸ "¿No tiembles cuando se acerca a ti?" (*Yerma: Poema 9*, 1.2). Wynter's version, in *The Barren One*, is "The men got to please us plenty, chile. They got to loosen the tight plaits of we hair. They got to give us water to drink from their very mouths" (11).

¹⁹ "[D]ebía haber Dios [. . .] para que mandara rayos contra los hombres de simiente podrida que encharcan la alegría de los campos" (*Yerma: Poema 10*, 1.2).

in the canonical version. Her husband is the party who abrogates this property right. Per the logic of the honor play, to restore order, the offending party must die at the hands of the violated spouse. Wife Yerma kills husband Juan accordingly. García Lorca has flipped the wife-murder genre upside down. Through his subversion of the honor scenario, the playwright thus condemns his society's under-emphasis—indeed utter devaluation—of women's lives and its over-emphasis on controlling women's sexuality in the service of men and their religion (whether their faith be in the *divine* or in the *market*).

Perhaps García Lorca's reversal appears radical enough. Yet, Wynter's first play exceeds the Spanish poet's emphasis on women's right to fulfillment, whether through actual sexuality, the reproduction it allows, or other acts of creation. Rather than writing a tragic end for the transgressing woman (either as killer or killed), Wynter allows her own "transgressing" character to live, re-affirms her marriage, and legitimizes her "bastard" child, thereby refusing both the rectification required by the honor play and the continued misery of the woman in *Yerma*.²⁰ (Thelma and Louise need not go over the cliff.) Put differently, with her own subversion of the honor play, written less than a quarter-century after García Lorca wrote *Yerma*, Wynter expands on García

²⁰ Wynter takes this subversion again one step further with *The Hills of Hebron*, re-imagining the "barren" woman's dilemma, in being trapped between what is "right" to do according to cultural and religious mores, and the desire for fulfillment that cannot be achieved within them. Aunt Kate is the one figured here as the "barren" one, a barrenness produced through her husband Aloysius's supposed inability to conceive a child strong enough to survive the debilitating conditions of the neglected underclass of urban Jamaica. Aunt Kate's solution is quite different than Yerma's. She breaks her marital vow to conceive a child with Moses, with the conviction that doing so would give her child a chance to live. Of course, readers know from the beginning of the novel that this child *hasn't* actually survived, and depending on how it's read, the child's own brother (both biologically and at the breast) might be the one who killed her. "Barrenness" is thus theorized as resulting not just from biology. It arises, in that context, first from parental commitments—to pride in the case of *UtS/HoH*, and to financial accumulation rather than other creativity in the case of *Yerma*. It also resulted from the actions or the inactions of other agents—the government that neglected, or Isaac who killed. All crises in *UtS* and *HoH* are perceived as equally purposive by the characters; it is not happenstance or "natural" disaster that causes calamity, but rather it is a vengeful or indifferent God sending hurricanes that kill, or a father sinning that causes his son's physical deformities.

Lorca's generic heresy of centering a woman's claim to an entirely different conception of the notion of honor.²¹

Publicly Renewing Acts of Faith

Refusing the Call

In Wynter's version, the religious community that provides the context for the requisite test of faith is not a long-established village in a society with values entrenched over centuries. This community had only settled in the hills of Jamaica a generation before the storyline of *Under the Sun* begins. In the opening scene, we learn that their current community leader and religious guide, Obadiah, has successfully "kept himself from sweetness and washed away . . . hevil in the healing stream of his sacrifice" (*Under the Sun*, Stage Version, p. 8, Act 1, Scene 1).²² Despite his sacrificial abstinence, however, his wife Rose shows up pregnant, calling into question her own celibacy—and thus his honor. As Glen Dille explains, when such suspicions of faithlessness were raised in Golden Age honor plays, their scripts required offenders to submit to a public auto-da-fé, or act of faith, a ritual in which "they acknowledged their heresy, received their punishment, and were reconciled to the church" (8). This opening scene of the first act of *Under the Sun* stages just such an auto-da-fé. Predicating her demand for an explanation on her assumed maternal authority, Miss Gatha asserts,

²¹ Wynter's transformation of the plotline of *Yerma* with her play *Under the Sun* also refuses the dramatic strategy of consolidating the ailments felt community-wide into the tensions between individual characters that is emblematic of older literature of the Western canon, and particularly of its novels. With her drama, Wynter resists the glorification of the individual by re-allocating the sources of trouble and their solutions to the wider community. This strategy was attempted by other anticolonial writers as early as C. L. R. James in his 1936 *Minty Alley* and claimed as a particular strategy of Black women writers beginning in the 1970s (Courtman, *Lost Years* 109). Selwyn Cudjoe regards this focus on "the collective rather than personal self" instead as "culminating" with Wynter's 1962 novel (Cudjoe 41). In *Yerma*, the title character suffers from the "drought" of her husband's determined pursuit of material goods at the expense of all other values and Yerma rejects communal redress, enacting her own (privatized) vengeance instead. In *Under the Sun*, on the other hand, the drought is literalized and felt across the community—and individual solutions are figured as impossible.

²² Unless otherwise noted, all references to *Under the Sun* are to the stage version. After first mention, I will only use page, act, and scene numbers, unless more is needed to distinguish from another play.

“Is I did bring you up. . . [f]rom the day your mother died.” She then commands, “Answer me!” (12, 1.1). Thus, the first demand for proof of innocence asserts the authority (right of demand) not of the patriarch, as the canonical model would have it, but of a matriarch.

However, the requisite demands fail to produce the requisite testimony. Rose remains silent in the face of Miss Gatha’s indictment and all that follows. Parental authority having failed, Obadiah invokes his authority as leader of the polity, an authority Biblically granted in Proverbs 25:2.

Obadiah is supported in his attempt to restore order by first his ensign, Brother Hugh, and then the whole of the church body. Hugh issues the call, “It is the glory of God to conceal a thing but the honour of kings. . .” The congregation responds to the call, transforming the Bible verse’s actual ending (“to search the matter out”) into an imperative: “Search out the matter!” (12, 1.1).²³ Rose doesn’t speak. Then Obadiah declares, “as your Elder, I charge you to speak out now! . . . Answer!” (13, 1.1). Again, utter silence, made all the “louder” by the appearance of the stage directions on the page. When one reads the vertical stack, the repetition resounds:

(Silence) [. . .] /

(Silence) [. . .] /

(Silence) [. . .] //

(Silence as the men turn and look at each other) /

1st MAN: (Hysterically) [. . .]

(Absolute silence).

²³ This recourse to the Bible for the community’s remedy, combined with Obadiah’s devotional act, helps to rebut the deep-seated prejudices and recriminations against African-based religious practices by the West Indian ruling and middle classes. The elite sector denounced African religious modes as superstition or worse and supported the criminalization of its practitioners as a result. Citing, chapter and verse, the Bible they hold sacred, Wynter highlights the hypocrisy of these “Christians” and their actions, at the same time attempting to stage the potential salience of the Otherized religious practices. The turn from culturally-based to theocratic reasons for vengeance against the unfaithful also mirrors the strengthening of the Inquisition-era courts that reinforced the Church’s juridical function during the Golden Age. These courts were used far more frequently to punish religious heresy than sexual infidelity or other transgressions. I address the collapsing of sexual trespass with racialized religious heresy and veiling of the latter in the former in the next chapter.

If the silence on the page is palpable, how much more so must it have been on the radio, where the rule against “dead air” is absolute?²⁴

Rose’s silence reverberates all the more powerfully because she maintains it against the Black aesthetic call-and-response imperative within the discursive context of the Black church. From the very beginning of the scene, the congregation has been dutifully answering the calls issued by Obadiah and Hugh. When Obadiah the Preacher calls and Rose refuses or at least fails to respond, it does not matter whether the silence refuses or fails. The preacher’s command over the congregation is based, in part, on the responses (s)he is able to elicit, so silence in the face of a call undermines (perceptions of) the preacher’s authority and prowess. Therefore, if the congregation is not adequately responsive, the preacher will frequently reiterate the call. Obadiah does so here, instructing, “all the people shall say ‘Amen.’” Frantically escalating, he repeats, “Say Amen, say it,” with his “say it” echoing Miss Gatha’s previous demand, “Answer me!” (15, 1.1). His repetition emphasizes the absence of Rose’s required testimony and the inability of both patriarchal and religious authorities to elicit it.

Rose’s silence can thus be read usefully as refusing an Althusserian “hailing” by the “ideological state apparatus” of the church that constructs Rose both as subject to the authority of its leader and as a sinner, an adulteress deserving of excommunication. Her silence rejects the presumed censurability of parishioners by preachers and challenges compulsory female submission to male authority. If, in the traditional honor play, the domestic sphere over which that male

²⁴ In a 2019 public reading of *Under the Sun* at the University of Texas–Austin, a family emergency prevented the actor cast as Rose from performing. We had not contracted any understudies, so another actor had to double as Rose. In the call-no-response scene, this actor had lines to deliver as her other character, so there was no Rose “present.” The absence of an actor’s body on which to focus had the effect of constituting, as the accused Rose, the audience itself—customarily silent, in the case of a traditionally construed audience, and, in the case of a radio audience, necessarily silent, or at least unheard by the actors. Rose-as-audience-member *couldn’t* respond, whether she desired to or no, or couldn’t be *heard* by the other participants in the drama. Rose’s silence thus became a condition of the embodied scene or the disembodied medium. Several viewers reflected on the increased resonance of the play for them in experiencing the(ir) continued silences as audience-member-become-Rose.

authority reigns is an extension of the state, and the colonial state is subject to imperial rule, her silence then also resists state power—and empire.²⁵

The law of the mother and the law of the father having failed to produce the necessary response, Obadiah deploys the law of the husband next—and this is where violence enters. Now as husband instead of preacher, Obadiah reacts to Rose’s continued silence, to the abrogated auto-da-fé, as an honor play husband would be expected to. He moves to administer “justice” at his own hands, invoking remembered intimacy all the while. “You see this hand?” he asks. “. . . You remember how it feel? . . . [T]his hand remember the feel of your neck, . . . easy to squeeze” (13, 1.1). Before he can reach Rose, the community intervenes, but not to excuse her. They demand that her “crime” be framed not as an affront to Obadiah’s honor, but instead as a violation of Biblical law, again entangling religion and patriarchal order. They argue that her punishment must be based in the Bible. The scene plays out the debate staged in the canonical honor plays over what constitutes just retribution. The husband could only enact a personal vengeance, which some condemned as immoral. On the other hand, the public authority, here the church, could administer punishment righteously.

However, Rose’s silence prevents any juridical movement. She remains resolutely mute when her pregnancy is revealed before the church congregation and when asked to identify her presumed paramour. Nor does she speak in the act that follows; it is through other characters’ gossip intervention that we learn when (but not how or by whom) the child had been conceived.²⁶ The

²⁵ The conceptualization of silence as resistance has been well covered by a range of scholars. In the realm of legal discourse and pedagogy, for example, Margaret Montoya describes the sometimes opposing forces of the silencing forced by dominant actors vs. the silence employed by subordinated ones (269). Dorothy Roberts raises important questions about the difficulties in determining whether silence is, in fact, catalyzed by resistance as opposed to mute acquiescence or even complicity (344).

²⁶ In the novel that follows, Rose never breaks her silence. Critics largely read her as involuntarily silenced rather than actively resistant. I discuss this aspect of Wynter’s versioning later in the chapter.

traditional auto-da-fé is thus altered from the very beginning. The accused, ultimately refusing to acknowledge any wrongdoing, causes the ritual to go completely awry.

When Proof Comes

Throughout, Rose refuses to offer the proof of *chastity* the honor play traditionally requires. When she finally speaks much later in the play, what she ultimately testifies to instead is her sexual desire and her sexual pleasure. This unusual witnessing deepens in significance because Rose offers it within the only monologue of any length that Wynter accords her character. It is the third act, scene two. Obadiah has mistaken Rose in the dimly lit dusk as the presumed adulterer and is intent on murdering “him” after extracting a confession. Seized thus by her husband, Rose responds by offering the explanation whose absence has driven Obadiah mad.

Even as she appears to finally comply with the “auto-da-fé,” however, most of Rose’s short “explanatory” monologue is given over to depicting the abundance of desirous beings fucking in the night. She starts by offering a richly tactile description of the scene: “The moonlight was like tonight, pouring out same way so [. . .] and the mango trees was just folding out so, stiff-folding out ‘gainst the night. [. . .] The mangoes was a full-ripe on the trees and the mango sap was oozing out so” (33, 3.2). Having established the “natural” scene and thus the naturalness of desire in language reminiscent of Janie’s rhapsodizing in Hurston’s *Their Eyes*, she continues by linking that scene with an earlier memory, equally sexual: “All of it did mind me of that first night [. . .] and as ah did mind me of that I did ‘member [. . .] your hands on me, [. . .] and [. . .] my breasts did tighten up sharp like a canna-lily. . . .” Thus, Wynter’s subversion of the traditional honor play reveals itself most clearly in this scene in which Rose finally tells Obadiah that she was pleased that night when the child was conceived.

Rose’s testifying to her capacity for pleasure does not stop here. With this acknowledgment that she had been openly yearning for her absent husband, Rose then recounts—without ever

naming him, if she indeed knew it *was* him—how Isaac, the son of Miss Gatha and the first Elder of the community, had raped her during his last visit to the community before leaving the settlement forever.

Such an admission would not have cleared her during the Golden era. Voluntary or involuntary, sexual contact equals trespass. However, for the mid-twentieth-century audience, explaining that she had been violated would have absolved her of all guilt. Rose continues her harrowing story, again in a halting, elliptical speech: “[T]his . . . this thing came down sudden on me, a thing without anything else to it [. . .] and I fight and I fight, but like I was fighting a . . . shadow . . . and meanwhile . . .” Her husband responds to her hesitance, fully cognizant of what the elision signifies, by prodding, “Meanwhile?” Rose testifies, “My body, ripe with the remembering of you, arched up high with the life inside, arched up high to the sky!” revealing to Obadiah that, even as she was raped, by a “shadow,” even though, against this natural backdrop suddenly rendered malevolent, she still fought (this struggle being the only “proof” she offered of her “innocence”), both the memory of sex with her husband and also, it seems, *the physical experience itself*, afforded her pleasure.²⁷

Rose’s admission is dangerous, and not just in the world of the play. As we read these lines, it is worth recalling that Wynter’s character was *speaking* them in 1958—and that her descriptions were intended for a public, shared experience. Indeed, they were broadcast right into the homes of listeners in both Britain and the Caribbean. The unabashed, lush sexuality and eroticism must have been shocking enough to the “respectable” Caribbean sensibility. We must also keep in mind how Black (women’s and girl’s) sexuality was both mythologized and maligned, that Black women and

²⁷ This “confessional” scene carries great weight, and its almost total transformation for the novel that followed is a crucial site for investigation. I address this change and the related criticism regarding the edited version later in this chapter.

girls were still imminently rape-able “without,” as Saidiya Hartman puts it, “a crime having occurred” (49) and hence that Black women and girls faced elevated danger in England. As recounted by Beryl Gilroy in her (understudied) memoir, *Black Teacher*, a young woman’s “colour and ‘exotic’ beauty could provoke racial abuse and sexual harassment” (“Beryl” 64). The danger went beyond latent racism. This was the era of gangs such as the “Teddy Boys” who, emboldened by the rise of right-wing organizations headed by self-proclaimed fascists like Sir Oswald Mosely, attacked Black residents in the streets and in their homes. Gilroy writes that for Black women, in particular, the problem was “getting from A to B safely, without being assaulted by the Teddy Boys or chased by [. . .] the members of the League of Empire Loyalists” (“Beryl” 64).

The danger of such violence was further heightened in this moment. Black people in England, paradoxically both unwelcome colonial subjects and deliberate recruits to the metropole, were agitating for equitable treatment in Britain and an end to colonization abroad while White supremacists were ardently challenging their right to citizenship in the seat of Empire. The infamous Notting Hill Riots had ended less than a month before *Under the Sun*’s actors went to the BBC studios (Wynter, *as Rose*, among them) to rehearse and record this play that explicitly raised the specter of impurity. Gilroy relates how Englishmen ogled and jeered as she passed, demonstrating a profound “repressed fear of the female black body, with its supposed impurity, its difference and its deviance,” as Sandra Courtman puts it (“Beryl” 53). In this case, Gilroy defends herself with her spoken words, calling on their Englishness—invoking *their* honor.

Adopting a veil of chastity would have been a more common approach to battling Black women’s construction as deviant and available for violence. Black middle-class writers throughout the diaspora had long deployed this strategy of depicting Black women as lacking desire, challenging

historic pretenses for White male violence against Black women.²⁸ To exonerate her raped female character, Wynter could easily have deployed this strategy as well. Nonetheless, she does not shy away from depicting Rose as a sexually desiring human being. To the contrary, she emphasizes this fully human desire, making it plain that she considered emancipating women and sexuality from constraints illegitimately deemed moral to be integral to struggles against domination more generally.

In the traditional honor play, any “proof” submitted by the suspected wife must be entirely free of the taint of sexual contact (including that which is coerced or forced). Even a rape, an act that by definition is performed against the “transgressing” woman’s will, would have been considered ample evidence that she had violated the husband’s honor, which must thus be avenged at her expense. If rape by an aggressor occasioned such violence by an avenger, how much more so would the admission of an orgasm, which requires at least the body’s assent? Yet, while Rose finally offers evidence that she has neither lusted after nor violated her marital vows with another man, she affirms at the same time that she *has* been sexual *without* Obadiah and enjoyed it, also acknowledging that she has enjoyed sex *with* Obadiah. As Obadiah had suspected, “the Adulterer” *did* experience what he’d called “the rhythm in the ring” of the “motion” Rose “did motion” (32, 3.2). Obadiah’s conception of the incident explicitly acknowledges Rose’s part, Rose’s doing. Yet, even though sexual, Rose’s testimony deflates instead of enlarging Obadiah’s desire for vengeance. Having finally heard this explicitly sexual, frankly desiring explanation, Obadiah not only spares Rose’s life but also accepts responsibility for supporting her, the child, their entire community.²⁹

²⁸ See, for example, Angelina Weld Grimké’s 1916 play *Rachel*, the first full-length drama authored by and centering a Black person to be staged in the US. In this case, despite her character’s strict adherence to Black middle-class respectability, the violence of lynching devastates her family; Grimké thereby demonstrated the inefficacy of respectability as weapon.

²⁹ The song and corresponding children’s game that Obadiah invokes in this monologue is “Brown Girl in the Ring.” His line, “you remember the motion that she did motion for we?” (2.2, 32) echoes the song’s imperative: “Show me a motion!” See the interludes for my discussion about the function of this and other songs for Wynter’s critical imaginary.

Wynter's restorying transforms the terms of the gender code by rendering the woman both pleasure *desiring* and pleasure *capable*, capacities that also would have earned her the designation "whore" under Early Modern doctrine. What's more, since it is Rose's pleasure-*full* report that exonerates her (by disarming *him*), Wynter thereby makes the woman's desiring, pleasurable, productive body justification for her ultimate absolution, rather than annihilation.

This would be enough. Like García Lorca's *Yerma*, Wynter's play presents a woman who is innocent of violating any conjugal code. However, the virtue of Wynter's character centers on her honesty about a vital sexuality rather than a requisite sexual denial. Now let's take it one step further. In her exploration of Shakespeare's double-voicing of values to please both crowd and patron simultaneously, Curdella Forbes reports that "two of [his] most powerful tools of problematization [. . .] are the cross-dressed body and the dramatization of silence" ("Shakespeare, Other Shakespeares and West Indian Popular Culture" 55). Hasn't Wynter plotted Rose using both? Rose is "cross-dressed" in this "confession" scene, for she is taken for her own—presumed male—adulterer. Obadiah catches her out. His (mis)apprehension suggests that she has abrogated her conjugal contract by self-pleasuring rather than because someone else has pleased her.

Other possible double-voicing calls up other conceivable interpretations. Certainly, Rose's allusions to a spirit taking her and the life she feels as she conceives give the scene a Biblical valence, with Rose as Mary, immaculate conception, and so on. That's likely the valence that would be heard by a British audience unfamiliar with Caribbean mythology. But those familiar would as likely hear the "double-voicing" and think of the soucouyant—Ol Higue—who seduces people and copulates with them in their dreams. If there is any validity to this culturally-specific connection, I suggest that the rapist/succubus (usually a female spirit) be read as polysemously as other Wynter symbolics. With Isaac in mind as the actual aggressor, one would argue that the act is not sexual at all—it is the violent and coerced appropriation of Caribbean women's creativity by the Caribbean man in the

project of nationhood. She who bears the child bears the nation. At the same time, the succubus or self acting could be a reclamation of the right to autonomous female sexuality (alone or with another) and a repudiation of patriarchal power. Indeed, it could even be the repudiation of the father. For if Rose self-pleasures, she self-impregnates as well; in her telling, the phenomena coincide. In this case, to people the nation, she would need neither spirit nor man. Not only is the rooster not laying eggs—he's not mounting hens.

Rose has very few lines—far fewer than Obadiah. However, carried in these few lines is a profoundly brave abrogation of the sexual code established in the medieval order (and threaded into Caribbean society as respectability), whether Rose climaxes at the thought of touching her husband, or at the hands of a succubus, or in enjoying her own self. Even if Wynter delays our full appreciation of Rose's radical intervention until the very end of the play.

What's Good for the Goose

Obadiah similarly ruptures the code. Initially, he complies with the community's demand that Rose be excommunicated, even cursed, and later vows to enact an older form of justice by killing Rose and her supposed lover. However, in the end, Obadiah renounces both the retribution he sought and the version the community demands, instead embracing—what's more, legitimizing—the child that is to be born. Through both “female” and “male” characters, the one refusing to adhere to expectations of sexual repression and the other disavowing fatal retaliation for female sexual autonomy, Wynter opposes the canonical honor play's gendered sexual censure, outstripping García Lorca's already subversive rewriting.

Furthermore, the narrative achieves the restoration of “domestic order” and sanity not through the resumption of a patriarchal order that emphasizes conjugal sexuality but rather through re-entry into a matrilineal history marked by sexual intimacy outside marriage. Along with his decision to reconcile with Rose, Obadiah also chooses to eschew the patriarchal home in which they

had established their marriage. Instead, he joins Rose in her mother's "home." This is the hut to which Rose's mother had once been banished to labor and deliver Rose in shame—a shame due in part to her status as unmarried and pregnant. Yet, Rose is also pregnant and unmarried. Obadiah had given Rose a "paper of divorcement" during the failed auto-da-fé at the beginning of the play. As made plain by the Bible verses invoked during the ritual, since they are no longer married, the two are no longer legitimate lovers, either.

Nonetheless, it is here in the matrilineal home that Obadiah regains his sanity and resumes his filial responsibilities. The couple's location outside of prescribed conjugal sexuality *conditions* the re-establishment of a "domestic order" achieved by embracing the matrilineal home and re-assuming a maternal history they both inhabit and rewrite with Obadiah's presence; Rose, like her mother, is unmarried and pregnant, but unlike her mother, she has a companion who remains in the picture and takes responsibility for supporting her and the child. What brings Obadiah the peace that precipitates his accepting responsibility, what allows this simultaneous re-assumption of the maternal and restoration of their home, is Rose's acknowledgment of her *doing*, rather than any confession of *wrongdoing*.

If Obadiah assumes his responsibility as father, he is quickly transformed into a "mother" as well. The fertility symbol or doll, the stand in for "his" baby that Obadiah carves, awakens his awareness of his own (re)creative capacity. In other words, it is in the feminizing of Obadiah (productively, generatively), that Wynter renders him fit for leadership. Obadiah becomes father-provider to the community, but also mother-birther of his family.³⁰ His transformation presents a slanted take on what Hortense Spillers has called "the heritage of the mother" that the Black man in

³⁰ In any case, "breadwinner" is not and never has been a gendered position in the Black context. Wynter repeatedly refers to this requirement of Blackwomen to provide (*Interview*). Spillers also reminds us that Blackwomen have historically performed the hard, manual labor from which exemption is supposed to be a woman's due (72–73), an argument that similarly conceptualizes gendering as inherently racialized.

the Americas “must regain as an aspect of his own personhood—the power of ‘yes’ to the ‘female’ within” (80). Wynter decenters the corporeal connection to parenting—even if Obadiah makes his doll with his body/mind, the living child who will continue the community is fathered but not “sired” by him. Those males who would be leaders in the burgeoning nation must assume their creative potential and responsibility by acknowledging their role as mother, not father, of the nation. Obadiah wrests from Caliban the object of his desire—the peopling of the island through rape. Caliban has reproduced, but the women—and the children, the people—are still not his. Caliban, made to signify the Black Caribbean man for so many centuries, is revealed as the projection of the refusing White “Father” (Spillers), replicated in all the Black Isaacs who flee.

I argued above that Obadiah’s mis-identification of Rose as the Adulterer genders “her” male. Taken in yet another direction, in making Obadiah and Rose both female and male, Wynter un-genders both characters, or at least suggests that these are not meaningful distinctions.³¹ It does not matter whether the adulterer is male or female—it is “his” act of participating in the “motion she did motion for we”—the “property” Obadiah has considered “private” to him that matters (32, 3.2). It is the property relation which is his alone. Wynter has reversed this move by reinterpreting the Golden Age notion of honor—a notion that *was* property, in that it could be traded for money, titles, and so on.³² She “democratizes” this male-only possession by making women eligible to be the owners, not just the owned. Furthermore, if Obadiah shares the “motion” that had been designated “private” property, the destructive trend with we’re most familiar under (neo)capitalism meets its opposite. The private is collectivized, for what was only “his” is now “theirs.” Thus, once

³¹ Indeed, in “Mama’s Baby,” Spillers has convincingly argued that, at least for the Black people enslaved in the Americas and their descendants, gender cannot be.

³² One thinks here, also of Cheryl Harris’s theorization of Whiteness as property.

democratized, distinctions can't matter long. The suggestion, then, is that the way to ending gendered oppression is ending *gendering* altogether.

Wynter's rewriting of the genre is thus total: the sought-after auto-da-fé confesses to action rather than inaction; to the "trespassing" woman's lived sexuality rather than chastity; to the admissibility, furthermore, of intimacy and relationship outside of church-dictated bounds. The resolution turns away from rather than returns to patriarchal order.

Revising the Normal, Cock Upon Cock

If *Under the Sun* disrupts understandings of acceptable female sexuality conventional at the time of its writing, the play simultaneously intervenes in the unfettered enjoyment of male sexual entitlement. A man's right to demand sex from his wife (or really, any woman with whom he's intimate) has become enshrined in social mores (and often laws) that sanction his rape of her (in other words, define it as not rape but right), while simultaneously denying women title to sex from their lawfully-wedded husbands. (He is allowed to decline *and* demand; she is allowed neither.) This exclusively male sexual entitlement reflects/creates the corresponding patriarchal claim to ownership of the property and labor of women; what's theirs is his, but not vice versa. Yet, in the same scene in which Obadiah presents the new child, he also confesses: "I come to testify to the sin I did commit, for I did take a vow that man married to woman had no right to take" (46, 3.2).³³ Because it calls into question a man's right to unilaterally engage in or abstain from sex at his whim, Wynter's identification of Obadiah's vow as unjust again refuses the prevailing gender code.

The play's destabilization of male sexual entitlement *also* challenges the right(ness) of celibacy. Sexual abstinence is the *raison d'être* of the medieval clergy and their claim to an exclusive

³³ This line has been transformed for the novel. It reads instead, "before I present [our son] to the congregation I came first to testify and make public witness of the sin that I committed. . . ." (*Hills* 309). The sin to which he is confessing is never specified, so the other characters are left to assume that Obadiah is referring to lying about having had sex with Rose. However, in the play the sin is clearly *not* having sex with Rose.

capacity for interpretation of the divine itself. It supports the medieval epistemology that the honor play supports and reflects.³⁴ Because Obadiah's decision to abstain is made in order to appease a vengeful God, he brings his celibacy into the realm of the righteous and religious clergy. Having begun with Obadiah's vow of celibacy as the leader of a religious congregation, pronounced before them inside their sacred space, Wynter's play finishes with the leader's admission that not only was making such a vow *not* virtuous, it was sinful instead.³⁵ Obadiah's admission of error could be interpreted more canonically as the acknowledgment that since women are (perceived as) excessively sexual and seductive and thus too difficult to resist, any vow of celibacy is bound to fail. However, such an interpretation has already been foreclosed by a previous declaration by Aunt Kate, the eldest member of the community and one of its founders. Aunt Kate attests that she, as a wife, would not have permitted such abstinence. What's more, there's no reason to think that their God would either. Speaking to an unmarried community member whose prudery she disdains, Aunt Kate scoffs, "I would have liked to see Aloysius take a vow like that when he was living and married to me! You ask your Sister . . . and she will tell you that when a man and a woman lying in a bed where they in the habit of doing *what the Good Lawd put them there to do*, they going to do it whether they awake or sleeping" (37, 3.1). In this counter-signification, since fucking is "what the Good Lawd put them there to do," then *not* fucking becomes the sin.³⁶

In attempting to grasp the radical political revisioning of Wynter's play, it's useful to think of *Yerma* and *Under the Sun* together here. Obadiah's confession of wrongdoing directly responds to

³⁴ See Wynter's explication of the possession of the clergy/dispossession of the laity via justifications of holiness/celibacy versus fleshliness/sexuality in "On How We Mistook the Map for the Territory, and Re-Imprisoned Ourselves in Our Unbearable Wrongness of Being, of *Désêtre*" (135–37).

³⁵ See the similar arguments about the character Brother Man's celibacy in Faith Smith's article on Mais's asceticism.

³⁶ This interaction, like the "such a garden!" scene in the church described below, has been removed from the novel.

Juan's sexual withdrawal from Yerma against her will. Juan unilaterally chose to invest himself in capital production, to the exclusion of sexual satisfaction or human reproduction. Obadiah similarly "took a *singular* vow" not to "know [Rose] until the next hurricane season did pass away" (7, 1.1, emphasis added), purportedly for the spiritual good of the community.³⁷ However, as Aunt Kate put it, the couple is in this bed *together*. Wynter's attention in the play to the just expression and experience of sexuality by *both* (or all) parties in relationship asserts by extension that if what is *his* is also *hers*, then the claim to property and labor must be reconceptualized as jointly—or communally—owned. Such a reconceptualization unsettles the planter class's claim to peasant subsistence lands and labor—and condemns the plantocracy's previous claim to ownership of their ancestors' bodies as well.³⁸ Furthermore, Obadiah's unilateral determination of what will happen between him and Rose—and what will not—mirrors the action taken by Isaac, which audiences will more readily denounce as transgression. Obadiah, like Isaac, fails or refuses to obtain consent. Wynter's deployment of consensuality as an essential component of righteousness here—of consensus rather than tyranny—thus works on many levels to destabilize the colonial order of knowledge and being.

For Wynter's countertheatrics to accomplish this re-ordering, it is critical that the opening dilemma posited in *Under the Sun* resemble the general scenario at the center of honor plays and that

³⁷ Because of Wynter's consistent practice of deep intertextuality, I find it impossible to dismiss as coincidental the single appearance of this phrase, "singular vow" in the King James Version of the Bible that was commonly used in the early 20th century Caribbean. It is found in Leviticus 27:2, and refers to the differing monetary valuation assessed for the service (lives) of women, men, boys, and girls. The enumeration of values found here is eerily similar to the auction block valuations I've encountered in many texts (while departing from the symbolism collapsing all categories of Black humanity into the pieza unit that Wynter explicates elsewhere). I wonder whether the evocation of the Biblical verse was enough to call to the minds of her listeners this differential equation, and whether, if so, it made them question its justice.

³⁸ It should be noted that the Early Modern honor plays also sometimes showcased male culpability, in that it was acknowledged that sometimes a husband's lack of sexual attention caused the wife's sexual disloyalty. However, acknowledgement did not lead to a changed outcome—regardless of cause, honor still had to be restored via assassination. It is therefore not Obadiah's acknowledgement of culpability, but rather his ultimate renunciation of this form of resolution, that makes Wynter's versioning subversive.

the resolution diverge. By rejecting the expected violent resolution, Obadiah, the presumably affronted male character, steps outside his prescribed dominant role and contributes to shifting relationships of power and property, paralleling Rose's refusal to submit to what would have been, for her, a false auto-da-fé. This refusal to violently enforce socially prescribed behavior also works to reverse political censure/sanction of sexual behavior in the first place and ultimately to challenge the legitimization of state violence to maintain "law and order" over property and actions.³⁹ As demonstrated by the state-ordered carceral, martial, and police everyday violence that continues to be carried out across the globe, to say nothing of the societal repression of sexuality that attends each of the strands of violence, Wynter's attempts to rupture such deeply embedded narratives of social control and their justifications were revolutionary in 1958. They remain so over sixty years later.

What Sex Has to Do with It

Wynter does not confine her celebratory approach to sexuality to the characters Rose and Kate. Other New Believers are also depicted as acknowledging the potency and power of the sensual and sexual. Wynter strengthens the links between sexual force and spirituality, countering the idea that they are opposed rather than conjoined, by locating discussions of congregants' sexual activity—perhaps even prowess—literally inside the church. She simultaneously refuses to shroud the activity in religious mystification, remaining quite clear throughout that "what the Good Lawd put" sex there for is also pleasure and play. In the opening scene, his church brethren mischievously

³⁹ In the play, the repudiation of such state repression remains veiled within the figure of Obadiah as divinely-recognized "king" (see my discussion of "state" authority on p. 9). This connection becomes more explicit in the novel, particularly with a scene in which people agitating for jobs at the Labor Office are fired upon by the colonial police (*Hills* 291–94). I would argue, however, that this refutation of state violence cannot be taken as evidence for Wynter's adoption of non-violence as creed; the *violent enforcement of social prescriptions* as visited on the dominated that is delegitimized in this particular play in no way equates to *revolutionary counterviolence*, one enactment of which is prefigured in *Yerma's* justified murder of Juan as symbol of male supremacist order. See, however, the Wynter's interview on the NIH's *Soundings* program for a different take on guns and counterviolence.

rib Obadiah. They hold forth on Rose's sexuality, apparently in awe of "such a garden, such a spring, such a fountain!" (8, 1.1). Their church-situated (thus religiously-inflected) declaration recognizes women's sexuality as lush, productive, nourishing, and flowing—the source of food and beauty, of water both contained and free. However, the brethren also go on to put sex in the context of no less a realm than cricket, one man declaring to another, "You batting on a good wicket too Mass Laz, with Sister Inez." A third retorts, "Good wicket or not, ten runs is a lot," with another chiming in, "But like Sister Sue is the best wicket of all for Brother Zacky have top-score with thirteen" (8, 1.1).⁴⁰ While the "runs" to which the men refer clearly symbolize the children conceived through the sport, the sport metaphor itself extends the realm of sex beyond procreation for either economically-imperative agricultural productivity or religiously-sanctioned multiplication, acknowledging sex for recreation and gratification as well.

Such an acknowledgment might seem too obvious to mention in the current moment. Still, when Wynter was writing this play, the forthright appreciation of sexuality as enjoyable depicted in the scene was far from given.⁴¹ The Caribbean was still in the grip of a Victorian prudery that the middle classes and those who wished to join them maintained fiercely, at least in rhetoric, if not in practice.⁴² Furthermore, even those writers opposing colonialism were still writing women's sexuality

⁴⁰ The accompanying stage directions exhort the congregation to laugh, but this instruction is undoubtedly more for the reader than for the actual actors. Even on the page, this scene is damned funny, and on stage it's even funnier, a fact remarked upon by the actors in rehearsal and attested to by the enthusiastic participation of the audience at its performance.

⁴¹ Decades of scholarship on Black culture have now recuperated the sexual, including in the Caribbean realm. See, for example, Carolyn Cooper's body of work on the sexual as political and Jennifer Nash on Blackwomen's ecstatic expression of sexuality. Men's and boy's discussion of female sexuality for their own play and pleasure, on the other hand, is certainly nothing new, and is enshrined in that most canonical form of Caribbean "literature," the calypso, or its Jamaican analog, mento.

⁴² While acknowledging the hold "respectability" maintained in realms both real and mimetic, Wynter had also contested its justification from the beginning of her career. For example, her 1956 short story for the BBC, "Paramour," enshrines as virtuous the younger "kept" woman of an older wealthy man, suggesting that necessity rather than immorality drove women to trade upon their sexuality, a notion that presages both her own exploration of sexual economy in her 1972 essay "One Love—Rhetoric or Reality?—Aspects of Afro-Jamaicanism" and Kamala Kempadoo's 2004 discussion of "transactional sex" in the Caribbean, "a term used to denote sexual-economic relationships and exchanges where gifts

into the changing literature as simply a tool for the production of the (sometimes new kind of) nation.⁴³

Wynter further underscores the central importance of sexual expression rather than repression and pleasure versus simply (re)productivity with the timing of the drought that brings the community to its knees. It is when Obadiah condemns Rose for her apparent indulgence in sexual desire that the land itself begins to dry up. Drought also follows Juan's sexual incapacity with or refusal of Yerma in García Lorca's original. Wynter sharpens the point by including in the plot a hurricane that deluges the community after Obadiah and Rose marry, with the wet excess signifying the overindulgence in sexuality that Miss Gatha denounces as responsible for calamity. The drought, however, surpasses the hurricane by far in its devastation of the community, rendering material and conceptual living nearly impossible and thus perfectly mirroring the supposed loss of "honor" to men in the Spanish Golden Age. The "drought song" repeatedly sung by various characters mourns, "June and July is a dry-dry hard time, / But drought in November, Lawd Massa, dah sweat out we substance" (19, 2.1). Everyday hardship, in other words, can be tolerated; this drought is deadening, literally and emotionally—it cannibalizes even one's essential being.

The results of constraining sexuality are also figured in repeated scenes of women gathering at the desiccated spring, both its life-giving water and the ritual surrounding its collection denied. Wynter counters the attachment of sex to sin (death) by highlighting the erroneous connection as first articulated by Miss Gatha in blaming Obadiah's inattention to the community's health on his

are given in exchange for sex, [and] multiple partnerships may be maintained" (qtd in 15–16). The "triangle" of Isaac, Obadiah, and Rose retains some faint echoes of this theme of an older (un-deserving) man and a younger one unwillingly sharing the sexual attentions of a young woman, which is more loudly amplified in *Maskerade* as the conflict between Driver and Cuffee.

⁴³ For more on woman as national symbol rather than women as anticolonial agents, see Belinda Edmondson, *Making Men*; Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather*. For my interpretation of a similar use of woman as symbol by Roger Mais, see Chapter 4.

lust and crediting her son's suitability for leadership to his apparent disinterest in "woman business." Obadiah extends the error with his vow of abstinence. Both characters, in linking sex and sin, or virtue with denial of the flesh, set in motion processes that brook great hardship for the community. Wynter exposes such errors as failures of leadership at the domestic and the political level and suggests sexual expression and pleasure can also be revalorized by examining the damage that occurs when they are repressed instead.

Rejecting (Sexual) Tit for (Sexual) Tat

While the celebration of female sexuality in *Under the Sun* mounts a determined opposition to the gendered coding of the world of the honor play, this opposition would elsewhere appear instead to support characterizations of hypersexuality that soon shifted from women alone to the "pagan" world at large. The distinction of (fallen) flesh from (redeemed) spirit and body (nature) from mind (culture) was the criteria leveraged for separating the "uncivilized" from the "civilized" well past Enlightenment. However, the promise Wynter crafts for Obadiah, this vow to forbear from touching his new wife for an entire year, works to subvert this element of the coded racial/sexual order by contradicting the Eurocentric planter society's structuring of Black people in the Caribbean as "savages" invested in flesh rather than spirit.⁴⁴

⁴⁴ Of course, within the terms of the ratiocentrism of the Early Modern epistemology that displaced the theocentrism of the medieval order before it, Obadiah's vow to sexually abstain, because it is "irrational," would render him uncivilized again. (See, for one explication of this change in orders, Wynter's "The Ceremony Must Be Found.") In this current case, however, Obadiah's vow, undertaken as a ritual of divine devotion, is a repudiation of the hegemony of ratiocentrism. Miss Gatha, on the other hand, apparently embraces this same Reason, casting doubt on Obadiah's faithful adherence to his vow through her "scientific" deduction. And in fact, the vow proves insufficient on its own, as does Miss Gatha's reasoning. Finally, it is Obadiah's faith illustrated not through the vow but through his ultimate acceptance of the spirit-begotten child of his humble wife *in combination with* Miss Gatha's reasoned management of the community's resources that are required for the community's survival. As such, with *Under the Sun*, Wynter both refuses excommunication of Black people from Reason by the Enlightenment/colonial world and rejects the purposive "de-godding" of the Enlightenment project. See also Derrick White's co-related argument that in *Black Metamorphosis*, Wynter opposed the idea that religion only functioned to pacify. Instead, she figured the cultural rituals carried forward from their homes in Africa and maintained in "the New World" as "an alternative consciousness that resisted against the 'economic orthodoxy' of the plantation."

Thus, the pattern emerges: at every turn, Wynter attempts to counter the totalizing narratives of previous eras. As part of her strategy, Wynter re-purposes iconic Christian symbolism and characters. She figures Obadiah as the (returning to) faithful carpenter and Rose as his spirit-impregnated Mary.⁴⁵ In the church scene, when Rose's ill-begotten child is introduced to the congregation, the worshippers "[sing] big Magnificat with Rose" (37, 3.1). They invoke the idea that Rose, too, is the "low handmaid" of God who has ensured, with her gift of this child to the world, that "henceforth all generations shall call [her] blessed." "The Magnificat" becomes a title the hymn's lyrics proclaim.⁴⁶ However, here Wynter avoids the trap of creating a faulty negation to counter the equally false image of Black people that was disseminated by the inherently White supremacist ideology that held sway in the islands and beyond. She insists on Rose's virtue/spirituality and living sexuality *simultaneously*. Notwithstanding the many parallels she draws to Mother Mary, Wynter as definitively declines to fully extend the Biblical analogy to the exalted mother's virginity.⁴⁷ Remembering the spirit-filled, although far from immaculate, conception of her child, Rose claims for her body a fecundity fueled by the memory of sexual desire for her husband.

⁴⁵ Wynter's invocation of Joseph works on multiple levels, since Joseph is also the clear Biblical justification for fatherhood (and thus inheritance) on an other-than-biological basis, a transformation of kinship necessary for uprooting, White supremacy, as discussed in . While critics of the novel have frequently noted Wynter's associating Rose with the Madonna, they have largely ignored Obadiah's corresponding Biblical role.

⁴⁶ Wynter's evocation of a Black Madonna signified by the "magnificat" in her conceptual reworking of themes appears to be more celebratory here than in its first public form, her 1957 poem, "Elegy to a Black Girl." The poem, broadcast on the BBC, sounded a much bluer note on the seeming impossibility of any blessings or joy attending the sojourn of a Black singer in the cold North: "... where deer graze or used to do,/ A shot drones out ... / ... and in her eyes, [there is]/ No miracle of birth ... / ... no black magnificat" ("Elegy" 2). Still later, one of Wynter's 1975 blues poems from Del Mar would again invoke Mary and her magnificat with a grievance equally as damning as that of "Elegy." In a world whose "dance/ ended long ago," the speaker advises, recent hope must be constrained. She warns, "Be sober then; come back again / To familiar pain/ ... the grief of thaw has come again" ("Exile No 5").

⁴⁷ Wynter goes on to more explicitly repudiate the conjugal requirement for honorably exercising sexuality and reproduction in *A Miracle in Lime Lane* (1959), and *Shb . . . It's a Wedding* (1961), as well as *The University of Hunger* (1960) (see p. 144n26), as she had with the short story "Paramour" (see p. 108n42). Repeatedly emphasizing "transgressive" sexuality in the face of religious laws and social mores, frequently with the literal result of more abundant life, Wynter detaches sex and pleasure from its signification of death/dying/damnation and reattaches it to life/living/salvation.

Because of that desire, she implicitly accepts the “life inside” that, however illegitimately wrought, caused her body to “[arch] up high to the sky” (33, 3.2).

In Wynter’s resolution of the honor play dilemma, the dramatist not only figures Rose as innocent of any willful violation; she also represents her female character as sensual, fully vested in and capable of enjoying the flesh, and, what’s more, experiencing the enjoyment and desire as ultimately spiritual as well. *Under the Sun* makes women’s sexuality exalted and beautiful at the same time that it is quite literally as natural as moonlight, mangoes, and melon, rather than either excessive, monstrous, or demonic, as the Early Moderns would have had it, or animalistically (savagely) “natural,” as the Enlightenment would. If Rose is the mother of the living God, of divinity on earth, she is a Madonna restored to flesh, blood, and boners. Through the play, Wynter thus rejoins the *flesh* (ruin/affliction) and *spirit* (salvation/cure) long separated by clergy of the Christian Church—a unification necessary to counter the idea of the debased “sensual native.”⁴⁸

Contesting Representation(s)

In fact, none of the characters inhabit a body/mind or flesh/spirit or fallen/saved or nature/culture binary depicted as always negative or positive. As I hope the discussion above has made plain, Wynter remakes the honor play in multi-directional and quite complex ways. On the other hand, Rose’s part appears to contain far fewer dimensions. One might even describe her character as flat. In any case, it is notably less compellingly realized than any of the other speaking female characters as well as many of the major male roles.⁴⁹ Criticism of *The Hills of Hebron* has understandably noted (and often objected to) Rose’s relatively muted presence. Kelly Baker Josephs and Shirley Toland-Dix, for instance, both reflect on Rose’s silencing in their 2008 and 2009 essays,

⁴⁸ See “Unsettling the Coloniality” for Wynter’s engagement with Jacques Le Goff’s explication of this medieval oppositions of “Flesh/ Spirit” and “Affliction/Cure.”

⁴⁹ See Toland-Dix’s similar argument (71), also discussed below.

with Toland-Dix commenting that, in fact, “Rose is never ‘unsilenced’” in the novel (71). And indeed, even in the original story, where the full exercise of sexuality is often celebrated rather than disciplined or disappeared, Rose had fewer lines than any of the other characters upon whom the plot hinges. Taking a step back, however, I propose we consider several questions: Why should the flattening of one character figure so loudly in critical attempts to assess the disruption of sexual politics achieved by the play? Does the potential for unmaking and remaking reside only in the one female character? Or, for that matter, only in female characters, as much of the criticism on the novel tends to imply?

Acceding to either delimitation would be a mistake, for two reasons. First, in expecting all “transvaluation” to be located in the one character, scholars risk under-appreciating the subversion Wynter accomplishes. In fact, they might well conclude that Rose’s embrace of her sexuality/sensuality/desire ultimately fails to disrupt the patriarchal agenda of the honor play, since even as Rose refuses to testify falsely, the play also depicts her as passively submitting to the excommunication her husband has decreed. Obadiah only absolves Rose when convinced of her lack of guilt. This retention of the power to judge, to sustain or snuff out her life, is the same power relegated to the husband (or father/brother) in the traditional honor play.⁵⁰ However, in focusing only on *her* actions (or lack thereof), such an interpretation ignores the fundamental equation—the fundamental mattering and the requisite actions—that Wynter has substituted for the original. The honor play genre addresses female sexual transgression and the restitution of abrogated male honor. With *Under the Sun*, Wynter flips the equation. Those revealed to be sexual transgressors are *male*.

⁵⁰ A strictly feminist reading would likely draw similar conclusions. The “dialogue” Obadiah holds with the apparent adulterer revolves around what Obadiah claims has been taken from him (“that which was private to him” or his property in Rose) but also what he assumes he and the adulterer now share, given their sexual intimacy with Rose. Sedgwick, for example, would contend that the situation exemplifies Rose’s “[function] as the conduit of a relationship between men . . . [who thereby] engage in a struggle for dominance or recognize their mutual entitlement” (Yarbro-Bejarano 8).

Resolution is achieved when one of these transgressors restores *female* honor. First, he resumes his position as provider and protector. More importantly, he offers up a proper confession of his sexual sins before the church—supplies, in other words, the requisite auto-da-fé—and acknowledges the de facto leadership provided by Miss Gatha even before she stepped into the void.

For those attending to the play's intervention into the notions of female (in)capacity and “(dys)selection” that contribute to the paternalist order, another focus of critical attention is Rose's total disappearance from the frame by the end of the play. For example, Toland-Dix, who to date provides one of the most complete analyses of Wynter's treatment of gendered dominance, contends that in the *novel's* resolution, which she argues is essential to understanding the challenges and retreats of the work as a whole, “women characters have actually been returned to prescribed support positions” (72). She later asserts that “none of the women characters is allowed to become a counter-voice,” and indeed, “the liminal category of native woman remain[s] silenced” (75–76). Given the density of the novel, with the specter of the Prophet Moses and his various quests for control overpowering the rest of the characters and subplots, this conclusion is understandable. However, even for the novel, this line of interpretation, in its focus on and disappointment about the single character, fails to make audible the “repressed discourse” of the characters who *actually* make it into that final frame: Kate and Gatha. And in the play, these two women are peers *in dialogue* over the child whose kinship is assumed, not bestowed. Rather than this Mary, her Joseph, and the newborn Jesus (or the preceding Kemetic trinity of Ast, Asr, and Hru, or any of the other “founding families” of the world's various cosmogonies), the trinity that remains within the proscenium of this drama includes the two women whom the play here literally centers. These are the characters who have demonstrated a capacity for true leadership and exercised it. While the novel doesn't allow them speech, in the play, the curtain falls, or the broadcast ends, to the sound of their voices.

Together, the two elder “stateswomen” are moral compass and organizing force. In his return to sanity, his chosen family, and the church, Obadiah confesses to Kate-identified failings and pledges to fulfill Gatha-declared mandates. In addition, before the production ends, with Kate and Gatha centered/audible, Miss Gatha’s instructions to Obadiah and the rest of the male leadership and congregants—Miss Gatha’s words—move them offstage and into the wings. Perhaps this framing falls short of the full assumption of leadership that will indeed be necessary to achieve equitable governance on all points. Still, it suggests an enlarged—and cooperative—role. Again, a *singular* figure is insufficient for the demands of the community. The two elder stateswomen collaborated in building the community from the beginning. They shared even in parenting each other’s children, however bitterly. And they are in the scene, together, in the end—the alpha and the omega. What signifies as the necessary negation of the crisis-precipitating messianic or otherwise individual leadership—the hope, albeit never guarantor, for the community’s future—is, therefore, their collaborative model.

However differently the critics of *The Hills of Hebron* must, of necessity, read Rose’s character through their various analytical lenses, putting Rose back into the context of the traditional honor play rather than relying on the assessment of a thread that has been pulled out of the “web of signification” allows us to see exactly what occurs within the one dimension. Looked at within the context of the genre, one can see the character’s function in disrupting the honor play’s demand for male possession of female chastity and obligatory protection of male honor at the expense of female living. Given her location, her relative passivity, and her dearth of lines, all operating within the confines of the canonical honor play dilemma where her prescribed role is putative sexual transgressor, *Rose* may well be overlooked. But her declaration of pleasure *cannot* be.

The radical interventions for which Wynter employs Rose’s character in the play become even more evident when one juxtaposes Rose’s representation in the play to its (d)evolution in the

novel. *Under the Sun* was broadcast in 1958. By 1962, when the book was released, Rose's declaration of pleasure—indeed any self-authoring of her story or preoccupations—had entirely disappeared. Readers of the novel don't see Rose's own words recounting how Isaac raped her, much less receive even a hint that during the assault, the character experienced both terrifying violation and sexual gratification. Wynter's novel instead offers its audience an encounter entirely transformed, from an *also* sexual (albeit involuntary) experience into an *only* violent assault—a fact only made known to us through Obadiah's reflections. As Toland-Dix contends, "Coming to terms" with Isaac's rape of Rose "becomes a vehicle for [Obadiah's] healing, salvation, and growth" (71). In the novel, readers get two male-authored and male-centered versions of the event: Obadiah's musings on his own privation and Isaac's lamentation about his own expulsion from humanity. In the novel, other than calling for help when she goes into labor, Rose does not speak a word.

Contrasting this silence to the power of her monologue in the play, and given the general lack of precedence in other Caribbean literature of its celebratory rendering of female sexuality, lush and unabashed, I am led to pose another question. Assuming, as I have above, that the flattening of Rose's character in the play is intentional, it would also make sense to assume that her absolute *silencing* in the novel is purposeful as well. But to *what* purpose?

Perhaps, as several scholars have suggested, Wynter was acknowledging, by the time of the novel, the actual silencing of female actors in anticolonial movements, particularly the occlusion of those still young and *hors de l'élite*.⁵¹ One can take the writer as an example; in 1958, the Federation of the West Indies had just been born, and Wynter herself had emceed its arrival.⁵² By 1962, Wynter

⁵¹ Toland-Dix argues that Wynter is hemmed in by the novel's realism. She writes that, given the form, "Wynter can only depict what she envisions actually happening in the new nation" (72). Modhumita Roy offers a similar analysis.

⁵² Wynter served as the emcee for a celebration of the newly-instituted Federation, held at St. Pancras Town Hall, a fact V. S. Naipaul relayed in his humorous take on the proceeding for a BBC report ("W.I. Federation" 3). See this anecdote in Chapter 1.

had narrowly escaped sectarian violence in the independence movement in British Guiana and, as Kelly Baker Josephs puts it, was “negotiat[ing] race and gender in imagining a new nation, creatively examining the anxieties surrounding independence in Jamaica” (“Necessity” 179). Nor was this negotiation merely theoretical; as she herself reported, her return to the Caribbean also hemmed her in more decisively as a now single woman, required to raise and support her children on her own (Dance and Wynter 280). Perhaps as significantly, ungendering power does not appear to have been on the agenda when, the year after the play broadcast, Castro and his forces had accomplished their revolution—the first successful revolution in the region since Haiti had seized its independence in 1801. Personally and on a broader scale, Wynter was witnessing the exclusion of both women and egalitarianism across racialized or gendered categories from the otherwise still utopian vision of the sovereign state.

Of course, other possibilities exist. Necessities of form or space might have precipitated the contraction of Rose’s role. The weight of the novel being given over to an expanded iteration of the iconic messianic preacher and his quest for a Black heaven, the fleshing out of Isaac’s story as Fanon’s colonially-educated subject, the expansion of the historical backdrop to investigate the lead-up to world war or the transformation of the more Black Pentecostal cum humanist congregation of the New Believers into a Garvey-influenced proto-Rastafari sect—any of these factors could well have demanded a corresponding truncation of Rose’s character.

Alternatively, the scenes celebrating sexuality may have been subjected to the coercive force of respectability or editorial censors more exacting at Jonathan Cape, the novel’s UK publisher, than at the BBC. The mounting list of excised or radically transformed scenes supports the latter speculation. Even as greater violence and more sexual coercion appear in the novel, what disappears

is content that could be read as celebrating sex. Obadiah's confession is fundamentally altered, and Rose's self-narration is excised. Furthermore, the funny and celebratory scene at the church is expunged, and Aunt Kate's repudiation of Obadiah's vow, which she casts as sinful, is rubbed out. Particularly in contrast, the earlier versions of the story emphasize openings for female leadership and female longing. When did the revolution stop being sexy—stop laughing, loving, and “making sport with the . . . trees”?

Critics are right to question why Wynter's character becomes mute in later versions. However, ultimately, for our purposes here, the catalyst for the novel's excising is less important than what the novel's surgery reveals about the original, as honor play negated. The original demonstrates distinct points of focus that help reveal different nuances of political imagining. When we look at it through form and genre, what becomes most strikingly apparent in the play's adaptation as novel is how all the emendations tend to obscure the wife-murder genre that Wynter versioned with the play. The revision displaces the genre from its role as the engine of plot and resolution. It thus occludes our ability to see, explain, and make use of Wynter's “demythification and hallowing” of gender boundaries and sexual domination. In the drama, Wynter's “transgressing” female character can be seen as functioning to disrupt the honor play's demand for male (White) possession of female (Black) sexuality and for obligatory protection of male (White) honor at the expense of female (Black) Being. The normative genre of the honor play offers Wynter the foundation on which to stage her countertheatrics, allowing her to focus her audience's attention on the co-creation of dominations of coloniality, sexual and gender “deferents,” wealth, and racialization, and the necessity, for anticolonial struggle, to combat them all.⁵³

⁵³ Wynter defines “deferent” as a “play on the Derridean concept [incorporating] . . . the stratifying/status dimension, making use of the concept of ‘different’ behavior which functions to inscribe difference, and to constitute ‘higher’ and ‘lower’ ranking” (“Beyond Miranda” 367).

Wynter blows the traditional honor play apart and builds her own up from the ground, beginning with a refusal of culpability for individual sin and ending with a vision for expanding humanism and life rather than exacting divine-ordered death. Ultimately, the play offers a powerful insight: If sin, in the reconceptualization offered by Aunt Kate, is the denial of sexuality and all it entails (creativity, productivity, spiritual connection, play, and pleasure), then salvation can be found not in austerity or withholding but in giving—sharing all capacity that resides in the community and turning work and resources over to the task of creating and sustaining life.

Although the powers that had abandoned them expected them to suffer in silence, the New Believers instead organized for Black life and thus began to enact a lived—even if troubled—freedom. Furthering that lived freedom, as Wynter’s thorough restorying of the honor play in *Under the Sun* reveals, also entails defeating the White supremacy that “honor” helped to incubate and birth. It is to this anticolonial struggle against White supremacy that I turn next, in ⁵⁴

⁵⁴ Various reasons are given for the Royal Court’s failure to produce the play. In his support for her Guggenheim candidacy, artistic director George Devine blamed “casting problems” (Pennington), which may have been a euphemism for a bias against Caribbean accents. Amanda Bidnall, in her study of Black British culture during that period, writes about the Lloyd Reckord play, *Flesh to a Tiger*, staged that year. Reviewers panned the show for its inauthentic dialogue or because “its West Indian phrasing was *too* authentic for native English audiences to understand” (213). BBC production notes also evidence frustration about the legibility of Caribbean accents to British audiences, and Caribbean actors’ tendency to speak and act at a more leisurely pace than the audiences had come to expect. For instance, the producer of Wynter’s *Brother Man* adaptation warned, “It is clear that the script is too long as it stands, particularly as West Indian actors tend to cover the ground rather slowly” (Lefeaux, *CL to SW 24 Mar 1964* 1). Griffith (2017) also addresses the apparent preference for (certain) British accents, although his analysis suggests that the main objectors were Caribbean listeners, rather than the British producers (*BBC Development* 38).

A 1962 *Gleaner* article reported that the play “was never performed because the director, George Devine, felt that ‘Under the Sun’ was a new type of play, requiring a company of actors who had worked out a style of acting as intrinsically Jamaican as the play itself, requiring a ‘Jamaican Folk Theatre Company’” (9). However, another report said nothing about conceptual or casting problems, blaming the cancelation on the English Stage Company’s lacking funds instead. *Flesh to a Tiger* had only garnered 15% of the box office (Bidnall 206n2), suggesting that the company nixed the production because they feared the same fate awaited any play using “West Indian phrasing.” Despite their stated mission to produce non-commercially viable theater. The funding thesis corresponds most with explanations most often given by Wynter. (See, for example, interviews with Scott, in *Small Axe*, and Tall, in appendix here.) Interestingly, the Royal Court Theatre reclaimed Wynter recently by finally staging, in July of 2022, a reading of the play they’d pulled out of their archives (*Living Archive Vol. 1, Royal Court*), directed by Jasmine Lee-Jones. To my knowledge, this performance is the only to have been staged by a theater company to date. A smaller reading, without set or props, was held at a celebration of Wynter at the University of Texas–Austin, on May 18, 2019. (Pomona College faculty member Kyla Wazana Tompkins procured the same edited script in 2019, but only to use for private readings.)

Entremés 3

“Pass the Ball”

In the introduction, I explained that Sylvia Wynter used songs for knowledge-making in her plays. In other words, she used songs to deepen the meaning, not simply adorn the play or entertain. Let's see how that works for another song game in *Under the Sun*.

Within the first few minutes of the first scene of the radio drama version, the audience hears the song “Pass the Ball,” and the last scene circles back to the same. In its traditional game form, the lyrics and rhythm of “Pass the Ball” mark the action. The lyrics can change, as is usual with all songs made up by and passed around the community. Wynter's were, “Pass the ball and the ball gone round,/ Mawga Nanny show me where the ball gone round/ Play boy, play girl, play boy play,/ Jigger Nanny show me where the ball gone round!” Simple enough. However, looking more closely at the words combined with the actions, it seems like the game may be rooted in maroonage.

We can find the possible connections with a practice or rehearsal of fugitivity from slavery in the details given, without comment, by the anthropologist Martha Beckwith. She tells us that the players sit in a circle, keeping their hands behind them, and they pass some object from one player to the next. Meanwhile, two players stand in the middle. One, sometimes called the “searcher,” tries to figure out who has the object. The other player in the middle is the “master,” who “sometimes beats” the searcher for failing to find the object or any player found holding it (Beckwith 30). References to the “master” who “beats” other players announce the song's association with slavery. Calling out the name Nanny forges the song's relationship to maroonage.

Few historical maroons are better known popularly than Nanny. Maybe Harriet. But Nanny was of the sort of maroons who settled in the mountains and caves of Jamaica and stood their ground. These Maroons had successfully defended their community against capture or destruction since the British first occupied the island. That means that any time players call out Nanny's name,

they also call up the Maroons' historical and continuing community and the idea that people can escape unfreedom. In this version of the song, this Nanny is first called Mawga, meaning meager or starved, like the New Believers before they left the city to make a life in the hills. When she's named next, "Jigger" is attached, bringing even more history into the frame. "Jigger" is one of the alternative names used for the "blood-sucking fleas" that plague the barefoot—bare feet being a sure sign of poverty (Cassidy, *Dictionary* 246). (And we've seen how Wynter signals class among her characters partially by who has shoes.) This is where it gets even more interesting. "Jigger-Foot," a common malady, is also "a place-name." And it signifies the "poor, backward place" connected to the 1865 Morant Bay Rebellion. Cassidy demonstrates usage with a work song, "War Down a Monkland" (which Wynter later brings into her play, *1865—A Ballad for a Rebellion*). The lyrics progress from "War down a Monkland" to "War down a Morant Bay" and finally, "War down a Chiggerfoot" (Cassidy, *Dictionary* 247). The lyrics and action connect Nanny to the acts that constituted the Maroons as a community in the eighteenth century *and* to the nineteenth century poor peoples' rebellion in which the Maroons abetted the colonial government by serving as its gendarmes. The lyrical recording of history is deliberate, according to Olive Lewin, who writes that such songs "'allude to significant incidents' and 'remind us of the past,'" and that "[t]heir stories are hidden between the lines" (121). The song game retrieves from the repertoire and acts out two possibilities at once: revolutionary, self-authored freedom and self-serving betrayal or compromise.¹

I'm generally not looking for such a complex message in a children's game. As it turns out, circle play could be for adults, too, and some of the games have the same associations with Nanny—and with pain. The adult-only ring games occur during nine-night ceremonies, the nine nights of music, dance, and play that celebrate a person who has passed on and keep the grieving community

¹ See Diane Taylor (2007) for the repertoire of embodied expression versus the archive of texts.

moving together. In one popular game, a dozen players sit in a circle while another leads a call-and-response song, and they pass around “stones about the size of a brick.” Like in the children’s game, if a player messes up, “finger mash.” In another version, the ritual is a dance, and “the ‘stones’ are partners who keep moving from the ring to the centre and back.” Jigga Nanny leads the dance (*Jamaica Talk* 275).² Whether for children or adults, the song game’s words and actions evoke history. Even if there’s a “master” in the game, Nanny drives the song. Something hidden makes its rounds, and the threatened penalty of either clumsiness or disclosure is violent censure—getting beaten by a person or smashed with stone.

The ritual can signify in many ways. It could be the re-staging/reporting of the “*grand maroonage*” of escape (the attempt has been mounted!). It could be a warning that discovery—either of the fugitive or the abettors—means severe punishment. This danger could caution the would-be fugitive to take care not to get caught but also offer a reason not to leave. The ritual could also sound the call to go. In the US context, such “spirituals” as “Swing Low, Sweet Chariot” were the departure signal for those who’d been preparing to leave. In the fugitive context, the demand that the player or dancer “pass the ball” could signal the same, with “Mawga Nanny show me where” being the fugitive’s request (pre-Treaty) to be brought to the concealed community of those who had already marooned. The same line could be interpreted from a very different positionality—that of the “master” or British who had bound the post-Treaty Maroons to return escapees from the “other side of people” (Bilby and Yelvington). Each of the interpretations leads back to fugitivity.

By the time Olive Lewin, the Jamaican Jamaican music and folklore expert, did her fieldwork in the late 1960s–1980s, any acknowledged connection between “Pass the Ball” and maroonage had disappeared. Still, other traces of fugitive practice and training remained. In *Rock and Come Over*, the

² See Ron Canfield on the Sistren collective’s use of ring games as foundational to their indigenous theater.

popular book of cultural information she culled from her many years of study, Lewin reports on the game tourists called the “Limbo.” It was once known as “Pass the navel.” One of the older residents explained to Lewin that during slavery or “apprenticeship,” if a person didn’t bring in the expected harvest, the driver would punish them. The penalties were so severe that people would risk worse by trying to escape under the fence. The game, with its progressively lowered pole, would help them gain the strength and agility to do so (85). Lewin also tells us that the song “Hill and Gully Rider” originally referred to an “athletic game” played in “western Maroon towns.” The action called for people to leap over and duck under clasped hands, which could be raised or lowered at the last minute. The song warns that failure means a broken neck and “if you bruck you neck you go to hell” (82). The “Hill and Gully” terrain—high peaks, sudden chasms—is one of the factors that let the Maroons best the British militarily. This game would not only teach them to run the terrain safely. It would also help them build and maintain the muscular strength they needed to do so. All sorts of games, like dances, functioned as more than social glue or entertainment.

Let’s return to “Pass the Ball.” How does this song with such deep historical roots function in *Under the Sun*? Wynter certainly doesn’t employ “folk” songs simply to lend some cutesy authenticity to the play. (Later essays and notes to theater directors railed against such shallow uses of culture.) The songs aren’t used just to evoke nostalgia, either. Hearing the tune opening the radio drama, listeners who weren’t from the Caribbean might be reminded of the Caribbean anyway if they had heard Edric Connor’s recent successful album of Jamaican folk songs. It had been released in the UK a few years before.³ More likely, to the outsider, it would signify nothing, especially because the actors would have sung in a very different way. Wynter’s stage directions call it a lullaby,

³ Edric Connor & The Caribbeans: *Songs of Jamaica* (1954). <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S0CmTfN-F8>

not a game. Lullabies are sung softly and they can conjure memories (or illusions) of babies and nurturing. Even if listeners didn't recognize the tune or the words, it could tug the heartstrings.

For the Caribbean listeners, wherever they were found, the radio drama would have demanded emotional involvement more directly. The slowed-down melody with these words would be enough to bring the familiar song, and home, to mind. At the same time, they might wonder why the tune had been transformed. In the beginning, singing these words, "Mawga Nanny show me where the ball gone round," Aunt Kate is lamenting a child who is gone forever. Listeners later learn that Isaac had been present when her daughter died—he's the one who tells Aunt Kate that her only child to have survived infancy will never return. In the same scene, he tells her that he's leaving, too. The audience knows he's making off with everything the community has invested in and for him. The modulated song at the beginning foreshadows the community's abandonment. Aunt Kate sounds the grief of the enslaved kin that fugitives left behind. (One is powerfully reminded, here, of Toni Morrison's *Song of Solomon*.) Now imagine this song being heard by all the Caribbean workers and students who had left their families behind "in ah Kingston town," sung not as a game but as a dirge. At the end, they hear it sung again, this time by Miss Gatha, whose child is also gone, her dreams of a better life with him. For both outsiders to the culture and, more viscerally, insiders, the song does affective work. This is the first level—an opening up. Emotional experiences are better assimilated and remembered. Recalling is necessary for reflection and dialogue.

The second level is topical. The words and melody, recalling the game and its history, sonically connect the New Believers ever more closely to the Maroons and to the Morant Bay Rebellion. Other West Indians might not have known that "Hebron" was Maroon country when they heard characters referring to "Cockpit Gully, but they certainly had heard of the rebellion. The song, felt and calling up all of its embedded contexts, calls up rebellion with it. The Nanny song also helps Wynter establish that this alternative community centered in the play shifts the structure of the

society. The people are self-organized and self-governed, even if they had originally “migrated” just to survive. Recalling this history allows Wynter to restimulate the desire to finally achieve a sovereignty compromised for (and by) the Maroons, denied in the 1865 rebellion, and postponed yet again in the strikes that rocked the Caribbean eight decades later in 1937–8.

Opening and closing with “Pass the Ball” emphasizes the anticolonial rallying cry of the play, as well as its caution. The tie to the Maroons assures people that they can succeed. Some among them already had. But hearing the song as a lament instead of a game reminds the Caribbean listener that, just as when people used to “pass the navel” under the fence to escape, there were still people required to stay behind—or returned there when they escaped. The “liberation” of some is bought at the expense of others’ “finger mash.” They would all need to stay vigilant and work to prevent repeating past tragedies.

The historical context is critical to understanding why so much is subvocalized through song instead of being directly delivered in dialogue. The official Federation of the West Indies has just been birthed, and the fate of many colonies is not yet decided. Government media is broadcasting the play in the seat of the same Empire that these colonized subjects are trying to convince to let them go for good. Any critique has to be oblique. The actors are in London coming to the studio to rehearse, work out changes, and get it all on tape. Recalling the slave economy to those who benefit from it (present tense deliberate) when some of them have the power to set the terms of withdrawal might not be wise. The same goes for the maroonage that forced the colonial government to acknowledge that the British weren’t smarter, fiercer, or stronger than that group of Black people they’d attempted to dominate. Turning the song into a lullaby, Wynter soothes the colonizer’s ear. “Pass the Ball” allows her to communicate the radical desire for real Emancipation without raising a single hair on the back of the censor’s hand. Evoking emotion and history, she activates the knowledge carried by the Caribbean listeners, calling on them to “play” responsibly and well.

Chapter 3

Restor(y)ing Honor, Ending White Supremacy

Race in cloth [means] the coarse thread that is distinct
from the other threads in the weave.

—Sebastián de Covarrubias Horozco,
Tesoro de la lengua castellana (1611)¹

The answer to a myth of force is not necessarily counterforce, for if
the myth predicts counterforce, counterforce reinforces the myth.
The science of mythography teaches us that a subtler counter is to
subvert and revise the myth. The highest propaganda is the
propagation of new mythology.

—J. M. Coetzee, *Dusklands* (1974)²

As discussed in the Introduction, Sylvia Wynter began her critical-imaginative writing during the middle of the twentieth century, when colonized subjects were converging on the British metropole, twinning a similar confluence in the French. Many of these subjects were working to establish the collective subjectivity of their peoples—in- and inter-dependent *identities* meant to engender the independent *polities* they desired. Some carried out that work of redefinition in the realm of the arts. Through her play, *Under the Sun*, Wynter responded to the decolonial imperative of “interrogation and unmasking of European ‘pretexts’” (O’Callaghan 73) that has proven to be her enduring guide. Wynter’s countertheatrics plugged into a long Pan-African tradition also being carried forward through the counterpoetics of Césaire and Senghor, the counternarrative of Lamming, and the counter historiography of C. L. R. James. However, the play does not contribute to the sort of “iconoclasm of form” (Forbes, *From Nation* 11) with which Caribbean writing began, at that time, to

¹ Quoted in Burns 188. (The Spanish reads “Raza en el paño, la hilaza que diferencia de los demás hilos de la trama,” [Burns 366].) The full text continues: “Race in lineage is understood to be bad [*se toma en mala parte*], as to have some Moorish or Jewish race” (“Raza, en los linages se toma en mala parte, como tener alguna raza de moro o judío,” [Burns 366]).

² Coetzee 32.

be associated. Instead, with *Under the Sun*, Wynter seizes upon a very old form: the honor play genre that helped birth and nurture imperial Spain and, as she later argued, undergird British imperial expansion. This chapter extends my argument that Wynter versions this traditional form to reveal and thereby begin to counter its White Christian Male supremacist logics.

It is through decoding and rewriting the honor play genre that Wynter begins to develop an analysis of the mechanism of racialization, which she assessed as proceeding through a delineation of “genres of being Human” (Wynter, “Unsettling” 316). Racialization is one of the primary “conceptual foundations of Western humanism” (N. Edwards, “Talking” 13). Since the “enlightened” West deployed racialization to justify Indigenous genocide, the institution of chattel slavery, and the settle colonial and absentee landlord extractive economy this slavery enabled, confronting racialization is imperative for American decolonization. We can recognize the operations of this racialization by taking stock of the traditional honor play genre and the adaptations of the genre found in García Lorca’s *Yerma* and Shakespeare’s *Othello*. Reading the “subverted and revised” ante-myths closely alongside Wynter’s replacement myths allows us to discern the “countering” of her countertheatrics.

Attending to the form of *Under the Sun*, particularly its restorying of *Othello*, also brings into view the beginnings of Wynter’s life-long project of revealing and refusing both *ideological* supremacy and the *actualized* collateral suppression of non-male and non-Christian, non-White people. Her honor play versioning publicly performed a “disruptive deciphering” of the entangled early modern processes of gendering and racializing subjugation that she would later expand upon in print with her conceptual essays, most iconically in “The Ceremony Must be Found” (1984).³ As she articulated

³ Another important exploration of this theory is found in her 1990 essay “Beyond Miranda’s Meanings.” There, Wynter argues that the imperial/colonial enterprise of the sixteenth century generated and was increasingly predicated upon a shift in primary division from man over woman to “man” as universalized Western subject over “native” as the Western Other. “In other words,” she writes, “with the shift to the secular, the primary code of difference now became that

there and in many essays hence, each of the contingent processes of humanization/ dehumanization and selection/dysselection functions within an overall matrix of domination.⁴

In the previous chapter, I argued that both García Lorca and Wynter refract the genre's canonical equating of women's sexual constraint with a man's honor and its requirement that this honor be held as sacrosanct even at the expense of women's very lives. I contended that Wynter's own version insists instead upon women's right to their whole sexual beings and respect, protection, and life, while also restoring the "transgressed upon" man to a place of honor not over but instead alongside his wife. In doing so, Wynter undercuts the notion that female restraint is required for male dignity. Here, I build upon my claims that Wynter upended the honor play because she recognized its function as an ideological tool, sometimes buttressing social hierarchies and sometimes harrying them.⁵ I demonstrate how Wynter's versioning of the form helps us understand the honor play's project of domination through racialization and appreciate how Wynter's countertheatrics function. In other words, it is in reading Wynter's drama through the form it adopts and adapts that we are able to trace the traditional honor play's development, first, of the equation of female chastity with male honor, then male honor with religious loyalty to Christianity, such faith with biologically-determined "blood purity," and that "blood purity" with Whiteness, a process of

between 'men' and 'natives,' with the traditional 'male' and 'female' distinctions now coming to play a secondary—if none the less powerful—reinforcing role within the system of symbolic representations" ("Beyond Miranda" 358).

⁴ Although it has become common to refer to racial, gender, sexual, and so on *identities* presumably possessed by groups of people, given that identity categories are contextual and shifting, it is important to recognize instead the *processes* of domination that produce those groups, processes Wynter attempts to elucidate when she uses the language of selection/dysselection. It is harder to find apt metaphors for processes than it is for states, however, particularly processes that seem adaptive. Perhaps this is why Wynter is drawn to concepts that emerge from the study of biology, processes such as mutation. My objection to such terminology is that it suggests that the shifting codes that people construct are "natural" processes instead, and with "natural" comes the notion of inevitability as well.

⁵ See Wynter's discussion of the medieval use of the topos of adynaton to turn the symbolics of the culture/polis "upside down," drawing on Ernst Curtius ("Eye" 11–12).

correspondence that leads ultimately to ideological White supremacy.⁶ Comparing Wynter's dissident slant to its canonical model reveals how this first play demonstrates her life-long insistence on assailing the intricate machinery of domination, a machinery that self-lubricates and self-calibrates, swapping out parts and processes as necessary to keep it operating. By demonstrating this throughline, this chapter also connects Wynter's early critical-imaginative expression to the later "properly" theoretical.

Having addressed Wynter's refusal to uphold the honor play's religious pretext for female subjugation in the previous chapter, it is to her conceptualization of racialization as an engine for subordination that I turn in this one. Wynter's exploration of increased domination grounded in a biologized conception of race/religion ranges over a vast territory. While there are many entry points into this territory, my examination of this work in *Under the Sun* can be fruitfully tethered to three rigs: a process, a pairing, and a people/place. The process is racialization through sex and religion; the pairing is Shakespeare's Othello and Desdemona, and the people/place is the religiously organized "Black" community on the island of Jamaica.⁷ For analytical purposes, then, my argument will engage with each of these rigs in turn, lacing in how the conceptualizing Wynter effects through the drama intersects with the creative-critical and creative-theoretical work that followed.

First, the historical process. Wynter began recognizing the canonical honor play's ideological operations in studying the *obras* of Spanish Golden Age dramatist Antonio Enríquez Gómez. Wynter discovered that, like many in the African diaspora from the period of enslavement onward, this

⁶ As discussed in the previous chapter, the expanded version of this story kernel in novel form obscures the honor play models that Wynter revised, also obscuring this clear scaffolding for her decolonial practice with them.

⁷ In this chapter, because its focus is racialization, I use scare quotes around Black to insist upon both the necessarily contextual and shifting definitions of Blackness, and on the constructedness of notions of race itself, particularly in the periods under study in this chapter. (See Entremés 2 for more on differing notions of "Blackness.") I recognize that the repetition of such scare quotes throughout could test the reader's patience, but it seems important, in addressing a US American audience, to counter the idea that Black means one thing and that thing is what it means here, now. ("White" likewise.) One could, of course, make similar arguments about gendering.

dramatist and poet passed of necessity. The difference was that his masquerade was textual and played out along racial-religious rather than exclusively racial lines. As such, he contributed to and resisted the developing purity imperative simultaneously. Enríquez Gómez's authorial passing practice drew Wynter's attention to the development of racialization and White supremacy through religiously-ordered sexual and reproductive control and the purity imperative they upheld during that period. It is to these contingent processes that this section attends. I read *Under the Sun* to demonstrate how Wynter's anticolonial authorial method contravenes the purity imperative. She restores her "superstitious" and "impure" characters to honor and calls into question the founding of kin, wealth, and power on biologized racial/religious premises.

Second, the iconic pairing. Having investigated the veiled racializing project of the canonical honor play, I move to examine Wynter's refraction of Shakespeare's considerably less veiled *Othello*, an honor play revision in itself. *Othello*, undoubtedly part of the Western canon, uses the wife-murder plot differently. The title character suspects his wife's infidelity, demands proof of her chastity, and kills her when he is unsatisfied with the evidence. Normally, this action would restore his honor. However, Othello is a racial other, a Moor in Venice, and a converted Muslim. The tragedy demonstrates to its audiences that even seemingly heroic, well-classed African men are, in truth, weak and violent subhumans. Such beings should not be allowed to marry their ("White") daughters lest they end up dead or, worse, bearing miscegenated children. The play punishes both characters for their race mixing. Not only does *Othello* bring "race" explicitly to the fore, but the drama equates the raced subject (Othello) with a female subject (Desdemona) already debased within the society reflected in/constructed by the canonical honor play. I suggest that Wynter's versioning reveals *Othello's* correspondence of racial and gender inferiority in order to reverse its mechanism,

restoring both “deferents” to a humanity equally elevated rather than equally debased.⁸ By so doing, she enacts the anticolonial mandate to recognize culture as an ideological “social text of colonial power” that must be “expose[d] and dismantle[d]” (Tiffin 30).

Third, her story’s people/place. Shakespeare’s Othello is destroyed in a European city populated predominantly by people raced “White.” Because of his fundamental difference from most of those in his society, Othello’s debasement can be read as the subjugation of an individual. A rehumanized “Black” Othello could thus be dismissed as an individual exception to the rule of “Black” inferiority. Wynter’s transposition of *Othello* into a *primarily* “Black” and poored, still-colonial Caribbean realm thus becomes integral to *Under the Sun*’s collective revalorization of women and non-white people. Wynter has described “Black” people as occupying the “absolute zero” position on the colonial graph of humanity (“Beyond the Categories” 72). Because the above-zero (elevated) humanity of all other people is relative to the “zeroed” humanity of “Black” people, it is the rehumanization of the latter that she saw as necessary for the elevation of all non-“White” peoples. In revalorizing her “Black” characters, Wynter repeatedly calls attention to their “Black” features and traditions—including leadership, speech, rituals, and song. She also refers to the “Black” conditions the inhabitants of this colonized region still faced during a historical period of abandonment and exploitation by the planters and the planter-oriented government. I demonstrate how Wynter insists upon the “Black” location through her investigation of “Black” religious rituals and engaging the vexed “Black” prophetic tradition in Jamaica.

I demonstrate the consistent tilting of Wynter’s conceptualizing work, in both its creative-critical and critical-imaginative modes, by addressing several examples of the abstracted non-fiction

⁸ Wynter defines “deferent” as a “play on the Derridean concept [incorporating] . . . the stratifying/status dimension, making use of the concept of ‘different’ behavior which functions to inscribe difference, and to constitute ‘higher’ and ‘lower’ ranking” (“Beyond Miranda” 367).

theory through which Wynter came to explain the inseparability of any one process of domination from the others that she had first explored in her dramas. I use “tilting” here because it connotes an active stance of assault, the charge of anticolonial thought and action. It also evokes the instability of the ground being tread, the exploratory rather than algorithmic moment, the necessary distinguishing of actual “enemies” from their windmills, and the requisite measuring of these enemies and the sources of power held not only by the tilted-at but also by the tilters.

Black Truth Counters White Supremacy: Deracializing Religion

Before I turn to my investigation of the historical process of racialization Wynter explores in *Under the Sun*, it would be helpful to recall the play’s central conflict. Her plot revolves around the religious community’s leader, Obadiah Brown; the apparent infidelity of his wife, Rose, who is revealed to be pregnant despite the year-long abstinence of her husband; the community’s interpretations of this deviance from “right” action; and the ways they confront the departure. According to the Biblical mandates invoked by the church congregants, Rose must be shunned and cursed for her sexual, read also as spiritual, infidelity. The community’s demand that Rose be rendered socially dead and their invocation of God’s deadly vengeance against her mirror the honor play’s fatal containment of female sexuality, and at several points, Obadiah is indeed on the verge of killing his wife. Ultimately, however, the community rejects this violent resolution and reincorporates Rose, the baby, and Obadiah into their *socius*.

Even this brief sketch of the plot reveals that Wynter reworks the central conflict of the honor play to undermine its sexual logic. In rewriting, she does not restrain sexuality and religion, further enshrining the notions of right filiation as the traditional honor play would. Instead, she opens them up, creating space for developing the radically different ideas of political and social organization that would be necessary to transform colonized into autonomous societies. When Wynter scripts Obadiah re-embracing the “transgressive” Rose rather than killing her, she authors a

radical shifting of values. Through his actions, this representative of husbands prizes the life of this representative of women above the sexual fidelity that is supposed to be an essential constituent of his “honor.” This ideological heresy alone breaches the honor play’s code, for which male honor is supreme. Women are not supposed to step out on “their” men.

However, Wynter carries the heresy even further by refusing the genre’s invocation of “pure” lineage. The chastity fundamental to the wife-murder play is required not just because women’s sexuality is considered male property. Women’s sexual fidelity to their husbands was also regarded as essential because it secured the biologically-construed inheritance integral to the Early Modern conceptual foundations that gave rise to the honor play. This conception is supposed to be based in Christianity. And yet, in Wynter’s versioning, Obadiah not only claims as his own the child who is clearly not his biological kin. He also gives his actions Biblical authority by invoking the passages that proclaim the birth of Jesus, child of the revered Mary and a Holy Ghost. For example, where the scriptures announce, “[U]nto us a child is born, unto us a son is given” (Isaiah 9:6 KJV), Obadiah repeatedly declares, in the final scene of the play, that “a boy-child was born unto me and my wife Rose Brown” (45–6, 3.3).⁹ This Biblical borrowing casts Rose as sanctified rather than sinner and establishes Obadiah as a latter-day Joseph, the most unambiguous scriptural affirmation of fatherhood on an other-than-biological basis and a divinely honorable role.¹⁰ According to *Under the Sun*, then, female sexual exclusivity is required neither for male honor nor to secure family lineage. By invoking Christianity’s sacred text to endorse a more open model for righteous kinship,

⁹ Unless otherwise noted, all quotes are taken from the stage version of *Under the Sun*. After first mention, I will only use page, act, and scene numbers, unless more is needed to distinguish from another play.

¹⁰ By incorporating paraphrased Biblical verses in her characters’ dialogue, Wynter also versions the Bible—source of the original “canon” and arguably the very center of Anglophone literature’s troping (also a word with religious origins). In versioning Shakespeare, the Bible, and the honor play for which Lope de Vega, Shakespeare’s Spanish counterpart, is most famous, Wynter in essence incorporates and revises the whole of the received “Western” literature with which Caribbean writers believed they must contend.

Wynter's honor play versioning opposes the supposedly religiously-ordained dynastic and biological imperative of the Spanish Golden Age. "Biologized" racialization allowed for the conquest of the Americas, for enslavement, and for colonization. By countering biologized racialization, her play denies the legitimacy of these violent historical processes and the orders they brought into being.

Understanding how the requirement for "blood purity" that Wynter's play refuses was established is essential for understanding European racialization, as Wynter conceives of it, because "blood purity" both ignites and drives it. As Wynter informs us in her magnum opus, *Black Metamorphosis* ("Single Culture" 472), one of the honorifics that the "man of honor" during the Spanish Golden Age fought hard to attain and keep was *hidalgo*. The word signified the literal "son of somebody" who is "pure," somebody who could trace his lineage to "true" Spaniards, those who were not Jewish, not Muslim, not Moors.¹¹ Rather than being a commitment to a divine order to which individuals are called (or corralled), religion becomes a characteristic that inheres in genetically-defined families and is passed on. It becomes embodied in the lineage, or "blood." This presumed genetic kinship among "White" European Christians, enforced via female sexual fidelity, founds ideological White supremacy.

By rejecting kinship determined by genetics alone in her honor play remix, Wynter refutes the basis for what turns out to be not only a Male supremacist but also a White supremacist notion of "honor," along with the power and property it garners. As such, Wynter's revision counters the practice of racialization and the White Male Christian supremacy it enables. Of course, the ideology of White supremacy subtends colonization in turn. When she uncouples biological inheritance from what constitutes family, writ small (my child), medium (my nation), or large (Humanity), she remakes notions of kinship. With this, Wynter strikes a necessary conceptual blow for independence from the

¹¹ The term later became associated with *non*-hereditary titles bestowed upon "men of honor" who could prove their *limpieza de sangre*, their "clean" or "pure" blood, as discussed later.

Supreme White Patriarch (whether in the imperial seat or in the colony) through this honor play versioning as well.

From the first scene, *Under the Sun* demonstrates how the developing ideas of race and purity, notions of sexual domestication as religious mission, and questions of breeding and lineage all become intertwined. When Obadiah learns in this scene that another man has impregnated his wife, Miss Gatha indicates that the abrogation is of God's word rather than Obadiah's honor and that the sin belongs to Obadiah as much as to Rose. She accuses him of being "so wrap up with woman that after [he] preach Thy words a few hours of the day, [he] lay down and the benches creaking [under his] foot, and all because of a hand to drive in a nail" (18, 1.1). According to Miss Gatha, Obadiah has failed to appropriately care for the congregation/ community spiritually and materially because of his divided loyalties. The trespass under question migrates, therefore. The blame moves from *Rose's* failure to be sexually constrained to *Obadiah's* sexual excess and from this purely "sexual" responsibility to be chaste/exclusive/moderate (as obliged by religion) to a more general religious requirement for responsible stewardship.

Rather than simply morphing from female to male responsibility and from sexual to religious, however, this migration of meaning moves in multiple directions. We can see this later in the play when Wynter reinserts notions of sexuality as central to the supposed trespass, especially as sexuality relates to reproduction and race. In the first scene of Act 2, for example, Obadiah assures "the Adulterer" that he will eventually catch him near "the fowl house where our hen hatching out your eggs" (29, 2.1). He reasons that the usurpation of his conjugal right could not have occurred "in one of the Cockpit Gully" that surround their village because, as he puts it, "then I would have been sure to hear cock upon cock crowing to warn me that whilst I was down here [. . .] ruffling me wings, [. . .] secure in me pen, a traitor cock was crouching, was springing, was leaping to mount me hen!" (28-9, 2.1). This invocation goes far beyond anxiety about possible sexual infidelity. Cock

upon cock, Wynter sonically ties the supposed trespass against Obadiah to cuckold's etymology, invoking a man's fear of his progeny being supplanted and his genetic lineage cut off.¹²

The language Wynter uses carefully references racialized genetics and breeding. Obadiah's objection—referencing hens in a fowl house and cocks in pens rather than cuckoos or other wild birds alone—expands the meaning of the sonic link beyond sexual aggression in the wild into the notions of animal domestication that turn out to be the etymological root for “race,” or *raza*. The word *raza* was defined in the “first Spanish Dictionary,” we are told, as the “breed of thoroughbred horses, which are branded with an iron so that they can be known” (Greer et al. 12). That is, from the very beginning (and likely before the naming occurred), race was methodology, enacted to mark possession and signal reproductive value.¹³ Historically, the right to breed belongs to the lord and seignior, the owner and master; he designates which cock can mount which hens. Wynter continues to emphasize this etymology in her restorying, forging linkages among race, breeding, and specifically male lineage (“cock upon cock”), especially as connected to Obadiah.

As often as these linkages are revisited, they are rejected. For example, in Act 3, Isaac dismisses Obadiah as an “ignorant black stallion of a man” (41, 3.1). The scene reveals the dehumanization of the colonial worldview, impressed upon Isaac through his colonial education. According to this view, Obadiah has become the negative racial stereotype, the “Black” stud suitable only for impregnating mares—perhaps the mirror opposite of a “prophet” capable of “taking vow” (41, 3.1). Yet Obadiah has already disproven the stereotype, if at great cost. To ward off the taint of

¹² The cuckoo bird lays its eggs in the nests of other birds, which then raise the hatched chicks as their own (OED). The cuckoo doesn't just add its own egg to the nest, though, adding to the host bird's brood-raising burden—the host faces the total replacement of its own progeny. First, the cuckoo pushes out the host's egg to make room. Then, when the cuckoo chick is hatched from the substituted egg, that chick pushes the remaining eggs or hatched chicks out of the host nest as well, claiming all the parental resources (food, grooming, etc.) for itself. The fear of total usurpation is therefore tied up in the word cuckold, encapsulating far more than shame or embarrassment about sexual rejection or “cheating.”

¹³ “La casta de caballos castizos, a loscuales señalan con hierro para que sean conocidos.”

any unrestrained sexuality, which the church denounces, Obadiah has domesticated *himself*—ultimately constraining his sexuality alone, even if he had intended, through the vow, to constrain his wife’s as well. In control of his own sexual activity, Obadiah “masters” himself. With such reversals, paired with the many passages invoking animal “husbandry” and religious faith, Wynter demonstrates the complex entanglement of sexual constraint, religious repression, and racialization.¹⁴

When I assert that Wynter *demonstrates* this complex entanglement, I am tacitly supporting the argument that sex, religion, and race *were already intermingled* in the canonical honor play, an assertion also endorsed by many scholars of the genre. María Elena Martínez writes that increasingly during the *Reconquista* and the period that followed, the society’s “notions of familial honor [. . .] stressed chastity for unmarried women and fidelity for married ones” due to the “fear that pure women would secretly introduce tainted blood into a lineage” (57). Congress between Christians and non-Christians was also already interpreted as scripturally forbidden (“Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?” [2 *Corinthians* 6:14]). *Sexual congress* was all the more denounced because such mixing could sully the bloodline of descendance. And indeed, the threat to “honor” in the plays frequently manifests as the suggestion that in addition to a woman having engaged in a sexual liaison, she also conducted this trespass with a man whose “blood” was “tainted.” The prevalence of themes censuring women’s sexuality with threatened violence has led to the Golden Age honor plays being dubbed “wife-murder” drama—not *Reconquista* drama. However,

¹⁴ Allusions to what Pamela Bridgewater has termed “reproductive slavery” are also inescapable here. (See, for example, her articles “Reproductive Freedom as Civil Freedom: The Thirteenth Amendment’s Role in the Struggle for Reproductive Rights” [2000] and “Un/Re/Dis Covering Slave Breeding in Thirteenth Amendment Jurisprudence” [2001]). This warrants further critical attention to the ways that Wynter’s creative-critical work begins to theorize racialized gendering/ gendered racialization (terms she always troubles, rather than adopts), as later taken up in, e.g., “One Love—Rhetoric or Reality” (1972) and “Beyond Miranda’s Meanings” (1990).

the plays implicitly express a heightened concern for preserving a “pure,” by definition Christian and, by implication, “White,” familial lineage.¹⁵

This entanglement has prompted some critics to argue that female containment operated as an alias for the subjugation of the non-“White” as well—Jewish, Arab, North African, “Black.”¹⁶ Joan Ramón Resina, for example, asserts that “the theater popularized absolutism and *the values of caste* so relentlessly” (304, emphasis mine) that the *comedia* became a most “effective propaganda machine” in the service of racial/religious dominance.¹⁷ Negative racializing associations and the social and economic disenfranchisement of the descendants of Jews and Muslims/Moors were certainly contributing to Spain’s incipient consolidation as a nation in the wake of the *Reconquista*. In this long moment, “old Christian” families (those that have “always” been Christian) hold themselves to be the only “true” Christians and, therefore, superior to those newly converted. Church-supported governance begins the process of racializing religion by assessing peoples’ religious commitments based not just on their *parents*, who could at least be argued to have influenced their ideas, but also on their great- or great-great-grandparents. Moreover, when the other-than-Christian religions that the church has already worked to degrade are tied to genetic

¹⁵ The underlying anxiety about racial-religious futures propagandized through the honor plays proved to possess an extraordinary potency. This fear of extinction endured for well over a century beyond the 1492 culmination of the more than seven-century *reconquista* that ultimately ended Muslim “Moorish” domination of Spanish and Portuguese socius and polity.

¹⁶ For a more thorough exploration of this transference, see Joan Ramón Resina; Glen Dille; and John Elliott, but also, importantly, Yvonne Yarbro-Bejarano’s critique that such readings minimize the importance of gender. She writes that “[t]he major focus of honor-play criticism has been the relationship between honor conflicts in the theater and the function of honor in early modern Spanish culture” (2) even though “gender and sexuality, in tandem with other hierarchical relations, [are] structuring principles of the honor play rather than [. . .] peripheral or secondary to the analysis of what is ‘really going on’” (3).

¹⁷ For a better understanding of the historical process through which religious distinctions became embodied, gendered, and racialized beginning in the fifteenth century, in this case in Spain, see, e.g., María Elena Martínez, *Genealogical Fictions*; Greer et al., *Rereading the Black Legend*; Sylvia Wynter, “1492: A New World View.”

lineage—forward and backward down the line—then that genetic lineage becomes degraded as well. Religion is thereby racialized, and concomitantly, those not “raced” Christian are dehumanized.

This transvaluation of religion as race *joins* rather than *supplants* anxieties over religious “purity” disguised as and functioning to further gendered social and sexual constraint. The transitive property of purity in process within the canonical honor play—and the society it reflects and recreates—operates at least twice. The violently enforced sexual loyalty (read exclusivity) of the woman also symbolizes a coerced religious adherence, which is, in turn, racially inflected. Nonetheless, the transvaluations do work to veil burgeoning religious and racial bigotry in the honor play and society. It is in part this masking of multiple primary antagonisms that Wynter seeks to expose and disrupt through her various revisions and evocations of the honor play.¹⁸

This preoccupation with the entanglement of race and religion began early in her academic career; Wynter’s graduate archival research focused on a dramatist who repeatedly engaged the racial-religious anxieties propagandized through the canonical honor play. This writer’s work—and life—are replete with the multiple transpositions of symbolic devaluation that have proven to be such a compelling site of conceptualization for Wynter. As a “*converso*” (converted) Jew, or (pejoratively) “*marrano*,” Antonio Enríquez Gómez (1600–1663) had to prove himself a “clean” Christian with a demonstrable clean lineage as well—the opposite of Jew or Moor. Whether truly converted or merely masquerading as Christian in the face of the overt and aggressive persecution of Muslims and Jews, his family members were repeatedly required to submit proof of their *limpieza de sangre*, or blood purity, in articles of faith the wife-murder plays would depict on the literal level as certifying sexual rather than religious fidelity. Despite the honor play’s retrenchment of the very symbolics deployed against Enríquez Gómez’s family, the dramatist wrote many plays of this genre,

¹⁸ Revalorization of the “Black” women, children, and men the honor play devalues is, of course, another crucial task of this versioning.

thus wielding his pen in service of the ideology of White Christian male “purity.” However, even as he wrote *for* White Christian supremacy while in Spain, the writer (under a pseudonym) dropped the guise of the moralizing “Old Christian” when in exile in France. Instead, he gave voice to Jewish themes with his many plays as well as one revelatory Romantic poem about a “believing Jew” whose faith endured despite imprisonment and torture.¹⁹ Writing prolifically regardless of context but toeing the Old Christian line in one while bucking it in the other, Enríquez Gómez was deploying the strategies of dissemblance crucial for the survival of the marginalized.

Wynter “understandably,” in her own words, was compelled by the “passing” practices of this liminal figure whose group was marginalized and suppressed during his time, as her group was marginalized and suppressed during hers (*Intervien*).²⁰ Wynter’s study would lead her to conclude that Jews in the late medieval and early modern periods were the ultimate “Other” to “clean” Christians, just as “Black” people had become the ultimate “Other” to the White ideal so painstakingly maintained by the structures of the colonial society in which she had been immersed.

Wynter’s later historical scholarship also clarified the many ways that the project of *oppressive* racialization (rather than simply differentiation) under the veil of religious allegiance was well underway before the European conquest of Africa and the Americas. Wynter found that “Black”

¹⁹ The poem was titled “*Romance al divín mártir, Judá creyente*” (The ballad to the divine martyr, Judah the Believer) (Dille 17). Enríquez Gómez had never published it; the copy scholars study is the transcript Wynter includes in her MA thesis (Oelman 50). Further evidence of the equivalence Wynter drew between the position of Jewish people in Inquisition-era Spain and that of “Black” people in the British Empire later is found in Wynter’s first use of the title *The End of Exile*, for her unfinished novelistic treatment of Enríquez Gómez’s life. She was later to bestow the same title on her novel about the New Believers, that community of dispossessed “Black” colonial subjects in a new “Hebron” led by a character named after the Hebrew prophet “Moses” first seen in *Under the Sun*. Notes, syllabi, and lectures for the courses Wynter taught on Spanish Golden Age literature, as well as presentations and unpublished essays (all held in her personal papers) also point to this equivalence.

²⁰ Lope de Vega, the celebrated Spanish counterpart of Shakespeare, also captured Wynter’s attention. This Golden Age dramatist eventually proved the most generative for Wynter’s conceptual breakthroughs; she has made extensive use of his play *El nuevo mundo descubierto por Cristobal Colón* (*The New World Discovered by Columbus*), which she argues addresses the conceptualization, development, and consolidation of state power in ways similarly demonstrated by Shakespeare in his *Tempest*. See, for example, Wynter’s “Unsettling.”

figures appearing in Iberian literature “predated the Portuguese discovery of Africa in the fifteenth century,” which testified to “the reality of an earlier and established black presence [. . .] related to the Arab conquest of Spain in the eighth century” (“Eye” [1977] 11). Referring to Miriam DeCosta’s research on the early 13th century *Cantigas de Santa Maria* (*Canticles of Holy Mary*), Wynter elaborates that, in this literary context, “The black Moor is portrayed as the opposed term to the Christian religious metaphor. [. . .] [the] infidel, invader and defiler of Christian altars.” She emphasizes that the correspondence being made was racial as well as religious: “[B]lack as pitch,” it was the Moor’s *skin* color (not just presumed sin) that was held up as the opposite to the “white” skin that was now emblematic of Christianity. In other words, as she later explained, “black-skinned” people—people who had traveled on their own or were brought to Portugal and Spain in the thirteenth century—were “made to function as the marker of extreme Otherness to the projected normalcy of the white-skinned Christian” (“On How” [2006] 149–50).²¹ Her research demonstrates that, while racialization had begun with the separation of the apparently similar but religiously different, the physiognomic difference gradually coincided with then replaced the doctrinal, thrusting out of the “Human” family “Black” and other people with origins beyond Europe.

Decades before she undertook this historical scholarship, Wynter had already worked to reveal this symbolic drift from religious commitment to racialized identification and a concomitant racial/religious supremacy with *Under the Sun*.²² Her honor play versioning not only highlights and rejects the concept of purity at the heart of the canonical drama but also calls into question its very salience. Throughout the play, she emphasizes the *already* “impure” lineage of her wife figure, Rose,

²¹ See also the 1991 essay, “1492: A New World View,” where Wynter notes that “the pattern of conquest and colonization” by Europe had begun “some two-and-a-half centuries before 1492” (11).

²² Geraldine Heng’s more recent work corroborates this conceptualization of racialization through religion that Wynter had begun to limn with her MA thesis and continued in her drama. See, for example, Heng’s *Invention of Race* (2018).

and the illegitimate conception of the child Wynter represents as the hope of the generation to follow. Rose is the castoff daughter of an exploited “Black” worker and a corrupt “White” government functionary, the “District Commissioner . . . who had a hankering after black flesh” (40, 3.1). She is a literal bastard and product of what “White” upper-class (creole) Jamaicans would view as a “dirtying” of the bloodline, quite the opposite of *limpieza de sangre*, and a threat to immaculate succession. Nonetheless, when her baby emerges at the end of the play, he is whole and without any apparent deficits, despite being the child of a bastard and the product of rape, his “father” Isaac being the clubfooted and morally degenerate progeny of an adulterous, and thought to be also false, prophet.²³ Wynter’s emphasis on this *sucio* lineage and refusal of the honor play genre’s sanctions destabilizes foundational notions that “bad blood,” or, indeed, biological heredity more generally, determines destiny.

Wynter enlarges this anti-White Supremacist and anticolonial message with Rose’s incarnation in *The Hills of Hebron*. For the novel, she adds a Chinese shopkeeper grandfather to the character’s immediate ancestry, enabling Rose to represent all the major “racial” groups of Jamaica. Wynter’s Madonna figure, mother of the nation’s future, is thus rendered as the Everywoman of Jamaican peasant, working class, and small-time mercantilist society. As an illegitimate castoff among the New Believers, she represents, instead of the upcoming Brown elite, rather the lumpen, whether Black, Brown, White, or Asian—and hence the most liminal position of the polity. Her extreme

²³ On first glance it appears that Wynter follows medieval convention here, with physical “deformities” signifying moral ones. However, Isaac’s club foot could also associate him with obeah; the obeah(wo)man is thought to have a “sore” foot (Moore and Johnson 16). Such an association makes sense. He does benefit from the community at the community’s expense. He’s also the son of Miss Gatha, who acknowledges that other villagers call her an Old Higue, the witch/vampire figure of regional lore elsewhere called a *soucouyant*. I don’t mean to suggest that Wynter is offering some deeply entrenched meaning to be disinterred here—merely that this is one instance in which she might be invoking African-derived religions and stories as a way of insisting upon the humanization of the “Black” residents of this community, as well as signifying at a level only clear to those familiar with the culture, as those in dominated cultures so love/have to do. See my discussion of her humanizing obeah below, starting on page 31, and her subvocalization or double-voicing in songs in Entremeses 2 and 3.

liminality makes Wynter's choice of Rose crucial. She is a vital allegorical figure for the "re-indigenized" dwellers of the "New World," where, Wynter would later explain, "all the major and hitherto-separated races of the world have been brought together . . . to work out a common destiny . . . [that] would entail the transformation of our original dominant/subordinant social structure and its attendant perceptual and cognitive matrices into new ones founded on reciprocal relations" ("New World View" 5).²⁴ When Rose and her ill-begotten child are embraced by Obadiah, chosen leader of this isolated "Black" community, he is demonstrating his acceptance of what Wynter elsewhere refers to as the "black truth" of the circumstances they are living. For, as many proponents of decolonization were arguing was the reality for the colonized, in this case, the "black truth" was the naked reality that, to survive, all the groups of the dispossessed must come together—rather than battle each other for the title to lead or gain or own.²⁵

As such, when Wynter scripts Obadiah declaring, in the final scene of the final act, "Tonight a boy-child was born unto me and my wife Rose Brown" (45, 3.2), she affirms a multiracial unity and non-biologically based kinship vital to the necessary power-sharing needed to transform conditions for the majority of people in the region.²⁶ *Not* restoring kinship and leadership in this

²⁴ Note that Wynter published two different versions of this article, both bearing the same title. This quote appears in the 1991 original but not in the 1995 expanded version published in Vera Hyatt and Rex Nettleford's eds., *Race, Discourse, and the Origin of the Americas: A New World View*, Smithsonian, 1995, 5–57.

²⁵ Referring to recognition of the situation West Indians confronted in the decade immediately post-"Independence," Wynter writes, "This process marks the path for the West Indian from acquiescent bondage to the painful beginning of freedom. Freedom means the rejection of 'white lies' and the acceptance of the 'black truth' of his condition" ("Learn Pt. 1" 23)

²⁶ Elsewhere, Wynter has made gestures toward a conception of kinship far more expansive than the nuclear family that has come to be the desired norm if not the demographic reality in many parts of the world. See, for example, the stated desires for an inclusive erotic/familial triangle of minor character, Gopal, in the play she co-authored with Guyanese writer Jan Carew, *The University of Hunger* (1960). (Unfortunately, Gopal's scene was eliminated in the play's 1961 television adaptation, *The Big Pride*.) Which is not to say that Wynter's treatment of kinship is untroubled; as *Under the Sun* makes clear, "family," whether biological or not, like the larger community, can inflict violence. Rose's "father" uses a bribe to escape acknowledgement of paternity; her adopted "brother" rapes her; and her adopted "mother" demands she be excommunicated and even cursed.

way leaves their communities vulnerable to the sort of racially-exacerbated schisms that thwarted Guyana's first attempt at self-rule under the avowed socialist, Cheddi Jagan—or the sort that continues to maintain a Jim Crow order in the bourgeois White supremacist United States despite the many movements for “Black” emancipation and worker and civil (etcetera) rights. *Under the Sun* was written several years before Wynter's own attempt to further an also racially equitable socialist state under the government of Cheddi Jagan. However, she was participating in broadly anticolonial and specifically antiapartheid movement discussions in England around that time. Furthermore, she had studied the history of the Jamaican Maroons, who held themselves to be ethnically different from the other “Black” people on the island, a difference violently exploited by the British. She would have understood the need to combat the sectarian divisions arising from notions of racial or ethnic purity, both in fighting to throw off colonial powers and in establishing independent states.

With *Under the Sun*, Wynter restories a dramatic genre that had been inaugurated at a historical moment when notions of race and supremacy were consolidating. Her play acknowledges racialization at the same time that it refuses separation or subjugation. Struggles to decolonize, Wynter was suggesting, allowed no room for supremacy, racialized, gendered, or otherwise, nor the dominance such supremacist ideology implied.

As such, although it is crucial that Obadiah renounce deadly vengeance against “his” woman and adopt radical acceptance instead—both of Rose and of the child conceived through rape—the play cannot leave its rejection of biologically-justified lineages there. Wynter extends the rejection to biologically-based political inheritance as well.²⁷ From the start of the play, Miss Gatha's attempts to claim leadership for her son are rebuffed, with characters explicitly denying any inherited right of leadership. One character declared that “Hebron is the inheritance that [the Lawd] give to the all of

²⁷ The rejection would apply broadly, not regionally, but also note that when Wynter wrote *Under the Sun*, only a handful of families participated in Jamaican governance; the cousins who headed the rival parties were among them.

we who followed after him [and] when [His] prophet Moses died [Moses] chose as elder, not any children to follow after, but the man most worthy” (10, 1.1). The play’s advocacy for leadership based on “worth” rather than biological dynasty counters colonial governance through an inherited monarchy.

As importantly, however, it countered the idea that only “White” or “White”-proximal people could rightfully lead the region into independence. Abiding White supremacy was a key obstacle to obtaining self-rule, let alone any fundamental restructuring of society.²⁸ The “purity” evoked as a pretext for the distribution of benefits in Golden Age Spain couldn’t even be generated, let alone guaranteed, in a post–chattel slavery society literally produced and enforced in part through “White” male rape of “Black” women and outright denial of parentage. Nor could the society of the previously enslaved afford the separatism and elitism such purity called forth. The community of New Believers in this post–chattel slavery but still colonial society (and by extension, all of the dispossessed) absolutely requires the incorporation of all its members—no matter their provenance—because without each bringing what she has to the table, they will not move beyond subsistence, if indeed they even survive. In the face of the killing drought, the New Believers are finally forced to come together.²⁹

²⁸ In her important 1970 essay on Caribbean society, “The Social Framework,” Goveia called the shared value of White supremacy the “integrating principle” of the Caribbean. Countering the oft-argued position that Caribbean society is entirely divided and pluralistic, and “held together by economic reasons and by force” rather than any particular cultural or shared values, Goveia writes, “On the basis of my own historical work” (published in a groundbreaking 1956 study of the British West Indies) “the West Indies in the past have had an integration which has transcended internal divisions, and the very division between the classes is in fact part of the rationale, part of the integrating organization of the society in which the different classes live differently [. . .] This integrating factor which affects the society as a whole is the acceptance of the inferiority of Negroes to whites” (9).

²⁹ The notion that resources, rather than being hoarded—even those that are historically valuable, even the spoils of inheritance—should instead be shared across the community, regardless of biological kinship, is concretized in one character’s coveted stone “Spanish jar” being pressed into quotidian service to collect water in the city and another’s “half-dead mules” to fetch that water home (25-6, 2.1).

Scholarship that has more recently traced racializing processes back as far as the fifteenth century includes that of decolonial theorists such as Aníbal Quijano, Nelson Maldonado-Torres, Walter Mignolo, and Ramón Grosfoguel. However, their examinations tend to elide Wynter's preceding research and theorization on race, and the one rare reference (to an essay on C. L. R. James that she wrote in 1992, decades after she had published her first essay on racialization) misrepresents Wynter as conceptualizing the racism that attended racialization as a *consequence of*, rather than *justification given for* colonization.³⁰ I would argue that this citational neglect, as well as mischaracterization and misdating of Wynter's work on race, prolongs a blindness to the European emergence of racial concepts in part as a European counternarrative to perceived *European*, rather than African (or Moorish or Jewish), inferiority. The counternarrative arose, as she demonstrates, in reaction to cultural and political incursions *into Europe* ("the [Islamic] conquest of Spain in the eighth century"), not in reaction to European encounters with "primitive" others outside Africa. In fact, in this most sustained of interactions with "Others" on European soil, these "Others" had proven to possess superior navigational, mathematical, and medical knowledge, as well as comparable architectural and construction skills. The inferiority myth was spawned by nativism, not imperialism. Putting together this European counternarrative with the conquest of Africa and enslavement of Africans *pre-1492*, along with their transport to Europe, changes the temporality, impetus, and targets of the racializing project. In this timeline, "race" as inhering in genetic lineage of necessity precedes rather than coincides with "New World" colonization and, therefore, cannot be seen simply as a byproduct of medieval or modern European imperialism or "New World"

³⁰ See, e.g., Mignolo 2007 (316); 2015 (109). These decolonial scholars are not alone in their citational neglect. Other such scholarship on racialization, including "medievalists" who acknowledge the racialization through religion that Wynter identified, do not, nonetheless, appear to acknowledge Wynter's scholarship.

colonization.³¹ Wynter's research suggests at least that racialization began not with fear of difference but instead with creation of and emphasis on difference and an attendant creation of fear.

The many theoretical implications of this more extended timeline for racialization are too numerous to address in this dissertation, but I will gesture to one. We are living through another moment of escalating nativism, manufactured difference, and conflagrated fears. The long view could shed light on why, European Christianity having remade religious commitments into racial categories as far back as the twelfth century, the conflation of religion with race, if ever successfully countered at all, has so apparently easily become *de rigueur* again.³² Although Christians in the twentieth century successfully deployed multiracial rhetoric to globalize the Christian church, this rhetorical multiracial embrace nevertheless continues to be undermined by the White-is-the-only-right European Christian origin story. Indeed, in the United States, this origin story has been mainstreamed and weaponized, thanks to a renewed "War on Terror" that allows national leaders to bar even entrance, let alone full and unadulterated citizenship, to people from Muslim countries. Here, the distinction that appears to have come to matter most, when it regards living unmolested and supported, is the one that has already repeatedly mattered, to the point of war—*limpio*, thus White Christian vs. *sucio*, thus indigenous or Moorish/Black/African Muslim or Arab Muslim or Jewish, Turk, or Hindu.³³ Acknowledging the depths to which the Christian origin story remains based in a history of racialization and White supremacy that far precedes the founding of any of the

³¹ The post-dating performed by these Latin American theorists diminishes the centrality of encounters with African peoples—and particularly the enslaved brought to the Americas—in the formation of notions of race, particularly as a dehumanizing mechanism, raising questions about their own projects exploring the specificity of raced dynamics in Latin America.

³² In the late twelfth century (i.e., before the Spanish Inquisition), English officials murdered ten percent of the Jewish English population (Heng 61).

³³ Evidence of this most basic divide also exists throughout Anglophone literature, from Shakespeare's 17th-century tale of the famous Moor to Equiano's 18th-century autonarrative, to Royall Tyler's 18th-century captivity narrative spoofing.

nations of the Americas could help us understand how to create alternative narratives, “new mythologies” that embrace rather than exclude.

Of course, the racialization of religion—and the idea that religion inheres in the genes—also continues to have ramifications that far exceed US racist nativism. Global repercussions can be seen in the cooptation of genome mapping technologies used, for example, by the Chinese government to better track Chinese citizens belonging to the Uighur Muslim minority and, among other repression methods, to identify them for incarceration in “re-education” prisons. When we acknowledge the long-standing and slippery historical interplay between domination via gendering and racialization, both achieved through the vehicle of religion, as Wynter does, it allows us to see more clearly a *project* that *sought* new selves to “Other,” absent a people who could be separated out easily by apparent physical difference and what Wynter calls symbolic life or culture. Othering itself then emerges quite clearly as a force to oppose for those who wish to work for a more equitable and humane world.

To Be Successfully Wedded, Not Deaded: Revising Othello

Wynter opposed otherization and advocated the coalescing of the Human, in ever wider connecting circles, from the “Black” put-underclass of the islands she called home to, finally, the species as a whole, often emphasizing the principle through the figure of Othello. Indeed, although Wynter herself first came to the study of race, empire, and the honor play through Spanish literature, for the reader of English literature, Shakespeare’s *Othello* is the honor play variant Wynter evokes most legibly and consistently in her pursuit to uncover barriers to broad human solidarity, first with her countertheatrics and later in essay after essay.³⁴ For example, in her widely read 1984 essay “The

³⁴ I should note that many critics, e.g. Donald Larson (3) and Wynter herself (personal conversation), exclude *Othello* from the “honor play” genre proper, because they consider its central emotional drive to be jealousy, not shame or dishonor. However, the play’s generic placement is far from settled; some critics call it a domestic tragedy, others a revenge tragedy, while some see no utility in a categorical hard line. In the case of this further refraction of the genre, I

Ceremony Must be Found: After Humanism,” Wynter invokes the fatal pairing of Othello and his bride to call for the creation of a ritual that will instead successfully “wed Desdemona to the huge Moor”³⁵ across their presumed differences of “race”/religion and “gender”/ “sexuality”—a “ceremony” that by its repetition and eventual embrace will recreate society itself.

Reworking *Othello* allows Wynter to clarify that wife-murder is inextricable from *limpieza de sangre* as is *limpieza de sangre* from White supremacy in all its manifestations, from Nazism to the massive incarceration of the jobless poor and caging of migrant children. *Othello* is, therefore, a significant reference point for Wynter’s exploration of literature’s function in reproducing societal codes and for her explication of the concept of blood purity. First demonstrating, with *Under the Sun*, her refusal of the purity imperative by successfully yoking together the characters whose analogs *Othello* figured as fatally different, Wynter later abstracts the ideological transitive property of purity in operation in the wife-murder play for closer examination. She explains that *the notion of blood purity* “[made] possible a bio-ontological principle of Sameness and Difference” that allowed people to invent a “scientific” explanation for being, origins, and descent and displace the “super-natural” or religious explanations that had previously reigned (“Ceremony Must” 54). This shift to biologizing logic enabled the ideological transmutation of “the caste principle of Noble Blood” that had previously been deployed to reserve power for the aristocracy into a “‘race’ principle of an innate biologically determined shared superiority,” through which the “White” Christian middle classes could marshal their own power and later dominate. In other words, the constructed-as-biological

don’t believe the distinction between honor and revenge would be readily apparent to viewers or readers, then or now; the features linking *Othello* with the wife-murder plays that are a subset of the honor play, or even more, their contemporary real world manifestation as honor killings, would be highly legible: the centrality to the plot of supposed female infidelity, references to and demands for proof of characters’ purity, and the murder of the female *infidèle*.

³⁵ The title is taken from John Peale Bishop’s poem, “Speaking of Poetry”: “The ceremony must be found/ that will wed Desdemona to the huge Moor.” The end of the poem repeats the lines Wynter chose for her title: “The ceremony must be found / Traditional, with all its symbols / ancient as the metaphors in dreams; / strange, with never before heard music; continuous/ until the torches deaden at the bedroom door.”

“mode of Sameness [is] made possible by the mode of Difference of meta-physically excluded Others.” This means that “White” Christians achieved group cohesion and then dominance by rejecting the kinship of humans they rendered religiously and, therefore, racially dissimilar. Their consolidation and power depend on difference. Blackness, as represented by *Othello*’s Moor, is thereby “projected as the very Lack of the human, as bio-ontologically inferior.” Othello, overdetermined as “Black” and uncivilized, becomes the index of *inhumanity*, the negation against which (“White”) Western bourgeois people would “prove” humanity to be theirs alone.³⁶

Remixing *Othello* enables Wynter to reveal this projection of inferiority and the presumption of the supremacy that is its inverse. The racializing project of the honor play genre as a whole is made all the more apparent by the ways in which *Othello*, as an exemplar of the genre, both enacts and inverts its canonical scenario. When first staged, *Othello* presented an “actual” Moor—through the ruse of blackface—as the legal, if not societally-approved, husband, and therefore represented more transparently one of the actual targets of the Inquisition-era racial-religious anxieties described above. That is, where the canonical honor play expressed anxiety about the possible religious contagion of the *interloper* (i.e., the illegitimate sexual competitor of the church-legitimated sexual partner), in *Othello*, it is instead the “legitimate” husband who is tainted by virtue of his presumed religious (but actually racial) difference, the husband who is the threat. The play suggests that “legitimate” matrimony is no longer adequate for preserving purity; the “trespass,” therefore, now exceeds the bounds of the church, and racialization begins to exist independently from the obligations for religious purity that gave rise to it.

³⁶ This dehumanization is figured in multiple ways, including even the music Othello prefers. See, e.g., Catherine Henze, who writes that “Othello prefers ‘The spirit-stirring drum’ and the ‘ear-piercing fife’ of ‘glorious war’” to music, which makes him “a monster” (135).

Furthermore, these racial anxieties do not simply exist alongside religious ones in *Othello* but instead begin to *replace* them, taking the transformation from despised gender/sexuality to despised racialized religion one step further. Developing concepts of race at the time the play was written still allowed for the idea that a person could “convert” *racially*, just as they were often required to do religiously. This fluid notion of race is underscored by critic Ian Smith, who notes that, with Shakespeare’s “attention to the stage practices related to the textile black body,” he “produc[ed] and circulat[ed] a material notion of race that would prove powerful for early modernity” (24). Intervening in the commonplace critical understanding of the handkerchief Othello offers Desdemona, Smith convincingly demonstrates that the cloth, described as “dyed in mummy,” would necessarily have been black, rather than the presumed white that critics have traditionally associated with Desdemona’s chastity.³⁷ This black cloth, Smith argues, would also have signaled to the audience the actor’s capacity to render himself “Black.” Indeed, the handkerchief reproduces in miniature for Desdemona the black “pleasance” cloth with which “White” actors originally transformed themselves for the role of Othello. The question, in other words, cannot be whether Desdemona “proves” her virginity Othello by staining a *white* cloth with her blood when they consummate their marriage. Instead, the reproduction of the *black* cloth suggests that Desdemona might also become “Black”—and that keeping the black cloth close indicates her willingness to do so. It replicates fairly bluntly the anxiety that “White” Iberians of the time had begun to experience. They feared that racial contagion could affect not only the actual progeny conceived by the tainted but also the many others who found themselves in proximity to the tainted. “Black” could rub off

³⁷ Note that “mummy” is not some obscure word for a bygone color—it is the same mummy US culture revives every Halloween, except that in Shakespeare’s time it referred not just to the embalmed bodies of Egyptians, but also to such bodies removed from their tombs and powdered for European consumption. Smith’s article provides a fascinating look into the technologies of racial performance that can lead one into a rabbit’s warren of information on the literally cannibalistic European traffic in dead bodies during Early Modern times.

on them. If this were the only fear, preventing such proximity would suffice, but there is an important extension to Smith's revelation with implications for the audiences of the time. They would have wondered, watching the Othello actors in blackface: If "White" people could render themselves "Black" simply by putting on certain clothing, couldn't "Black" people similarly make themselves appear to be "White"? Such "passing" would make controlling proximity impossible, and their White Christian state would be irredeemably apostatized as a result. Indeed, this was the official justification for the Inquisition's centuries-long harassment and ultimate expulsion of Jews in 1492 and Muslims in 1508.

Thus, in *Othello*, the character representing the actual historical ("Black," Muslim) *target* for expulsion from the social and political body sustains the honor play plot even as he reverses the traditional racial and religious roles—while ultimately not reversing the outcome for either the raced/religious or the gendered party. This is important for the connection I am making to Wynter's versioning of *Othello*. In *Othello*, it is the "Black" Moor who demands proof of the purity of his "White" wife, and proof failing, it is the "Black" Moor who expels the "White" woman by murdering her. Othello cannot even see how his "deferent" status—a status he shares with Desdemona—makes them both the targets of Iago's malignant resentment.³⁸ "Black" Othello's power of Reasoning is not developed sufficiently enough to prevent him from being engaged in an ideological war on terms entirely manipulated by White Male Christian Iago, who wields his misogyny and racism in equal measure. When Othello fails to assess the evidence before him correctly, this lapse, a classic "tragedy of miscalculation," ultimately functions to indict the presumably Muslim Moor, and the drama makes him pay for it with the loss of first his beloved and

³⁸ Indeed, Shakespeare's "Moor" could read to contemporary audiences as perhaps more "White" than "Black," given his failure to make use of the double consciousness his racial position should enable.

then his own life. As such, *Othello* literalizes the developing racial-religious conflation and censure that is otherwise metaphorized by the wife-murder play in the Spanish tradition.

However, with this tragedy, Shakespeare also equalizes responsibility—and accountability—for the unforgivable error of making poor alliances, in this case crossing boundaries of “race” and religion. The play closes with both spouses equally laid low, positioned together on the bed, and thus literally at the same level as they die.³⁹ Just as this drama indicts the religious/racial outsider, it also indicts the “White” Christian woman who, as her murder proves, had made a fatal miscalculation in marrying him. For both husband and wife, the tragedy of faulty judgment leads to the misallocation of loyalties (a “domestic” error, as discussed in Chapter 2, that, when made by the sovereign, can lead to the state’s downfall). The play thus directs its warning at both “Others”—the man (dysselected by “race”/religion) and the woman (selected by “race” but dysselected by “gender”), who transgressed by committing their loyalties to people and presumably principles “outside” those of “their” “race” and religion.

In opposing the separatist sanctioning of *Othello* with *Under the Sun*, Wynter must address this fear of muddled racial-religious lineage head on, countering the appeals to maintain racial purity and fear of so-called miscegenation that run throughout. In one scene of Shakespeare’s play, Iago taunts Desdemona’s father with the very image of the dreaded consummation, declaring, “Even now, now, very now, an old black ram/ Is tugging your white ewe. Arise, arise! / Awake the snorting citizens with the bell, / Or else the devil will make a grandsire of you” (1.1.97-101). Both spouses are

³⁹ I’m indebted to Ruth Vanita for this observation. In fact, the end of the play finds not two, but three equally slain so leveled. Ruth Vanita writes that “[t]he spectacle of Desdemona and Emilia lying dead together” demonstrates “how great lady and ordinary gentlewoman are equally defenseless as wives” (352). Vanita argues convincingly that despite the differences in their social status, the two women share a brutal exposure to male violence and refused state protection. However, in the scene Vanita describes, it is actually all three characters—“White” noblewoman, “White” maid, and “Black” nobleman—who expire side by side. Curiously, this critic doesn’t similarly claim a shared vulnerability for Othello; her argument certainly suggests that, even though as a man he has more power than the women in his life, his vulnerability as a raced outsider proves as fatal.

depicted as animals, with their potential child the spawn of the devil, a particularly vicious slur on the Islam Moors were assumed to follow, but also a reference to precisely the phobia underlying miscegenation. In her versioning, Wynter mirrors Shakespeare's invoked racial phobia, with Miss Gatha becoming the mouthpiece for the dogma that "race"-mixing is dangerous—with the direction of the menace reversed.⁴⁰ First, she reminds Obadiah that the original purpose for their Maroon-adjacent retreat in the hills above Cockpit Centre was to provide a place where "black people could walk proud on the land" (17, 1.1). This is the site of imagined freedom from racial subjugation, which reads, on its flip side, as racial purity. In the next beat, she identifies the source of spiritual contagion, accusing Obadiah of getting "meshed-up in the flesh of a white man's stray-shot mulatto spawn" and claiming that despite all his efforts to rectify that lapse, now he "can't even [. . .] save curse from falling on we, on we children . . . on we black pickney children" (18, 1.1). Miss Gatha categorizes Rose as Other-raced and Other-specied—that is, not "Black" ("white man's mulatto") and not *Human* ("spawn"). At the same time, she identifies *his* "race-mixing" with the calamities—drought, hunger, the threat of death—that have befallen the congregants and their "black pickney children" (19, 1.1). The "impurity" that ontologically threatens the Whitemen of the wife-murder play through the incursion of the not-White/not-Christian male is here threatening the "Black" community *existentially* due to the corrupting influence of the not-Black female.⁴¹

If Wynter's color/race symbolism reverses the race-ordering values of the British society into which she launched her play, Shakespeare's apparent inversion of the honor play (Moorish

⁴⁰ This is presumably a "creole" rather than a "Black" creation in the islands. Alternatively, this allusion to the necessity of maintaining "Black" purity might be tied to early texts adopted by some Rastafari sects. See Price, "Cleave to the Black."

⁴¹ In the United States, with its particular "one-drop" conception of blackness, an audience for *Under the Sun* might not immediately recognize Othello and Desdemona in "Black" Obadiah and non-"White" Rose. However, Wynter's replication of the famously doomed dyad would have been apparent to her Jamaican listeners; it is the "old black ram" Obadiah figured as "new-married to a young soft sambo gal" and Rose the "bright"-skinned young ewe (7, 1.1). "Sambo" is a British slave society racial designation.

Othello as Noble, White Christian Iago as Evil) ultimately reinforces rather than disrupts the race/gender constructs of the early modern English society into which he launched his. This is because Renaissance ideology construes the non-White non-Christian and/or non-male as embodying the morally unacceptable “natural” sensuality and violence that Othello displays by killing Desdemona. His physicality stands in opposition to the rationality of the White Christian Male, or, as Wynter later put it, the “Man” for whom Othello was “projected as the very Lack” (“Ceremony Must” 54), and his violence “rights” the inversion of Noble Moor/Evil Christian. Moreover, because the traditional honor play masks racial conflict as instead “gender” conflict, Shakespeare’s versioning effectively *recodes* Othello as female, since the ideology also opposed female sensuality to male reason. Othello is thus equally figured as incapable and undeserving of leadership or any presumption of innocence.⁴² According to this tautology, Othello is doubly negated through ideologies of racial and gender inferiority. Ultimately, to be “Black” and/or female, and to be other than “Black” or female but aligned with the interests of either, is to be a potential threat to the order of the state, which is akin to and symbolized through Whiteman’s honor. *Othello* resolves with the extinction of both threats.

Since Othello is the index of inhumanity and is negated through ideologies of both racial and gender supremacy, reversing this negation requires countering both ideologies. Successfully uniting the sort of devalued characters that *Othello* figures as fatally different would necessarily entail that they both *live* in the end, rather than die. It would also require that the two figures be “evenly yoked.” In *Under the Sun*, Wynter’s own mad—or “un-Reasonable”—“Black” character and unchaste female character *do* live, and their roles in the society are rendered as equally important, both creating the possibility for their Black futurity. When Wynter calls for a societally-embedded ritual

⁴² For instance, Steven Wagschal refers to the Golden Age depiction of women’s jealousy as evidence that women are “weak-willed and irrational,” characteristics Othello displays increasingly over the course of the tragedy (3).

that can “wed Desdemona to the huge Moor,” when she invokes and rewrites *Othello* in her own play such that neither the woman suspected of abrogating honor nor the “Black” man indicted for faulty judgment is murdered, but instead *both* are exonerated and survive to produce another generation, Wynter implicitly protests *Othello*’s violent rectification of misaligned racial-religious loyalties.

Furthermore, through her play, she refigures Othello and Desdemona, via Obadiah and Rose, as belonging to the same elevated Sameness rather than to a debased Difference. Rose and Obadiah, both derogated and disenfranchised by the dominant order, must be co-related, or allied, intrinsically kin and thus part of the same collectivity to counter that order. Now brought into equivalence, Obadiah and Rose cannot be pitted against each other, the one sacrificed to maintain the other’s dignity, property, or potential. This move—correlating debased female with “Black” and non-Christian (male) persons—is critical to Wynter’s decolonial restorying.

The ultimate refusal of these presumed antagonists to dominate each other extends to the community writ large. I have suggested that one of the techniques Wynter uses to counter the dehumanization of Shakespeare’s play is the racial “inversion” effected in Miss Gatha’s warning, which characterizes the union of her Othello and Desdemona counterparts as dangerous for the “Black” community. However, this initial characterization should not be understood as here imposing an actual inversion of the values the canonical honor play assigned to race/color. Early modern literature made analogies between animals and “Black” and other “native” peoples that had been *actualized* by “White” colonizers who rendered the enslaved Africans literal beasts of burden. Wynter refuses to simply reverse the direction of the dehumanization, to render “Black” co-eval with Human and “White” with non-Human animal. For example, when Obadiah figures Rose as a “hen” in “the fowl house [. . .] hatching out” the eggs of the “traitor cock,” he simultaneously figures himself as a cock “flaunting [his] comb and jingling [his] spurs” (29, 2.1). In Obadiah’s tale, it

is *all* the “characters” who are animals, not only the “enemy.” Historically, “White” planters certainly suffered nightmares that, come Emancipation, they would be vanquished by those they had long subjugated, as evidenced by the journals they wrote during the colonial period. However, the greater freedom desired by the colonized subjects Wynter represents in the play leads neither to plots for White extinction nor to notions of Black superiority. *Under the Sun* incessantly deploys the traditional symbols of debasement not to reinforce supremacy but to suggest equalization and co-relation.

Delegitimizing Religious Hierarchy, Relegitimizing Black Religion

Faith Traditions

I have demonstrated how, first with her play, Wynter traced a process of racialization through religion, revealing religion as one of the primary engines for the colonization and slavery that followed. With *Under the Sun*, and indeed, all the plays that follow, she also counters the continued production of inferiority through the anointing of Christianity as the One True Religion. At a time when much of the drama of the region offered “simplistic second-hand treatment of the rural folk, in particular ridiculing their beliefs in obeah” (Regis 396), Wynter takes pains to vindicate the African-derived spiritual system of obeah instead, again through the mechanism of placing it in equivalence to its already-validated “opposite,” Christianity.

In this case, however, even as she renders the two spiritual systems coeval, she casts neither as a force for benign or positive good. One example of this coordinate characterization is found in the very first scene, set in the church. Hugh cites the Bible “chapter and verse” when demanding the rectification of Rose’s supposed transgression, telling Obadiah that he must: “Curse the adulterer as the Lawd done command in the Book of Deuteronomy, chapter twenty-seven verse twenty-four” (15, 1.1). However, when Obadiah begins with the terrible curse—“Thy Lawd make thy thigh to [rot]”—the import of this curse is immediately understood and rejected by the congregation. Such a curse would produce devastation as terrible as any obeah.

It would be difficult for the audience to miss this crucial equivalence, for the play's characters expound upon it at great length. One character, Sister Sue, explicitly connects the Biblical hex with parallels in obeah: "Don't curse that curse, you hear me [. . .] For if a curse like that curse 'gainst you is just as if obeahman should work black-magic-obeah 'gainst you." Her protest against the Biblical ritual has the quality of a ward against evil. "If curse like that curse 'gainst you is just as if you should wake up one morning, go out careless-like into your yard and should find a blue bag . . . [. . .] And inside the blue bag you should find . . ." Other women join in the ritualized protest, listing the terrible "ingredients" that might be found: "Hair from a human head . . . [. . .] a frog's leg [. . .] Scrapings from the hoof a mule . . ." Sue finishes, "So you wouldn't bother to go back inside your house, but instead would sit down in the sun and wait for the end," and another woman interprets, "For you would know that nothing now was any use now that obeah man done put black magic obeah on you" (17, 1.1). Their words imply that just as one is hopeless in the face of the obeah ritual, none of the redemption promised through right Christian action could save one from the Biblical ritual that Hugh and Miss Gatha demand. The two forces are equally unforgiving.

Wynter plays up the effect of the comparison through the proliferation of negative associations. With its evocation of the profound consequences of obeah-wrought vengeance, the beginning of the scene is already powerful enough. However, the violence of the Bible verses Wynter deploys in the rest of the scene are as palpable as any obeah, and when she piles one on top of the other, the analogy is devastating. Indeed, the state of being assumed to result from the curse sounds uncannily close to the legendary zombies, with the process also recalling their production.

The Biblical procedure Obadiah describes obliterates a person's humanity. The curse he calls for will erase "The Adulterer" to the point that "the littlest bit of remembrance memory of him going to blot out from underneath the sky." The horror of existential erasure Obadiah details means "the man not man more, for nobody remember that he was man" and deprives the victim of all

human contact and emotion. The devastating aftermath will rob him of the cardinal points of humanity, including birth, joy, sorrow, sexuality, and loving, for “he can’t remember what it was to born, to laugh, to cry, to know woman who did know him as man . . .” In the end, Obadiah concludes, “when he tired of all this [. . .] he not going to remember what it was to die.” Just as there would be nothing for you to do but “sit down in the sun and wait for the end” with the imagined obeah hexing, this invoked Biblical curse would result in you “walking in the shadow of death but even death won’t touch you.” The annihilation achieved by both Biblical and obeah procedures is total (15, 1.1).

As deadly as the comparison already appears, the fate being envisioned becomes all the more terrible when the audience recalls the words of this invoked verse that *aren’t* spoken. Ivy Wilson and Catherine Henze, among others, have theorized the significance of the unvoiced in oral performances. Henze writes that “what is *not* sung [or spoken], but remembered is also worth consideration. [. . .] The full cognitive content of [a song or speech] is the unscripted contrast between the heard version and the remembered source” (11). If that most famous Psalm recalled in the curse begins, “Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,” it ends, “I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me” (Psalm 23:4, KJV). However, in Wynter’s versioning of the Bible, fear *cannot* be conquered, and there is no comfort to be found. Instead, her allusions recall whatever comfort her listeners may derive from their practice of Christianity, only to remind them of the terror, arcane rituals, and “superstitions” propagated by their most sacred text in quick order.

Those who would condemn obeah must then confront the mirror she has shown them and resolve the dilemma of the parallel procedures. Wynter would later assert that “the process of demythologization” of “White” institutions required such parallel procedures to “re-define the relation” between the subjugated and the dominant: “If Caliban is to become a man, Prospero must

cease being a myth of super-man” (“Learn Pt. 1” 31). Given the status accorded to (certain forms of) Christianity in turn-of-the-century Jamaica, equating the reviled obeah with Christianity could not psychically be allowed to diminish the esteem for Christianity to the low levels any African-derived spiritual tradition suffered; it must raise the African up instead, producing reciprocal respect. If only “White” colonially imposed institutions were considered valid and valuable by colonizer and often colonized like, Wynter dramatically charts how the “Black” systems correspond to the “White.”

Demonstrating the validity and value of both enables her to rhetorically counter one of the colonial justifications for Black subjugation. When “European” religion or traditions are demonstrably savage and superstitious as well, it cannot be that African descendants in these islands are dominated because they are heir to superstition or savagery, as was often claimed. Wynter emphasizes these equivalencies throughout the play; correspondence becomes one of her prevailing strategies in the battle of revalorization that is one arm of anticoloniality.⁴³

Consistently, then, Wynter’s countertheatrics imagine new relationships rather than their reversal, equivalences rather than supremacies. We should recall, here, the dramatic versioning Wynter effected outside of *Under the Sun*. When Wynter adapted García Lorca’s *Yerma* as *The Barren One* (1958), she left the eponymous character herself unaltered. García Lorca depicts Yerma resisting the liminal position to which her society had relegated her and avenging her devaluation with actual violence—killing her husband. For *The Barren One*, Wynter faithfully reproduces this character’s motivation and actions. When she versions the honor play with *Under the Sun*, Wynter retains García

⁴³ Obeah is not generally construed as a positive spiritual force, even if its power is respected. Its globally poor reputation among people of the Caribbean makes it seem all the more remarkable that Wynter insists on casting obeah’s rituals as no worse, if no better, than some of those contained in the Bible. For instructive treatments of obeah and its corrective, myal, see, e.g., Erna Brodber’s *The Continent of Black Consciousness*; Zora Neale Hurston’s *Tell My Horse*; Brian Moore and Michele Johnson’s *Neither Led Nor Driven*; and Wynter’s ““We Know Where We Are From.””

Lorca's resistant marginalized female character. However, she renounces that character's violent resolution.

Furthermore, she redresses his versioning's erasure of the (generally veiled) racial anxieties of Renaissance literature that Shakespeare had chosen to literalize in his character Othello. Textually, she refuses to privilege gendered domination over racial and ultimately successfully "wed[s] Desdemona to the huge Moor." Implicitly and explicitly, Wynter cements together the survival of ("Black" and other) women to "Black" (male and female) people—and ultimately humanity writ large. Through its unification and equalization of formerly antagonistic agents, *Under the Sun* thereby stages the possibility of restructuring society and "its attendant perceptual and cognitive matrices . . . into new ones founded on reciprocal relations" ("New World View" 5). It is just such reciprocal relations, or "distributive justice, and [. . .] rational arrangement of the social and political spheres" (Daifallah 5) that thinkers such as Claudia Jones, C. L. R. James, and Frantz Fanon, the anticolonial thinkers Wynter joined on the scene in London, theorized as necessary for restructuring the relations of governance, economy, and relationships, from the family to the transnational community. Wynter's drama project refuses racial-religious-liberal-humanist and gender supremacy alike.

Leading on Faith

Wynter pays particular attention to the ways that enshrining Christianity as the One True Religion enabled the colonial elite to delegitimize leaders elevated by the working poor within their religious organizations. Refusing the idea of an anointed sainthood as the necessary basis for leadership allows Wynter to counter the colonial propaganda discounting the millenarian leaders who abound in the history of resistance to slavery and colonization.⁴⁴ Even as there is no intimation, in either play or novel, that Moses is saintly, Wynter does not allow the problematic character to be

⁴⁴ See Anthony Bogues's *Black Heretics, Black Prophets* (2003) for the tradition of Black prophetic leadership.

justification for the wholesale dismissal of these “prophets” as instead charlatans. In one scene, a community member expresses despair when facing the hunger caused by depleted land and drought. He argues that the community should disband and return to the city in the valley, where “the government may be little bit responsible for we... because we want we children to live” (45, 3.2). Another character reminds him that the government refuses any such responsibility. She recalls the studied neglect and collusion of government and elites that had created the very conditions that meant their children dying instead. In other words, it was the desire that “we children live” that had brought the New Believers together in the hills in the first place.

The scene emphasizes the reality that the people were responding to their immiseration, debunking the myth that they were answering the call of a false prophet. A combination of factors had produced expansive poverty and joblessness of the peasant class at the end of the nineteenth century, including the declining price of Jamaican sugar on the global market, which led to the flight of many sugar planters and the consolidation/growth of the plantations that remained. US American capitalists added to this economic transformation by aggressively exploiting banana cultivation. Their path to agricultural domination was paved by colonial policies favoring the discounted sale of large tracts of public land to wealthy planters—and an attendant inability of “small-holders” to access land via ownership (W. James 16–17). The formerly enslaved also suffered from restricted access to health care when planters no longer accepted any responsibility for employing doctors to treat their now “Emancipated” workers. Furthermore, planters quickly countered any possible improvement for wage laborers. When peasants fled the plantations to cultivate their own plots or find better paid work, the planters offset the loss of an infinitely exploitable laboring class by bringing in indentured labor from India and China. “Exit taxes” paid the transport costs for these laborers—taxes the planter-controlled government imposed on the limited number of Jamaican laborers that it allowed to seek higher wages (if not finding better working conditions) via migration

to Panama, Cuba, and elsewhere. Yes, they had to pay to leave. The scene above responds to these conditions of increased poverty produced by an elite-oriented government that ignored people's basic needs and imposed taxes and other policies that further enriched the elite at the expense of the peasants and working class.⁴⁵

Part of this state-enacted strategy for keeping the mostly "Black" laboring population contained was discrediting those leaders attempting to ameliorate conditions for their communities through self-organization, accusing them of being, instead of legitimate leaders, rather "false prophets" practicing non-Christian and thus "false" religions. Wynter's restorying does not lionize these figures but acknowledges the people's legitimate needs and the ways leaders arose to respond to (and sometimes profit from) those needs.

Wynter's first "prophet" is a vexed character. He is also connected with vexed historical characters who, nonetheless, Wynter has assessed as critical to the collective revindication of "Black" people. New "prophets" are always the "forerunners of the anticolonial movements," according to Wynter, because they offer people new origin myths (*Interview*). Reconceiving of themselves, the people can begin to move. Wynter would later explain that her messianic character Moses (as incarnated in the novel) was based on two historical "prophets" ("Re-Enchantment" 134). One was the Jamaican Alexander Bedward, a preacher who had claimed he would ascend in his living body to intercede for his followers, read as an escape from the hell on earth. The other was a similar figure from the mainland Caribbean, the millenarian Nathaniel Jordan, whom Guyanese legend owned as a prophet. The British Guinean government had also once confined Jordan to an insane asylum to constrain his proselytizing and organizing for what he believed to be a fuller

⁴⁵ Barry Chevannes reports that the cultivators who owned the smallest plots post-Emancipation "bore the greatest burden of taxation," with one parish assessing holdings smaller than 5 acres for taxes of about £989 at the same time as assessing holdings of over 1,000 acres at around £25 ("Repairer" 272).

emancipation.⁴⁶ Although these elements of the historical figures were incorporated into the novel that followed, when Wynter first created Moses for *Under the Sun*, he lacked the madness the character would later appear to exhibit, let alone a megalomaniacal quest for a divinity vested only in him. Neither did the plot contain any spectacular death aiming for heavenly ascension to match Bedwardian legend. Instead, in this first incarnation, two quite different historical figures were likely at least partially Wynter's models, both prophetic but one both political and religious and one more explicitly political: Leonard Howell, the Gong, and Marcus Garvey, popularly called Black Moses. The significance of the first of these models will become apparent in the next chapter.

As to the latter, Wynter's estimation of Garvey's crucial contribution to anticoloniality was well demonstrated. Joining Garvey's more recognized legacy to Bedward's in a 1972 newspaper article, she attempted to recuperate both men's legacies from the degradation they had suffered when they were depicted, instead of liberators, as madmen or swindlers by the Jamaican—and in Garvey's case also US—government. By the time she wrote this article, she had already argued that Garvey should be recognized as a “national hero,” along with another preacher, Paul Bogle (*National Heroes* 18–23). Also now recognized as a national hero, Bogle had led the 1865 protests that the colonial government had suppressed with so much ferocity that, as Wynter writes, the bodies of the murdered protesters were heaped in a pile eight miles long.⁴⁷ Some of this historical material found its way into *Under the Sun*'s novel expansion. For the play, however, there is no mass movement—not of the magnitude of the 1865 protests and certainly not on the level of Garvey's later UNIA.⁴⁸

⁴⁶ For a recent assessment of Alexander Bedward's role in agitating for greater freedom for Jamaica's “Black” poored, and in laying the path for the spiritually-inflected mass movement of Marcus Garvey, see Edward White and Barry Chevannes (“Repairer”; “Revival”). For more on Nathaniel Jordan, see Judith Robuck's 1973 doctoral thesis on the Guyanese Jordanite movement.

⁴⁷ The sources from which this reference to “eight miles of dead” emerges are many, although there is some argument over whether the numbers reported in the London news were accurate. See, e.g., *Monadnock* 1; Mimi Sheller 540.

⁴⁸ In 1965, not even a decade after *Under the Sun* had been broadcast by the BBC, Wynter also wrote a play about this uprising of the laborers that turned into a general push for greater self-rule, utilizing the actual speeches of the brutally

Instead, the play addresses what happens within a community organized around such a powerful and charismatic leader after that leader is gone and has been vilified in the popular imagination through the government's concerted attempts to defang that community's organizing promise.

That Wynter raised this problematic in 1958 is significant. Written within a community organizing against colonialism, the play recalls past "prophets" organizing around the needs of their people, leaders whom governments targeted for "neutralization" via propaganda or execution. Indeed, it was the 1961 assassination of Patrice Lumumba, embraced as a truly anticolonial leader, that caused Wynter and others in that community in England to lose hope for anticolonial struggle in Africa. *Under the Sun* anticipates the loss to the people caused by assassination, incarceration, deportation, and simple disappointment. Furthermore, the play opposes personality-centered leadership by discrediting one leader after another and demonstrating how "normal" people must organize themselves to satisfy their own needs.

In an all-important flashback to the night Isaac, son of the founding father, left the community for good, Aunt Kate describes the intolerable conditions the original members had been attempting to flee. The settlement in the hills, she declared, allowed escape

from hunger... from boxing up in a zinc-roofed crab-hole of a room that hide 'way close in the rubbish jungle of a tin-pan town where we could just manage to draw little breath to go on living on faith, hope and charity under the sun... Hebron was escape from looking for a work which wasn't

retaliatory governor and other key figures to ground the historical piece. This play, *1865—A Ballad for a Rebellion*, had been commissioned by the Jamaican National Trust to commemorate the centennial of the rebellion. Wynter used the occasion to rectify the historical record, which had, unsurprisingly, characterized the uprising as riot, the colonial governor as justified in his actions, and Paul Bogle a false prophet. Other writers also attempted to rectify this record. As Supriya Nair writes, several decades earlier, Vic Reid published, with his novel *New Day* (1949), "a counter-narrative" to "the colonial press [which] had dubbed [the Rebellion as] treacherous mutiny rather than the uprising of a people who were combating repressive colonial Regimes" (62). Wynter would go on to advocate the use of theater in helping to document the "people's" history as against the official versions they'd been taught, reinforcing her theorizing, in the 1971 "Novel and History" essay, that for colonized nations, fiction was "more valid as a mode of articulating history than the discipline of history" promulgated by their colonizers (N. Edwards, "Talking" 29). My work organizing Wynter's personal papers unearthed a partial script of a theater documentary on Black prison writing, along with an argument for increasing such use of theater, rather than or alongside film, to provoke discussion on key historical moments in Black diasporic life, as well as a completed film treatment of Columbus's first voyage to the Americas.

nowhere to be had... a piece of land... [where] we could eat bread by the sweat of our brow... After four pickney-children born dead because of what the doctor at the hospital said was under nourishment Hebron was for me a place where I could eat enough so that the last baby I was carrying could live to suck at my breast... could live. (41, 1.3)

It was *this* people—landless, jobless, homeless, and doomed by hunger to lose even their future generations, abandoned by a colonial government in cahoots with plantocracy—that unsaintly Moses had brought out of the cities and into the hills. The *movement* of the New Believers is pragmatic, even if Wynter’s countering of dominant, rather than reciprocal, organization of human relations through the play stages a Utopian vision. When Isaac cries foul on prophetic claims for the community’s founding, Aunt Kate rebuts his argument, articulating that whatever the contentions of either its founders or its detractors, the community had been motivated to establish itself for reasons as fundamentally material as religious.

Wynter’s scripting, with Aunt Kate rejecting the accusation that the character Moses is a false prophet, must be seen in this light. In this first version, rather than ascending into the hills with a quest to achieve the detached divinity of a God of the European tradition, Wynter’s prophet Moses was, like his Biblical predecessor, leading his people out of extreme privation in search of a place where they could *live*, rather than die; where they could finally draw breath “under the sun.” The play thus highlights the conditions faced by the jobless and mostly “Black” poor left destitute by the collapse of sugar in the wake of the withdrawal of many planters and by the subsequent consolidation of both sugar and banana plantations in the hands of a few home-grown capitalists and a scant few more global ones. The people who took to the hills were, as the character Aunt Kate voices it, attempting to “escape from hungryness . . . from sleeping on a sidewalk [or] . . . boxing up in a zinc roofed crab-hole of a room hide ‘way close in the rubbish jungle of a tin-pan town” (41,

1.3). Rather than a “prophet,” false or true, instead of a “rascal,” Moses was, Kate declared, “just a starving barefoot man.”⁴⁹

Wynter’s decision to leave such possible antecedents to her Moses obscured may well have been strategic. Another figure similar to Bedward and Jordan, one Wynter does *not* directly claim as inspiration for Moses, is nonetheless suggested: the charismatic leader Leonard Howell, dubbed by many “the first Rasta” (Lee). As far back as 1941, the colonial government had sent the police to destroy a community then creating itself at Pinnacle, a communal compound of some 500 acres established by Leonard Howell and the adherents of his “Ethiopian Salvation Society.” The raid, according to the conservative *Gleaner*, “was very popular with the surrounding inhabitants” (qtd. in D. Thomas 70).

It was far from the last; the Rastafari community was increasingly targeted by the police and maligned in the still-colonial press, in the Caribbean as abroad. A mere four years before the BBC produced *Under the Sun*, Alexander Bustamante, founder of the Jamaican Labor Party and, at this point, Chief Minister of the colonial government, had ordered a similar police raid on the “self-sustaining [Rastafari] community” (D. Thomas, “Rastafari” 73). The attack decimated the settlement, with officials jailing hundreds of the men and forcing the remaining members to seek hard-to-come-by shelter and bread in the cities they had previously escaped. As revealed in her discussion with David Scott, Wynter sets the novel that grew out of the play in a period that seemed more post-Emancipation than post-1938 to allow her to identify the earlier attempts to wrest control from the plantocracy as a crucial forerunner to the anticolonial struggles that followed, without engaging all

⁴⁹ The significance of bare versus shod feet is revealed in the attention Wynter describing characters’ shoes in the stage version of the play. Mass Obadiah wears “clean white rubbersoled canvas shoes” while Brother Hugh sports “shining black patent leather shoes,” and Miss Gatha “white stockings and black side-button boots” while others have “old-fashioned” shoes that are too small, “cracked leather boots,” or none at all (1-2, 1.1).

the geopolitical forces at play during and after the “world” wars (Scott, “Re-Enchantment”).⁵⁰ I would suggest that the resulting temporal ambiguity also allowed her to veil her critique of more *local* than *geopolitical* dynamics: the still-operating policies of abandonment of the peasant and working classes in general and suppression of the Rastafari in particular.

When Wynter was writing, there was an urgent need to refute anti-Rasta rhetoric, which the Jamaican government used to abdicate any government responsibility for the immiseration of its subjects, just as Reagan deployed the myth of the Welfare Queen in the US. Thus, while not going to the documentary lengths of *1865—A Ballad for a Rebellion* (written *post*-official colonial withdrawal), the pre-withdrawal *Under the Sun* nevertheless also endeavors to set the historical record straight. The play counters the ruling class propaganda that blamed the increasing chaos and deprivation of urban life, in particular, on the still-fringe few attempting to combat it through movements of spiritual and political community organizing, whether for the partial exodus (“Back to Africa!”) or for increased participation and ownership (“House an’ lan’ a’buy fam’ly oh”). Particularly disparaged by both the well-off and not-so-well-off and consistently targeted by the colonial police were the Rastafari, those who came to epitomize the phrase “starving barefoot man” even if their land cultivation in the hills meant that if they *were* starving, it was to a lesser degree than their urban jobless counterparts.⁵¹ The exodus from the cities of the early Rastafari, who worked the land and trades collectively in a manner the *Gleaner* called (out as) socialist, only mirrored earlier similar departures from the plantations in favor of subsistence farming (“Ras Tafari’s Retreat”).

⁵⁰ Such a comprehensive engagement was also rendered nearly impossible by the genre. Plays, and particularly radio plays, demanded immediacy—and brevity. See Deborah Thomas’s careful attention to the geopolitical dynamics in her 2017 *Small Axe* article. For more on the local forces at play, see Eudell, 2002; Bogue, 2003; Gray, 2017 & 1991; and R. Hill, 1983.

⁵¹ The existence of trained cobblers in the Rasta camps meant the residents were also more likely to be shod than were the city poor.

From Vexed Romance to Outright Tragedy

David Scott has asserted that Romance, rather than tragedy, was the preferred mode of anticolonial writers, looking, as they most often were, toward “utopian” futures (*Conscripts* 7–8). Scott suggests, furthermore, that tragedy is a more apt mode for the postcolonial text, which must reckon with the failures of formal independence if people are to find anything in them that could guide them to fundamentally restructure society. Wynter’s first play resolves by refusing ritual murder (or vengeance) and framing the possibility of a healthy future, centering in the proscenium those wise old characters who have shown their capacity for healing divisions and mobilizing for the collective good. Thus, this first drama is undoubtedly in the romantic mode, even if it is not exactly utopian. Scott’s observation raises an interesting question for this study about the writing of a playwright whose expression straddles the line of the anti- and putatively post- colonial: What would *Under the Sun* look like as tragedy?

Unfortunately, multiple “real world” responses are readily found. Osage Avenue, 1985, perhaps. Grenada, 1983? But one might also imagine analogs that were far closer temporally, geographically, and topically to Wynter’s historically-grounded explorations in her early plays: the travesties of the attack on Pinnacle in 1954 and Coral Gardens in 1963. The Jamaican police and judiciary had violently dismantled Pinnacle in 1954, just before Wynter penned *Under the Sun*. Wynter’s dramatic vision of an autonomously organized “Black” community still within the bounds of a colonial state which nonetheless imagines a future unmolested could function as a more particularized attempt to envision an alternative Black futurity for Pinnacle. This is a correspondence to which we should attend since Pinnacle was neither a nation nor had pretensions of becoming one. Wynter’s adoption of the “sovereign” —or at least separately organized—community can be read as theorizing decolonization in the direction of such autonomous communities—a more properly anti-state than nation-state mode.

Indeed, Donnette Francis identifies a “skepticism” about the capacity of a nation-state to fulfill the “freedom dreams” of the region’s people demonstrated by 1960s novels such as Wynter’s *Hills of Hebron* (1962). Although the play that preceded the novel was less pessimistic, it could already be characterized as skeptical, particularly concerning the future, and not only of the nation-state but also of its possible alternatives. In the alternative political and social world of the neo-Maroon New Believers, the wise and potential leaders all belong to an older generation. The younger women are silenced or silly; the younger men are absent, violent, and exploitative.

Conceptualizing Hebron as a possible Pinnacle analog, with all attendant warnings therefore also assumed, becomes all the more plausible when looking at the play that came next. If Wynter designs a perhaps romantic “Black” futurity in her pre-Independence 1958 *Under the Sun*, by the time her dramatic versions of Roger Mais’s novel *Brother Man* were staged in Jamaica in 1960 and broadcast on BBC radio in 1964 after the failure of Federation and the inauguration of formal independence, Romance has dropped away entirely.⁵² Wynter’s restorying of Mais’s 1954 novel *Brother Man* addresses the incapacity of the nation-state more directly than her previous plays had but also continues to express ambivalence about the possibilities for alternative formations—particularly those *ungrounded* in recognized occupation and use of *land*. The tragedy her *Brother Man* stages is the attempted destruction of a subjected people’s humanity and, even more crucially, the destruction of their dreams for land-based self-determination and self-sufficiency. It is to this play that I turn next.

⁵² I derive this production history from BBC documentation. Producer Robin Midgely’s 1961 letter calls Wynter’s *Brother Man* the most successful play he produced the year before in Jamaica. I have found no sources corroborating its staging. (I did see it in radio listings, but I have been able to locate that source again.)

Entremés 4

“Moritat for a Lost Leader”

In addition to the actual songs that are everywhere in her work, Wynter uses musical metaphors throughout her writing. For instance, in the “Strange Presences” article, she glosses the process of Caribbean creolization as “attempting to fuse the thin music of the spinet with the powerful rhythm of the drum” (“Strange” 145). Another such metaphor appears in the title of her poetic “tribute” to the then recently deceased prime minister, Norman W. Manley. The poem was published in the *Jamaica Journal*, starting on a two-page spread with a portrait of Manley by Karl Parboosingh.¹ To my eye, the large heading at the top is meant to apply to the whole ensemble. That would mean “A Tribute to Manley” isn’t part of her title. I’m not sure.

What I *am* sure about is after the (implied) colon: “Moritat to a Lost Leader.” The shade is deep. A “moritat” can be defined as “popular entertainment” that features “pictures of a murder or a sensational event” being explained in barrel-organ-accompanied song. More simply, it’s the “street ballad,” otherwise known as a murder ballad. (The 1961 Wynter/Carew movie puts a Caribbean spin on the trope, with a Calypsonian following the fugitive characters, strumming a guitar, and singing about their exploits. Pre-*Paddington*.)

Earlier versions of the poem were titled more plainly, “Ballad for a Lost Leader,” still evoking the music that occurs throughout the poem. However, moritat evokes it with much greater precision. The word is heavily burdened by its historical connotations and lends to a more sinister evaluation of the poem’s subject. The most famous moritat is “Mack the Knife” from *The Threepenny Opera*,” by Kurt Weill and Bertolt Brecht. The version most of us likely know is a translation of the German original, “Die Moritat von Mackie Messer.” Apparently, the German version is harsh. The

¹¹ *Jamaica Journal*, December 1969, vol. 3, no. 4, pp. 2–6.

English lyrics of one version go, “You know, when that shark bites with his teeth, babe/ Scarlet billows start to spread/ Fancy gloves, oh, wears old MacHeath, babe/ So there’s never, never a trace of red.” (I think that’s Bobby Darin’s version; I prefer Ella’s.)² The words easily give rise to images of politicians who hire out their dastardly deeds to thugs, masking their own complicity in the death and misery of their supposed constituents. In this sense, her title of “Moritat” protests the literally deadly results of the policies enacted under Norman Manley—as against the stated hopes of the young middle-class progressives of the PLP he founded.

Read through the commentary of the title, just about every line drips with condemnation. Immediately bringing in the language of the world marketplace, the speaker suggests that Jamaica’s future was sold. She compares Manley with the Pied Piper, a merchant with a good sales pitch, and the Biblical trickster who got Esau to trade his birthright for a “mess of pottage.” He “exchang[ed] charity for power” and used words as “instruments,” went from titan to puppet, and ultimately came to “taste [the] ashes” of failure and “the intricacy of grief.”

The 18th-century ballad opera that developed the murder ballad originated as political satire, lampooning the corruption and excesses of those in power. Along the way, it incorporated the broadside ballad that remembered the victims. This “Moritat” is no different. The “singer” mourns not the dead leader but the “lost leader” of “yesterday” who had made the young agitators for change believe. Their grief blasts out: “We cried aloud, we wailed upon the water.” Acknowledging the depth of the felt betrayal, having acted to bring about a broad freedom, she wonders what *they* did wrong: “Into what cul-de-sac did we dance / To find ourselves / High walled in Babylon?” In this “tribute” to the deceased, the dead invoked are the people left behind “in the scrub and alien country/ of the wretched of the earth.” In the end, she declares, “Worms ate our innocence.”

² <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wYaEVSjg5BE> Imagine, as one of her old friends had, Wynter in Ella’s stead.

Chapter 4

Restoring the (Black, Collective) Human

“I offered you a Black Kingdom and you offered me . . . bread.”

—*Brother Man* (1964)

“He spoke . . . the truth Ambro . . . For us Africa is here.”

—*Brother Man* (1964)

In the summer of 1959, Sylvia Wynter went home to Jamaica to give birth to her second child. While there, she adapted Roger Mais’s 1954 novel *Brother Man* as a radio drama, which she pitched to the BBC on her return to Britain that fall. Mais had died only a year after the novel’s publication. In some notes she was taking, likely to prep for writing the play, Wynter called Mais “the first important Jamaican writer” and noted his political origin story in “the movement for independence” whose drive “had been germinating for long before 1938” (“Rastafarites”).¹ Mais was also a playwright, having written more than a dozen dramas, of which several had been produced.² His drama experience may have led to the clear theatricality of *Brother Man*. The novel includes highly individuated characters, such as the title character and his foils; an already functioning chorus providing cultural texture; and chapters that work as acts.

In addition to appreciating the importance of Mais as a political figure, one who had been able to cross raced/class lines, and to the apparent theatricality of his novel, Wynter likely chose to adapt *Brother Man* in response to the dire need to address a seemingly intractable societal problem;

¹ Circa 1960, personal papers. See also her interview with Scott for the importance of Mais in her thought.

² See the “Annotated Bibliography of The Roger Mais Collection,” University of the West Indies Library. (The digitized copy I encountered didn’t include authorship, but it appears to be part of a study by Daphne Morris.) The Library of Jamaica Documentary Heritage project reports that the Mais collection includes “87 short stories, 19 plays, 17 radio plays, 7 novels (3 unpublished), 1 unfinished novel, and 1 folder with over 50 poems.” <http://www.heritagedocs.org/docs/jamaica.htm#rogermais>

the radical potential she saw embedded in Mais's narrative; and her desire to enable those politics to reach a wider audience. Mais had sought to counter the widespread demonization of Rastafari through his quiet literary introduction. With her adaptation, Wynter would seek more forcefully to reveal the origin of Rastafari political emergence and the imperative fulfillment of Rastafari political desires. As to reach, both the radio drama form of her adaptation, which would require neither literacy nor purchase to access, and her more explicit rendering of the radical potential in the original would do much to extend the text's compass.

One way to amplify the politics would have been through critique, a mode Wynter had increasingly been engaging with *Caribbean Voices*. C. L. R. James's critical approach to Melville, according to William Cain, functions to promote James's own politics, rather than reveal the politics of the text. To make this argument, Cain engages Melville's correspondence and other nonfiction writings that one might see as a "truer" representation of Melville's politics than his imaginative text. What a novel *does* and what its author *intends* for it to do can clearly diverge. However, I'm less interested in the "truth" of interpretation here than I am in this critical mode that Cain identifies as critics reaching toward the text's more subterranean moves that they believe are thought vital to surface in that historical moment. It is a minister's mode—deploying the most situationally apt biblical verses and explaining them in a way that allows the speaker to mobilize the desired sentiments and actions in congregants. Wynter's adaptation methodology for *Brother Man* appears to align with this Jamesian Melville mode. She revises her source text to "demand . . . that readers perceive the texts as they should be, as they need to be" (Cain 270, emphasis mine).³ The re-interpretive mode of adaptation allows Wynter to "make visible what has been obscured, what has

³ Cain also contends that James not only re-interprets, but purposely *mis*interprets Melville (and Shakespeare) "to make them serve his own social, political, and historical purposes" (270). I do not extend this part of his argument to Wynter's re-interpretative practice with Mais's fiction; her critical appraisal of Mais (for example in "One Love") quite forcefully represents Mais as political in ways that align with her dramatic adaptation.

been forgotten, what has disappeared from view” (Scott, qtd in Donnell 1) in order to address an urgent moral and political problem in that moment: those in power simultaneously entrenching poverty and scapegoating the poor, all while reacting with “exceptional violence”⁴ to the people’s legitimate claims to the possibility of a life lived with dignity.

Historical Context

Less than a decade had passed since Mais had launched his version, bringing attention to the bubbling dangers in a society organized to fail the most basic needs of the majority of its people while the elite deflected their responsibility by blaming its cachexia on those who appeared to have the least power to better the situation. Like his first novel, *The Hills Were Joyful Together* (1953), his second brought the wretched poverty and violence of the island’s urban ghettos into the homes of readers who might otherwise have been able to maintain willful ignorance, given the extreme stratification that created mostly separate class spheres. However, the second novel also cast shade on the campaign being waged in pulpits, bully pulpits, and print, which stoked fear and resentment of a particular set of Jamaicans. Claimed as a nationalist text, the novel refrains from commenting on the larger political process of decolonization underway, with England in the midst of deciding what to do with its colonies and regional factions mobilizing for and against self-government. Instead, it underscores the volatility of the coordinated elite strategy of surveilling, constraining, and scapegoating the urban poor and particularly this set of under- and unemployed, mostly Black persons. Could the immiserated classes organize their refusal of broad economic and political marginalization and coordinate with the more educated and resourced people also agitating for society’s transformation? This question was, in the early ‘50s, still open.

⁴ The phrase comes from Thomas’s important study, *Exceptional Violence* (2011).

Mais's own political commitments were clear. The colonial government had jailed him for sedition in 1944 when he wrote and printed an article criticizing Churchill's revelation that Britain intended to keep all its erstwhile colonies in a subordinate relationship, even as volunteers from all those colonies were critical to defending the "free" world. The article had been duplicated by the thousands and played an important role in mobilizing anticolonial sentiment. Some of Mais's imaginative oeuvre expressed his decolonial politics just as clearly. The play *Hurricane*, for example, written in 1941 and produced at Kingston's Ward Theatre in 1943, staged a demand for redistribution of the island's land from large plantation holders to the laborers who worked them.⁵ Although often counted among the Windrush writers' set, he was a generation older—a contemporary of Una Marson's—and had been writing plays, poems, short stories, news stories, and polemics since the 1930s.⁶ Even if not all of his work was as explicitly political as *Hurricane*, Mais was legitimately claimed as an anticolonial writer.⁷

However, his 1954 novel *Brother Man* has been read as among his less explicitly political works. That is, many critics hold that the novel declines to induce or invoke agitation for broad transformation of political and economic systems. As Kwame Dawes puts it, in *Brother Man*, "Mais fails to explore the larger political tensions of colonialism and race" ("Violence" 31). Instead, most

⁵ The *Gleaner* published a bizarre review of this production. The write-up obscures the play's subject at every turn. The play's "action takes place in a single day . . . in which great decisions are taken . . . [and] the force and fury of the elements reaches 'hurricane' strength." The abstract description continues: "The real protagonist . . . [is] an idea deep-rooted in some strata of human consciousness." The criticisms are no more concrete: "It is a play with a really dramatic story and setting; gripping from the purely human aspect, which from beginning to end is carried forward without slowing up and with real dramatic presentation" ("Roger Mais' Hurricane"). The review gives one an eerily familiar feeling, like reading an elementary school assignment in the guise of an online "review."

⁶ His only finished novels were published during his short stint in London and France, from 1952 to 1954. See Faith Smith's article, "Kingston Calling" for an exploration of these final years of Mais's life.

⁷ Mais's storied commitment to anticoloniality is well rehearsed in scholarship on Caribbean literature. See, for instance, earlier studies by Jean Creary/D'Costa (1968, 1978), Kwame Dawes (1983), Rhonda Cobham (1981), Daphne Morris (1987), and Evelyn Hawthorne (1988), and more recent treatments by Karina Williamson (2002) and Jahlani Niaah (2005).

commentators agree, the novel simply renders fully realized working-class/poor Black characters, including their thoughts and motivations. This rehumanization works to revindicate the burgeoning urban populations in Jamaica and particularly adherents of the growing group of Rastafari.

If, at a remove, rehumanizing Rastafari seems less than urgent in an anticolonial organizing moment, examining the historical record would quickly convince one otherwise. As early as 1933, an editorial warned of the growing Rastafari movement, “It Is Not a Joke,” and urged “authorities to bring the activities of those who preach Ras Tafari in Jamaica to an end.”⁸ In 1934, editorials and “news” stories were describing bearded men as deluded dupes of false prophets and possibly criminal cultists. The “sensible” vigilantes from one parish were praised for forcibly “shaving [off Rastafarites] . . . beards and whiskers whenever such things appeared.”⁹ Only half a decade later, novelist and *Gleaner* editor H. G. DeLisser was mocking the “Jamaican Assyrians” growing beards in preparation for their “return” to Africa.¹⁰ By the early 1950s, when Mais wrote *Brother Man*, the elite-leaning newspaper, *The Daily Gleaner*, was full of stories that flogged a moral panic about bearded men. “Reports” and editorials built on the ubiquitous anti-marijuana propaganda, suggesting that all members were drug-crazed and likely to prey on women.¹¹ Business impresarios and churchmen urged the government to eliminate Rastafari settlements and curtail Rastafari movement. Public sentiment across class lines was inflamed, and the climate increasingly dangerous for the Rastafari.¹²

⁸ “It Is Not a Joke,” *Gleaner*, 27 Dec. 1933, p. 13.

⁹ “Daniel of Ras Tafari Cult Is Put in New Den,” *Gleaner*, 25 July 1934, p. 3. See for similar assaults and editorial attitude toward them, “Fooling the Masses,” *Gleaner*, 6 Aug. 1934, p. 6.

¹⁰ “Random Jottings, As I See the World,” *Gleaner*, 25 Sep. 1940, p. 8.

¹¹ Media tended to focus on men, despite evidence that many of the devoted were women, even in the early years, if *Gleaner* accounts of the many court trials naming women as defendants are to be trusted.

¹² The normalization and escalation of violence against Rastafari has now been well established. See, for example, D. Thomas (2011).

The year Mais wrote *Brother Man*, the situation became measurably worse. Aston Jolly, a notorious criminal known as Whoppy King, fatally flogged and stabbed a young man and raped the young woman accompanying him, attempting to murder her as well. She survived the attack and told the police her assailant wore a beard. Jolly had been involved in petty and violent crime for years before Emperor Ras Tafari was even crowned, let alone had a politico-religious movement initiated in his name. Yet elite members of government and commercial sectors using media and grapevine played upon Jolly's appearance to further stigmatize the Rastafari and gin up fear. According to one newspaper account, the storied gangster wore a "shaggy scrubble of beard on his square chin." Strategically located in the next column, the paper reports that workers at the dock had threatened to walk off the job if bearded men were allowed to walk on.¹³ Given the relentless propagandizing and police targeting of Rastas, it would be difficult, if not impossible, to discern from the official record whether Rastas were actually committing any violence against others. What the record shows more clearly is that Rastafari were *subjected* to a violence that had already been encouraged for decades, as had general discrimination in all areas of life, including housing, employment, and schooling.¹⁴ Now workers—even those who could only be affiliated with Rastafari superficially—experienced ever more social and economic pressure in urban areas flooded with the dispossessed peasantry. Mirroring the social situation with terrifying accuracy, Mais's novel catalogs insult and injury:

People began writing letters in the press. All bearded men should be placed behind barbed-wire. They should be publicly washed (?) and shaved! They

¹³ "Huge Crowds See Jolly on Court Trip: Remanded in Palisadoes Slaying," and "City Dockers Refuse to Work with 'Rastas,'" *Gleaner*, 15 June 1951, p. 1.

¹⁴ As demonstrated above, the *Gleaner* teemed with stories praising assaults against Rastafari and other bearded men at least as far back as 1933. For later accounts, see Deborah Thomas's film *Bad Friday*, which includes the first-person testimony of many Rastafari targeted for violence, but also of a retired police officer explaining how forces shot at bearded, dreadlocked images during target practice. On employment, schooling, housing, and other discrimination, see, for example, Barry Chevannes's historical ethnographic study, *Rastafari Roots and Ideology* (1994).

should be banished to Africa. They should be sterilized. They should be publicly flogged. They became identified with a certain political party. They should be denied the vote. They were, in fact, potential rapists and murderers all. (173)

For anyone wanting the region merely to transition to self-government, the instability of the social situation would appear to be an untenable threat. Those interested in broader transformation, not least to create livable conditions for the island's people, would recognize the need to intervene in the narrative that rendered criminal all urban working class and poor Black men, especially the highly visible Rastafari.

Given all the negative propaganda about Rastafari, *Brother Man's* gentle attempts to humanize “the bearded men” in the eyes of the Jamaican public—whose poorer classes had been made to fear them as much as had the middle classes—becomes more legible as nationalist advocacy.¹⁵ However, the novel's deployment of Christian symbology and its distancing from core Rastafari tenets created an opening for some early critics to recuperate the novel for their colonial aims, treating it as an aesthetic object that transcended its political context at the same time that it offered evidence of home-grown genius. Other scholars have since remarked on the novel's apparently misogynist deployment of female characters and its indictment of the public who turn on their prophet, making the assessment of its politics less clear-cut.

Wynter offers her own critical assessment of the novel with less ambivalence a decade and some later. In 1969, in one of a pair of essays that helped found Caribbean literary criticism, Wynter rebukes critic William Carr for his “dispraise” (“Learn Pt. 2” 29) of Mais, in divorcing his art from his politics, and avers that *Brother Man* demonstrates Mais's “revolutionary intention” (34). Mais accomplishes a feat, she declares, in taking “the ‘native’ out of the darkness behind the word, and

¹⁵ See Robert Hill's analysis of the surveillance report commissioned from Augier, Nettleford and Smith. (“Our Man in Mona”)

[drawing] him into the light world of print” (34). Not only does Mais depict this “native” for others. He talks with this “people in exile in another Egypt.” And what do they talk about? No less than “Jerusalem.” In other words, Wynter argues that Mais dialogues with (at least) Rastafari about repatriation to their “homeland,” an end to their exile.

From their earliest emergence, various groups of Rastafari attempted to establish homelands in Jamaica, whether in preparation or in place of the desired return to Africa, and were met with the colonial government’s violent resistance. Leonard Howell, considered to be among the earliest Rastafari, began in 1939 or 1940 to establish a largely self-sufficient community in the hills above Kingston. In 1954, the year Mais’s original was published, the Jamaican Constabulary Force attacked the Pinnacle commune established by Howell yet again. This Rastafari community had survived decades of assaults by police and civilians alike, now to see the land sold off, violently re-possessed, and aggressively defended to prevent any reconstitution on its grounds.¹⁶ However, far from dealing the final blow to the movement as the local elites had intended, the destruction of Pinnacle had, instead of simply diffusing its members, seeded them among the city dwellers in the surrounding parish and the rural areas beyond.¹⁷

The repression had ignited new fuel. The summer that Wynter returned to Jamaica, the government and its stakeholders were awash with paranoia about a possible Rastafari insurrection aided by the Cuban socialists who had just succeeded in seizing their own island.¹⁸ Their fears seemed to be realized when security forces clashed with Claudius Henry, another Rastafari leader,

¹⁶ See Charles Price, *Becoming Rasta: Origins of Rastafari Identity in Jamaica* (2009). For the dismantling of Pinnacle, see D. A. Dunkley’s “Suppression of Leonard Howell in Late Colonial Jamaica, 1932–1954” (2013); H el ene Lee’s film, *The First Rasta* (2011).

¹⁷ See Charles Price, “Political and Radical Aspects of the Rastafarian Movement in Jamaica” (2000).

¹⁸ See Thomas, “Rastafari, Communism, and Surveillance in Late Colonial Jamaica,” 2017.

uncovering what appeared to be a plot to seize control of Jamaica. The government responded with what has been recognized as the largest military operation on the island since the Maroon treaties had been signed (although not a greater massacre than Governor Eyre's in 1865). By the time Wynter's adaptation was broadcast on the BBC in 1964, the security apparatus of the newly "Independent" state had also reacted to a localized threat with outsized aggression, like the colonial government it succeeded. When five Rastafari avenged the private enclosure of lands they had cultivated for years by blowing up a gas station belonging to one of the private owners, the prime minister, Alexander Bustamante, infamously ordered security forces to "Bring in all Rastas, dead or alive!" (Cooper, "Bring In"). The resulting military operation targeted a much larger circle of Rastafari than had been involved—and visited unspeakable violence upon them.¹⁹ The stakes for Wynter's adaptation were algorithmically more dire than they had been for Mais's novel.

Adaptation as Amplification

In this chapter, I argue that Wynter, using James's Melville mode, adapted Mais's novel to address increased marginalization and violence against the people exemplified in the Claudius Henry moment, not only re-asserting Rasta humanity, but also clarifying the dangers inherent in the elite-oriented government's approach and the people's acquiescence to it.²⁰ Absent the traces of her analysis in her correspondence or contemporaneous criticism, current critics may not be able to discern whether Wynter amplifies, in her version, only what she finds in the original or if she pulls into relief the significance she *wants* audiences to see. However, one can easily ascertain the differences she made. If Mais's gentler rehumanizing of Rastafari could be read to elide key Rastafari

¹⁹ See Thomas's *Exceptional Violence* for her chapter on the military roundup of innocent citizens initiated in the Coral Gardens operation. Listen also to "Bring In All Rastas Dead or Live—The Coral Gardens Story," the 10 Apr. 2020 episode of *Lest We Forget* podcast produced by Tenementyaadmedia. <https://www.tenementyaadmedia.com/lest-we-forget/coralgardens-ap3fp>

²⁰ Cf. David Scott interview (2000); Wynter laments that readers misunderstood her novel's ending and its import.

tenets and demands, sidestepping a clear commitment to anticoloniality, Wynter's versioning of *Mais* cannot. Her script accentuates pan-African aspirations by bringing Marcus Garvey and the "First Rasta" Leonard Howell back into the frame and, even more pointedly, acknowledges the working class/poored demand for self-governance represented by Claudius Henry's stand. Police, in her play, are identified as purveyors of violence, committed to protecting state property rather than peoples' safety. They are intent on surveilling and controlling the Black and poored, even to the disruption of the people's dreams of an actualized Independence. Her adaptation emphasizes police repression of Black men based solely on appearance, and portrays the marginalization of Black Jamaicans, particularly Rastafari, as both locally and imperially produced and enforced.

As such, more clearly than in any of her previous short stories or plays, Wynter engages the *systems* that impacted the poored and displaced peasants on whom many of her characters were patterned. Her *Brother Man* represents a mid-way between *Under the Sun's* relative silence about colonial structures and *The Hills of Hebron's* active commentary on the colony's many institutions, including the schooling, religious, financial, carceral, and security apparatuses. Her later essays critiqued elite-strata politicians' cynical manipulation of Rasta images and ideology to confuse voters with populist appeals and make the country attractive to tourists. Likewise, this early drama protests government protection of narrow commercial concerns, valuing tourism over the well-being of its residents, with policing functioning to enforce those market interests. With this intermediary play, she thus theorizes the Rastafari dream of "return" to Africa as driven partly by the desire to escape the controlling, subordinating reach of policing—a desire to live in peace.

At the same time, the play underscores Rastafari determination to make their political, social, and spiritual desires a reality. While *Mais's* novel depended on Christian morality to incorporate Rastafari, as fellow children of a supranatural God, Wynter's play explicitly calls for people to put faith in themselves rather than only God. In doing so, Wynter highlights, rather than hides, Rastafari

conviction that divinity resides in the human, a conviction that requires people to work toward heaven on earth in the present.²¹ However, like its source text, Wynter's interpretation refuses the African repatriation scheme. Her script asserts the premise that, "For us, Africa is here."²² This premise was later echoed in her 1970 thesis that Africans had "re-indigenized" in the "New World,"²³ firmly planting their Being in its soil and integrating their gods with the flora, fauna, and spirits they found there. It was their home, hard-won, and they should not have to leave.

Most readers recognized that Mais intended his Christ-like prophet character to elicit mercy for Jamaica's urban poor, if not necessarily address the causes of their immiseration. Many also acknowledged that Mais's novel protested his society's continued brutalization of people in marginalized religious sects.²⁴ Contemporary commentators were less likely to acknowledge in his original the elements that I contend Wynter amplified in her adaptation: the potency and permanence of African-aligned politico-religious movements; the malignancy of the state law-and-order ideology and apparatuses; and the demand for land/repatriation that had not been extinguished with Marcus Garvey's deportation or death. Recognition of these elements would be

²¹ For divinity in the human on earth, see Barry Chevannes, "Rastafari: Towards a New Approach" (1990); Ennis Edmonds, *Rastafari: A Very Short Introduction*, 2012, p. 239.

²² The pivot from Back-to-Africa abroad to Africa-is-here-at-home had been made previously by Black radical thinkers including Garvey. However, Claudius Henry enunciated this ideological turn most clearly within an at-least nominally Rastafari position, as I will discuss later. See Chevannes, "Repairer of the Breach" (1976); Bogues, *Black Heretics* (2003); and D. Thomas, "Rastafari" (2017).

²³ Some scholars have critiqued this terminology. (See, for example, Melanie Newton's 2013 *Small Axe* article, "Returns to a Native Land.") The term may result from a conflation of "native" as position and "native" as "indigenous," in other words, what Fanon identified as the "native" position of labor as instituted and enforced by colonizers among the "natives" proper colonized in India and Africa, a designation colonizers had first used for the indigenous of the Americas and the enslaved Africans they brought there.

²⁴ I use the word "sect" throughout this chapter to indicate Rastafari generally. However, this vastly oversimplifies; many different Rastafari groups have existed since the beginning, and their ideologies, cosmogonies, practices, physical stylings, and more could differ widely. For some of the texture of these differences, see Chevannes's *Rastafari: Roots and Ideology*, 1994.

imperative for any anticolonial project aimed at actualizing self-determination of the people generally, as opposed to the governing class more narrowly.

In the preceding chapters, I demonstrated that Wynter's versioning of a historical genre worked to revalorize the women and Black majority in the classes that colonial society exploited and attempted to repress. I suggested that part of Wynter's mission in reclaiming Black humanity in the people's own eyes was re-incorporating those marginalized from within, including the religions they embraced, even as she conformed to the society's almost uniform rejection of the African-adjacent practices of obeah and rejection of "prophets" deemed to be fraudulent. In this chapter, I extend this argument to Wynter's more direct engagement of a particular African-adjacent faith. To demonstrate my claim that Wynter enacts James's Melville mode to render more visible both the political repression and the political possibility inherent in Mais's original, I first engage Mais's original. Given *Brother Man's* relative obscurity outside of Caribbean schools, other than for Caribbean literature scholars, I investigate some of the ways other critics have approached the novel and offer my own interpretation. In the final section, I read Wynter's refraction against its source.

Original Mais

Synopsis

In one introduction to the novel, Kamau Brathwaite calls *Brother Man* Jamaica's first ghetto novel. Its ghetto-ness shows up in the noise of people's gossip, movements in narrow spaces, and the constant hustling required to address omnipresent want. As in any ghetto, there's lots of need and little money. The novel narrates the lives of a small cast of characters in what feels like a small community within the larger setting of urban poverty. The titular Brother Man, once a Rasta, makes shoes but also answers neighbors' call to use his apparent powers to heal sicknesses and judge disputes. Two of the people he tends are a neighbor whose husband has been jailed for marijuana possession and their young child. He lives and works platonically with a young woman who had

moved alone from the countryside. Taking her in enables her to live without having to prostitute herself. However, her presence jeopardizes his status as a holy man, a danger heightened when a misogynistic petty thug takes an interest in her. In the middle of the story nestles what looks like a more normal relationship between a dressmaker and her jazzman. However, her sister's precarity threatens this relationship; the sick and singled mother lacks skills and, man gone to jail, any support outside of her sister.

Precarity permeates the story, as does policing. The thug's criminal activities, including counterfeiting, attract police attention. A rival "healer" and old friend practices obeah and thus attracts police attention. Various assaults, break-ins, and robberies occur, apparently randomly, but all supposedly by men with beards. Their crimes, coinciding with the obeahman's con, the thug's counterfeiting, and the thug's coveting of the country girl, eventually bring the police to Brother Man's door. Faith in him destroyed, the people of the shantytown attack him. By the end, the thug's girlfriend has tired of his exploitation and killed him, and the singled mother has killed her sick child and herself. Also by the end, the Brother Man with a skill has pledged to marry the country girl, and the singled mother's sister with a skill has become part of their small family.

Criticism

As I alluded to in the introduction to this chapter, the critical approaches to Roger Mais's novel vary widely. Kwame Dawes writes that many nationalists claimed Mais for their cause, figuring him as an "engaged artist writing on behalf of the working class and working to win independence for Jamaica" (86). Other critics have asserted that Mais possessed an artistry and genius un beholden to or, less affirmatively, unaccountable to politics. I will leave aside commentary that views the novel primarily as an aesthetic object or process and the novelist as a philosopher and address two other veins of criticism here.

The first considers the novel to be anticolonial in intent, *prima facie* (its author is; the text must be, too), but views *Brother Man* as a “reticent” text. In other words, its mild approach reveals support of status quo politics—or at least reluctance to disrupt them. The novel sketches with appropriate seriousness the very beleaguered lives of the urban poor in an attempt to stimulate sympathy for their condition, if not mobilize action to change it. However, this camp points out, the text appears mute about the forces that have created the deplorable situation and fails to explore solutions (outside the Christian ethics of neighborliness and work displayed by the protagonist).²⁵ I would also include in this “reticent” camp those critics who read Mais’s rhetorical distancing of the protagonist from any Rastafari sect (down to the title character’s disavowal of key tenets of Rastafari doctrine), as Mais’s rejection or veiling of Rastafari religico-politics. However, many reasons for the text performing such rejection are possible; one could be the author’s refusal of Garvey-aligned “Back-to-Africa” politics. The veiling could also be caution, in response to the broad disdain for Rastafari held by people across much of Jamaican society, with Mais soft-pedaling Rastafari religious tenets either to avoid the negative censure of his class peers or to prevent people from rejecting altogether this novel that calls for mercy. An unread book is an unsuccessful intervention.

The second vein of criticism assesses the novel as an exploration, perhaps opportunistic, of philosophy or religion on home terrain.²⁶ For example, Kwame Dawes, in his article “Disarming the Threat of Rasta,” reads some political intent in the novel but concludes that Mais evinces more interest in using the setting of “the working class ghetto . . . as a contrasting backdrop for the exploration of the human experience in the Black community” (“Disarming” 89). Dawes bases his

²⁵ See, for one example, Kamau (then Edward) Brathwaite’s introduction to the 1974 edition of *Brother Man*.

²⁶ Several critics have suggested that *Brother Man* serves as a cipher for the author, a middle-classed man either deeply invested in the Christianity of his childhood (Carr, Creary) or striving to express the need to adopt a more personalized religion of his own making (Hawthorne). Normal Manley, although not a critic, has also framed *Brother Man* as Mais in another guise, although he doesn’t make it clear what beliefs Mais expresses through the character.

conclusions on Mais's biblical language, the parallels to biblical figures, and the apparent structure of good vs. evil characters, but also on the conspicuous absence of context for the petty and violent background Mais draws for his characters. The only political import, in this approach, resides in Mais's representation of Black people generally or the good-Rastafari proxy specifically as Human, with thoughts, desires, morals, and vices. Most commentators, however, are loathe to find any politics, let alone radical advocacy, beyond its representation of a politically-produced underclass. In this vein of criticism, Mais also "fails to recognize the political power inherent in the threat of violence that the Rastafarian is granted" ("Disarming" 91). In other words, even potential violence can compel society's transformation, a radical goal and one Mais skirts.

Wynter, on the other hand, locates the radicality of the text not in its representation of violence, potential or actual, but in re-interpretation. In that foundational critical article in 1969, she asserts that Mais's "revolutionary intention" was to liberate minds, a task that he could only achieve through recasting narratives, calling Mais "a Samson who dreamt that the enemy was not the poor maligned Philistines, but the myths which divided Jews and Philistines" ("Learn Pt. 2" 34). Writing critically about Mais's oeuvre in 1969, Wynter had already reinterpreted Mais's novel, amplifying the political undertones that, she now argued, many were attempting to deny.

The Novel as National Allegory

If Wynter locates the original's "revolutionary intention" in re-interpretation, what stories did she see Mais as having retold, or how? Again, we receive some indication from form. Aijaz Ahmad (1987) has famously disputed Fredric Jameson's relegation of all "Third World" literature to the category of "nationalist allegory." Indeed, one could raise reasonable questions about the "nationalism" of many Wynter texts. Mais's *Brother Man*, on the other hand, could well be one of the exemplars on which Jameson originally built his theory; it announces itself as both nationalist and allegory (even if, as Michael Niblett argues, the nationalist vision fails). Before one even opens the

book, *Brother Man* signals its allegorical mode, indicating that it can be read as a sort of morality play. Like Everyman of the genre's most known exemplar, the title character represents all people and attempts to embrace virtue and destroy vice.²⁷ Because he gives in to pleasures of the flesh (in this case diminishing his capacity to care for people in the community), his jeopardizes his path to salvation. At the end, however, we see the "light" of salvation that he points out to his promised one, the country girl Minette and by extension, Mais's readers.²⁸

Dawes asserts that the text "corresponds with a patriarchal structure in which the female is defined and controlled by the male" ("Violence" 31). I suggest that, instead of the novel commenting on gendering, Mais has simply reproduced the old trope for nationalist literature, with male characters representing rulers and female characters not female at all, but instead standing in for the nation. This reduction of gender to symbol makes *Brother Man* a national allegory in all its facets. Taking the characters as ciphers instead of people, then, we can see the violence of the society Mais depicts differently. The threat of (counter) violence by the Rastafari, a particular fragment of a larger working-class population, may hold the potential to force change. However, this is not the violence that Mais attends to. Instead, he symbolizes men as rulers and women as nation to indict the ruling class for their immiseration of the poor, an analysis that engaged scholars see Mais as dodging. If Papacita embodies Caribbean society's current and smoothly duplicitous²⁹ elite that exploits Girlie, symbolizing the beleaguered working class writ large, the danger of such

²⁷ See Katherine Little's article, "What is *Everyman*?" (2018) for this argument. Little identifies *Everyman* as a founding text of European humanism.

²⁸ Commentators have amply discussed another allegorical feature, the presence of oppositional pairs representing good/evil, virtue/vice, and so on. Kamau Brathwaite has argued, across several essays, that these pairings underpin the novel's musical structure. He used all three of Mais's novels to propose a jazz aesthetic as both critical and creative mode for developing a distinctively Caribbean literature. For the completed theorization, originally published across three different volumes of the Caribbean journal *Bim* from 1967 to 1968, see the chapter in Brathwaite's collection, *Roots*, published in 1993.

²⁹ See J. Dillon Brown's study of Mais's language in "Lyrical Enchantments of Roger Mais," *Migrant Modernism*, 2013.

exploitation becomes clear. Mais seems to be suggesting that when those in the ruling class spend their ill-gained surplus in ways that cater to new interests yet again (perhaps, in this context, the rising Brown and Black buffer class), the repeatedly brutalized working class will cut them down, just as Girlie cuts down Papacita, “stone cold dead in the market” then “sway[s] tipsily down the sidewalk” (189). Violence may carry the potential for transformation, but not when wielded simply by the desperate who have no direction. Her “husband,” that exploitative ruling elite to whom she had been unevenly yoked, is dead now, and the budding nation materially and psychically destabilized. Just as clearly, Mais locates the responsibility for this deadly violence in the ruler, not the ruled. If Girlie responds with violence, it is Papacita who “by his own violence . . . effaced” his image (179). No radical potential looms here, but the possibility that the inchoate nation could be destroyed before it begins certainly threatens.

“Will and Testament” Tells Class

Even if the actual condition of wretchedness speaks more loudly than anything else in the novel, the colonial responsibility for that wretchedness not only registers; it’s ubiquitous. The police, as one arm of colonial policy enforcement, chisel their way into the lives of the novel’s characters. Singled mother Cordelia’s predicament offers one example of the destructive impact of the police. With the text’s male/female pairing schema in mind, commentators often pair Cordelia and Bra’ Ambo, the “bad” Rasta obeah-man,³⁰ making him partially responsible for her downfall. But Cordelia only becomes available for this pairing when the police remove her original partner, her lover, Jonas. As the novel’s chorus repeatedly gossips, the police carted him off for selling weed: “Cordy’s man get tek-up fo’ ganga” (8). Jonas becomes like the one-hundred-plus men the Jamaican Constabulary Forces forcibly removed from Pinnacle in 1941 on the pretense of a marijuana

³⁰ “Rasta obeah-man” is already an oxymoron, since Rastafari tenets strictly reject any practice of obeah.

crackdown. According to survivors, the JFC and its deputized agents destroyed crops, consumed whatever food and water they wanted, and dumped or urinated in the rest, a scene Mais could well be evoking when he depicts the crowd that turns on Brother Man at the end of the novel.³¹ The colonial government criminalizes a substance its users deem sacramental, and the police enforce its sanction, upending lives in the process.

Mais throws neon paint on this manifestation of destructive police presence. He scripts Cordelia's sister, Jesmina, wondering, "Who would take care of [Cordelia] and Tad, now that her man was gone?" Jesmina doesn't blame Jonas, as if he had willfully abandoned her sister. Instead, she brings into question the law that effected his removal. "Six years for peddling ganga, Lawd," she laments, "but life was a hard and cruel thing. Six years" (17). Later she reflects further on this intrusion of law into their lives as foreclosing on possibilities for her and Shine. Before, "[s]he was his girl, and he was her young man . . . valid and sufficient," but then her sister's man "had been taken up for peddling ganga, and it seemed to change everything and bring a cloud over her life" (38). Her dream of marital bliss—the very dream the middle class scorned her working-class sisters for apparently eschewing—had been destroyed by the police.

The military, the police, and other security forces are wielded by the wealthy in their own interests. In a colony, as in a slave state, the ruling class use police violence or the threat of police violence to keep the colonized and enslaved from rebelling. As Frantz Fanon theorized in *The Wretched of the Earth*, "In the colonies, . . . the spokesperson for the colonizer and the regime of oppression, is the police officer" (3) who "ensure[s] the colonized are kept under close scrutiny, and contained by rifle butts and napalm" without any pretense at being a "helper" à la Mr. Rogers. Instead, the police officer "displays and demonstrates [oppression and domination] with the clear

³¹ See the Hélène Lee film, *The First Rasta*, for this first-person testimony of Pinnacle survivors.

conscience of the law enforcer, and brings violence into the homes and minds of the colonized subject” (4). Those who criticize Mais for depicting the effects but not agents of the working-class peoples’ oppression fail to recognize that for the urban impoverished, the face of state repression they encounter most often and most forcefully is the face of the police. Indeed, Mais repeatedly raises issues of innocence and unprovoked aggression. Even if he may depict carceral and police violence less explicitly in this novel than he had in the previous, nowhere does this novel intimate that the police intervene to help people rather than terrorize them.³²

As such, trust in the police could be adequately employed as a rubric for identifying who belongs to which class or sector in colonial (and internal colonial) societies the world over.³³ Within this rubric, Brother Man’s unreasonable faith in fair treatment by the police constructs him as a proxy for the middle-class reader, notwithstanding his residence in the shantytown. I submit this deliberate class location as the reason this text focuses less on the police violence that permeates the real urban enclosure of the Jamaican put-under-class and their fictional analogs in Mais’s previous novel. Mais’s audience are educated contemporaries, including those who likely share his political convictions, like Norman Manley, whose “progressive” party Mais helped to build. These residents would expect the police to protect them. Therefore, they remain obdurately incapable of perceiving police targeting and violence.

Let the Ceremony Be Found: Equalizing Relationships

Yet, when middle-classed John Power (aliased as Brother Man) sits down to write his “will and testament,” the person he names as heir is none other than a descendent of Bogle, a name

³² See, for this more explicit treatment of colonial violence, the chapter on *The Hills Were Joyful Together* in M. Keith Booker and Dubravka Juraga, *The Caribbean Novel in English* (2001).

³³ James Baldwin makes a point similar to Fanon’s in his 1966 article, “A Report from Occupied Territory.” Writing about the “occupied territories” constituted by Black-populated urban areas in the US, Baldwin explains, “[T]he police are simply the hired enemies of this population. They are present to keep the Negro in his place and to protect white business interests.”

irrevocably tied to an official National Hero of Jamaica acknowledged for his role in the country's transformation.³⁴ In 1865, when Paul Bogle had marched on the courthouse with other small landholders, they were protesting the excessive land taxation that was impoverishing them, among other grievances. Priyamvada Gopal identifies the principal drive for this land-centered protest as “the reality of black people demanding a more meaningful, self-defined freedom than the notional ‘Emancipation’ that had been bestowed on them” (88).³⁵ The protest and the outsized colonial government's response to it are known as the Morant Bay Rebellion.³⁶ Significantly, the violent official reaction to this initially peaceful civil demand forced Britain to reconsider its approach to colonial governance in 1865. In the novel's time, post-World War II and amid international anti-imperialist agitation, the Empire was being forced to reconsider again. Both with the juridical “will and testament” Mais inserts into the narrative and with the mystical ending when Brother Man passes the “flame” on to Minette, the author frames the offspring of Bogle as the torch-carrier for “a more meaningful, self-defined freedom.” He makes her rightful heir to the once-Rasta who left the sect because of lack of instruction and, importantly, lack of land (signaled by Brother Lackland's name). Furthermore, Brother Man begins writing this “will” just after he has promised Minette that he will marry her. John Power, now clearly an analog for the middle class, must marry the revolutionary Bogle—he can't just play house and pretend.

³⁴ A decade after the publication of Mais's novel, Wynter was commissioned to write an argument for identifying “National Heroes” for the newly independent Jamaica. The argument was accepted and Bogle was inducted in 1969. The argument was published as a book, *Jamaica's National Heroes*, in 1971 by the Jamaican National Trust Commission.

³⁵ See Gopal's *Insurgent Empire* (2019) for discussion of this crisis in Jamaica as central to conceptions of colonial governance more generally. Gopal writes, for example, “Within the British historiographical record, the Governor Eyre controversy functions as a *locus classicus*, a characteristic moment of internal moral crisis leading to self-correction—in this case a more responsive, liberal and reforming colonial government, with Jamaica passing to direct Crown rule in 1866, when its Legislative Assembly dissolved itself” (165).

³⁶ Many Jamaican writers have addressed this rebellion. For example, Mais himself wrote a play on one of the other major figures of this Rebellion, the mixed-race Baptist minister William Gordon, who was Bogle's friend. Mais's friend, Vic Reid, contributed the 1865 novel *New Day*. Wynter's play on the history was *1865: A Ballad for a Rebellion. The Morant Bay Rebellion* also furnishes the origin story for several of Erna Brodber's characters in *Nothing's Mat*.

Here we come again to the national allegory with which I began this analysis and return to evidence that Mais was attempting to establish as necessary more egalitarian relationships, where “we will siddun together” (38). Just as John Power is a cipher, here, for the educated middle class, Minette is a cipher for the exploited and unskilled working class poored people of the “urban village”—the nation. The egalitarian relationship Mais signals must be forged is that between those with more wealth and those with less—like the relationship between Gordon and Bogle. And establishing it would require—as it had then—redistribution of property, “both real and personal.” The privileged readers Mais interpolates into the text through the book-within-a-book “will and testament” are compelled, in their reading, to embrace that revolutionary potential.

However, Mais refrains from projecting some sort of utopia; indeed, the lesson comes with a stick. Mais’s final warning to the elite who would decolonize comes in his retelling of the incident that I have suggested drove him to write the novel when he did. He deploys a “random” act of violence as the final catalyst for the people of the lane turning on the erstwhile prophet, a case of mistaken identity based entirely on superficial resemblance, or stylings. That is, he repurposes the story of the June 1951 Palisidoes rape/murder by Aston Jolly, a notorious thug, an event the state seized upon to demonstrate the dangers of “the bearded ones” automatically associated with Rastafari. He sounds the warning that the potential violence of the ghetto will not remain contained there. The middle class, already embodied in the white-collar workers Jolly had attacked, will become a target if the Rastafari and their fellow shanty dwellers are not directed (instructed) and provided with land. Mais drives home the implicit threat by suggesting that Shine and Jesmina, two of the skilled and thus differently classed denizens of the lane, narrowly miss being the victims of the random attack. He has already endeared these characters to his readers. Now he plots them keeping each other’s company down by the water, sitting on a canoe. Familiar with the notorious attack, his contemporary readers would know that the historical victims of the attack had been on a seaside

date off Palisadoes Road, close to a Haitian gunboat submerged in the water there. Just as Girlie murders her exploitative and smooth-talking man, the simmering violence of the other unaddressed criminality—that of those structured as the “real” thugs—could bludgeon the nation’s future.

Ultimately, we cannot know what Mais meant to perform with his portrayal of John Power, *aka* Brother Man. He may have designed his heroically tragic character to elicit mercy for the Rastafari by troubling the moral conscience of those in Jamaica’s middle and upper classes demanding the violent sanction of all those figured Afro-adjacent (while sidestepping any endorsement of actual Rastafari, as Dawes has argued). He may have been evangelizing for the “individualistic, intuitive” religion of the Rastafari without any of the political valences of their repatriation demands, as Hawthorne has argued (24). Alternatively, Mais may have been evoking a more revolutionary politics on the scale of 1865, as I argue, with the working-class violence—not chaotic, arbitrary, and harmful only to those already most harmed by the society’s stratification—instead organized to disrupt that stratification. In this interpretation, Mais ignores the repatriation demand because his political hopes are for the Caribbean, not Africa, and the urban lumpen demanding return are the most likely to be able to actualize those hopes.

Wynter Remix

“If the white man has the idea of a white God, let him worship his God as he desires. If the yellow man’s God is of his race let him worship his God as he sees fit. We, as Negroes . . . believe in the God of Ethiopia, the everlasting God—God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Ghost, the One God of all ages . . . but we shall worship Him through the spectacles of Ethiopia.”

—Marcus Garvey (1923)

Where Mais’s text remains open for interpretation, there can be no doubt that Wynter meant for her *Brother Man* to warn readers that their society was facing a crucial carrefour. In the opening lines of

the script, her stage directions describe the character Brother Ambrose as “a man balanced on a razor’s edge between tragedy and farce” (1).³⁷ Tracing the allusion to its source, we come to Marx’s spin on Engels’s lament that history seemed to be following the Hegelian imperative of repeating itself, but “once as grand tragedy and the second time as rotten farce” (Marx 10). They had made their commentary in the context of their study of a French counter-revolution that re-established bourgeois hegemony. Wynter initially describes the character as intelligent but with “an underlying fanaticism which borders on madness.” As the play proceeds, it becomes clear that this madness is colonially-wrought—forged in the Empire and enforced in the colony—and has the potential to teeter off that edge if the character’s hopes for a full Emancipation are smashed yet again. Wynter’s allusion warns Jamaica’s bourgeois elite not to betray the oppressed classes of the island as they had when they consolidated power by capitalizing on the labor organizing following the 1938 region-wide riots—or previously, in 1865. Even if it was the oppressed who balanced on that razor’s edge, the danger posed was to the whole society.³⁸

It was an image she had pressed into use before. She had already invoked Marx’s lines in early 1958, describing the political and social situation in the West Indies. The displaced people “colliding” in the cities of the West Indies, she wrote, insistently “worship their prophets, their politicians,” or indeed “anyone” who sets himself up to be followed, a phenomenon exemplified by “[t]heir fanatic adulation of the flamboyant . . . Bustamante.” These people, easily led and as easily deceived, lived “comedy . . . often too tragic to be funny” and “tragedy inseparable from farce”

³⁷ The script I refer to throughout the dissertation is the BBC’s final broadcast transcription from the “Programme as Broadcast” (PasBs), unless otherwise noted.

³⁸ Elsewhere, Wynter writes, “The manager class . . . and the labouring indigenous class faced each other across barricades that are in-built in the very system which created them. That is why the clash in 1865 and the clash in 1938 and the future clashes are unavoidable unless the system itself is transformed” . Indeed, in an earlier period of anti-Rastafari paranoia, the historical repetition the local elite sought to avoid was the 1865 rebellion, presumably because the elite lost direct governing power in the rebellion’s wake. For more, see D. Thomas, “Rastafari” (2017).

(“Strange” 97). In this formulation, there was no “edge”—the two had already been collapsed, and the betrayal was already in full force. She would re-use the phrase in 1973 after many came to see the betrayal of “Independence” as complete and global. Referring to the Black colonized elite, she writes then that they “took up their Cross” and “proceeded to sweat in thick English flannels, to answer in Latin, and . . . to re-enact the Crucifixion not as tragedy but as farce” (“Afterword” 131). If any doubt arises as to what she signifies here, she clarifies: “The post-Independence, neo-colonial agony deprived us of His Excellency as Imperial Devil; and placed instead His Excellency as the Caliban Messiah, who, in the wilderness of jail, agreed to gamble with the devil” (“Afterword” 136).

By 1978, the traitor was not only “His Excellency” but a far broader swath of society. Wynter refers to the Jamaican situation then as one in which “rather than a united capitalist class facing a united working class, we find a struggle for relative shares of power between different sections of the [. . .] bourgeoisie [. . .] and of the popular forces” (“Bustamante” 3). This struggle could, she continues, be overturned by a “genuinely revolutionary situation,” but there was no such potential in Jamaica. History had already repeated, “the first time as tragedy, the second as farce” and now, she declares “[w]e have out-farced farce” (3). As she wrote and rewrote her own interpretation of *Mais* through the period of the federated West Indies and “Independence,” Wynter was watching Jamaica walk that “razor’s edge,” with the majority White and Brown elite poised, yet again, to betray everyone else: subsistence and displaced peasants (or “cultivators,” as they styled themselves), the urban working class, and the unemployed. Br. Ambrose is emblematic of those left behind. In the many scenes to come, she draws a sharp distinction between this iteration of Brother Ambrose³⁹ and the past iterations in *Mais*’s original and in her own novel. This Br. Ambrose

³⁹ Hereafter referred to as Br. Ambrose.

genuinely adheres to Rastafari precepts. He is intent on returning to Africa and dedicating all his talents to getting there—with any who want to join him.

Among Wynter's papers is an incomplete document with the heading "The Rastafarites," where she notes, "If I had not been in Jamaica in the summer of last year it might have been easy for me to accept" Norman Manley's "facile explanation" characterizing Claudius Henry's group as "a foreign menace" instead of home grown and other propaganda that was being "noised abroad in the past few weeks." With this note, it's possible to (roughly) assess when and how Wynter was considering this political crisis, as well as her understanding of Rastafari organization and precepts. The document clarifies the writing and production history for Wynter's theatrical adaptation of Mais's 1954 novel.

Because historical events shape her adaptation, having a timeline will help readers follow the analysis. The note in her papers reveals that Wynter had begun adapting *Brother Man* in the summer of 1959. A letter to Barbara Bray, her liaison at the BBC, dated November 11, 1959, indicates that she would send the *Brother Man* script soon.⁴⁰ Bray received the adaptation before Christmas, and by March, albeit with some dissenting voices, the editorial team had rejected her *Brother Man*.⁴¹ The

⁴⁰ At the same time, she submitted a script for *A Miracle in Lime Lane*, which she had been working on at the same time (Wynter, *SW to Bray Nov. 1959*). Wynter's BBC "script card," an index card that lists all submissions and recordings, acknowledges receipt of *Miracle* (mis-titled "Mirage") soon after, but the play had been rejected by February 1960. In the meantime, *The Gleaner* lists it as airing in Jamaica on the Wednesday after Christmas, 1959. Bray suggests, in her rejection note, that Wynter submit the script to the television unit, writing, "I really should hate to see it go unperformed in this country" (Bray, *Bray to SW Feb. 1960*) This indicates that it had been produced, rather than simply aired, in Jamaica. Jamaican critic Harry Milner reviews *Miracle* favorably, also revealing that theatre veterans Charles Hyatt and Louise Bennett played the main roles dramatically rather than comedically, which was "so out of their usual orbit." Milner concludes, "On the whole, like all of Sylvia Wynter's work, rewarding, enjoyable and with much promise for local drama in the future" ("Radio Play"). (Bibliographies often list Jan Carew as a co-author for this play; however, contemporaneous listings and write-ups, like Milner's review, credit only Wynter.)

⁴¹ (Bray, *Bray to SW Re BM Mar. 1960*). The main objection to the script seems to be its "pietistic . . . message," but at least one reviewer also referred to "A quite incidental white man and his incidental mistress . . . chopped to pieces of by a mad member of the Black Jesus Brotherhood" (Wood). Other notes demonstrate how much more difficult the media outlet found it to accept the critiques Wynter was making in this post-Independence drama. Cultural bias sometimes appears in full throat.

play's one steadfast champion was Robin Midgley, the BBC producer who had successfully produced both *The Barren One* (1958) and *Under the Sun* (1958) for the BBC. Midgley submitted another script for *Brother Man* in October 1961, indicating that in the interim, he had successfully produced the radio drama in Jamaica and that Wynter had now resolved many of the problems of the previous script.⁴² (He had been in the region to help launch the Jamaican Broadcast Corporation.) It isn't until March 1962 that *Home Service* agrees to put the play into production, after which the communication lapses (Bakeswell). The next note from Midgley stresses that Wynter had "now written [the play] in a far more complex form which really does take on major proportions at times as an analysis of what is wrong in Jamaica" (*Midgley, To SED, Jan. 1963*). This time they accept the script. However, when the BBC finally put the play into production in 1964, its editors still require many changes. Had Wynter rewritten it yet again?⁴³

The question arises out of more than idle curiosity or a cataloguer's fastidiousness. I have proposed that Mais had felt compelled to write his novel soon after Aston Jolly's 1951 assaults on Palisadoes Road, when the attacks furnished the pretense for yet another heightened police and public campaign against the Rastafari, resulting in escalating violence against members of the sect. I have additionally suggested that Wynter reacted similarly to an escalated campaign of violence, this time writing her adaptation in response to the uncovering of a supposed insurrection plot by

⁴² Midgley also revealed that Wynter had adapted the play yet again, for television (*Midgley, To SED Oct. 1961*).

⁴³ The editors expressed some misgivings about the production even after it was recorded. The producer wrote to the sound editor at *Radio Times*, "I should be grateful if it were possible for you to include somewhere in Radio Times, either with the billing or on another page, the following explanatory note about the West Indian play 'Brother Man'. Without it, I fear the listener will not be able to understand the objectives of the strange Ras-Ta-Fari sect whose activities bulk so large in the play:

"The Ras-Ta-Fari are a religious sect in Jamaica who derive their name from one of the titles of Haile Selassie, Emperor of Ethiopia. To them, he is the only earthly symbol of pride and power in which the black man can see a proud image of himself. Believing that all men should live as brothers, sharing things in peace and love, they dream of a return to Africa'" (*Lefaux, 25 May 1964, May 1964*).

Claudius Henry and his followers in 1959, a conjecture supported by the note I include above. In the years that intervened between the first submission in late 1959, the notorious UWI surveillance report purportedly by Nettleford et al. had been issued and serialized in the *Gleaner* for all to see. The discussion Mais likely wanted to stimulate had begun. But this was a highly fraught historical moment. Early in 1961, operatives assassinated Patrice Lumumba. Wynter and her family left England to join Cheddi Jagan's government in British Guiana, only to require rescuing from the Red House due to threats of sectarian, racialized violence. The Federation of the West Indies was formally dissolved, and Jamaica joined the Commonwealth of Nations in late 1962, with Bustamante as the first prime minister of an Independent Jamaica. Many other countries around the world also received their titular independence. In the meantime, Wynter had adapted her play, *Under the Sun*, as the novel, *The Hills of Hebron*, adding, among other characters, a Brother Ambrose, an obeahman opposing her messianic prophet figure who was "crucified" not by the public but by his own hand.

Back in Jamaica, 1961 had also seen the passage of draconian drug laws with vastly increased mandatory minimum sentences. Then Bustamante launched another military operation, which also led to widespread civilian violence, again against the Rastafari: the so-called Coral Gardens "incident" of April 1963. It's difficult to even read, let alone digest, the first-hand testimony of those who suffered through this travesty now known as "Bad Friday." The survivors speak of massive loss, torture, killing, and lasting trauma.⁴⁴ Their testimony echoes that of those who survived the decades of attacks on Pinnacle and likely many lesser-known assaults that began under the colonial government and continued well into "Independence." Any study of *Brother Man* (by adults), in its original form or as Wynter has adapted it, should be undertaken only with this historical context

⁴⁴ Abundant such witnessing saturates D. Thomas's film *Bad Friday* and book, *Exceptional Violence*.

understood. Part of the power of *Brother Man* in all its forms⁴⁵ rests in its historicity, inasmuch as the imaginative mirror can stimulate a reconsideration of the meaning of the historical actions and the way forward to actually repair the breach.

Although there may be even more revealed by looking at Wynter's 1959 Jamaica-produced version, the England-produced 1964 version from the BBC can be profitably compared to Mais's original novel to consider how Wynter clarifies and extends its political mission.⁴⁶ By then, the primary concern was no longer achieving regional federation, which had come in 1959 and gone by 1962, nor gaining nominal independence, some version of which had been achieved in 1962. Instead, the main concern for Wynter and many other anticolonial intellectual workers and artists was to help build the political and cultural foundation for a society constructed to fulfill the needs of all its citizens.

Wynter's Adaptation in Melville Mode

Part of that project would be the reincorporation of disparate people, with Rastas one of the groups then treated as outside of national belonging, the task to which Mais's gentle re-humanizing appears to attend. Wynter sets aside his strategy of allegorizing the desired equity and collaboration through the exemplary not-Rasta—a middle-class proxy and pious figure who should therefore be unimpugnable by the Jamaican elite—and his radical but historically valorized heir.⁴⁷ Rather than opposing real Christian to enemy of true religion, as in Mais's version, Wynter constructs a more

⁴⁵ Including the 2001 drama adaptation by Kwame Dawes, *One Love*.

⁴⁶ Editorial comments and the paperwork accompanying the various versions may help determine how and why Wynter made changes between versions. I have included some of these editorial comments in my notes.

⁴⁷ The language registers Mais allows his characters also indicate class/social position. The text refers to Brother Man with the Anglicized words in full in narration and the patwah version in dialogue. Brother Man exists, linguistically, outside the patwah of the community, but also retains an identity within it. Bra' Ambo, on the other hand, only ever speaks patwah and the text always refers him using the patwah moniker. On the other end of the continuum, the cop Jennings only exists in English and has no first, let alone pet, name.

obviously political conflict. Instead of a (fake because obeah-wielding) Rasta con artist, her foil for Brother Man⁴⁸ is a disillusioned returnee from England—a man who had fought in WWII and stayed on. Her Br. Ambrose becomes a true Rastafari brethren with Back-to-Africa aspirations, funding the dream with both sales of tickets for the return trip and counterfeit money printed with the skills he picked up in a hostile London.⁴⁹ The visions opposed here, therefore, are her Br. Man's individual and service-oriented approach to addressing the needs of the poor that tacitly consents to the status quo and her Br. Ambrose's furious refusal to surrender his dream for a more thoroughgoing solution.

Wynter's character Br. Ambrose thus delineates the distance between anticolonial desires and neocolonial reality. As we have seen, the metaphysical and political foundations of the "Black Kingdom" the Rastafari demanded—a "kingdom" at once spiritual and material—had been roundly ridiculed, denied, and actively suppressed not only by the press but also by mainstream society and its elite-controlled institutions of governance, legislation, schooling, and control. Although some readers hailed Mais's original version as one of the first sensitive treatments of Rastafari adherents, the novel actually sidesteps the claim to Black self-determination grounded in a divine Black Emperor, one of the principal tenets of Rastafari doctrine. It also elides the central demand of early Rastas that they be repatriated to Africa. Wynter's adaptation restores both doctrine and demand.

Wynter also sets aside Mais's separation of middle-class fortunes from poor. In Mais, the other "bearded men," those not associated with Rastafari, reflect the historical public caricature figuring them as, at best, drug-crazed and lazy "scum off the street" (104) and, at worst, dangerously criminal. Wynter takes pains to reveal some of the reasons the Black majority remains impoverished

⁴⁸ Hereafter Br. Man.

⁴⁹ Adding this backstory also allows Wynter to comment upon the alienation of the Jamaican emigrants unwelcomed in England even after their service—a theme especially important for the BBC's many emigrant listeners.

rather than allowing the commentary to remain oblique, as it was in the novel's opposition of working-class poor or peasant people to middle-class professionals (as proxied by people with skills). Furthermore, her critique brings into view an alternative post-independence. This potential society would make room for a Blackness that fully recognized and embraced its origins as well as Africa's continued influences on its religions and social organization. Perhaps as importantly, in the context of her wider body of work, Wynter's *Brother Man* also emphasizes the aspect of Rastafari (embodied) thought that maintains that people literally contain God, as heaven and hell are present on earth. If they thus reject redemption through a divine other, those working for true independence must establish it by reinvesting in their own, rather than any distant and alienated, power. Her adaptation does not mitigate the terrible violence and deep betrayal of the post-Independence moment. If anything, even if her version does not accumulate as many dead as Mais's, her plays more clearly represent the deep sorrow of those left behind, the rifts in the community, and the mutilated rituals that result from the over-exploitation of land and people. Like her creative-theoretical work, her plays, including this adaptation of Mais, describe the terrible but gesture toward a more hopeful futurity grounded in the people's determination to continue their "revolutionary assault" on reality (Wynter, "Learn Pt. 1" 24).

The cast of characters for Wynter's adaptation has been trimmed, likely to the limit the BBC would allow. We lose the singled mother Cordelia, her son, her sister, and her sister's jazzman beau. The basic plot and some triggers remain the same, even if some characters also undergo significant transformations. Papacita's violence, misogyny, and racism are even more malignant—to the point that he pimps Girlie out. He still covets Minette. The police pursue Br. Ambrose not because he practices obeah but because he counterfeits (and has roped the child Joe into the scheme by promising him a cricket pitch in exchange for his help). The Palisadoes attack is still the trigger for the police round-up of Rastafari and one reason the public assaults Br. Man. However, in this case,

Br. Ambrose, a known entity, launches the attack when he mistakes the couple as sacrilegious trespassers. As such, the import of the killing changes entirely, becoming one particularly-located person's reaction to society's betrayal rather than the random act of a faceless lot of criminals.

Back-to-Africa: Repatriate the Land

Religion as Remedy

The religico-political motivation for Br. Ambrose's actions may represent the most significant change that Wynter's adaptation effects. Minutes into the play, Wynter has stripped the character of associations to obeah and restored African repatriation as his grounding. Like the archetypal warner, Shadrack before Shadrack, Ambrose walks the streets intoning, "Black man one, black man all, heed my warning / Back to Africa, black man, back!" (1).⁵⁰ The phrase conjures Marcus Garvey, organizer of the largest pan-African movement in history. Garvey's *United Negro Improvement Association* worked to mobilize Black solidarity as a power base for Black self-determination, with a liberated zone in Africa as its geographic center. Ambrose then immediately concretizes his invitation to go "[b]ack to Africa, black man, back!" Mere lines later, he calls out, "Pay ten shillings down [. . .] / Get a *blue ticket* in return, and [. . .] / The Emperor will [. . .] call us back from foreign lands, / Back to the Negus, Haile Selassie. . . / Back to the Black Jesus, back to the Conquering Lion of Judah" (2, ellipses in original, emphasis mine).⁵¹ In the very beginning of the play, Wynter's adaptation thus emphasizes the connections that Mais's original soft-peddled, if not outright disappeared.

⁵⁰ Hereafter, citations of Wynter's adaptation refer to page number only.

⁵¹ Wynter uses ellipses throughout the script to mark interrupted or halting speech. For the rest of the chapter, I will use brackets when I excise parts of quotes distinguish editorial from authorial ellipses. See Chevannes (1994) for the warning role originally enacted by Revivalists but gradually taken on by Rastafari.

At first, it isn't clear that Wynter has dropped the opposition of Br. Ambrose as evil opposite to Br. Man's positive good—only that Ambrose squarely identifies as Rastafari. Indeed, the people's chorus at the play's opening indicts him for supposed trickery, “selling passage on a ship that doesn't exist” (2). However, we later learn from the omnipresent police officer, Corporal Jennings, that Br. Ambrose had attempted “to charter a ship for the return to Africa,” leaving a deposit in authentic cash for the purpose (17). Because Wynter associates Br. Ambrose with Marcus Garvey, the revelation that Br. Ambrose intends to execute an actual “return” rhetorically exonerates both Ambrose and Garvey. In place of Garvey's supposed attempt to defraud followers through his Black Star Line, Wynter reframes the intentions of Garvey, Br. Ambrose—indeed all adherents to Back-to-Africa precepts—as honorable, their mad “dream” instead a determined goal.

By contrast, in one of the mere two places where the novel mentions Africa, Mais invokes the diaspora “out of Africa,” making Africa the place from which the chosen (by implications Rastafari) have *come*, but not where they desire to go. Mais's titular character explains that “black men out of Africa . . . became God's chosen people” (74). The novelist doesn't even represent Rastafari electing to return. Instead, the frenzied public *demand*s it, in lines that echo, almost verbatim, the newspaper reports invoking anti-Rasta violence after Aston Jolly's arrest: “They should be publicly washed . . . and shaved! They should be banished to Africa” (173). The words violently recall the history of the post-slavery recolonization (as opposed to repatriation) movement; they could have been uttered by the White US citizens who rallied for newly freed Black laborers to be expelled. Mais offers up a much different Back-to-Africa than Wynter invokes in her adaptation.

In addition to recuperating the validity of Back-to-Africa aspirations, the close association Wynter forges between Garvey and Br. Ambrose also “cleanses” the latter of the supposed taint of

obeah the novel had implied. Garvey had famously abhorred and preached against obeah.⁵² By detaching the thought-evil obeah from Br. Ambrose and attaching to him instead the honor of a hero, Wynter expunges his previous incarnation as the “bad” magic-practicing Rasta, augmenting Mais’s work to make Rastafari eligible for Jamaican humanity. In this way, she returns not only the bearded Jesus-avatar to the folds of the human, as Mais had. She also reincorporates the bearded magicless Rasta—the run-of-the mill, downpressed shantytown resident—too.

With the play’s allusions to selling a return to Africa, this revindication becomes threefold. Pinnacle leader Leonard Howell had been ridiculed in the press for selling photos of Haile Selassie as far back as 1933, and intimating that they were “passports” for entry into Ethiopia, although not passage. And, of course, the most immediate connection at the time of the play’s broadcast would have been the “blue tickets” Claudius Henry sold, supposedly to finance passage to Africa. I will return to these blue tickets.

Wynter cements Br. Ambrose’s connections with Garvey and Garvey’s anticolonial ambitions by bestowing him with parallel skills and a similar experience of encountering hostility in the metropole despite them. Br. Ambrose trains as a printer in England, where he had found himself after the war. Garvey, too, had been a printer, although he had apprenticed in Kingston. Indeed, Garvey gained organizing experience with his efforts to unionize printers there. Brother Man explains that when “the war started,” Br. Ambrose had gone to fight for the “Motherland” as a

⁵² Rastafari have also historically opposed obeah, which makes Mais’s Bra’ Amba character even more of a fraud—he’s neither Rasta nor obeah man. However, Garvey also opposed Rastafari. Wynter scripts the chorus objecting to Br. Man, “He is still a Rasta Fari Brethren and they have nothing to do with the true church” (4). Compare this to the UNIA denunciation: “the Kingston UNIA Convention denounced all ‘new cults [that were] entirely contradictory to the set principles of true religion’ ” (Lee 110).

munitions worker but “found himself fighting two wars—one against the Germans, and the other against the people whose side he was fighting on” (15).⁵³

Wynter multiplies this sense of dreams being ruptured in or by Empire by plotting other characters losing their fortunes in Empire rather than founding them. Their plight mirrors Garvey’s loss of everything—down to his freedom—in his quest to enlarge Black freedom through his enterprises in the United States. For instance, questioning another character’s ability to experience happiness, Minette says, “The man [Hortense] took up with last year gone off to England and not even write a line to her since . . . what love she has to sing about?” (13).⁵⁴ Hortense later echoes this line, lamenting, “He borrow money ten percent interest, travel all the way to England [. . .] I keep him in food and clothes for one year” (39). She elaborates that she’d heard the man had been sweeping the London streets, literally cleaning up after the Empire’s citizens as, in its outpost, she licks pots and buys bags of bones. Mais had plotted Cordelia’s abandonment through imprisonment for drug dealing, with Jesmina indicting colonial government entrapment as well. When Wynter represents women’s abandonment as caused by a metropole that swallows up its erstwhile colonial subjects—not a case of male carelessness or “criminal” behavior or its punishment by colonial structures—she also brings the colonial frame back, demanding accountability for colonial harm. Furthermore, Wynter effectively dulls the allure of remittances that catalyze emigration when she characterizes the money flow’s direction as from the colonized to the colonizing zone, still, leaving those who stay behind financially destitute, as usual, and now emotionally destitute, too.⁵⁵

⁵³ One measure of how this direct indictment of England was received by BBC editors: all the lines above in this paragraph were stricken in the broadcast transcription, meaning that the actors were not allowed to speak them.

⁵⁴ This line was also stricken from the broadcast script.

⁵⁵ See Smith, “Kingston Calling,” for her discussion of ways Mais’s situation disrupts common understandings of exile and direction of financial flow.

Black God, Black Rule

The treatment to which England subjects Br. Ambrose also turns out to motivate his embrace of divinity. Garvey had declared that Black people would worship a Black God “through the spectacles of Ethiopia.” Br. Ambrose similarly “wants God to be black,” and what’s more, a “god of wrath and vengeance against the whole white world,” because of the double war he was forced to fight in England. Justifying this reorientation, Br. Man explains that he considers it “wrong for a man to worship God fashioned in an image different from himself” (15).⁵⁶ With this dialog, Wynter brings to the fore the Rastafari insistence on Black divinity and the Jamaican mainstream arguments against it. Minette counters Garvey. First, she directly echoes the lines seen in the epigraph of this section, “Then God should be yellow for Chin, white for the white man, black for you.” Then she retorts, “And for me who is mixed up white, black and yellow, what colour should God be?” (15), invoking the problem of a divided multiracial Jamaica. If the region’s elite pretend that their “God is no colour at all” (15), Wynter’s play objects that “it’s wrong for a man to have to deny his own appearance . . . in order to call himself the . . . son of God” (15). Throughout the play, Wynter avoids metaphorizing Rastafari precepts as a pseudo-Christianity. Instead, Wynter stages the theological debate juxtaposing two possible futurities for Jamaica. One enforces a fabricated unity in which people worship the same God, embrace the same culture, and live the same values that supposedly all have “no colour at all.” The other builds a government that acknowledges Black divinity and underwrites the expressed desire some hold to return to their “Fatherland.”

Throughout the play, Wynter raises this possibility of African return, giving airtime to the debate while justifying the desire rather than ridiculing or disappearing it. The Back-to-Africa moment embraced in some form by most Rastafari reacts, as she explains it here, to a particular

⁵⁶ These are the lines that remain after the double war lines have been stricken. Br. Man’s reasoning for Br. Ambrose’s theological re-orientation represents a still radical but much less political position.

dispossession in the New World and acknowledges connections that have endured through slavery. Imploring his childhood friend to join him, Br. Ambrose mourns the “exile from our black earth, from our black God, from ourselves” (23). The aspects this Rastafari names are not distinct or separable from each other; land is integral to the Black divinity they live. Significantly, during this time when Caribbean writers in London were building on the trope of artists’ exile from their Caribbean homeland, Wynter emphasizes another experience of exile, this from the land they knew how to cultivate, their spiritual systems, and themselves. The description could just as well denote the exile of Pinnacle survivors as the displacement and dispossession of the enslaved. Furthermore, she juxtaposes this enforced exile with chosen “exodus,” with Br. Ambrose declaring, “It’s coming true at last . . . our exodus” (23). The Rastafari may be reacting to dispossession, but they are choosing to go home rather than compounding alienation by emigrating to one of the seats of Empire.

An essential aspect of Wynter’s reinterpretation is her reframing of the putative crimes with which Rastafari were relentlessly associated. Ambrose recounts how he had a vision of Haile Selassie telling him to “get ready a ship for Africa” in order to “lead my children . . . back” (23).⁵⁷ He understands his role in the counterfeiting operation as divinely ordained, “the Way” available to achieve the paramount mission of return. She identifies Br. Ambrose’s purposive actions as stemming from this doctrinal imperative rather than worldly wants or inherent immorality. This perspective even reframes the brutal murder that—with the propaganda hurricane that followed it—likely provoked Mais to start this novel. Mais writes the attack as a crime pure and simple; an unprovoked aggressor attacks a young couple, robs, rapes, and leaves for dead. Wynter’s rewriting renders the aggressed-against “boy” as a “man” and a government functionary, engaging in his extra-

⁵⁷ This passage is also stricken.

marital shenanigans out on the Palisadoes with a “girl” who is his much younger, darker subordinate—his “sharp black chick” (26).⁵⁸ Even this subtle change reveals the political charge that Dawes considers missing from Mais’s novel.

However, Wynter transforms the motivation for the attack even more significantly. Wynter’s version portrays a person whose spiritual and political hopes have just been dashed by a recognized authority denying the possibility of repatriation. The play scripts Br. Ambrose singing the Rasta anthem, “Oh Fatherland,” and praying at his “altar” to Blackness. The couple surprises him there at the moment of betrayal, and when he sees them, he perceives them as part of a trespass against his Being. They stand in for colonist and colonial collaborator alike—the government announcer and all those who conspired to deny Rastafari dreams of return. His action, striking out at them, cannot achieve actual revolution. However, in attacking its representatives, he repudiates his unfreedom (44). There is nothing random about it, any more than in Mais, Girlie’s murder of her oppressor is random or depoliticized.

Whose Law, Whose Order?

Wynter consistently brings into question the morality and purposes for law and order. She depicts Br. Man here as Mais does, often inhabiting colonial ideology as much as he questions it. At one point, he begs Br. Ambrose not to break any laws, lest he be jailed. Br. Ambrose pushes back, “Whose law? The white Man’s law that he made to keep us in bondage? To break his law is to break our chains” (24). Changing tactics, Br. Man then frames Br. Ambrose’s actions morally instead of juridically, asking that his friend distinguish “between what is right and what is wrong.” Br. Ambrose

⁵⁸ The BBC editors objected to the first submitted script’s killing of this “white man.” The offended editor writes: “A quite incidental white man and his incidental mistress are chopped to pieces by a mad member of the Black Jesus Brotherhood” (Wood). Unless the broadcast script is different, the man is raced only in opposition—she being Black, and he a ranking civil servant.

again rebukes his logic: “Right for whom, Manny? For them? Or for us?” (24). Br. Ambrose demonstrates his understanding that his metaphysical and material needs, as emblemized in efforts to repatriate, are directly juxtaposed to the commercial schemes of the foreign investors alluded to in the figure of tourists. Indeed, Corporal Jennings had asserted that the police crackdown was necessary because of the flood of “false notes ending up in tourists’ pockets,” a situation that “could break the tourist trade” (10). Wynter’s Br. Ambrose never fails to assert his understanding of the state’s necessary construction of Blackness as criminal.

Nor does Jennings, in Wynter’s version, ever appear in the guise of kindly government representative, reluctantly investigating a case against the good Br. Man. Instead, he embodies Jamaica’s mandate of law-and-order-to-secure-commerce, attempting to mobilize friends against friends in its service. Hints of US-style COINTELPRO appear. Br. Man rejects the corporal’s attempts to make him participate in the surveillance of Br. Ambrose, saying, “he is my brother.” Jennings retorts, “I am your brother too. ~~You have to take a side, Brother Man. Between those who break the law and those who keep it~~” (17).⁵⁹ This law-and-order divide reflects the elite’s anti-Rastafari (and anti-poor generally) propaganda, which labels criminal Rastafari attempts to survive while refusing any responsibility for creating conditions that would support their living.⁶⁰ The attitude is emblematic of larger cultural divisions. Again, in her foundational 1971 essay, “Novel History, Plot and Plantation,” Wynter theorized the link between those who uphold law-and-order ideology and those who invest in status quo political and economic arrangements, even as she was purportedly addressing literary critics who “acquiesce” and those who revolt. If one follows this line

⁵⁹ The latter two sentences of this quote are stricken.

⁶⁰ One *Gleaner* account in 1937 crows about the “demolition” of a “Rasta village.” The writer details how the wrecking crew stomped the corn and other vegetables inside the gate, led by a government agent whose military credentials are also listed. The “report” ends, “Having completed the destruction of the miniature ‘village,’ *leaving the human element to find quarters elsewhere*, the party withdrew” (“Ras Tafari Shack Village,” emphasis mine).

of thought, it is Br. Ambrose who properly revolts against the surveillance and repression of the state, acting to protect his provision grounds against the depredations of the plantation.

The police pursue their mission as relentlessly as Br. Ambrose. The stage directions describe Corporal Jennings as “steady and solid” but “ruthless” (8). He repeatedly demonstrates his limitless inhumanity, not only pursuing serious crimes, such as the counterfeiting, but “trying to trap” the child Joe (8), hassling streetwalkers, and threatening shopkeepers (10). The people react to all the policing with mistrust and, in any contact with Jennings, palpable fear. Wynter’s dramatic canvas is necessarily smaller than Mais’s novelistic one. However, the play still conveys the sense of super-surveillance, violence, control, and exploitation he develops with his “Flying Saucer Squad.” Furthermore, Wynter’s version underscores the police function of controlling dissent. When the police bring in Br. Ambrose after smashing the people’s Back-to-Africa hopes, Jennings cautions Minette to keep quiet about the arrest to give them time to organize extra staffing “in case his followers give any trouble” (46). Wynter’s play thus reveals the careful state management of desire through surveillance and violence that Deborah Thomas surfaces in her 2011 study of Jamaica.

Wynter also connects the apparent crisis catalyzed by Henry’s organization with international cooperation, heightened government surveillance, and control of Rastafari in the name of economic prosperity. She scripts Jennings telling Br. Man:

~~The African United Nations Representative [. . .] is due here next Saturday. If we so much as touch Ambrose, the Ras Ta Fari will swear blind that it’s because the Government don’t want him to hear the summons from Lord Haile Selassie, doesn’t want them to return to Africa. We might have a riot on our hands and a riot would frighten away the tourists.~~⁶¹

The only “riot” attending an Ethiopian “representative” I knew about was the visit of Emperor Selassie himself. However, that didn’t occur until 1966, after both the Jamaican and the BBC

⁶¹ P. 17. The first and last sentences of this quote were stricken from the script.

versions of Wynter's adaptation had already been broadcast. I had not yet learned about the mid-1960 Nettleford et al. report hastily put together, as Robert Hill argues convincingly, to advise the government on how to deal with the crisis.⁶² As a result, I was fascinated and puzzled when I discovered that Wynter's adaptation included an attempt to mollify Rastafari desires for return, with the Jamaican government collaborating with an Ethiopian representative who claimed his country would only welcome skilled returnees.

Wynter engages this pacification attempt extensively. Hortense warns Br. Man: "It's going to be a thing when Brother Ambrose hear his African Brother tell him that they don't want him in Africa." When Br. Man questions why Hortense would think this would be the representative's message, she informs him that the government had solicited the visit. They had instructed the rep to tell the Rastafari without skills that Africa doesn't want them "so they better content with the country that they have" (38). The language duplicates the UWI publication on Rastafari that Robert Hill has contended established the intelligence-gathering apparatus of the soon-to-be-Independent state. The UWI report asserts that "any African Government [that] agrees to permit immigration . . . will probably impose tests on the immigrants," which may include "literacy, artisan skills, and economic viability." Furthermore, it warns that "many Ras Tafarians could not pass such tests without preparation and help. They would have to use opportunities provided for learning to read, or for acquiring technical skills" (Smith et al. 34). The latter document echoes into a late-1960 letter from Jamaican Governor Kenneth Blackburne, who, as Thomas reveals, argued that the government "would have to convince Rastafari 'that their faith in a return to Africa is misconceived and that their belief that they will be welcomed on their return by the Emperor Haile Selassie is without

⁶² See "Our Man in Mona," Hill's 2017 interview with Annie Paul, in which Hill rehashes an earlier presentation of his research at a UWI-Mona conference on the political theorist and former intelligence agent, MG Smith, one of the authors of the "Rastafari Report."

foundation’ “(“Rastafari” 80).

Thomas’s study of British intelligence across its colonies demonstrates that the colonial government was concerned about precisely the sort of collaboration that, I argue above, Mais signaled was a necessary component of decolonization with his novel. The dangers feared by the government—regional and imperial—were the violent reaction to long-standing exploitation Mais embodies in Girlie’s murderous revolt against Papacita and the potential revolutionary transformation Mais suggests with the rapprochement between the middle-class proxy leader and his Bogle heir. What Wynter broadcasts to Jamaicans at home and abroad is the Rastafari’s righteous anger and persistent efforts to build a life where “we won’t have to beg and fight and crawl for a place” (17). She amplifies Mais’s warning while explicitly identifying those responsible for the people’s immiseration.

Roger Mais’s original already exposes the real “criminality” enacted by those who deny the island’s residents basic needs such as health care, food, and a safe place to sleep. He warns (perhaps over-optimistically) that harm will come to those who are responsible but unaccountable. Sylvia Wynter’s versioning sharpens the knives. Not only does Girlie render her boyfriend cum pimp “stone cold dead in the market.” The duped Br. Ambrose also bumps off the “big-shot civil servant in the finance ministry,” who, if not directly responsible for the government’s neglect and subterfuge, still benefits from it. Early in the play, a fellow “sufferer” blows up at Br. Ambrose’s chanting invocation to join his Back-to-Africa migration, telling him to “stop robbing poor people and fooling them up with your mad dreams” (2). This denizen of the shantytown lodges his complaint of betrayal and connivance at an individual, not a system. However, later, replying to Hortense’s justification of governmental attempts to dissuade its citizens from migrating, Br. Man uses similar language to indict larger institutional forces rather than individual people or groups. Knowing the African representative, at the behest of the Jamaican government, will disappoint

Ambrose and any other Back-to-Africa adherents, Br. Man says, “You can’t break a man’s dream like that, Hortense” (39), even if his “dream” of going back to Africa would not/could not be realized. When Hortense questions, “But if the dream begin to get out of hand, what else is the Government to do?” he retorts, “They can give us a new dream . . . a better one.” A sovereign nation, to decouple from colonial imperatives, must not abdicate the responsibility to inspire a direction as well as action that responds to the expressed needs and desires of its people.

A New Dream

Ultimately, Wynter’s drama insists that the vision of a larger freedom that the Rastafari hold should be embraced by society in general. Br. Man proclaims that the “dreamers” of this “new dream” would be not only Br. Ambrose but also “You and me . . . [and] all the people on this lane . . . in this island . . . all the people . . . all of us!” Br. Man issues an impassioned plea for an inclusive dream—one that would speak to more people than those who had retreated to the hills in search of a life of “peace and love,” seeking “a world of our own, where we won’t have to beg and fight and crawl for a place” (17). This plea would have been broadcast directly into the ears of dreamers far from the island, soliciting empathy from both the working-class Britons and the West Indian “exiles” there. What do *you* want? Is it not a world where we won’t have to beg and fight and crawl?

Through Br. Man, Wynter thus frames the previously ridiculed desire to return to Africa as justified by the fundamental need to escape repression and live with dignity. However, she had already demonstrated the Movement to be far broader than a reaction to oppression. Early in the play, Br. Man narrates how he became a Rastafari, founding his conversion in an ethic of care. He tells Minette that when he “was a young man without work . . . without hope,” the Rasta who had taken him in had been “the first person who ever made Ambrose and me feel . . . important . . . as human beings . . . who cared about us.” Where government and elite had abandoned them, Brother

Lackland welcomed them into the community in the hills. There they learned trades and “lived as Brothers and Sisters, working the land, sharing everything” (14). The “miracles” of Wynter’s adaptation reside in this communion, which goes far beyond the provision of material goods.

Wynter’s play is a conversion story, like Mais’s novel before it. In both, Br. Man comes to understanding late. When he invites Br. Ambrose to sup with him after having spurned the latter’s plea to join him on the trip back to Africa, Br. Ambrose mourns, “I offered you a Black Kingdom and you offered me . . . bread” (24). With this dialog, Wynter distinguishes between a spiritual/political quest and the more basic quest for subsistence, emphasizing through Br. Ambrose that mere subsistence is insufficient. The Rastafari are not *homo economicus*. Nor, according to Wynter’s depiction here, is their quest utopian. Juxtaposing the “Black Kingdom” he has held out as a possibility to Br. Man with the “white heaven” the latter appears to choose instead, “wrap up with [a] woman” (24), Br. Ambrose repudiates an otherworldly heaven as well as a Romantic vision. Rejecting the general disdain with which the Left had held religion, this Rastafari conception makes spirituality a necessary element of their transformed world. The spirituality is grounded, ultimately, in the land and in the people themselves. Her later *Rockstone Anancy* would reintegrate the African gods rent asunder by the forcible removal of Africans from their lands and themselves. Here as there, even as she endorses belief in humans, Wynter refuses the degodding of the Enlightenment.

Earlier in the chapter, I had said that I would bring Claudius Henry and his blue tickets back into discussion. When I first read Wynter’s adaptation, I had already learned about Henry and the crisis perceived in his organization establishing a military training camp in the Red Hills outside Kingston. Some evidence suggests Henry was selling those blue Back-to-Africa tickets to finance not transport but internationally organized armed resistance to the government. In this case, when Wynter chooses to make the tickets that Br. Ambrose sells blue, like Henry’s, it could indicate that even if she humanizes Br. Ambrose, he remains an ambivalent character, his Being revalued but his

values not embraced. On the other hand, if, as I have argued above, Wynter's script ultimately rejects repatriation, as does Henry, her specifying the blue tickets associated with Henry raises further questions. Br. Man, who is, as I have said, late to understanding, affirms, "He spoke . . . the truth Ambro . . . For us Africa is here." When the script endorses "Africa at home" instead of return, does it also endorse the armed struggle *to achieve* Africa at home that the ticket sales appeared to finance?

Where Mais's original gestures to an unsure path to possible redemption, Wynter's adaptation ends with the conception that struggling for an enlarged Black being *is* the redemption. Br. Man reflects on what happens when people discover that someone they have made over as their prophet is "trapped like them." He acknowledges the attack on him, saying, "[I]hey beat him down to the ground." However, Br. Man asserts, "This time the man didn't stay down. [. . .]. This time he got up." These words could describe the Rastafari determination, time and again—after having had homes, whole settlements, dismantled, and crops destroyed—to reconstitute their communities and achieve their heaven on earth. We buil' we house again, right up from the ground. The blue tickets raise the question of how.

New Belief, New Meaning, New Order

In an interview decades after the launch of her one novel and the last of her BBC radio dramas, Wynter reflected on writing into the novel her separate community in the hills above the city, a group of people who attempted to live from their cultivation of the land and reliance on a New Belief in themselves. She indicated that she might well have been thinking of the Rastafari, "in the back" of her mind, because they had been giving new meaning to Blackness "since the thirties" (Scott, "Re-Enchantment" 145). The decades had smoothed out the timeline of her concerns. There is no question that she was thinking of the Rastafari, since she had re-engaged Mais's urgent advocacy, dating back to a similar crisis in 1951, during yet another crisis in the summer of 1959.

Mais's original version of *Brother Man* locates revolutionary potential in Rastafari, suggesting that what they "lack" to constitute a force for changing society is education and land, and advocating for greater social and economic equity in the inchoate nation. Wynter re-interprets the novel to emphasize the Rastafari tenets and revolutionary potential subvocalized in Mais. Her versioning denounces the government's betrayal of the people's dreams, insisting that, since they cannot all go "home" to Africa, they must be granted their Africa at home. During the same time that she was directly versioning Mais, she was also revising her play to produce the novel for which the prophet has been transformed from a sketch of a man present only outside the storyline of the play, into a leader who, like Leonard Howell, secured land in the hills for his flock. Her fictional versioning emplots, as David Scott pointed out, "a kind of cultural-political community that is not on the agenda of the nationalist movement . . . [and is] structured . . . on a cultural logic that . . . attempts to think through an alternative political order" (134–135).

Wynter's version valorizes what, for many Rastafari, is the middle way: land in Jamaica sufficient to their needs, autonomous communities, and freedom from any binding ties to Babylon would be an acceptable transitional phase in the preparation to go "home."⁶³ What is most imperative is that the alternative political order be grounded. Fifty years hence, reacting to the understanding of the massive counter-intelligence fraud that had coopted their aspirations, several Rasta elders angrily retorted, "We want to go home" (Hannah). Recently, the Jamaican scholar Annie Paul reflected on the offer of reparations for the 1963 police killings of Rastafari at Coral Gardens. Reacting to the disbelief of Rastafari at the relatively paltry amount offered, Paul declares,

⁶³ In 1966, when the Emperor Haile Selassie visited Jamaica, "he disclaimed messianic status and leadership" of the Rastafari who had constituted themselves in his name. Lewin reports that "Rather than defect, disenchanted [Rastafari] adapted to what they saw as a new situation . . . Jamaica, till then a place of exile to which they owed limited or no allegiance at all, became Jah (God)-make-yah (here) and a specially beautiful second home" (199). See also Charles Price, *Becoming Rasta*, on repatriation aims.

“What the Rastafari always wanted was land to live and grow on. If money is in short supply, why can’t the Government make up the shortfall by apportioning land to them?” (A4).

In her critical-imaginative mode, Wynter commits again to the imperative of land redistribution even through her titling. The next play published, an adaptation of García Lorca’s *The House of Bernarda Alba*, is reinterpreted as *The House and Land of Mrs. Alba*, itself echoing the Maroon lament in blues mode, “house an’ lan’ a-buy fam’ly, oh!”⁶⁴ What matters is not just house but also land. And its redistribution would transform society. In her creative-theoretical mode, Wynter would continue to write about Rastafari potential for fundamentally reordering the world by giving Blackness new meaning.⁶⁵

⁶⁴ Wynter submitted *The House and Land of Mrs. Alba* (1968), to the BBC in 1971, but they declined to broadcast it (Imison). Only one act was published and performed as far as any documentation shows.

⁶⁵ See, for example, “Jonkonnu in Jamaica” (1970, *Black Metamorphosis*, (nd), “One Love” (1972), “The Lumpen Poetics of Reggae” (1976), “‘We Know Where We Are From’: Politics of Black Culture from Myal to Marley” (1977).

DC al Coda

It quickly and somewhat disconcertingly struck me that for her the past (including her own past) was not over; it was not the past. The past for her was *still* a part of her present and *therefore* still under revision, still open to contestation and change, still open to being recast and reanimated.

—David Scott, “Agonistic Intimations” (Scott, “Agonistic” ix)

Assistant, take out from my bag some mosquito fat, politician’s promise, businessman’s integrity, Edwin Allen’s brevity, Advertiser’s ethics, academic’s humility, Jonkonnu’s socialism, Babylon City’s unemployment solution, Church Parson’s Christianity, Jonkonnian justice and equality, and a pinch or two of the Share the Wealth budget. Mix well, and the cure is in the bag.

—*Rockstone Anancy*

All the world is dead, my love
The morning is bright.

—“Elegy to the South African Dead”

The delicious

Sylvia Wynter engaged all the “multiple modes of domination” with her “pluri-conceptual” theorizing (“Beyond the Categories” 65) in her fictional and poetic oeuvre. Even her earliest pieces protest limits put on girls and women from within their communities. One story, “Bat and Ball” (an autobiographical tale, no less), narrates a girl’s triumph in finally obtaining the right to pitch in cricket, rather than merely fielding balls, and in beating her older brother at their favorite game. She recognizes that the victory will be swiftly avenged with a more total exclusion, boys closing their ranks against her. The poem “Elegy to a Black Girl” and the story “Ghost on Her Grave” poignantly evoke a Black singer’s isolation as both Black and female within a White European landscape. At the same time, her stories address colonialism and neocolonialism (“Gwana,” “Sharpeville,” *Ballad, Rockstone*, “Moritat,”), the negation of Black Being (“Elegy” and “Ghost”), religious repression (*The Barren One, Under the Sun, Brother Man*), and impoverishment, exploitation,

violence, and disenfranchisement (*Under the Sun*, “Sharpeville,” *Brother Man*, *Miracle*, *University*, *Wedding*, *House and Land*, *Ballad*, “Moritat”).

Of her modes, I like the storying most. I enjoy a well-written and thoughtful theoretical exploration, for sure. But I would choose a chewy narrative over a delicious abstraction every time. Reading the abstractions that elaborate alongside the narratives that conceptualize is the only way to approach a full understanding of what Wynter is working toward/through. Starting with the stories makes it easier to grasp her. So, there it is. Why return to these buried morsels when there’s so much other urgent work to read? In part, just because they’re yummier and go down easier, and that’s good. Wynter’s ideas and processes are important, I want people to think about them, and the easiest way to get them to do that is to present them first in story form. I know once they read the stories—and the stories they reinterpret—others will be hooked like me. Then they’ll be more likely to do the difficult work the abstractions require. And, of course, I want to see the plays produced (again). More on that shortly.

As bell hooks reminds us, theoretical texts can also be pleasurable to read if care is taken to write them in that way. However, such texts tend to remain opaque to the vast audience that I believe needs them to help think about domination’s mechanisms and how to break them. We need new stories and new storying methods to get to that other side. Wynter’s dramas, stories, and even poetry aren’t simple, but they are more open and accessible to the uninitiated. Among those not-yet-trained readers are the undergraduates many of us teach. Reading and performing Wynter’s narratives, our students may also be encouraged to do theory of their own. We may, too.

The possible

Narrative holds great possibility for such theorizing because it is anti-disciplinary. It refuses to be confined; it is promiscuous, anti-dogmatic, free to hint as it remixes but unburdened by the mandate to cite every tittle. Stripped down so, it invites readers to discover the origins, the contexts,

for ourselves. The discovery is delicious and potentially surprising. Thus, my conviction remains: this dissertation contributes most significantly by re-presenting the critical-imaginative to those who already read Wynter and by introducing the unknown to an audience that I hope continues to grow. As such, ultimately, the most important “chapter” is the one that comes next: what gets built out of the appendix that lists all of Wynter’s known (completed) critical imaginary. I look forward to the day when all the plays can be performed—perhaps broadcast!—and all the stories read aloud. The rewards will be legion.

Wynter’s re-interpretation of her own work offers as much to chew on as her restorying of other writers’ work. Yet, people seem to assume that the play Wynter expanded for her novel is a sort of “apprentice” text for the fuller, more complete—read “better”—novel. People also seem to assume that when writers translate or adapt, they produce texts that differ little from their originals.¹ At least when writers translate work from other languages, their intellectual labor serves the acknowledged literary aim of making recognized works of art accessible. Mais’s novel, already written by a Jamaican about Jamaica and at least partially for Jamaicans, would not appear to need translation. Whether adaptations are considered apprenticeships or copies, knockoffs, or dumbed-down versions of the artistic original—perhaps to make it accessible to the largely unlettered public—the thinking seems to be that none warrant attention. That thinking is shortsighted. Wynter’s transformations from one version to another are substantial. They should be read for their own merits, as well as the traces to other thought that they allow us to discover. I have seen just how, and how much, Wynter restories *Brother Man*; I know that scholars will find careful reading of other translations, adaptations, and source texts as fruitful.

¹ The BBC rejected Wynter’s adaptation of García Lorca’s *House and Bernarda Alba* on just such a basis. Returning her manuscript, the editor wrote, “We have broadcast the original play before, and I don’t think the translation to the West Indian setting would help make the play any more meaningful” (Imison).

Rockstone Anancy is among the restories that fall into the category of both source text and adaptation. In *Rockstone*, one can see the sort of “Brechtian” alienation effects Wynter had begun experimenting with in her *House and Land*, with some of her discoveries informing the later *Maskarade*. Wynter also versions Miss Gatha in *Rockstone*, under the name Malvernina Smallshop, called Mother Balm. It is this character that opens the way for the righteous executioner who later appears in *Maskarade*. She is called “Mother,” but the ancestral gods who have appeared protest, “A descendant and doctor science of the Ashanti Earth Goddess [. . .] crying her heart out to be a doctor’s mother! [. . .] Such a small ambition” (33–34). She must assume her own power and leadership. And, in becoming a righter of wrongs, she doesn’t replace the male leader, cured of his corruption. Instead, they create a different structure, side by side. Next to *Brother Man*, this is the piece I most want to see produced, here and now. *Brother Man* would be simpler to stage. And devastating to encounter. Done well, *Rockstone* could be an experience as all-encompassing as the recent musical *Fela!* Also devastating, but rollicking fun, too. As we do.

The rampart

One of the questions that tugged at me when I began writing this dissertation was why Wynter’s work, particularly the early creative, has been so ignored. The question still itches. I offered some possibilities in my opening chapter. However, even more than all of these, I think Wynter was sidelined by the academy over time because of her resolute anti-disciplinarity and the difficulty with which her thought can be sifted into particular ideological boxes. This anti-disciplinarity is already evident in her early critical-imaginative work. Even as she repudiated the ratiocentrism of Enlightenment humanism, she embraced a more expansive Humanism. There goes the religious sector of Caribbean society. Even as she denounced White supremacy and championed organizing Black communities around their needs, she rejected the idea that the purpose of such reorganization was to build an exclusively Black nation. (And she steadily asserted to those trying to re-instate an

African past that there's no return to a before Europe, as Césaire so often argued—or a before Islamic conquest.) So there go certain tendencies in Black nationalism and Afrocentricity. She refused gender oppression but also a singular gender focus. There goes hegemonic feminism. Nor could she get down with a singular economic lens. There went the Marxists. The members of all those clubs stopped reading her, stopped citing her, because they couldn't find simple ways to read her into their disciplines. Also, she indicted their disciplining.

I'm glad we're in a transdisciplinary moment (one, it should be said, that Wynter helped author). Despite their complexity, their density, whether in story or essay form, and the impossibility of enclosing texts designed to remain open, I find in Wynter's thought a wall to hold back the overwhelming sense of pessimism that I experience from many other thinkers, as well as my own eyes-wide-open (*xippi*) existence in the world. Wynter has a way of declaring that we must make a breakthrough in knowledge to overturn the world as we know it, meaning we have to create the conditions for that breakthrough, and the stakes are the continuation of humanity or its destruction, and I still come away thinking, okay! We only have to create new origin myths and get people to accept how they are reconstructed, come together as a species, and thereby dismantle all hierarchies. That's an utterly implausible (edited from impossible) task, but let's roll up our sleeves and set about achieving it! How can she refuse to underplay the enormity of the task, remaining brutally honest about “the black truth” of our condition, and still convey such optimism? How do you even say—we must defeat White supremacy, male supremacy, hierarchical thinking, the hold of global capital and its disregard for human and all other life along with the mythologies of scarcity it has spread (in the face, moreover, of scarcities that appear to be real, and really scary, such as the recent insulin and baby formula fiascos), oh, and by the way, all simultaneously, or at least, with an eye always to the whole—and still come out with a sense of this revolution as possible?

The struggle is the redemption. Wynter's determined versioning practice teaches us, "if me house [tear] down ah can buil' it up/ Can buil' it up right from the ground, ha, ha!" (The "ha, ha" is important, too.) Reframing the conflicts that prevent the forging of a species-oriented ethos, figured first at the community level but with the intent to "build a good broad road out into the world," is part of the revolutionary work her restor(y)ing stages.

I don't think I am alone. By that I mean, scholars consistently relay their excitement about the expansiveness of Wynter's thought, and probably even more about her *thinking*, her ability to explode subjects that seemed closed or exhausted. It's what Keith Walker describes as "an enabling elasticity of mind that inspires scholars to break out of the prison walls of their academic specialization" ("Not to Exist" 39). But I would guess that what attracts them as much is how that "enabling elasticity" also conveys optimism. Her reaching toward, her breakthrough method, implicitly carries with it the idea that a breakthrough is *possible*, and that it will help us to (continue to) achieve a more complete emancipation. Because the possibility of a utopian futurity (dynamic practice, not state/status), and all the ways one can begin to enact it, helps us get out of bed in the morning and out the door to confront what must be done. This means that Wynter's work is heavy with political significance. Any catalyst for doing what must be done to right (end) the world is.

The mourning

Notwithstanding the glimpses of utopia, grief has attended me often during this process. It dogs me as I close.

In May of 2019, Esther Kim and I—with the indispensable assistance of Kim's many friends and colleagues at the University of Texas—Austin—were able to stage a reading of *Under the Sun* (with professional actors and pre-recorded music, if no sets, props, or complex blocking). With Professor Wynter attending, along with many of her intellectual comrades, friends, and family, we gave the play its first hearing since it had been shelved some sixty years before. During the post-

production fêteing, a tentative plan hatched: a Wynter drama series, every spring. We would stage a reading for at least one play each year, if we could locate enough complete scripts. May 2020 was to be the next. Early in the year, we had already sent the director the script for *Brother Man*. This is the play my self-professed nonreading forever-friend from middle school had delightedly devoured and demanded to see come alive.

Then the schools all shut their doors. Then the intense fear and isolation began.

There are many places I could have gone with this study. However, more than anything else on my woulda-coulda-shoulda list that I didn't, here is what I grieve most: Given how the virus has persisted, there won't be another staged reading with Professor Wynter attending. Writing the sentence, I want to delete it. I can't, though; she would disapprove. We must face reality, always.

The end?

In relating the experience of interviewing Wynter, David Scott reports he suddenly realized that “the past is never past” for her (“Agonistic” ix). I was ever reminded of this in my work with Professor Wynter, in person and on the page. One example is illustrative. I was on one of my sojourns with Professor Wynter, helping to sort and organize her personal papers in preparation for them to be transferred, finally, to an institutional home. Wynter had been awarded an honorary degree and was writing a speech for the ceremony. Because ill health was fatiguing her, she worried about finishing the vexing task. This was in 2018, when the British government escalated its deplorable mistreatment of the “Windrush generation”—harassing and threatening to deport long-time British subjects and residents while blaming bureaucracy. Naturally, Professor Wynter did not feel she could accept the honor without addressing the political situation. I suggested she use a piece she had written during the Windrush era, allowing it to comment for her. I had imagined the historical piece, whole and untouched, sandwiched between some sparse new commentary. You know the move: “As I wrote then,” and so on. There was no way. Between the lines of the text that

I'd printed out for her, she began to make changes, reinterpreting the history with the benefit of some 60 years of hindsight, recasting the text as it "should" now be. No past is past. All past is open to re-interpretation, reframing. Old stories must be told anew so that we *can* enact a Human Being that we *must*.

Over the many weeks I spent among Wynter's papers, I would witness this purpose and method repeatedly. She had sketched out talks and articles on legal pads. On the long, lined pages were often carefully taped rectangles of paper bearing typed text or photocopied bits from books or articles. Some rectangles held "block quotes" from other writers, while some contained her own. They were surrounded with handwriting text that interacted with, modulated, or entirely rewrote the printed text. Picking out a morsel here, adding something, setting aside there. Watching Wynter in her current writing task and bearing witness to so many of those past acts reminded me of *tànn ceeb*, the pre-cooking task of rice sorting I had seen performed so often. I flashed on the treasured image of my small niece, sitting on the stoop with her flat-bottomed basket, surface half-covered with rice.² She would deftly flick the to-be-used to the right, the to-be-discarded to the left, eyes full of stars despite the tedium, as she listened to our tales. Lécboon, lippon. Story me a story.

What does it mean if no past is ever past, no text ever closed?

² Of course, the metaphor can't quite capture Professor Wynter's writing process; what people cull in cleaning *ceeb* is actually detritus, not another something yummy for some other dish. Most Senegalese households require this tedious cleaning process because the imported "broken" rice can retain bits of dirt or broken pebbles. Most rice sold in Senegal consists of this "low quality" (but delicious!) import despite Senegal being a rice-growing country itself. The Senegambia is the region from which, as Pierre Thiam teaches us, *Oryza glaberrima* originally spread—along with the knowledge of how to cultivate it, when traffickers in Humans sought out African rice's expert cultivators so they could own the technology, the market, and the food, not just the labor. Calling it "Carolina" rice is like calling Kunta Kinteh Toby. (For more on how enslaved technologies built the rice industry in the Americas, see Thiam et al., *Senegal*; and Carney, "Rice Cultivation.") But I digress.

Appendix A

Citational density comparison

In my introduction, I offer a comparison between Google Scholar citations for Stuart Hall and Sylvia Wynter. Google’s Ngram Viewer tool represents the difference in citational density even more starkly and in visual terms. The tool searches books, rather than journals, albeit only those scooped up in its controversial digital publishing project, Google Books, enabled in large part by collaboration with the nonprofit Hathi Trust. Hathi has sought to digitize the entire collections of university and select public research libraries, almost all located in the Global North. As a tool that focuses on books, Ngram Viewer can be taken to represent the uptake of a thinker in the academic world, where scholars reference and extend through monographs. This is the Ngram comparison of mentions of Hall and Wynter from 1956 to 2019, the last year its English Language corpus includes.

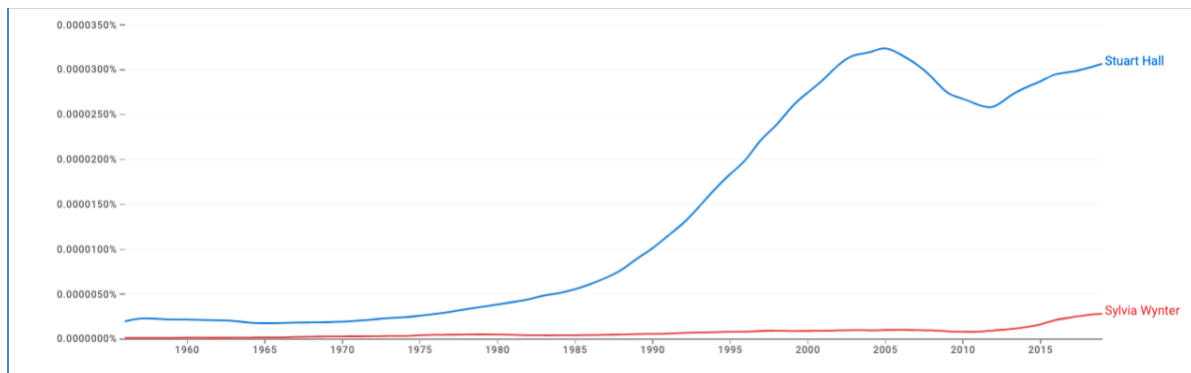


Figure 1: Google Books Ngram Viewer, terms “Stuart Hall” and “Sylvia Wynter,” period 1956–2019

The measure is the percentage of mentions as against all appearances of two-word terms in the corpus. The exponential increase in number of books published over time is controlled for in the algorithm.

Another comparison is instructive for how this density differs across disciplines.

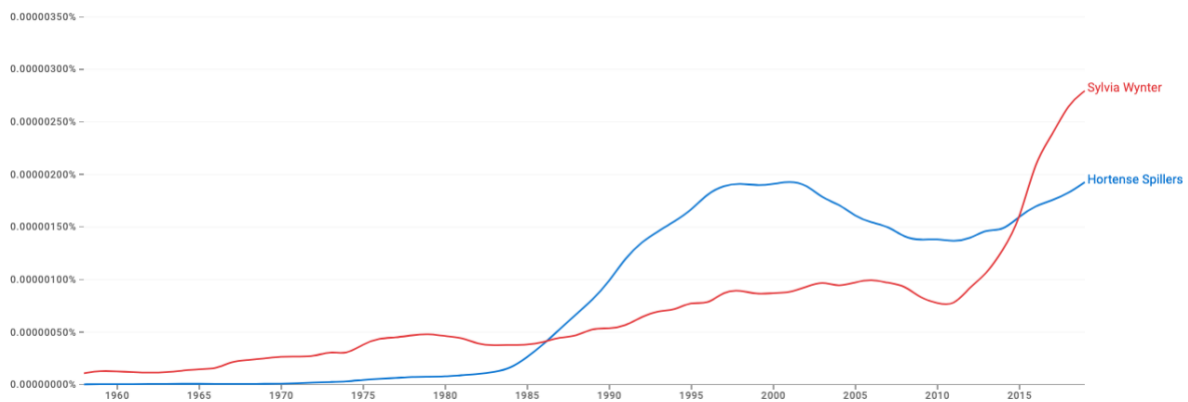


Figure 2: Google Books Ngram Viewer, terms “Hortense Spillers” and “Sylvia Wynter,” period 1956–2019

However, note that the collection limitation may be significant in this case, since the scanned books were held mostly in the Global North, which may be more likely to discard books important to other regions. None of the Hathi Trust members are located in the Caribbean. In other words, to paraphrase, Hathi Trust is a mechanism for securing the conception of the library, the global Global North Library, which overrepresents itself as if it were the universal Archive itself. (See <https://books.google.com/ngrams/info> for a more complete explanation of the tool.)

Appendix B

Interview Excerpt: Beginnings in Music, Dance, Acting, and Storying

Sylvia Wynter, interviewed by Asha Tall at Wynter's home in Texas, July 21–27, 2017. Lightly edited for length, clarity, and organization.

Dance

AT Dancing is rarely ever invoked when people speak to your work. Can you talk about how you came to dance and what dance represented for you? What was your first memory of dance? Were you dancing as a child? Did other people in the family dance?

SW: Well, growing up as children, my mother was very talented at home, very creative, so we heard her reciting poems, like old-fashioned Victorian poems, but also dialect poems, in Jamaica, and we were encouraged to dance to popular American music, like I remember one song, “Heaven, I’m in Heaven” [Frank Sinatra, “Cheek to Cheek”]. And so, we were lucky in that because of my mother we had what I could call a creative childhood, in that, how should I say, non-pretentious familiar way. But then of course, dance—we all danced. We took it for granted that dance was a part of life. But in terms of my coming to dancing, that would be a particular moment. And as I think I’ve spoken very often, that, we were a colony of a British empire, and that’s what knew about the world, and that’s how we responded. I mean, there was governor, and the governor came accompanied by military soldiers, you know, all dressed in white, with a white sort of helmet, and things like that. That was authority for us, right, but that was in a sense a kind of a distant authority, in that, that was only on formal occasions. But we took it for granted that there couldn’t be any order but that order.

But nevertheless, the sort of singing of Jamaican folksongs—my mother would sing them, and ourselves with American popular music and Jamaican folksongs. We were in a world that would lead very easily to my coming to the recognition that once the anticolonial movement had started, the revalorization of dance, of all that had been negated aspects of our lives was, how shall I say, a very powerful moment.

And so going to dance with Boscoe Holder, when he started his troupe in London—he was from Trinidad, and therefore from the Carnival tradition, and his brother Geoffrey, who actually came to America and also took part in the whole, what I could call the Dunham movement, the revalorizing of Black dance, which of course before had been the very negation. So, when I went to university in London, and Boscoe had his troupe, I would leave after I had gone to my lectures and go over to where he had his little dance place he had rented, and we would go and dance in this thing gratis, just for, not just the fun of it, but for the recognition that we were formalizing the kind of dancing that we had taken for granted as if it were just natural. And Boscoe was in the process of formalizing the movements, he and his wife, I think Sheila Clarke, right? But all of us were aware it wasn't just dancing. It was like an uprising from below, all the things that had been despised. So, you could call it the gaze from below everywhere it would be. You know? How do we revalorize all that had been, growing up, had been devalued?

You know, you are told, don't behave like a nigger, don't do nigger dances, don't do nigger this, and so on and so forth, so that was part of a profound movement. And dance was also in the United States, and with someone like Dunham, I remember sitting up in—I can't remember the name of the place in London, but it's a well-known place where great performers would come to perform. But you had these seats at the top, and I could almost have fallen out of my seat. It was—the rhythm! The drums, we had never known that kind

of complexity, that kind of power! We had heard it, it was dance music, but we hadn't heard it directed towards a purpose. And I really felt I could have fallen over the damn [balcony]. [LAUGHS] I mean, it was the excitement that gripped you. And then you understand how, I think in Africa somewhere they say that rhythm holds up the universe. And that was the kind of rhythm you were hearing. And so that is how I began to dance, and that is where these pictures would come from.

And by the way, I'm sure you know about Victoria Santa Cruz? Oh, God, when you see—I don't know if you saw how, when she moves—it destroys the whole Cartesian thing of the mind versus the body. It is totally destroying it. [LAUGHS] Because the mind is not separate from the body. Both of them are encompassing each other, you know? And so, it's then everything else that I have done, everything you'll find, is this same thing. But it's not just me. It's all of us at that time.

AT: Even as you're saying dance was central to the beginning of your creativity, people haven't really followed that up.

SW: Yes, because they separate—it's the Cartesian division—there's the mind separate from the body, and the fact that there's conceptualization in African dance as in all dances, but perhaps more powerfully. If I could just say something that really has astonished me. The extraordinary findings that are being put forward by the neuroscientists, the linguists, and so on—the human begins in Africa. Indeed, we are all descended from Africans. Although the people who talk about that, they still want to put the idea that there are apes and then there are humans. I'm going to show you a wonderful book called *Biomythology*, and they will show

you a picture that was in all our minds.¹ There are little black apes, right, and then it [the figure] gets larger and larger, and it gets lighter and lighter, and then at the end of it—

AT: It's the white man at the top of the ladder.

SW: I'm not sure what the picture is called, but the book is *Biomythology*. And that's in our minds. So, I remember I was at the hairdresser the other day, and I tried to bring it up, but they didn't want to have anything to do with that, because it's in their heads. I didn't tell them that was what was in their heads, but I was just telling them, you know, this is extraordinary, that all our children are being taught that the humans begin in Africa, we all descended from Africa. Because for them, what is Africa? It's still that negation. I'm saying, why don't we have students excited, and realizing—you're overwriting the history of human kind! What is the block? But I think that is that picture. That damn picture.

AT: That picture, and the other one for me—I had an African dance teacher, I believe she was from here, but she was teaching African dance, when I was an undergrad, and she showed us the picture of the Peter's projection of the map, instead of the Mercator projection. You're familiar with the two? The Mercator projection is the one that we're familiar with. It's the globe that's flattened out. And so, it completely distorts the proportions of the different land masses. So, in our heads, we see always Europe as dominant, the United States, North America, the North is always larger in our minds than the South. It diminishes the South. When you see the Peter's projection, it shows that Africa takes up far more space than Europe and Asia. It takes up far more space than North America. But for me, it was stunning, absolutely stunning to see that.

¹ David Cook. *Biomythology: The Skeptic's Guide to Charles Darwin and the Science of Persuasion*, AuthorHouse, 2016.

SW: I hadn't thought about it. It's not something I've conceptualized. But you took it for granted, and the way you have sub-Saharan, you know? [LAUGHS] Sub-Saharan. As if, any down there below.

AT: Right. And it's this vast land mass and because of the ways our minds have been trained, on that kind of picture, it's almost impossible to get out of the mindset, so that the North does not dominate, in terms of land mass, and at that time, of people, population.

SW: I'm going to show you this wonderful book, *Biomythology*. He had the best picture I've seen in life. I remember an Indian once saying that when he was growing up, he could never get it out of his mind, it was this thing going up and up and up until you became human, and of course you had to be white to become human. So, it's interesting. But what you've just said is also very powerful, about the geography of it. And then I was always bad at geography anyway. [LAUGHS] But I hadn't thought of the geographical impact. I would love to see another kind of map.

AT: Just the power of the visualization and what that does. So, when you were talking about how you came to dance, was your first experience, at least of noticing the power of dance, as it in London, or was it as child?

SW: Growing up there was that kind of dancing, and people by and large people very well, you know? In every day settings, when you go to parties and things like that. So that was there, but it was never formally approached the way it was when we began to dance with Boscoe. There are formalities. For example, I remember very much the rhythm, like Victoria Santa Cruz's, has to be *tight*.

And of course, because they had Carnival, they really had a much vaster—so I have a book to show you when we're finished which is called *Caribbean Festival*—I have it out there to show you. The Trinidadian thing was for me what Dunham was, too. For example, we

never knew how it was to dance out into the snow in Carnival, but they knew how to dance and so, myself, I danced out into the snow—I got pneumonia, by the way. Yes. [LAUGHS] But you *did* it because it was so infectious. So, the Trinidadians were the ones who *culturally*, in a sense, what can you say, colonized the rest of us from the different parts of the Caribbean. Especially the Anglo parts which were more strict and proper.

AT: And also, with the Calypso.

SW: And with the Calypso, of course, with the Calypso! Yes, yes. So, Carnival I think was the best source of that. Although we would have it in Jamaica, I think we hadn't developed it, because they had a festival rite that they were enacting every year. Whereas we had just bits and pieces of it, but we had no Carnival tradition.

AT: So that actually brings me to Jonkonnu, because that *is* Jamaican.

SW: Very Jamaican. And also in many other islands, too, I think in the Bahamas, there was a form of Jonkonnu.

AT: And even in North Carolina, here, they have a Jonkonnu tradition.

SW: Yes.

AT: And in Honduras.

SW: Honduras and quite a lot of places. It's a strong thing. It's sort of everywhere.

AT: So, you've written a lot about Jonkonnu. You explain it as part of the indigenization of African culture, the embrace of the African, but at the same time it's what makes Jamaicans Jamaican or West Indians West Indians and Antilleans Antillean. But from my understanding what you're arguing is that doing the dance, doing dance itself, doing Jonkonnu, partaking in the ceremony, both honors and enacts that indigenization, so that it's the dancing itself that performs or enacts the revalorization or rehumanization.

SW: And putting down roots. Jean Price-Mars of Haiti, that's what he insisted. He was trying to say, yes, we are African in Haiti, but we are also Haitian. You know what I mean, because you had to deal with these new circumstances. You're bringing this African tradition, and because it's the longest and oldest tradition that we're going to find, it does have all kinds of mechanisms to literally, what we say, to put down roots. And it's the people on the slave ships who are going to be the carriers of all this. This is an enormous paradox. They're going to be the carriers of not just a sort of— Because as you know in Africa there are many, multiple different traditions, but all are fused by a certain [knowledge of] the whole power and meaning of rhythm. Because rhythm is also an enormous unifier. If you think of what happens...

AT: Everyone starts clapping to the same beat, and dancing to the same beat.

SW: The same beat, yes. You wonder whether physicists have ever thought, when the Africans say “Rhythm holds up the universe,” have they ever thought of the power of rhythm? I'm pretty sure that it *is* held up rhythmically, but how can you express that in conceptual science, in science? Because as I say it, I'm sure it must be so, but I don't know why I'm so sure it must be so.

And by the way, if we are ever to be ourselves, it's the only thing that really holds us together. Because the only time you see people really coming together is when they're dancing to the same rhythm.

AT: You've talked a lot about the ways that music *is* this unifying force, and that rhythm is the basis of the universe, and it is something that you *feel*. And I think there's somewhere that you say that you can't dance by proxy, you can only know what you know as a dancer by dancing.

SW: Yes!

AT: And so, I'm wondering if you feel as if some of the understandings that you have tried to express in language later, that you came to know them through the dance itself.

SW: Thank you. That's the point that I really want you to see, that there is nothing that I have done that is not related to that moment of dancing, but dancing within a whole thing where we are coming up from below, we are overturning all these things that had always been put on us, we are now revalorizing it, but not revalorizing it conceptually, but even more powerfully. And as I said, that's where the Dunham thing came from, the recognition of what she did. And then there was also Pearl Primus, of course. But Dunham was more... They were very different. Pearl Primus was very powerful, but I think Dunham was more—she was an organizer, so she brought the group together. And she created a moment in London... By the way, *all* the audience was transfixed.

AT: I wanted to play you a little clip and see if we can recreate some of that. Because this is from that time. It's not in 1948 when I think she first came to London, but this one is from 1952. [[We play and discuss British Pathé clip.]]

SW: That could be the one. Yes. Yes... The rhythm. [LAUGHS] Yes. Thank you. So, you can see what happened, why I told you I could have fallen out of my seat. And I think nothing like that had been seen before. At least you know, you would have seen it in Africa, of course, and everywhere where it was being taped—but put on stage, highlighted, made into, how shall I say, I would say a cultural, not production, but a cultural event. A transformative event. Transformative. When you began to look, usually, rhythm was used in a very erotic sense, you know? And it was just there to be with the music. But this was now putting an entirely different. And you notice the attitude is the rhythm. It's an entirely different attitude to rhythm.

AT: Yes. The other thing I noticed in there, you were seeing at the very end, they were talking about the Ag'ya dance, which she found in Martinique, which is really similar to capoeira in Brazil, and also it seems to me that it fits the description of what Edward Long was talking about, all the way back—you spoke about how Edward Long wrote about Jonkonnu and before that was talking about the martial dances, the military dances of Black people, and that this is one of the reasons that the dances were—

SW: —were banned.

AT: —banned. And that you can see in this Ag'ya that she brought back, when they're doing the dance, you can tell that it's not just... Let me see if I can find L'Ag'ya, the dance in Martinique that, you know, you just spoke about how Dunham went around and found the dances and the songs all over Latin America and the Caribbean. So, this is one of them. She did this field work in—

SW: 1936.

AT: Yes, so this is the original form, that she then took and transformed into the dance. And just like with capoeira, you can tell that it's a dance form, but it's also a fighting form.

SW: Yes.

AT: So, I wanted to ask about this, and about, you see Edward Long talking about it and you see the various of the colonizing forces talking about it.

SW: Long had seen the martial spirit and their fear of that sort of martial spirit.

AT: Right. Let me play a little of it for you.

[[We play and discuss Ag'ya fieldwork clip.]]

They of course didn't have sound with the recordings at that time. But Fanon characterizes the dance of the colonized, the so-called Native, as sort of the physical release, a necessary release. He called it the “exercising of the refusal they cannot utter and the murders they

dare not commit” that “wastes” the building up of counterviolent feeling and action that has to meet the colonizers’ and the enslavers’ violence. But when I look at the clip of Ag’ya, I wonder whether we might more rightly call this spiritual and martial preparation—

SW: Yes. Yes.

AT: —as opposed to a wasting of the energy. Because it seems to me the dance is actually keeping people in shape for struggle.

SW: Yes. Well, actually for any rebellion to take place, this current had to be there. Normally when they talk about the Haitian revolution, they downplay the final ceremony. They forget, it transforms you. We forget that in all human orders, each human order has a conception of life that is symbolic. And they have to, because remember what they have to do to the young men, especially in traditional societies, the young men, when they’re born, they have to be taught to value their symbolic life over their biological life, the life born of the womb. So that is why the men... have all kinds of rituals, where the young initiate sees the men giving them life, but this life is a symbolic life to defend. Just think of the United States, all of these veterans who come back. They are the ones who are going and [risking] giving up their lives for this thing. And they are, in a sense, prepared for it, not so much by the martial dance, although the training is there, but by straightforward ideology, whereas I think that in the African and traditional societies, it’s part of the everyday life. You’re continually being made to understand that you give up your biological life [in the service of your symbolic life]. So Hobbes says, it is his biological life. *No*. What you give up your life for is the defense of the symbolic life of the group. And so even the women giving birth in a way, they shed their blood, to give birth. So, they give birth to a child, but they’re also giving birth to a symbolic meaning. But not in the way that the men have to be, because you have to prepare them to give up their life and not run away. And so, as you say, every day, it’s being done in these

dances. And Long was right in that he was looking at it from a planter's eye, and from his protection. So, he's seeing the danger, and eventually, they banned the war drums, for example.

AT: I was also wondering, while you were doing this work, particularly the Master's—you've already said you were dancing while you were doing your Bachelor's, but were you also dancing while you were doing your Master's?

SW: I can't remember. But I know, certainly when I first came, and I was doing my BA, yes, I was—every day, on the days of the week, you would leave the university and you would go to the studio. Yes.

AT: And at that time did you see the academic enterprise to be related and complementary to your dance work? Or did you find them to be contradictory? Does the academic work go hand in hand with the dance work for you at that time?

SW: I think at that time, remember, we had not had a university tradition in Jamaica itself [LAUGHS], so I had no idea what a university tradition was, and because I had no idea, I took it for granted that you could do [them both together]! The sort of ignorance did it. Because we would not have a university until after independence, and then we set up a university. We had gone, we only had I think high school, and we had a school for teachers. But we would not have had university. So...

AT: My friend Deb [who you met] was talking about that—the fact that her mother very much resented that she was not able to be educated beyond high school in Jamaica, and that's the reason that she came to the United States.

SW: Exactly.

AT: That also points up the usefulness of not knowing the rules, right?

SW: Yes. Very good.

AT: Because it creates openings for you, if you're not disciplined already, your mind is not enslaved to these rules and to think that it's not possible. But you just did what you wanted to—you didn't know that dance and academics weren't supposed to be complementary. So, you were at the university and you were dancing. How did you learn about the Boscoe Holder group in the first place?

SW: I think what about it that was nice is it was a small West Indian circle. In England, now, for the first time we were West Indians. We had never been West Indian before. We come now, we're living together—remember, these islands are very far apart [LAUGHS], Jamaica from Trinidad. And now, Trinidad, I think, takes the lead in things like dancing because of its wonderful calypso and 'mas tradition, and Carnival tradition. In Jamaica, we didn't have that. We had Jonkonnu, which is an entirely different kind of thing. But nevertheless, it was the Trinidadians coming to England and our meeting up with them that in a sense began to West Indianize us, so to speak, as far as dance was concerned.

AT: And so did you meet Boscoe Holder before you saw Katherine Dunham or after?

SW: I can't remember, but I have a feeling I might have been with Boscoe already before. But I'd have to see what the dates were. It's possible. But I remember, I think I would have been dancing with Boscoe before. One would have to see what was the date when she first came to England. And she put on this extraordinary—as I told you I was sitting up in the cheap seats and I could have fallen over! I had to be careful because the rhythms were so powerful. In fact, in London there was a recognition that this was something powerful and unusual. And remember she had gone and studied in the different areas, so she's getting out the tradition from the roots. And so, traditions, for example, that would have come from Africa itself. And at that time, we had no way of knowing, and even now most scholars are not ready to understand the dimensions of Africa as the origin of the species, as the origin of

language, as the origin of dance, music, traditions, right? And then all of this coming out. Even today it means you're sort of turning the world upside down. But, nevertheless, it means that our tradition of dance is an ancient, ancient tradition. And of course, the Latin American, you also had Spain, and their tradition is a powerful one, and the indigenous peoples of America, and so it was this, in all the islands and areas of what I call the circum-Caribbean, this is where a mixture of things, so we had this rich tradition of dance, and this fusion. It was this fusion that we were using. So, in a sense, we are moving toward what I call an ecumenically human conception of the world. I think we are moving towards it even now, in spite of the tragedy of what's happening.

Importance of Literature

AT: Maybe we could turn now to your work at the university. I was wondering, what led you, when you were finished with your baccalaureate in Spanish literature, to go on and pursue a Masters' level degree? Did you have to go to Spain to do the research?

SW: Actually, I can't remember if I went to Spain to do the research.² But what had happened was in the meanwhile I had fallen very much in love—I had also done English literature—and I had fallen very much in love with Shakespearean literature, which was a great period of literature. And in Spain, they had a parallel, because this is a monarchical state—this is after the feudal order when the monarchical state becomes dominant both in Spain, and in England, and France, everywhere. This is the monarchy, this is the state. For example, in *The Tempest*, for example, Prospero acts always from reasons of state. And then if you go to

² On a document in Wynter's papers titled, "The End of Exile or The New Convert: A Synopsis," dated 10 Apr. 1961, Wynter writes: "Very little was known of the actual life of Enriquez Gomez. In order to find out the true facts, I did research in Portugal, Spain, France and Holland. For he had lived in the Marrano communities of the countries at some time or the other of his life. As a soldier, he may also have travelled to the New World. As was customary with the Marranos of the period, Enriquez Gomez deliberately obscured the facts of his life, using different names in different countries."

Spain, Shakespeare's opposite is going to be Lope de Vega, one of the great playwrights. He has a play called *El nuevo mundo descubierto por Cristobal Colón, The New World Discovered by Columbus*, but it was also centered about the state. The heroes are the king and queen of Spain, who are the rational [beings], like Prospero, whereas the Caribbean cacique as you would call him, was therefore the irrational—he had abducted someone else's bride, and so on. And remember that Caliban had attempted to rape Miranda. So, what you had now was the great reason/passion, reason/lack of reason, reason/nature.

This is a code of the Renaissance, that's going to be coming in with people like Pico de la Mirandola, so perhaps at another time we could speak a little bit about him, because remember, in our present system, if you think of that world order of the Middle Ages as what I'm going to call a theocosmogonic one, because a cosmogony, no human order can exist without a cosmogony, really, or a chartering cosmogony, which keeps the order together because we all believe in the origin story, and so the medieval origin story was very much that the celibate clergy were able to redeem the nonclergy, the noncelibate, from original sin, right? But they would have to go to church, and so on, so the laity, that is to say the scholars who were not celibate, would therefore be condemned to the sins of the flesh, so you're going to see how we're going to go from the spirit and the sins of the spirit vs. the sins of the flesh, to reason vs. also the sins of the flesh, but seen as a giving in to natural appetite. This is where you're talking about the secularizing of the world, the laicizing of the world. So, that is why I think that—the important thing to understand is that when Copernicus, who is a priest but also an astronomer, and when he says, “It may seem absurd, but the earth also moves,” it's as if when we were to say, “Now, it may seem absurd, but as such-and-such argues, Blacks are as much human, as entirely human as Whites.” It may seem to us absurd. [LAUGHS] Right, but because it would seem to them absurd, that would then

lead to what we call the natural sciences. Because you now began to look at the world, and you no longer see the universe in which the earth is fixed at the center of the universe as it dregs. But no, it's exactly like all the others, it moves according to the same laws. And therefore, you get the kind of physical sciences. OK?

I'm just trying to say, that is the kind of literature that I'm studying, and literature, you see, is the one that makes you see it. So, you read the plays, and you see how they are bringing in the new conceptions—they're not totally radical, but they are nevertheless a break with what you call the theocosmogonic world, the world that is governed by the priests in a sense.

If I could just stop there for a moment, I'm just trying to keep my thoughts together. Because it's an *enormous* moment. Because Césaire is going to argue there can be no going back before Europe. You can't go back in the world—any of us, including Islam. Islam which had been very dominant and powerful before. But once the Renaissance, what we call the Renaissance movement, and the Reformation movement occurs in Europe, you are starting something entirely different. So, in a funny kind of way, I have never been able to teach Black Studies without beginning with Europe. Because Blacks and Negroes as we know them hadn't been conceptualized in those terms, until, of course, and this was the whole thing of the expansionism and the voyages and so on. So, but always, in this thing, we were—whereas in the theological cosmology of the medieval order, Blacks were seen as the debris of Ham, as having been descended from the children of Ham and so on, and that has caused a lot of problems in the world. But Blacks were always part of that negation, so even when you went back and you made the big break, and you were no longer enslaved to original sin, or redeemed from original sin, but essentially enslaved to the negative parts of one's body and one's natural appetites and desires, and this is where you get Caliban in

Shakespeare's play, and in Lope's play, you are going to get—I can't remember his name—but he's the cacique, the governing authority, but he acts without reason, whereas the king and queen of Spain act with reason.

What I am trying to say is we're beginning to grasp something larger than what we have normally been taught, and beginning to see how there is going to be this tremendous break that's going to lead to the natural sciences. And when we say the sciences, we simply mean this. It's a very simple thing. That in any human order, there must be truths of solidarity. Now scholars, the normal scholars, we are supposed to manufacture those truths of solidarity and that enables us to live and work together as a species. But there's a normal sense of being. There's a normalcy. There's always in every order a normalcy. So, Prospero is the embodiment of normalcy. The king and queen of Spain are the embodiment of normalcy in these respective plays. So, notice what you're getting from the literature. You are getting a kind of knowledge that you normally don't have. But you are able to understand why what we call the natural sciences developed, and why for the first time you have the kind of knowledge—what is the knowledge? Simply this. That with the natural sciences, if they are to be scientific, they must be cognitively open. If anything comes in that contradicts what they are saying, then they must take it in. Whereas all other kinds of knowledge, including secular knowledge, or what you call today the social sciences, or the science of economics—they are said to be sciences—they model themselves on sciences, but they are not science, because they have to keep the order, the order of homo economicus—they have to keep that order together.

So, I think that what happened is when we began to experience ourselves as Caliban figures, then it is from that, as the negation of normalcy, because you have a sense that, let us say Prospero is the embodiment of normalcy, then Caliban must be its negation, and we

would always come in as the Caliban figures. So that means we would have—just as the laity, or the laymen and women, had had to struggle against the clergy in order to not remain as the non-normal other to the clergy, and so they reconceptualized the conception of being human as that of rational, and as Pico de Mirandola points out, when he rewrites the Biblical story of God speaking to Adam, and so God now says to Adam, “All other creatures have I put and bound in their places, but to you I have given no fixed place. You can be the maker of yourself by obeying, thinking rationally like the Angels, and arriving at the Angels, or giving in to your bodily passions.”

Ok, so this is the new ethic, and that’s why Césaire is going to say we can’t go beyond that because no other, including Islam, and Islam had actually done a number of great things that still have to be studied, but once you had these voyages which disproved all the earlier theological geography of the earth, and began to bring in what we call a scientific geography, you see the West had introduced something that of course had changed the world entirely.

AT: So, your studying of the Spanish literature enabled you to put it together as more of a total European and British worldview?

SW: The Spanish and the English. The two together.

AT: The two together instead of it being simply something that was coming about that Shakespeare was noting, this is something occurring across the literature of the period.

SW: Exactly.

AT: So, your founding within Spanish literature gave you insight into that which those of your Anglophone contemporaries would not necessarily have had, because they weren’t studying it.

SW: Normally. Exactly. And that's why I would start my Black Studies courses with actually introducing the changes in the world, because that's where the Black would come to occupy a totally negated position. Because up until then, Blacks had remained in Africa, and they lived in their own worlds. But only with the beginning of the voyages and the massive slave trade, and then we are going to enter it as slaves bought and sold as what they called piezas, you know?

This is where Césaire is going to argue that we were going to be the only ones put outside of humanity totally. And so, we are faced with a challenge. Which is totally because of what he calls a singularity. Our challenge is to find a conception of being human in which we no longer need to be the other to being human. But the problem of that challenge, in order to do that, we can't make any other person ever again be placed outside of humanity. So, this then brings up an imperative universality. It will come to you slowly. But that is how it begins.

And this then comes from one's perception of literature. And yet they're dismissed as the humanities. But to understand everything about our present order, we're going to have to actually look at the kind of literature that is being written and to see what the changes are, you know?

AT: A 16th century Spanish play might still seem to be an odd subject of study for someone already involved in political and cultural decolonial work. Can you explain? Was your interest in Spanish Golden Age drama itself, or did you choose to write on Enríquez Gómez's *Á lo que obliga el honor* for something in particular that you took from his work or how he functioned as a writer?

SW: You've touched on something that is very very powerful, very important, because where are we now going to go? Because in our society, we take it for granted, for example, there's a

wonderful brilliant essay by Toni Morrison, where she points out that without the utter liminality and total negation of the Black, all the other immigrant groups who come in could never fully realize themselves as being fully American, but they can be because there's always the negation of the Black that makes them able to institute themselves.³ When they come to the country they can only succeed through the Black/white mechanism, because the Black is that which they must not be, so they have to detach themselves from the Black. And then the white is there. Actually, this then links to an African thinker called Legesse. He wrote a book called *Gada*, the study of an African system.⁴ He shows you that in every human order, there has to be a category that's called the liminal category. That category is the negation of everything that is the norm. And no society can function without that category of the liminal or the total negation and therefore of the nocebo effect, the damaging effect, in order that the ones who are coming in between will feel the thing of experiencing themselves, and they do that through the negation of the Black. That's what she's sort of pointing out in this essay. So that in a sense the Black functions as the liminal other in the American social structure, and he shows you how in other systems it does. But he says the real revolution is when the liminal moves out of his place.

AT: Which is what happens in this time, when people in London at the time in the face of this White supremacist culture are saying, no, we actually have culture also.

SW: Exactly. So, you see there is nothing that is not part of that whole struggle. There's absolutely nothing that is not part of that struggle. But I will try and find that Morrison thing because it's brilliantly put out. What's funny is she's saying what Legesse is saying, but he's

³ "On the Backs of Blacks," *Time Magazine*, December 2, 1993.

⁴ Asmarom Legesse, *Gada: Three Approaches to the Study of African Society*. New York: The Free Press, 1973.

saying it is a system in all societies, and she's showing how it functions in this society, you know? And how every immigrant is going to depend on the negation of the Black in order to make it as an immigrant.

So the idea of America as a nation of immigrants is also dangerous and destructive. Because the Anglos are not immigrants, they are settlers. They are conquering settlers who came and took away the land of the Indians. So, they are not immigrants either. And we are not a nation of immigrants, really. We have a group now that actually came to immigrate into the land of the settlers, and to be accepted by the settlers, and they had a hard time, remember, with being accepted. But what Morrison wants us to see is that without the Black liminality, they would not have been able to do it, because they always had this, whatever has happened, they weren't Black.

OK, now, why do I write on Enríquez Gómez? Because he was a Jew in Spain, and to be a Jew in Spain at that time, an utterly religious, theologically, we talk about the Inquisition and so on, and so you had the Jews and then you had the Muslims—but to understand the Muslims, remember, Islam had been very great. And it had conquered Granada. And so when Ferdinand and Isabella began to expand, the ruling person of the land was still a Muslim, a Moor we could call them. So, then you had these two liminal others to being what was called a clean Christian. To be a *limpio* Christian, you had to have no trace of the blood of either the Jew or the Moor. So, they found themselves in the place we have found ourselves. We are the others to all humanity, but they were the other to being a clean Christian. And so, then you had the inquisition. So what he [Gómez] did, he went and lived in Bordeaux for certain times, and I think he took part in business, and what he did at that time, he wrote very powerfully Jewish plays, and then when he came back to Spain, he wrote very powerfully Spanish plays, because *Á lo que obliga el honor*—the honor code was

a very aristocratic code, and you had to behave in certain ways that sometimes called for you to kill your wife, for example, in order to save your honor. And so, naturally, as a Black, and so you are tempted to pass for white—the whole thing of passing? Of course, that's what I'm going to select, you see? Because it so corresponds to this.

AT: So he was passing as a limpio Christian.

ST: And when he was a Christian, he wrote his plays, he wrote exactly as a Christian would. And so the title of it, *Á lo que obliga el honor, What Honor Obliges Us to Do*, to kill our wives if necessary. And you begin to understand. But to understand it you have to see the tragedy of the Jews, the tragedy of those Moors who were now conquered who had once been dominant—they had dominated Spain, you know? But now they were also the other. So of course, you can imagine the moment I saw that that was going to be my subject.

AT: So then, your location within Spanish literature has contributed to a different outlook than many of your contemporaries.

SW: Well, I think the fact of—remember, one of the most wonderful things that happened to me is that I went for a summer course in Spain, and on the basis of an essay that I wrote, I was offered a scholarship, and I went back for a year, and that year in Spain allowed me to identify with Spain, even from a historical point of view. Because you are able to see that Spain was very very great, and then of course, it would come down to nothing. You could already see the signs of what it would become. But also, the friendliness and happiness of the Spanish women, the Spanish students, and so on, was very very moving for me, so that had as much a great impact as the literature would have. Especially when I recognized the similarities that you could see and the differences.

Because they were both great. They called it the Golden Age of Spain, and of course you really could call it the Golden Age of England, because it is a remarkable thing when

they begin to expand and become empires, and things like that. Although we would find ourselves as the objects of these things, nevertheless it allowed you to understand, to—I don't know how to explain it. As I said, how I would feel for the marrano Jews is how I would feel for the Palestinians today, you see? This is the parallel. You see what I'm trying to say. Who is the object of the greatness of another group?

Dance, Cultural Inquiry, and Decolonization

AT: Yes, I see that. You're going in so many places that we can get back to it a little bit later. But I also want to go back to think about where you were with dance and the ways that then you began to take it up in your writing as well. You wrote about Jonkonnu for the *Jamaica Journal*. And you also wrote about Jonkonnu and other folk music traditions and dance traditions in your as-yet-unpublished "Black Metamorphosis." And you explain the practice of Jonkonnu in the island as part of the indigenization of Africans in the Americas. My understanding, and I think that this is been coming out in the interview, is that you are arguing that doing the dance—partaking in the ceremony—both values and enact that in indigenization. So that dancing among other spiritual, political cultural practices, dancing performs that revalorization of Human that you're talking about and it enacts the rehumanization of Africans in the Americas. Am I characterizing your argument correctly?

SW: I would say so. And then if you think about it in America, in fact, now in North America, the coming together of multiple peoples from all over the world. And this is something that North America is running from. And this is something that North America is running from, but when Langston Hughes—he has a wonderful poem and in the new African American museum that they've set up, they cite him in a poem where he says, "I, too, sing America." But they don't quote the most important part—"The land that's not been yet, but yet must be."

The circum-Caribbean or the New World is going to be at the beginning of, for the first time, of an ecumenically human civilization. And so, in a sense, Hughes is saying what Césaire is saying. Césaire is saying that our singularity is that we cannot be Human in the terms of being human in any of the conceptions of the human that now exist. We can be human only by a kind of return to that origin in Africa. And then we can become only by experiencing ourselves as an ecumenically human species.

AT: And so, how much of this politic that you found to be embodied in dancing, this revalorization of the Human through the dance became evident or more evident to you through your own practice of dancing? How much of that came through, you doing the dance itself?

SW: I'm just trying to think. Perhaps the best way I could put it is that for most of us who were educated formally in the terms of Western civilization, one of the most total things is the Cartesian conception. I'm trying to sort of condense it. For example, most of us would have known the Cartesian conception of the body being the opposite—the negation of the mind—but when we are doing this dance, we know that that cannot be so. And yet still we understand how this conception literally structures a lot of European thought, and the thought that we would have then would be thought against ourselves. Because, of course, Black dance, you could think of it as something all of the body, and yet still as you discipline yourself, doing this dancing, and you understand how this ostensibly pure fleshly thing has to be conceptually, but conceptually in different terms. It's not that there's a mind separate from the body. They are both part of each other. You cannot have a mind without a body. So, you have to then go totally against that conception. And therefore, you have to begin to think against a lot of formal knowledge. But actually, it's the very joy of living. It's the very joy of dancing. And also remember that when we danced, in a sense, we danced together, as

a group. It's not really a single dancer, or a single couple dancing. It is the whole idea of dancing as a group.

And also, the idea of rhythm as rhythm, as itself, a very conceptually rigorous thing. When you listen to drums and you listen to real drummers and, you know, the, the way the world comes, comes open to you in this kind--in this drumming.

So you begin to have—I remember when I said to Greg Thomas in the interview and I ended by saying something that I've always been happy that I said because it's true! When I said, I'd like to think the way Aretha sings. And you know what that is? She goes from one thing to another and you don't know exactly where she's going to. Until she has gone there you couldn't have imagined that she would have gone there. But it's in the process of doing it, you know?

And so, I think is also in the dance and also in great athletes, I think, too, when you see the total movements at times, you know? And how are you going to say is it just a question of the mind? It's the mind and the body together. So, how should I say. Maybe I wouldn't say that when I was dancing and so on. But always, it was the gaze from below because everything about, that was Black, everything that was Black rhythm, everything had been despised. And you are doing this thing and you're feeling something, something flowering out, something that is, is magnificent. But at the same that you are constantly revalorizing in your mind that which has been despised, that which has been made to be from below. And so all my work, I think, is the gaze from below.

Like, for example, in "Gwana," that story. It's the gaze from below. It is a revalorizing of the gaze from below, the gaze that had been the despised and had been cut aside. But yet still knowing that, that gaze from below opens us onto what could possibly become an ecumenically human view of the world, which is what I think we are lacking now.

That's why I cite the Pope so often because, if you read one of my essays that I wrote in a collection, it's going to be about Bartolomeo de las Casas who fought for the Indians. And then he thought that whilst the Indians had been, he knew the Indians had not been enslaved with what they call a just title He didn't know that the Blacks had also been enslaved without a just title in the Catholic tradition. A just title meant that you had just title to take away somebody's land, or to take away their [freedom]. Because, for example, they had heard the word of God and they had turned themselves away from it. But then he found out that the Native Americans had never heard the word of God, the Christian God, nor had it been when it was with the Africans. And so he repented and said he didn't know if God would accept his soul. And so why I like this present Pope is that he's bringing back that conception of what Christianity can be. And, by the way, also what Islam can be, remember, because in Islam, shariah law means that they can't allow the poor to go without food. Whereas natural scarcity in the Malthusian concept is that the poor *needs* to go without food. Because if you have more and more poor, the world will get more and more in trouble. So, the whole conception of natural scarcity is what is central to capitalism, right? In the sense that you can't avoid it, you cannot allow natural scarcity to conquer. You see, so that capitalism, now will grow food and so on, in abundance, but it can't distribute it because it's not supposed to go to those who have been naturally, naturally dysselected.

Darwin is always speaking about natural scarcity, but most traditional societies didn't have natural scarcity, except as they had a drought or something like that. Because redistribution was central to holding the order together, by the way. And although the distribution might also be unequal, that's not the point. You don't have people begging in the street. And now increasingly it's white men and women—have you seen them?—that are now begging in the street.

AT: We have the army of the homeless.

SW: Yes, the homeless. And then having a home of course is the supreme bourgeois quintessence of being, and yet they see people lose their homes and they see them out there, and they don't see it as a profound condemnation. A profound condemnation.

One can go and read in Darwin's *Descent of Man* and you're going to see our entire conception with respect to poverty enacted in that book with a newer concept of natural scarcity, as distinct from shariah law. And you could go and see them. And you can then see why Islamic people would hold on to the concept of shariah law. Whereas within a capitalism or within the bourgeois conception of being human, you would say that, you know, it's the very opposite that in a sense, the poor have been naturally dysselected. And so wasting the money on the poor is just sort of wasting it. I'm putting it rather, how shall I say, baldly, and not with the subtleties, but I'm saying, you have to try and go and look at shariah law. Come and then look at it with respect to the poor. And you're going to have to tremendous trouble because within our thing—it is logical for people to be poor and for them to be hopeless and so on, because you can't imagine redistributing except redistributing money in such a way that you can, you can, how should I say that...

AT: Only to have enough so that it can feed back into the capitalist system.

SW: Exactly.

AT: Only enough so they don't rebel against the capitalist system.

SW: Exactly. Because the capitalism system [pretends it is there] to destroy natural scarcity. But natural scarcity does not exist, it's just a trope and it's a conception that has been created by Malthus and then passed on to Darwin. And Darwin, by the way, not as a theorist—as a theorist, he says awful things in the *Descent of Man*—but as a human being, he was a very kind and gentle man. So, I want us to separate the being that it being human from the being that

is a theorist, and I want us to begin to become very suspicious of all theories including my own. You see what I'm trying to say? We have to be very very suspicious of them.

AT: Okay, I wanted to bring it back—you were talking about the revalorizing from below, which existed within the dance as well as in the other projects other cultural projects that people were taking on. And I wanted to, to get you to, to say a little bit about how that revalorization is integral to the project of decolonization. Or as Erna Brodber put it, to the finishing the project of Emancipation, how that revalorization is integral.

SW: That's a very good idea. It *is* integral. Exactly. Very good. Because it is the problem of emancipation and then decolonization. And then we now have to go further than that, but I haven't quite—ecumenically human emancipation, in terms like that.

AT: You have identified that time in London after World War II and before the assassination of Patrice Lumumba as a hopeful time, when it seemed as if revolutionary change was possible. Can you talk more about the kinds of collective work you were doing with the many others gathered in London at the time, and the ways that music, dance, and theater in particular figured in that liberation matrix?

SW: Well, just after the war there was a special moment and remember that England had had to pull out the best of itself in order to win, and so there had been enormous equality, as for example, in the rationing of food, even in something as simple as that.

So, we're moving away from all this idea of natural scarcity. The point is, how can we get together and live as a group that can fight off Hitler? And they did. And so, there was that moment in London, that was a beautiful moment. It did not last long, but it was a beautiful moment because they fought an heroic fight, it had been a heroic fight to destroy Hitler.

AT: And this might explain part of why there was an opening in that time when the, when all of these people are coming to England from the West Indies, many of them having come back from having fought in World War 2 on the side of England, and their conception of the world, even if they had been educated through the system, the same system, they were coming from a different part of the world. And so they were not completely in tune with the people who are in England. And so those clashes coming together also perhaps helped to make that opening because the, their--I'm reaching for what I'm saying. But because, because even if they have the same origin story, they know that there's difference, right? Just as you were saying that there was a dance that made, you know, that there's not a mind body split. In fact, if there's not a mind body split, then some of what you who are saying now we have to disrupt the formal orders of knowledge because we know exactly with our bodies that order is not correct. And so maybe that helps to understand why that period of time became an opening for change, because people can actually see what they understood to be true was not true.

SW: Exactly. For example, even the rationing of food. For the first time, people had equal rations of food and a sort of a redistribution that they'd had to have in order to win the war. And so even the health system in England [that] was introduced after the war was won by the Labour government. You see, and you see here, and so from then on, the British people have seen healthcare as a human right. We have only come to use the word human right now and of course human rights as we know can only be ecumenically human rights, although no one as yet is understanding why this has to be so for human rights to be logical, it has to be ecumenically human rights.

AT: You were talking about how that moment of opening and possibility and hope in England didn't last. And so, were you in London at the time of Notting Hill Riots?

SW: I certainly was in that area when the riots are going on.

AT: And so you were experiencing the Teddy Boys and so on.

SW: Yeah, yeah. Oh yes, I was. Remember I had told you when Jan and this other very big guy was going and there were skinheads and they just melted away [LAUGHS] when they saw these two big Black human beings, Black men.

The Role of Song

AT: In your essay on “The Politics of Black Culture from Myal to Marley,” you explain that the aesthetic space of the song institutes a “radical desire for a realization of happiness” that compels action. And in your *ProudFlesh* interview with Greg Thomas, you speak about the “liberating and emancipatory dimension” of Black song—and how the music blossoms to produce new understanding. From the time that I joined you in this project to recover your early work, you have maintained the importance of hearing the music and the songs that are integral to the plays. One of the reasons I wanted to talk about song is because one of the things that we’ve been trying to do is find recordings, right, and you were particularly keen on finding a recording of your Lorca adaptation, “The Barren One,” because of how Cleo Laine sang in it, although now that you have heard the Danish version of your play “Under the Sun,” that play might come in as a close second.

SW: Yes.

AT: So, I was wondering about the connection between—because you wrote your own songs for “The Barren One.” So, you wrote some songs. I know that Lorca had a lot of folk songs in it, and you also had some of the folk songs of Jamaica in “The Barren One,” but you also wrote some of your own.

SW: I did bring in some of the Jamaican folk songs, but I can’t remember which ones it would have been. Have you ever heard any of them? Of course, there are no recordings, right?

AT: I do have some. There are no recordings of “The Barren One,” but there are some recordings of some of the songs that you used. There are songs like “Hill and Gully Rider,” and there are songs like, you used “Mango Walk,” I think.

SW: Was there one [sings] *Train top a bridge jus-a run like a breeze / An’ a gal underneath’ it a wash her chemise.* [LAUGHS] Rookoombine.⁵

AT: Rookoombine! Yes. For the washerwoman’s song.

SW: Yes!

AT: According to this, you were already writing, as you were dancing, you were already writing calypsos of your own.⁶

SW: Yes. Well, they weren’t really calypsos, but just that they gave it the sort of generic name. They would be more on the Jamaican model.

AT: The mentos.

SW: There’s a woman I think, Olive Lewin, in Jamaica? You’ve seen her work. Okay, so she collected a lot of the songs. And then with respect to music, there was, was it Carlos Moore?⁷ A brilliant musician. Did you see him mentioned anywhere? I think, he might still be alive, in Miami. But he was a brilliant musician. He had studied in Panama, Panama Conservatory, then turned to jazz and so on. I still remember his playing, his band, playing, and it was extraordinary. So, when I went to Jamaica and I wrote a couple of plays there, I did work in concert with Carlos, but that was in Jamaica.

⁵ One version: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mgYp0mUaq4k>

⁶ Joan Hamilton of Mary Harris Agency to Richard Afton, Esq. of BBC Television Service, 27 June 1957. BBC WAC.

⁷ Carlos Malcolm, former leader of the Afro-Jamaican Rhythms.

Archives and the Plays

SW: Unfortunately—I have a lot of material in my papers, but I haven’t had the time to go through my papers. That’s a problem. I’m trying to find, you know, where can I deposit my papers, and how can I find somewhere I can get them to. I’m so afraid that I’ll die and leave all the burden of these papers. I’m just worried about leaving the burden of it on my son. And it’s a pile of material that would obviously have to also to be sorted through and selected and so on.

AT: Yes. You need an archivist to do that.

SW: So, a lot of this material that you’re saying—some of that would be there. No, not very much from England, unfortunately, because I didn’t take them with me when I was going. Nevertheless, the Jamaican period, when I was writing plays, and there’s one called “Shhh—It’s a Wedding.” [LAUGHS] It became famous as “Shit It’s a Wedding.” [LAUGHS] So, I may have some of that. And then I’d written a play for the Jamaican Government, in 1965. In 1865 there was a great rebellion in Jamaica, of the peasants, and then it had been brutally suppressed. And it became a cause in England, of course. And strangely enough, the scientists tried to take the part of the rebels, where the literary people took the part of Eyre, the Governor Eyre, who had massacred the peasants—eight miles of dead bodies, for example, one headline read. [The play] is called “Ballad for a Rebellion.” But there would be things in the Jamaican newspapers about it. So, we did it in 1965, because it was supposed to be a commemoration. And we used a lot of songs in it.

AT: It seems like you used song in just about everything.

SW: Yes, I would say so. Very very much so. But I was hoping to begin to go through my papers, but I don’t know if I will be. But I would love very much. Because I also have a lot of unpublished material. I don’t know if you remember the whole Alan Bloom controversy.

Alan Bloom was one of these right-wing scholars. And the University of Notre Dame had called me to come and give some lectures, about 3 weeks or something, on his right-wing conceptions, so I had gone there. And I remember going and giving it and coming back with a whole box of papers and putting it down and saying, okay, well, I'm going to try and write that up and make some money for a change, and of course I never did, so it's still lying down there, hopefully, in that box. So, there's a lot of unpublished material. Just like *Black Metamorphosis*, which they found.

AT: I wonder whether you might be able to have a university around here that would have either students of history or students of library science—somebody who would be invested in helping you to go through your papers who would be assigned to you instead of you having to rely on somebody's spare time.

SW: Yes. I have a couple at University of Austin. They had come to see me, but I told them I was trying to get off this preface, right? To explain about this, let me just show you something. Because I'm sure you heard about—I have to show you this to explain.⁸

So I told them when I was finished, I would get back in touch with them. So, I might get back in touch with them and find out how they might help me with respect to beginning to go through the papers. I just wanted to make sure that I've got this thing off to the publisher, and then you came afterwards, so. But it's such a lot of material, and a lot of it in the end will have to be thrown away I'm sure, but there's a lot of it that's valuable. A lot of unfinished material.

AT: One of the things I know from working with archivists is that the person who collected, or wrote, or the person whose material it is, should not be the person who starts throwing

⁸ Preface for *We Must Learn to Sit Down Together and Talk About a Little Culture: Decolonizing Essays 1967–1984*. Edited and with an introduction by Demetrius Eudell. Peepal Tree Press, 2022.

things away. Because what's valuable to—what does not seem valuable to you could very well be valuable to somebody else, for historical reasons, or for thinking about the entire corpus or something. They could be thinking about something that you're not thinking about. So, archivists always say that the person whose archive it is should not be the person throwing things away. Nor should the person's family. That's why you really need someone who is trained in archival collections to come and look at the things that you have so that you don't end up getting rid of material that's very valuable. There are things that we get rid of because we have to move, that they would have wanted to see in an archive. Original manuscripts that were marked up, and that kind of thing.

SW: But I tend to be, sometimes, repeat a lot of material, so it's a lot of repetitive material.

AT: But the person who wants to work on those things will find it interesting what the repetitions are and where the variations are, you know?

SW: I see what you mean. Another kind of specialist altogether to what you are. Because they're looking at it from the point of view of material that they would consider vital but you might consider repetitive and unnecessary.

AT: Right. So, we were saying, there are songs in all the plays that you wrote; there's abundant music and dancing. Do you see the song writing you were doing in England for your radio plays and then in Jamaica for your Pantomimes as a bridge to literature on the page from the more embodied cultural practices of dance and song?

SW: Yes, yes. And the unifying thing to be able to experience, let's say, the Danes, to be able to express that experience, you know, and so there was a coming together across space, you know? And so, it's wonderful to hear their music and notice how powerful the music is in it.⁹

⁹ She's referring to hearing the Danish version of *Under the Sun: En bro til himlen*.

But they themselves are embodied words in the way. Because remember, you know, we began as a languaging, the first languages appear in Africa as storytelling—of course, origin stories begin in Africa. The origin myths.

AT: So, you're saying that, the words themselves are already embodied? When you take the songs and you write them down that doesn't disembody them?

SW: No, I'm keeping with the idea of origin stories and therefore keeping what I see as the immense human tragedy that, like the bees, who can never know their beehive because the beehives are the ones that enact all their roles, so the queen getting everything, right [LAUGHS], and the poor worker, and so on [LAUGHS]. So, it is for us and we are structured by our origin stories.

But that we have told these origin narratives ourselves. And so, if they are not fallen entropically apart, the origin narratives, we can't afford to know them because the truth will stop being, how should I say—the truth has to be truths of solidarity. So, when we talk about ideology, that is the dilemma in which we find ourselves as all human groups. But before this, we would never have to say, okay, how are we going to do this? But because the earth is being destroyed by our present homo economicus origin narrative, that that particular origin narrative is destroying the planet, right? Because we don't have to have all the food we have to eat, you know? But why do we have this consumer thing? You have to continue creating enough to keep natural scarcity at bay. But natural scarcity is not a living reality. It's an origin story conception, you know? So then when we come now to say, okay, we now need a science of the word, and that is a science of our cosmogonies. That means that we would no longer have the liberty of having a good conscience at the same time that we have a hierarchically structured order.

And I think in one of the plays, actually. In one of the plays, I think in *Rockstone Anancy*, I think—I would love us to find that thing. In *Rockstone Anancy*, where we share or we don't share. Remember, in *Rockstone Anancy*? Please let us find it and put it back in.

Remember that that's a big thing. "Do we live for all or [do] we share?"

AT: Yeah, and that's also in *The Hills of Hebron* and in *Under the Sun*, because Miss Gatha is the embodiment of African leadership that requires the redistribution rather than the amassing for personal wealth.

SW: Of course. And yet still, she's also at the same time, in her ambition for her son. You see what I'm saying? So, there is a complexity actually. And so this one, *Rockstone*, is actually taking off the entire economic system at the time.

AT: And Black Power.

SW: And Black Power. Exactly. And so everything is coming up. And this was actually a very successful production.

AT: One of the things that's interesting is that I think you were writing this at the same time that you were—So the date for this is 1970, so this is the same time you were writing the "Jonkonnu."

SW: Of course. The essay on Jonkonnu. So, you can see there the interaction in the conceptualization and the dramatization. But also remember what we were also doing, this was all now African-descended. This is the whole world because it was a powerful figure. Very powerfully West African, those traditions. But they'd lived in Jamaica, because they'd come on the same ships, and they were there with us all the time, and growing up and so on. But this was taking off the economic system. And I thought it was very clever—two coffins for every corpse! And here in America now people are ordering extraordinarily elaborate funerals.

AT: This is so rich with all kinds of things, and I think it speaks in some ways against the cult of death. I think that you have some basis here also for the whole fact that that capitalism is basically—capitalist enterprise here is the undertaker—

SW: Yes, yes.

AT: —digging us under. So, it's fascinating. There are so many different parts of it.

SW: The more of you who die the better, right? [LAUGHS]

Dance as Theory

AT: Right. Exactly. And then it's just replete with songs that you wrote. So, songs and dances, throughout. And I was thinking that in some ways your particular movement from dance and song to literature, visual art speaks to the larger movement of black art that you've written about really extensively. So, for example, in your essay, "The Eye of the Other," you wrote that "Black people alienated from the dance-based 'oral/ritual structure' of their worlds made use of the fragments that remained to make art." And we've seen how writers have challenged themselves to use musical forms like the blues in their literary creation like Langston Hughes used the blues, and tried to use that formally. Are you arguing that they have similarly made use of Black dance forms not just as imitation, but as a catalyst for structure and politics. Is there a way that we have made dance come through structurally or politically through our Black arts?

SW: Well, certainly, I think if you think of Dunham, and you see that the work that she did, you could say it's an aesthetic thing, but it was as much a profoundly political thing, right? Because it's a revalorizing of knowledge that had been considered not knowledge at all. She's going to collect a certain knowledge about all the dances that have, you know, descended and come to exist all over the Caribbean. Some were Black, some were Native American as well. But all of that music that had been, just you know, knowledge of the body knowledge

of so on, so on. But now, she's going to bring back into the world, I suppose, of what we call art, you know? And so this is a profound kind of embodiment, but also of the revaluation of that which is below.

AT: It's interesting though, that you said that the point of the origin tale is to structure the hierarchies, is to, is to make explicit what the hierarchies are in order to decide who is going to benefit, at the expense of whom, right? But if you think about the dance, if you think about what happens within a dance form, does the dance not do away with hierarchies? You know, if you're dancing, like if you think what was happening as you were dancing in a group, right, you all have to work together. There's a form of solidarity there that can't be—even if you have somebody who is a star and they dance more and they get top billing—you all have to work together. So, there's a kind of leveling in the dance form itself that does away with—

SW: A specific type of dance form! Because, let us think about the Blue Danube, and the waltz-- this is the hierarchical world. Right? Okay, you see what I'm saying. So, our dance is an entirely different kind of dance—you cannot have—and yet, still, it's beautiful. I mean, The Danube, and they're waltzing along. This is a hierarchical world. The premise of the music itself, the kind of music and so on. But against that is the fact that most of, that all African dances are collective dances.

AT: And also, if you think about the choreography also like if you're watching ballet or something. You know that what you have is somebody who is the choreographer who told everybody else what to do.

SW: What to do, yes, quite, quite.

AT: Whereas, if you're talking about African-based dance, what you have is—we talked about this the other day. You have certain movements. And you have certain you have a certain

vocabulary, in a sense, of dance. But within that vocabulary of dance, yeah, you're able to express yourself. So, you do your own thing. You don't hold yourself to exactly what the choreographer said. But you do work within that system, exactly, which is an entirely different thing. It becomes a much more democratic form of art than this—the choreographer is at the top.

SW: Very much so. And so, you could see the difference when you would see why when we're going back with sort of Boscoe Holder, and we're picking up all these dances or, for example, Beryl McBurnie in Trinidad, because she was one of the—she had a dance troupe, but she was one of the principal theorists, you know, of this going back to what we had despised as popular dance. Because growing up, we had all had aspirations of being members of the bourgeoisie., and so we were taught to despise [our dances], and so on.

So, by the way, it was also an uprising against our bourgeoisified selves, you know, that was also happening. We didn't know at the time, you know, and so we were moving towards, I think, a far more collective and that's why I said that line of, of Langston Hughes, the land that's not been yet, but yet must be, that was the land I think we were moving towards.

AT: There are various characters that you describe in your early plays as essentially thinking through doing that they, I think Obadiah, for instance, he comes to realize things as he does them, and elsewhere, it seems as if you argue that there can be no separation between action and thought, or praxis and theory, that the two are tightly interwoven. So, for instance, in *Black Metamorphosis*, and “Beyond Miranda's Meanings,” you name as the original sin, the separation of manual labor from thinking labor.

SW: And that is not original to me, a lot of, I think, particularly Marxian thinkers have always had that as their thing.

AT: So how does this relate to your dancing? Might one say that your creating through dance was also part of your theorizing, that some of your theory arises from, or that you are, it doesn't arise from is as if it's somehow separate, but it is also integral to it.

SW: It's is part of an enormous movement, I think it is, and that's why I call it, it was the colonial movement. It was part of an uprising of the self. And so, we were taught that, most of us our, you know, all those country dances, you know. Or, at that time in Jamaica, too, because we were still very oral, and the radio was very new, so when an incident had happened, like a sort of famous murder, so they put it out on bits of paper and sold it. So, it was like a ballad. We still lived in a very oral world. So that actually, there was such a death. And, of course, it became a sort of scandal, because he was, the man was keeping her, but then the young man comes in. It's very difficult for people now to imagine a world in which, when an incident like that happens, the ordinary people, I mean, not sophisticated reporters or anything, they would make up a story and they would hand it about. So, they took the place of the radio. When a tragedy happened, you would have a man or woman together they would put out, little pamphlets like, it's something like the Brechtian thing, and you'd put out these pamphlets. And so that story, "Paramour," was a true story that I remember had been put out on a pamphlet.

Yes, and so I was trying to think, this is the popular. You see what I'm trying to say? It's a popular endeavor. It's a popular endeavor of marking this tragedy that has happened. In a sense, a sort of heavy everyday tragedy. But, but the tragedy and so the story "Paramour" has something of the power of that. I'm sure I would have read that in one of those pamphlets--that's why it stuck in my head. So very much.

AT: That's very interesting. I didn't know that backstory. So, I have some of the photos printed out, just so that you have them in your hands.

SW: Oh, yes. This is Ben and myself.

AT: He was one of the Dunham dancers?

SW: I *think* he was but I wouldn't swear by it.

AT: Was he in the Boscoe Holder group with you?

SW: No, no, no, I met him in Rome. But Ben was making a living as a professional dancer, so he would have to train me as a professional dancer. So, in a sense, we danced, we trained rigorously, and we went and we gave shows at night clubs and at a theater once, I think, I can't remember what it was, but that was my thing as a professional dancer—that's where those pictures come from.

AT: Did you find that dancing as a professional dancer changed your attitude toward dance or your appreciation of dance, or the way you thought about it in any way?

SW: Not really, because remember we still had the Dunham tradition behind us, so we saw ourselves as dancing in the Dunham tradition. We saw that. Either he was a Dunham follower, or he would have been around it. He would have begun [there]. Unfortunately, I can't remember his name, but he was a very lovely person, and it was fun working with him. He was gay, and he had a sort of group of friends whom I met, and they were still part of the banned group. But in Italy it couldn't be that horrible thing it was in the Anglo world. But we got on very well, he and I, and he trained me actually much more. I had to fight—that's why I wondered if he was with Dunham, because the exercises were far more rigorous than being with Boscoe. But that was probably the only time when I would say I was a professional dancer.

With respect to the photos, I think there are two types. There are ones that talk about the recovery of all the forgotten dances of the Americas, of the circum-Caribbean, right, being drawn together all that had been despised because, even Spanish dance, which is

superb, had also be despised because it had become part of the whole out of the whole popular movement. It is the recovery of le popular, of the popular, you know, in that sense of that which lies underneath and which as you say, gives rise to the kind of dance. So, the kind of thing in which, I don't know, the joyousness of everything that happens in a sense. It cannot be separated. I mean, you could never be, be made into the, you know, it could never be made into the Viennese waltz, or something. [LAUGHS] It's an entirely different world.

And then of course, remember, it will go with sharing of food, you know, with popular events where you cooked a lot of food and you, shared a lot of food. And so it was, it was our memory of those kind of events. And you know, in our own different regions that would be the thing.

So it is, I would say it is the popular in a very wide sense. It doesn't matter how elegant and so on a Louis Armstrong will be, it still has even the idea of "Mood Indigo," a special kind of the blues. And therefore, it's a kind of feeling that only when you feel yourself to live at the bottom of the world, so to speak. You know that, that feeling can come out and therefore the desire to change that world and to change it by making that music into a weapon. You know, let it go out and go upwards. And then transform in a sense, the ruling classes or the ruling powers, the ruling songs, sort of taking over, you know, of the world. This was what, in everything I do. It was that idea. You know, it was the, almost like the redefining, you know, the rearticulating something of the kind of world that we will want to live in, you know. But it's joyous—above all, it's joyous.

AT: You've spoken of Rex Nettleford as being on a different order than Katherine Dunham. How do you see Katherine Dunham succeeding with dance where Rex Nettleford fails? Is it the same principle—you talked in—I believe it was in "One Love," you talked about the difference between copying language and rather than creating it or transforming it. So is it

that Nettleford dances are like that Rasta stereotype of “Yah, mon in a Rasta cap,” instead of the essence of what the Rasta is, does he render a static stereotype where Dunham transforms the function of the original meaning of the movement into something else?

SW: I think Dunham started a movement to which we all belonged. I think even Nettleford could be said to come out of her tradition. He himself is a superb dancer. He is a human being incapable of making a move that is not elegant, precise, and just right. Very very gifted. But in terms of the conceptualization, I don't think he had— But he himself, as a dancer, was a sort of super dancer and the people in his troupe were good, but I'm just saying, the difference was that *he* was the one that was the extraordinary [dancer]. But in a sense, it was “pretty” right? Whereas Dunham wasn't pretty. But he himself as I said, I always do have to meet this distinction. He himself was just absolutely superb. With every move he made. But somehow the conceptualizations were very bourgeois, I think. But then this always seems so easy for one to say that, but you just want to know there was a very great difference between the Dunham style and his own style.

AT: It's interesting that you bring it down to “pretty,” because you've also talked about that with Miss Gatha, and I remember some of your notes for *Maskerade*. I'm not sure if it was in the published version or on one of the one of the scripts, that your notes were: she was not to be pretty. She was to be powerful. And that there's a very great difference between those two things. And one shouldn't be tempted to make her into this pretty character. And not ugly either, but not caricature, not to be a caricature.

SW: Not to be judged in those terms whatsoever.

AT: Not to be judged in those terms at all. It's all about her power.

AT: When you went home to Jamaica in 1955, after an 8-year absence, you helped organize the first Jamaican Festival of Arts? What did that entail, and why did you lend your energy to the effort?

SW: Well, because it's part of, I suppose, building a nation, I suppose, or building a national sense of identity and so on. That's in the talk called "Scarlet Poinsettias." If you ever have the chance, there's Claude McKay, a Jamaican poet, and he has a wonderful letter and at the end, he remembers the poinsettias and he bowed his head and wept in one poem, you know, because the poinsettia is red in warm December, you know? That is such a memory. That's such a memory. And again, the words are powerful. Yes, if you have the chance, you could look at it. He was an early writer. You know, one of the earliest writers.

Short Stories

AT: Most of the time that we've been talking about this project, your interest has mainly been on recovering the work of the dance and this is moving into the arena—

SW: Into the realm of the word, with the realm of the word.

AT: of the word, and what you were thinking about in terms of reading these early works—

SW: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

AT: that you had sort of put behind you and weren't thinking about anymore.

SW: Yes, yes. But I think what unifies them is the fact that I was doing them all for a specific program of the BBC, *Caribbean Voices*, and therefore they had set special forms and so the logic of the stories, why they're so good is because they have to respond to the time limits of what each the story would have to be. And this comes across very well. It does have this this sort of clarity. But also, it was, you know, the thing we were doing. We were also recalling our reality from London. And you remember how when I was writing the first stories I wrote were set in England, you know, and the snow, which I had never felt. And I

remember the best one I liked was one set in Yorkshire I think was a miners' or something strike or some other strike. And I was the heroine of the strike. Right? [LAUGHS] But of course, I'm setting it in London, and I'm talking about the snow. That's what it was, you see, when we were growing up. That's how it was. Your whole imagination was captured. [LAUGHS]. And so now here we are in London now and then writing, recapping bringing the Caribbean landscape, you know in in writing. It's now alive and aware, you know, so that that was interesting thing.

But as I said, the fact that we had to do it a certain time frame means all the short stories are really what they are—short stories, and sometimes even in some of them you will see where a few lines would have been taken out, you know, to fit into the thing, but that I think was a good thing because they are literally short stories and you know, short stories should be conceptualized in those terms. So, I was very pleased with those. Very surprised, actually, I said, “My God, I'm a professional writer.” [LAUGHS]

Acting

AT: In between dancing, where you allowed the body and music to tell the story without adding words, and the plays, where you incorporated body, music, and words, you were also acting in a different form of drama. Can you talk about how you came to act in the theater and in film?

SW: These were all attempts to make a living as a sort of freelance writer and freelancing. [LAUGHS] And so of course, my favorite one, the one that they all tease me about, especially Jack, is “The Land of the Pharaohs,” right, where I am, of course, one of pharaoh's concubines. And I'm sitting on the stage. And, of course, they made you up. And when American make up people make you up, you can't recognize yourself, right? [LAUGHS] And

then Jack Hawkins was the Pharaoh and he was cursing like mad in English because it was hot. And I was sitting at his feet, and he did not— [LAUGHS]

AT: He didn't know that you spoke English?

SW: Yes, yes, yes. So, and I think a famous American writer had written the script.

AT: William Faulkner.

SW: William Faulkner. "Who speaks for Cicely?" they would go, you know—the different envoys are coming. "Who speaks for Pharaoh, who speaks for this" and so on, and then we're just sitting there, of course. [LAUGHS]. Poised, all made up, and of course the make-up artist is such a genius you don't know what you look like. [LAUGHS]. So that is a film part that I remember because most of the other film parts were really crowd scenes. So, I never really had much of a thing, but I did have an agent. And I suddenly realized what I never did in America was to get myself an agent, you know, for my work, I never thought of that.

And of course, you saw that picture, for example, where my, I think my agent would have arranged that, where a newspaper puts my face against the face of an African [sculpture], you know.¹⁰ And it was saying, you know, and she discovers her roots or something. You have it, you gave it to me. But it was also a good idea because it was true, so that in going to London, we were able to go to the British Museum and we were able to see things we had never seen before. And we were able to look at our own physiognomy and realize that when you look at African physiognomies, these are the norm.

But we had always felt that ours—they made us feel that ours was the negation of the norm, you know. So, that, I think they have some pictures of that there. So, these were all kinds of discoveries that we made—the negation of the self, the negation of being. You

¹⁰ See p. 305 for the clipping. The sculpture the newspaper juxtaposed to Wynter's face was one of the Ife terracottas (that of the *emese* of Lajua), not one of the Benin bronzes that were still at the British Museum. See Blier, p. 69.

know? And then you realise that that is part of imperialism and colonialism, you know, and that part of this is also the struggle to both recover and revalue, what had been your identity and try to find it and think about it. And so, in a sense, it was like Garvey's Back to Africa, but in a different sense.

That's why, as I said in *The Hills of Hebron*, the novel, the title I wanted was *The End of Exile*, and that that end is when Obadiah meets this anthropologist who recognizes in his carving a tradition, an African tradition. That was the end of exile, you know, the end of unconnectedness with the world from which we had come.

Appendix C

Annotated List of Known Critical-Imaginative Work (chronological order)

Archived/ Broadcast/ Published/ Performed ✓

- 1956 ✓ “Paramour.” *Caribbean Voices*, produced by Ulric Cross, BBC Radio, 25 Nov. 1956, 11:15–11:45 PM GMT. Runtime 15.5 minutes. Short story.
Also broadcast on JBC, 25 Nov. 1956, 8:15 PM EST. Voiced by Sylvia Wynter.

In “Paramour,” a young girl befriends a neighbor, a woman who “saves” her from a torrential rain. Enchanted by her graciousness and happy for the companionship, the girl agrees to teach the young woman how to read, so the latter will be able to read the letters of her beloved. Her beloved is not the man who “keeps” her in this neighborhood house, though. That man, older and married, isn’t aware she loves another—until he is.

Set in early 20th century Jamaica, the story critiques the economic marginalization and sexual predation unskilled women must negotiate, along with the ostracization practiced by the slightly better off, more “respectable” set, and one girl’s determination to be humane rather than “proper.” The complex tale also explores a mother’s attempts to inculcate in her daughter a class- and church-determined “appropriate” approach to sexuality—and her daughter’s determined refusal to be thus socialized.

Wynter based her story on true events taken straight from the broadsides that community news carriers passed from hand to hand before the ascendance of radio in her childhood (*Interview*). In addition to critiquing the conscribed economic arena within which mid-twentieth-century Caribbean women battled for subsistence, this story marks Wynter’s first known exploration of a phenomenon that she approaches again in other plays: the “love” triangle of older, wealthier (often White or approaching White) men, the women who are their sexual objects and often concubines, and the younger, poorer men who are the focus of the women’s romantic and sexual desires in turn.

- ✓ “Gwana.” *Caribbean Voices*, produced by Ulric Cross, BBC Radio, 2 Dec. 1956, 11:15–11:45 PM GMT. Runtime 6.75 minutes. Short story. Voiced by Sylvia Wynter.

This tale appears to relate the experience of an iguana and begins simply enough. “Gwana” suns himself, flees before the children hunting him, and hides, as is his routine. Read at another level, however, the story reveals the comprehensive assault enacted through colonial occupation and “development,” in this case embodied by missionaries and the children they “civilize.” In this short and startling story, Wynter gives evidence of her early and enduring interest in both the ontological insecurity (Morales 2023) of the colonized and the defiant refusal of some liminal figures to concede the determination of the terms of engagement to their oppressors. With a direct simplicity unmatched outside her stories for the BBC, Wynter captures both the “native” position and the self-disdain Fanon so famously explored in his seminal *Peau noire, masques blancs* (1952).

- 1957 ✓ “Bat and Ball.” *Caribbean Voices*, produced by Ulric Cross, BBC Radio. First broadcast 11 Aug. 1957, 11:15–11:45 PM GMT. Runtime 12 minutes. 1957. Short story. Also broadcast on JBC, 11 Aug. 1957, 8:15 PM GMT. Voiced by Sylvia Wynter.

In this semi-autobiographical tale about her cherished cricket, a girl finally gets her chance to stop running after balls in the cherished cricket field, but must weigh the risks. If she bowls out her older brother in front of a girl he’s trying to impress, she knows he won’t let her play again. No more cricket would mean a return to household confinement and chores. But the chance to bowl proves too tempting. The story is redolent with the images and smells of a rural Jamaican garden in a childhood summer, a beautiful backdrop to a startling story of protest about gendered unfreedom.

- ✓ “Ghost on Her Grave.” *Calling the Caribbean*, produced by Ulric Cross, BBC Radio, 8 Sep. 1957, 10:30-12:45 PM GMT. Runtime 13.5 minutes. Short story. Voiced by Sylvia Wynter. Also broadcast on JBC, 8 Sep. 1957, 8:15 PM EST.

This story centers the loneliness of a Black blues singer who has migrated to Europe. She is the object of fetishized admiration but is refused any truly reciprocal friendship. Set in a Nordic landscape, “Ghost on Her Grave” offers us one of Wynter’s rare early treatments of Black immigrants in Europe. With the exception of this story, the poem that follows, and her Sharpeville poem, most other works in Wynter’s early critical-imaginary are set in the hot Caribbean, whether lush or arid. The contrasting cold of this story’s setting is mirrored in the exactingly transactional violences of its characters, where family solidarity (used here as a metaphor for nativism?) trumps the young characters’ romantic attachments, both to the singer’s transcendent art and to each other.

- ✓ “Elegy to a Black Girl.” *Caribbean Voices*, produced by Ulric Cross, BBC Radio, 20 Oct. 1957. Poem. Voiced by Sylvia Wynter.

Like “Ghost on Her Grave,” this elegy invokes the quite literally deadly alienation of a Black blues singer who finds herself in northern Europe. This European setting and society are not the expected Promised Land, origin of high culture and grace. Instead, the poem depicts a land of archaic cruelties in modern guise, where “rank urine seeps from antediluvian cobbled streets.” One of the few elegies Wynter wrote about unnamed and unknown personages, “Elegy to a Black Girl” also presents a speaking “I” who first envisions the singer as a serene Madonna, but then recognizes that the singer instead embodies creation denied. Dispossessed of humanity—her music, even, muted—this Madonna is stripped of her “magnificat.” Being Black in an incessantly White world, she neither receives nor can hope for a divine promise that “henceforth all generations shall call [her] blessed.” In some ways, then, this elegy offers an already-raced predecessor to Wynter’s later adaptation of García Lorca’s tragic *Yerma*, centering another singer whose creative potential is thwarted.

- 1958 ✓ “Under the Sun.” *Third Programme*, produced by Robin Midgely, BBC Radio. First aired 5 Oct. 1958, 5:00 PM GMT. Runtime 102 minutes. Second broadcast 28 Oct. 1958. Third broadcast 21 June 1959. Radio drama (Also versioned for stage.)¹

Cast and music: Robert Adams (Brother Lazarus); Earl Cameron (Brother Hugh); Nadia Cattouse (Sister Gee); James Clarke (Obadiah Brown); Sheila Clarke (Sister Eufemia); Andre Dakar (Brother Zacky); Pauline Henriques (Aunt Kate); Cleo Laine (Sister Sue); Lola Parkinson (Sister Beatrice); Pearl Prescod (Sister Ann); Andrew Salkey (Brother Ananias); Frank Singuineau (Brother Julius); Elisabeth Welch (Miss 'Gatha); Gordon Woolford (Isaac); Sylvia Wynter (Rose Brown).

All music traditional, with lyrics revised and arranged by Sylvia Wynter. Emmanuel Myers on drums. “Hallelujah! Daniel saw the stone” and “Shouter Song” sung by whole cast, unaccompanied; “Drought Song” sung by Sylvia Wynter, accompanied by Nadia Cattouse, James Clarke, Andre Dakar, Cleo Laine and Pearl Prescod; “Mango Walk” sung by Cleo Laine and Nadia Cattouse, unaccompanied.

- ✓ Also produced in English (with a different cast and director) for *CBC Wednesday Night*, produced by Esse Ljungh, first aired Wednesday, 23 Dec. 1959, 9:30 PM, starring John Drainie. (See *CBC Times*, 20–26 Dec. 1959, pp. 2, 28, 29, 35.)
- ✓ Also produced in Danish as *En bro til himlen* (“A Bridge to Heaven”) by Carlo M. Pedersen and broadcast on Danish radio 4 Sep. 1962. The Royal Danish Library in Copenhagen holds a playscript published by “Danmarks Radio. Hørespilarkivet,” but the library will not circulate or scan the manuscript, designating it rare.

¹ The *Third Programme* was conceived as an educational program, aimed at “elevating” the cultural choices of BBC listeners. As such, its producers devised an acculturation broadcasting schedule. They introduced dramas and music with elements that were perceived as possibly alien to its audience by following the first broadcast with one repeat that came generally several weeks to a month later, then a second repeat that generally broadcast nine months to a year later. See Barbara Bray interview in the BBC audio archive: <https://www.bbc.com/historyofthebbc/100-voices/radio-reinvented/the-strange-survival-of-radio-drama/>

- ✓ Staged reading with professional actors 18 May 2019, University of Texas–Austin, directed by Zell Miller, III, and produced by Asha Tall and Esther Kim.



Cast with the playwright after 18 May 2019 reading of *Under the Sun at UT–Austin*. Photo © Olga Carew
L-R: Shereen McKenzie, Jeffery Da’Shade Johnson, Zell Miller III, Thomas Wheeler, Sylvia Wynter, Kriston Woodreaux, Kera Blay, Carla Nickerson (not pictured: Florinda Bryant)

Cast: Kera Blay (Sister Sue, Sister Beatrice, Sister Eufemia); Florinda Bryant (Aunt Kate, Rose Brown); Jeffery Da’Shade Johnson (Brother Hugh and Brother Lazarus); Shereen McKenzie (Sister Ann, Sister Gee); Zell Miller III (Brother Ananias and Narrator); Carla Nickerson (Miss ’Gatha); Thomas Wheeler (Isaac, Brother Zacky and Brother Julius); Kriston Woodreaux (Obadiah Brown)

- ✓ Staged reading with professional actors 22 July 2022, Royal Court Theatre, directed by Jasmine Lee-Jones. Cast: Mara Allen, Mensah Bediako, Doreene Blackstock, Chanté Faucher, Llewella Gideon, Hayden McLean, Clare Perkins, Susan Lawson Reynolds, Raphael Sowole, Luke Wilson

Various versions also held in author’s personal papers.

Discussed at length in “*Hosanna! We buil’ back we house*”: *Sylvia Wynter’s Dramatic Restorying, for Human’s Sake*. (See production notes in last footnote of Chapter 2.)

Purchased for production in 1958 by the Royal Court Theatre, *Under the Sun* testifies to the endurance of a simple peasant community that has settled in the hills to escape the joblessness and hopelessness of the ever-more crowded urban slums of Jamaica sometime post-“Emancipation.” Attention to this original storyline, out of which Wynter’s novel emerged, is illuminating. Rather than centering the aspirations of the male-focal and mystical prophetic leadership that surfaces in *The Hills of Hebron*, the play advances a more communitarian form of leadership. This first Wynter play also explores the people’s potential to change society change through a determined refusal of the crippling norms and conditions imposed upon them.

Wynter’s attention to the possibilities of regeneration through refusal and reframing here returns us to her overall interest in creation delinked from economic production. *Under the Sun* insists on investment in joyous creation rather than subsistence or acquisition of property alone, and rejects the separation of mind/body, spiritual/corporal that Wynter first understood through dancing to be false and continues to assault in her later theory. The play also lays out the necessity of incorporating all members of Caribbean society into the burgeoning independent nation, no matter the violence that led to their being. Thus, *Under the Sun* demonstrates not only the creative expression of Wynter’s theoretical rejection of Man’s reduction to *homo economicus*, but also her argument that “Who we are” must move away from “purely biological,” kinship-reinstituting being and toward the “ecumenically Human” community (“Unsettling” 326) (“Ceremony Found” 194).

Equally important to note, however, is the way that *Under the Sun* critiques the colonized people's reliance on an imperially-oriented elite. The London and Kingston press announcement that the Royal Court Theatre had purchased the play came mere months after the Federation of the West Indies was finally operationalized, yet in the finished script Wynter was already anticipating the post-“Independence” disillusionment about which African writers such as Chinua Achebe and Ayi Kwei Armah published novels in 1966 (*A Man of the People*) and 1968 (*The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born*). For instance, *Under the Sun* already speaks to the collusion of local leadership with foreign capital to economically enshrine tourism at the literal expense of the “sufferers” in both the hills and the shantytowns they'd fled. This dispossession was later actualized when the newly-independent Jamaican government evicted from their lands the Jamaican small-holders, many of them Rastafari, whose small plots were desired by foreign developers. One might easily conclude that, unlike the anticolonial writers Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o faults for their incomplete understanding of imperialism, when “Independence” arrived in the de-federated Jamaican nation to which Wynter had by then returned, she was neither “armed with an inadequate grasp of the extent, the nature and the power of the enemy and of all the class forces at work,” nor “shocked by the broken promises” (Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o 64). Her understanding of the situation is fully demonstrated in this play, which she uses to workshop possible situations as much as to decry the conditions.

- ✓ “The Barren One.” *Third Programme*, produced by R. D. Smith, BBC Radio. First aired 14 Dec. 1958. 7:55 PM GMT. Runtime 120 minutes. Second broadcast 7 Jan. 1959. Third broadcast 30 July 1960. Radio drama.

Cast and music: Betty Baskcomb (Women), Ethlyn Brown (Women), George Browne (Devil Man), Nadia Cattouse (Mary), James Clark (Men), Sheila Clarke (Devil-Woman), Fitzroy Coleman (Guitar), Leigh Crutchley (Men), Aloysius Ganda (Men), John Harrison (Victor), Pauline Henriques (Dolores), Dorothy Holmes-Gore (Women), Errol John (John), Cleo Laine (Irma), A.L. Lloyd (Men), Sheila Manahan (Women), Emmanuel Myers (Drums), Pearl Nunes (Old Woman), Pearl Prescod (Women), Hilda Schroder (Women), David Spenser (Men), June Tobin (Women), Anthony Viccars (Men), Gabriel Woolf (Men), Gordon Woolford (Men), Sylvia Wynter (Women)

Note that the cast list advertised in *Radio Times*, as pictured below, contains notable differences from the one above, which was taken from the Programme-as-Broadcast (PaB). The *Radio Times* list has additional characters and some switched roles. These differences appear to be due to *Radio Times* referencing an early stage script (as in the playwright's personal papers), instead of the script actually utilized and later preserved in the PaB microfiche.

Various versions also held in author's personal papers.



*Ad for Wynter's "Barren One,"
Radio Times, 12 Dec. 1958, p. 23.*

The Barren One is Wynter's dramatic adaptation of Federico García Lorca's *Yerma*, which insists on creativity as a bulwark against the dominance of capitalist prioritization of economic accumulation over all other human activity. Looking at the predicament of childless women in Spain's then agrarian society, García Lorca depicts the ways that such women are boxed in by offering the example of title character, *Yerma*, whose choices seem confined to either a joyless life or violation of communally-enforced religious tenets.

Ultimately, *Yerma* maintains her chastity, but kills her husband, obliterating all possibility of joy with him. García Lorca's original expresses this creative resistance through song, and Wynter's particularly fluid adaptation into a corresponding Jamaican agrarian landscape, moment, and idiom retains the apparent focus on song as creation. To these elements Wynter adds drumming—particularly drumming dedicated to a Shango-centered spiritual practice. Because that drumming practice also entails dancing, Wynter is able to utilize an embodied invocation of Shango to introduce dance as creative resistance into García Lorca's play, and offer the African-based religions then practiced in Jamaica as an alternative to the Catholic proscription of erotic life that García Lorca links with the dominance of capital. Furthermore, Wynter's inserted alternative offers a real option for re-engagement of creativity in ways that García Lorca's fantasized erotic pilgrimage cannot, thus grounding her alternative both in real world experience and in the particular lived experience of Shango practitioners—or those who observe them—in Africa and the Americas.

1959 *A Miracle in Lime Lane*. JBC Radio, 23 Dec. 1959, 8:00 PM EST, 30 Dec. 1959, 8:00 PM. Musical.

Also performed at the Jamaica Folk Theatre, Court House, Spanish Town, 17 Dec. 1962. (One source says Spanish Town Folk Theatre.)

Held as typescript in playwright's personal papers. (Note that while some biographies list Jan Carew as co-author for this play, contemporary critics acknowledge only Wynter, and the typescript bears only her name.)

Although Wynter penned the play when she was still in London (she pitched it, unsuccessfully, to the BBC "too late" for the 1959 Christmas season), her characters had already gone home to the Caribbean. Indeed, the encounter that one protagonist, Mass Joshua, had with the metropole had proven devastating. Rather than allowing his experience to simply embitter him, however, Joshua builds upon his memories of post-war subjugation in England to protest the community's ostracizing of a young woman who has been duped—and impregnated—by a Lothario already endowed with a wife and children. By the end of the play, through the vehicle of the nativity pageant the yard residents act

out, the once “crucified” Magdalene has been re-envisioned as Mary. The community around her transforms into an organ of support, pledging to share their resources, however meager, with her. Even the children make pledges, promising to, for example, teach the unborn child to “wheel and turn.” With the frame play, Wynter illuminates the officious hold of Church-based morality and colonial government on the sexual and economic lives of the yard’s inhabitants, a dominance she first explored in her story “Paramour” and revisited in *The Barren One* and *Under the Sun*.

With *A Miracle in Lime Lane*, Wynter extends her experimenting with indigenized forms, reflecting her determination to showcase the “creolized” arts particular to the Caribbean, of which Jonkonnu becomes her most studied exemplar. This play is her first of many to utilize the device of a play within a play (e.g., *Sbb... It’s a Wedding*, *Rockstone Anancy*, and *Maskarade*). In this case, she draws on the Coventry Corpus Christi plays, specifically the Shearman and Tailors’ Pageant, as the source material to furnish the internal spectacle. The selection of an itinerant dramatic tradition grounded in the culture of an illiterate peasantry but produced by “companies” of skilled workers seems an apt choice for this play whose frame is the urban “yards” of modern Kingston. Also appropriately, this play was the inaugural production for the Jamaican Folk Theatre Wynter helped to found on her return to Jamaica.

- 1960 ✓ “The University of Hunger,” with Jan Carew. *Third Programme*, produced by Charles Lefeaux, BBC Radio. Runtime 76 minutes. First aired 17 Aug. 1960, 8:00 PM GMT. Second broadcast 9 Sep. 1960, 8:50 PM GMT. Third broadcast 19 Mar. 1961, 5:00 PM GMT. Radio drama.

Cast: Barbara Assoon (Dolly Greene), Thomas Baptiste (Jojo, Warder Rawlings), Earl Cameron (Sutlej), Leo Carera (Van de Kruze), Jan Carew (Waiter, Radio Announcer), Christopher Carlos (Gopal), Fitzroy Coleman (Calypso Singer), Pauline Henriques (Mrs. Dowling), Lloyd Reckord (Smallboy Dowling), Andrew Salkey (Peanut Vendor, Detective, Policeman 2), Gordon Woolford (Warder, Policeman 1)

Music: “Itaname” and “I Want to Be Ready” sung in studio unaccompanied by Thomas Baptiste; “Oh My Lad” and “Is Trouble” sung and played by Fitzroy Coleman

Reprised by Georgetown Theatre Guild, Georgetown, Guyana, 1966.

Various versions also held in author’s personal papers.

The title of this radio play is taken from a poem by the Guyanese poet, Martin Carter. The poet was repeatedly imprisoned for his political agitation against the colonial government in then British Guiana, the site of the jailbreak from which this *University of Hunger* takes its inspiration. Written with Guyanese writer Jan Carew and broadcast years before Guyana achieved independence from Britain, the play is based on a jailbreak of several inmates from a British Guiana prison. *The University of Hunger* dramatizes the severing of the hopes of the colonized poor, one after another. For instance, the iconically middle-class aspirations of one character—a house and marriage to the girl next door—crumble when,

shamed by his apparently pious mother's attempt to survive through male liaisons, he steals a petty sum and lands in jail. Another character, Gopal, turns to crime after losing his "respectable" job as a bus driver when an Englishman causes a crash and blames the accident on his inability to see the too-black Gopal's hand signal in the night; what matters most to Gopal is neither his erasure in English eyes nor his jailing generally, but rather that imprisonment curtails his desire to be a father. Jojo, the prison's singing bard, is shouted down when he improvises on traditional tunes, even his creativity strangled.

For the central character, the charismatic but doomed Sutlej, all of these aspirations denied are rolled into one. This prison-grown intellectual, a character ubiquitous in the literature of the Black and colonized, breaks out but cannot actualize his freedom. Given that the threat or reality of imprisonment is a defining characteristic of the lives of colonized peoples, the jailbreak here functions both as literal fulfillment of the desire for freedom and metaphorical imperative for decolonization. The elder prison intellectual is juxtaposed against the younger initiate, who although both untutored and unarmed for struggle to achieve and maintain actual sovereignty, nonetheless must engage that very struggle. It is his time.

Carew authored the original story. He credits Wynter with the addition of the female characters who complicate this story even further, refusing an easy throughline from prison/ colonization/ slavery to freedom/ independence/ emancipation. One character in this play, written just before George Jackson—key theorist and militant for Black liberation—was imprisoned, recalls Jackson's identification of the Christian-inflected moral inveigling of mothers, who are unaware of its psychological harm to Black sons attempting to assume the armor they absolutely need to even survive, let alone mount an offensive for liberation. Such mothers abound in the literature. Less seen is the sympathetic treatment of the key female figure Wynter wrote into the plot—the erstwhile lover of the imprisoned intellectual, a theorist of liberation herself who chooses to leave the country with an older White husband and allow him to father the child, rather than nursing vain dreams about the potential for this inveterate misanthrope to transform. In so doing, she outright rejects his demand that the until-then-unknown child be left with him. Originally, Sutlej had demanded she abort. Explaining this demand when his cellmates express yearning for children, he declares, "Every first of August we celebrate what we call the abolition of slavery, but the black man will always be a slave and there is only one way he can end it... He can stop breeding slaves!" (9). Confronted with the actual child, Sutlej now wants to claim him, basing his patriarchal rights exclusively in a racialized biology and plans for a return to a Black past that has long since disappeared. Through the dialog between Sutlej and Dolly that serves as the center of the play, a critique begins to emerge regarding various strains of Black Power, Black capitalism, and Black cultural nationalism that came to vie for primacy in the post-"Independence" decades in both England and the Caribbean.

The tragic storyline could be read to suggest that if the older generation of Black men in this struggle do not come up with better strategies and ideologies on which to ground their liberation, they will be doomed to die alone, abandoned by real and symbolic children and female counterparts alike. However, any analysis would benefit from being read against the traces of the editorial conversation that remain in the BBC documentation. These traces suggest that the earlier versions of the script militated far more aggressively for freedom, calling for counterviolence as necessary for liberation.

The University of Hunger was adapted for television a year after the radio play was first broadcast. Retitled *The Big Pride*, the ITV film was one of the first on British television to be authored by Black writers and boast a predominately Black cast.

- ✓ “For Those Killed at Sharpeville—An Elegy.” *Calling West Africa*, and *Caribbean Service*. BBC Radio, 29 Apr. 1960. Runtime 9 minutes. Poem. Read by Andrew Salkey and Pauline Henriques.
- ✓ Published as “Elegy to the South African Dead.” *Fighting Talk: Fighting Talk Committee (Johannesburg)*, vol. 14, no. 7, Dec. 1960, pp. 10-11. Poem.



Harold Rubin drawing in *Fighting Talk* issue where Wynter's Sharpeville poem appeared.

Composed as Wynter's own infant son lay nearby, “Elegy to the South African Dead” is the poet's sorrow song grieving colonial violence against an unnamed victim, one representative of innumerable others. The poem on the March 21st massacre, first read on air at the BBC on April 12th, was later published in the South African periodical *Fighting Talk*. (This is the ANC journal that was edited, after 1955, by Ruth First, possession of which supplied the “proof” of subversive activity the Afrikaner government used to justify their imprisoning her). While the poem's mourning tribute to the slain speaks most directly to a specific event in a specific location, Wynter uses language here that she echoes in future writing, linking the Sharpeville massacre inextricably with the violence of other colonized spaces in the Caribbean and in Palestine, with the scene of state-enacted slaughter echoed in the play *Under the Sun*, then again in the novel *The Hills of Hebron*. It expresses the author's “deep sense of lived, existential kinship with the indigenous peoples of South Africa” (*Interview*). The poem does not stop with an indictment of colonial violence; it also highlights both the eroticization of such violence and the complicity of all those who render it spectacle. The connections she makes also demonstrate that the struggle in which she and her comrades were engaged was as anti-imperial as anticolonial.

- 1961 ✓ “The Big Pride.” *Drama ‘61*. ITV Television Playhouse. 28 May 1961. Revised version of “University of Hunger.” (See above.) Directed by Herbert Wise. With William Marshall as Sutlej, Barbara Assoon as Dolly Green, Johnny Sekka as Smallboy Dowling, Nadia Cattouse as Mrs. Dowling. Music by Fitzroy Coleman.

Forgotten Black Drama on TV, British Film Institute. 4–25 Feb. 2019.



Still from *The Big Pride*, ITV 1961. Nadia Cattouse as Mrs. Dowling, mother of Smallboy, played by Johnny Sekka.

- 1962 ✓ *The Hills of Hebron: A Jamaican Novel*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1962. Novel.
- 1963 ✗ *Shh... It's a Wedding*. Town Hall, Spanish Town, 18, 22, 23, & 25 Jan. 1963. Ward Theatre, Kingston, 8, 15, & 22 Feb. 1963. Directed by Jan Carew, produced by John Guy. Musical.



Note that a pre-production write-up in *The Gleaner* titles this musical “A Child is Born.”

Cast: Alan Brown (Minstick), Sagwa Bennett (Duke Williams), Dennis Daley, Yvonne Jordan, Cliff Lashley (Custos), Louis Marriott (J. P. Ranglin), Marina Maxwell, Lola Parkinson, Annie Perkins, Hilary Reckord (child), Margaret Reckord (seduced maiden), Tony Rowe (child), Milton Scott (Boysie), Ted Warmington, and a chorus of 30 singers and dancers.

Music by Carlos Malcolm and his Combo and the Frats Quintet, with lyrics by Sylvia Wynter.

The script for this play hasn’t surfaced yet, but judging from reviews that appeared in *The Gleaner* at the time, the musical, like *A Miracle in Lime Lane*, has a nativity play at its center. According to critic Norman Rae, there is also an element of passing in the play, with a son who has gone abroad and refuses to recognize the Black mother he has left behind. The tale of family dissolution would thus speak to the sense of alienation felt by the many relatives left behind during that period of escalated emigration post–World War II.

Ad in
The Gleaner,
4 Feb. 1963, p. 7.

The musical was produced in Jamaica at the beginning of 1963, with lyrics and a libretto by Wynter, in collaboration with the famous Carlos Malcolm, who soon after formed his own band, the Afro-Jamaican Rhythms and wrote most of the music for the first James Bond movie *Dr. No*, filmed in Jamaica in 1963.

- 1963 ✕ “Pickney Child.” Essex Music, contracted 1 Nov. 1963. Not yet found.
- 1964 ✓ “Brother Man.” *Home Service*, produced by Charles Lefeaux, BBC Radio, 22 June 1964, 8:00 PM GMT. Radio drama.



Illustration of *Shine*, by Roger Mais, *Brother Man*. Heinemann, 1974, p. 86.

Cast: Earl Cameron (Brother Man), Leo Carera (Brother Ambrose), Jan Carew (Voice), Mona Chin (Minette), Sheila Clarke (2nd Woman Vendor, 2nd Woman), Jumoko Debayo (1st Woman Vendor, 1st Woman), Frankie Dymon (2nd Man Vendor, Man), Leonie Forbes (Girlie, Girl), Charlie Hyatt (Corporal Jennings), Horace James (Fingers), Bloke Modisane (African), Barbara Morgan (Eudora, the Candyseller), Elisabeth Morgan (Joe), Pearl Prescod (Hortense), Lloyd Reckord (Papacita), Andrew Sachs (Chin), Gordon Woolford (1st Man Vendor)

Music: “Hit the Road, Jack” sung in studio by Gordon Woolford and Frankie Dymon; “Jesu, Lover of My Soul,” “On Jordan’s Stormy Banks,” “Nobody Knows the Trouble I Seen,” “What a Wonderful Thing,” all sung in studio by Pearl Prescod; “Long Time Gal: played on guitar and sung in studio by Leo Carera; “Our Fatherland, Thy Name So Dear,” sung unaccompanied by Leo Carera; “No Other Love” sung in studio by Leonie Forbes

- ✓ Also produced in Jamaica and broadcast on JBC c1960.

Various versions also held in author’s personal papers.

Discussed at length in “*Hosanna! We buil’ back we house*”: *Sylvia Wynter’s Dramatic Restorying, for Human’s Sake*. (See Chapter 4.)

Brother Man recounts the stories of a set of characters who could have come straight out of a novel by Chester Himes: the small-time con-artist, Papacita, who is both trapped and enraptured by his violent love affair, looking to make it big and leave town; Brother Man, the pious Rasta “preacherman” who cares “even for the smallest of these” but whose piety is dangerously myopic; Minette, the country girl who once turned tricks to survive in the city but has moved in with Brother Man as his platonic—and frustrated—companion; Brother Ambrose, the Rasta brethren with back-to-Africa aspirations, funding the dream with both sales of tickets for the return trip and counterfeit money printed with the skills he picked up in London after the war; and, of course, the po-lice, represented by Corporal Jennings, the policeman who attempts to strong-arm the people of the community, who are united against him.

Cast of characters notwithstanding, Wynter's adaptation shares a mission not with Himes, but with Mais, who wrote the novel *Brother Man* to rehumanize the violently marginalized Rastafari to their Jamaican compatriots. Mais's 1954 version was written before Jamaican statesmen and police had dramatically increased their surveillance and repression Rastafari adherents. This particular uptick, one of many, crested in the brutal raid on the self-sustaining Rasta community of Pinnacle that sent many of its male members to prison and uprooted the rest. Wynter's 1959 adaptation also aired in Jamaica before the crushing of a prominent Rastafari leader (one who had reportedly claimed divinity and been sent to a mental hospital as a result) who had launched a renewed back-to-Africa movement for the immediate enfranchisement and eventual repatriation of the repressed. By the time the BBC aired her radio version of *Brother Man* in 1964, Rex Nettleford, Roy Augier, and M. G. Smith had issued their infamous government report (1960), under the auspices of the still consolidating University of the West Indies; they claimed that the Rev. Claudius Henry had a limited following, but that they and other small sects, all sheltered under the Rastafari umbrella, were violent, anti-White (as opposed to anticolonial), and ganja crazed.

Wynter also uses her version to comment upon the alienation of the Jamaican emigrants unwelcomed in England even after their service during the war and post-war rebuilding, and to critique the Jamaican government's collusion with Ethiopian officials intent on keeping any repatriation movement at bay. Importantly, in the context of her wider body of work, Wynter's *Brother Man* also emphasizes the aspect of Rastafari (embodied) thought that maintains that God is literally present in man, and heaven and hell present on earth, thus both revising the hope of redemption Mais rests in a divine other and expressing the need for those working for independence to enact their sovereignty through a reinvestment in their own, rather than a distant and alienated, power.

1964–
1983 ✕ Poem series: “Occasional Poems;” “Exile poems from Del Mar;” “Lost Poems;” “Failed Poems” and other individual poems, including several memorializing her mother, Lola Parkinson and dancer Beryl McBurnie; engaging important historical figures such as George William Gordon, Marcus Garvey, and George Jackson; and exploring history, as in “Poems for a Middle Passage.” In all, there are over 200 poems (in typescript and handwritten).

1965 ✓ 1865 — *A Ballad for a Rebellion*. Pageant/Play. First performed 23 Oct. 1965, Little Theatre, Kingston, Jamaica. LTM run thru November. Directed by Lloyd Reckord.



Ad in *Gleaner*,
31 Oct. 1965,
p. 17.

Various versions held in author's personal papers. This play, which explores the historical Morant Bay Rebellion, was commissioned by the Jamaican Ministry of Development and Welfare to commemorate the rebellion's centennial. Wynter borrowed elements of pageants to mix in with plays in order to “combine actual happenings” with “legends,” and created some characters to help fulfill the role of the chorus in setting the context and commenting on the actions or speeches of the historical characters. The play centers the heroes George William Gordon and

Paul Bogle but also includes documents by government officials such as judges and speeches “condensed for dramatic ends.”

✓ “Malcolm X.” *New World*, vol. 2, no. 1, 1965, p. 12. Poem.

In memorializing Malcolm X, this occasional poem protests both his exclusion from the category of martyrdom because of his Black location and the tendency for even those who embrace him to regard him as exceptional and fail to appropriately attend to his political vision. Wynter avoids lionizing X, even as she laments his loss.

✓ “The Blues of a Jamaican Lady.” *The Sunday Gleaner*, 9 May 1965, p. 4. Poem.

An occasional poem memorializing Una Marson, “The Blues” insists on Marson’s status as “poet” as against the presumably diminishing label “poetess.” This piece also refers more obliquely to Marson’s politics by invoking the pain of her sojourn “in exiled Garvey’s Europe.”

1967 ✓ “On the Death of Our Prime Minister.” *The Sunday Gleaner*, 30 Apr., 7 May, & 14 May 1967, p. 4. Poem.

“On the Death” memorializes Donald Sangster, who died shortly after he had assumed the office of Prime Minister. Serialized in three parts, each of which begins with a Bible verse from the Book of Job, the poem paints a deadly picture of Jamaican society and a man, not “crusader/ but [. . .] accountant” grimly bent on being just in the midst of an impossible situation, but trying still, for “all men have their fiction/ By which they endure to live: /Politics was his.”

1968 ✓ “For Us All.” *The Daily Gleaner*, 8 Dec. 1968, p. 6. Poem.

Another elegy, “For Us All” memorializes Martin Luther King, Jr. while refusing any finality. Speaking in King’s voice, the poem declares instead that when “I was born again,/ I was born a Man.”

✓ “Extract from *The House and Land of Mrs. Alba*, an adaptation of Federico García Lorca’s *The House of Bernarda Alba*.” *Jamaica Journal*, vol. 2, no. 3, Sept. 1968, pp. 48-56. Play.

✗ Also, *The House and Land of Mrs. Alba*. An adaptation of Federico García Lorca’s *The House of Bernarda Alba*.” TS. 1968. Author’s personal papers. Play for television and stage.

Multiple copies and versions of this adaptation exist, with at least one complete typescript for stage and one for television. However, they are substantively different from the one act that was excerpted in the *Jamaica Journal*.

Jamaica Journal editor Alex Gradussov complains, in a 1970 issue, that a UWI performance of *The House and Land* staged only the first act. This first act was also staged in 1971 by St. Andrew’s High School in a Drama Festival (according to *The Gleaner*). The excerpt printed in the 1968 edition describes the four acts of the play, and the author’s personal papers contain four-act versions for both stage and television. It does not appear,

therefore, that Wynter deliberately wrote a shorter version to enable easier private or amateur readings, in the manner Koritha Mitchell describes for the lynching plays that followed Angelia Weld Grimké's three-act forerunner, *Rachel* (1916). However, thus far no complete manuscript has appeared that resembles the bolder version Wynter excerpted, with its Brechtian techniques of alienation and the addition of the Amazulu Old Woman who begins the excerpted act. It is still possible that Wynter revised the whole play likewise, using as a foundation the translation that remains in her papers, but if so, that version is yet to be found.

1971 JAMAICA SECONDARY SCHOOLS DRAMA FESTIVAL		
6.30 P.M. at the LITTLE THEATRE		
November 16, 18, 20, 21, 23, 25, 27, 28, 30, December 2, 4, 5		
FIRST WEEK		
Opening by Mr. Corey Robinson.		
General Manager of the Jamaica Broadcasting Corporation		
Commentators: Barbara & Ancile Glendon		
Tuesday, November 16:	1. Opening Remarks	: A Slight Accident
	2. Manning School	: The Boy with a Cat
	3. Wolmer's Girls School	: Zuzuka, the Gypsy Maid
	4. Alpha Academy	: The Importance of Being Earnest
Thursday, November 18:	1. Glenmuir High School	: The House & Land of Mrs. Alba
	2. St. Andrew's High School	: The Feast
	3. Excelsior School	: The Story-Teller
Saturday, November 20:	1. Hampton School	: Simple Spymen (Act I)
	2. Cornwall College	: Fowl Play
	3. Jamaica College	: Liquid Assets
Sunday, November 21:	1. Campion College	: The Caucasian Chalk Circle
	2. Queen's School	: World Without Men
	3. Servite Convent	
TICKETS at SCHOOL or the LITTLE THEATRE: \$1.00, 50c, 30c		
Friday, November 26 at 6:45 p.m. Regional Festival at Manchester School Hall (Munro — Manchester — Knox)		

Listing in *The Gleaner*, 12 Nov. 1971, p. 2.

(“Extract” 49). In addition to working with this adaptation praxis (as she had with *Yerma*), she also adheres to Brecht’s theory of drama as an art form that should not merely mimic or attempt to “accurately” portray “real” life, but that should awaken people to reality in order to transform it. Wynter argues that Jamaicans cannot separate themselves into the “oppressed” and the “oppressors,” but must instead accept their common past in order to transform their future. The tragedy of *House and Land* is in the characters’ paralysis, which affects far more than the Alba family centered in this proscenium. This embraced stasis sees the fading ruling class not only turning in on itself, but also continuing to treat as invisible and dispensable those who maintain their lives on much less, even though it is these people who know how to maintain life on the available rather than the desired who have the potential to transform their society, making it possible for all to find new ways to live. *House and Land* measures the distance between the lives an elite once lived and those they never had to. See Owens (2017).

✘ *The Spinster*, an adaptation of Federico García Lorca’s *Doña Rosita, La soltera*. TS. 1968? Play. Author’s personal papers.

In García Lorca’s original, the betrothed cousin leaves Spain for Argentina, never to return. Wynter relocates this story to Jamaica, with the cousin leaving the island to seek his betterment in Panama, again adapting the language and music of Jamaican forms. The song “Colon Man a Come” lends both topical and contextual aid. The Brechtian alienation effect is evidenced in, for example, a character acting as director who stops the production and re-orientes the audience. The typescript for this play is incomplete, so perhaps doesn’t warrant an entry here. However, the missing first act could well still surface among the author’s other papers.

In an introduction to the extract of *House and Land* that appeared in the *Jamaica Journal* in 1968, Wynter explicates her theory/praxis of translation and adaptation as carried out on García Lorca’s play: “I have examined the play in the original in order to identify the social, historical and economic determinants of the characters and their society. I have then put the play back together in a Jamaican locale and period where the determinants are roughly equivalent to those of the original play”

- 1969 ✓ “Moritat for a Lost Leader.” *Jamaica Journal*, vol. 3, no. 4, Dec. 1969, pp. 2-6. Poem.

Discussed at length in “*Hosanna! We buil’ back we house*”: *Sylvia Wynter’s Dramatic Restorying, for Human’s Sake*. (See Entremés 4.)

Written soon after he died, this poem memorializes Norman W. Manley, one of the founders of the People’s National Party (PNP) and a chief proponent of full adult suffrage and self-government. However, it also critiques some of his actions and failures to act. Because of his involvement in the 1938 strikes and subsequent labor organizing, and the left-leaning bent of the PNP, which its leaders identified as democratic-socialist, many of the anticolonial agitators aligned themselves with the PNP, in hopes that the party would help establish an egalitarian society governed in the interest of all its citizens, not just the elite. By the end of Manley’s life, those hopes had already been dashed, resulting in widespread disillusionment. Wynter and her co-conspirators were looking for revolutionary change. Instead, they got, as had post-“Emancipation” societies after the surge of abolitionist mobilization “change and continuity” (Eudell, *Political* 47).

- 1970 ✓ An adaptation of Jan Carew’s *Black Midas* for schools, with introduction and glossary, published by Longman’s, England, 1970. School edition.



Ad in Radio Times, 15 Aug. 1958, p. 22.

Written for use in Caribbean schools, Wynter’s version of this novel set in Guyana begins with a note on the language, explaining and revaluing the Guyanese creole of its narrator. This is a coming-of-age tale that begins with its protagonist taking leave of all he knows (much of it unpleasant) to seek his fortune in the country’s hinterlands. He achieves that rise in fortunes and with it both attracts the usual hangers-on and repulses those who once knew a better him. He becomes greedy and restless and ends up betraying or neglecting the people who matter. When his fortunes reverse, he loses even more than he had gained. This novel, like Wynter’s plays, also contains a story in a story. Carew extracted it from the novel to produce on the BBC’s *Home Service* as “The Legend of Nameless Mountain,” in which Wynter performed. The ending lines of that story become the moral of this one.

- ✓ *Rockstone Anancy: A Magical Morality*, with Alex Gradussov.

Performed at the Ward Theatre, Kingston, Jamaica. Produced by Little Theatre Movement. 26–29 Dec. 1970, Jan.–March 1971. Ward Theatre, Kingston, Jamaica. Pantomime.

Cast: Ranny Williams (Rockstone Anancy), Louise Bennett (Malvernia/Mother Balm), Buddy Pouyat (Andy Russell), Lois Kelly-Barrow (Madame Culture-Vulture), Bobby Ghisays (Amadeus X Mach), Stafford Harrison, Claudia Robinson, Raymond Hill (Scorcher), Eleanor Wint (Blossom). Music by David Ogden, orchestration by Peter Ashbourne. Chorus: Beulah Banbury, Barbara Beavers, Paula Brown, Hope Foreman, Barbara Kaufman, Mabel Miller, Diane Sett, Gertrude Sherwood, Megan Thomas, Eleanor Wint, Courtney Brammer, Cecil Cooper, Bill Dumont, Douglas Folkes, Noel Heron, Stanley Irons, Vernon

Nash, Denzil Southwood-Smith, Fitz Weir. Dancers: Joyce Abrahams, Micky McGowan, Carole McClaren, Carol Miller, Patsy Ricketts, Sonia Thompson, Frank Ashley, Herbert Coverley, Noel Hall, Thomas Pinnock.

According to *The Gleaner*, even the final performances of *Rockstone Anancy* in March, eleven weeks after it opened, were sold out.



Ad for Rockstone Anancy opening, The Gleaner, 22 Dec. 1970, p. 6.

This musical comedy revamps the traditional light entertainment vehicle of the Jamaican pantomime to critique wealth disparities, the color line, cultural appropriation across class and national lines, political corruption and the cynical cooptation of Black Power and worker-organizing movements, loss of faith in Communist-style revolution, the diminishment of women's roles to that of mother only, and a restoration of Earth and female/male located power/justice. The play has two settings, one a rural "Balm Yard" to which one character "returns" seeking "her" roots, and the urban "Babylon City," location of businesses, government, and the university. (The play could fruitfully be read with Wynter's "One Love" essay, with its denunciation of "blackism.") Students at Jonkunu University demand classes in Black Studies, drumming and dance among them, and dance is repeatedly identified as essential, with one reviewer reporting that "la expresión danzaría es tan importante como el texto" (Gonzalez Freire

24). Strikes and even revolution are hinted at, with the main businesswoman and eponymous corrupt politician, along with his working-class-origins flunky, collude to put down. Mother Balm, hearing that her son is involved in the organizing and in trouble, travels to Babylon City to confront her one-time love, Anancy.

The combination of the Jamaican form of the pantomime with the Jamaican venue, which could more readily accommodate folk-culture-embedded vernacular forms than could the British literature realm, enabled far more theatrical experimentation. Wynter embraced these possibilities, using the pantomime to revive acknowledgement of the role of African-based religions in cultural forms as well as leadership organization. Mother Balm is yet another incarnation of Miss Gatha, evolving to recognize her own power since her appearance in *Under the Sun*. The play's transformed Gatha figure is fully acknowledged to be a priestess to the gods who had been brought to the Americas by enslaved Africans but estranged along the way, and Wynter uses the acknowledged power and desirability of the later version to wryly rebuke her earlier character, with one of the gods indicting her "small ambition," only wanting to be the mother of a doctor when she is a Science Woman herself. Wynter's transformation of Miss Gatha into the far more satirical but still powerful new character in *Rockstone Anancy* traces Wynter's increasing investment in particularly Jamaican cultural forms, also evidenced in her foundational

study of the Jonkonnu festival which appeared in the *Jamaica Journal* the year *Rockstone Anancy* was first produced.

While the comparison of the Miss Gatha characters offers the most obvious revision of notions of leadership, *Rockstone Anancy* also provides ample other examples, replete with farcical opposites, through which we can see the models Wynter essays in dramatic form in order to depict the ramifications of such models in society. Both the nascent union and the established business leaders are exposed as corrupt, while the “revolutionary” student leader is shallow and easily distracted and the cipher for cultural nationalism approaches culture consumptively.

✕ *Love, Its Moods and Meanings: A Meditation to Music*, with Alex Gradussov. TS. Circa 1970. Author’s personal papers.

Cast: Barry Bellamy (A Singer), Rupert Bent (Guitar), Faith D’Aguilar (2nd Woman), Yvonne Duncan (Reader 2, a Woman), Martha Goldson (Solo Lead Singer), Stan Irons (Reader 1, a Man), Barry Johnson (Joseph), Ivy Reynolds (3rd Woman), Noel Seale (Drums), Carmen Wellington (The Widow with Her Two Mites), Cleonie Whyte (1st Woman), Munair Zacca (The Good Samaritan)

The typescript describes this piece as “a half hour theme for Easter Sunday.” The “minor” Biblical figures Joseph of Arimathea, “the widow with her mite,” and the Good Samaritan are brought into the modern setting to reflect on the meaning of Easter. The beginning is all properly Biblical and related to the resurrection scene with the rolling away of the stone from the mouth of Christ’s tomb. However, soon after, the singular focus shifts. Scenes of a Kingston “yard” are mixed with Nigerian tales, Biblical verses, and poems from fifth century China, eighth century Japan, early-20th century Madagascar, contemporary Jamaica, and more. Each of the pieces, sometimes read over the music of a guitar and sometimes drums, “meditates” on conceptions of love not restricted to Biblical notions. Joseph’s lines introducing the next poet, “Learning to love a new land/ new poets learn to revalue / its devalued people,” are followed by lines from George Campbell’s memorable poem, which Wynter had once presented for critical assessment on air for *Caribbean Voices*: “Women stone breakers / Hammers on rocks / Tired child makers / Haphazard frocks [. . .] Wilful toil sharers / Destiny shapers / History makers / Hammers and rocks.” Following this poem, Joseph comes back in to add a conception of love, “Learning to love a country [. . .] For on a day in May 1938 / The people rose, shouted no more / Erupted into history / The new heroes of verse and prose...” Love, here, becomes closely associated with anticolonialism.

Because the “stage” directions indicate the use of captions, it appears that the script is for a television piece. Given that the piece is also fully casted, it must at least have been rehearsed, if not produced. However, I have found no record of production, nor any evidence that the author has claimed it among her works.

1973 ✓ *Maskarade in West Indian Plays for Schools*. Edited by Jeanne Wilson. Kingston: Jamaica Publishing House/Macmillan, 1979, pp. 26-51. Jonkonnu play script.

✓ Commissioned by the JIS Playhouse as a television play, broadcast 30 Dec. 1973.

- ✓ Performed January-April 1979 at Creative Arts Centre, Little Theatre, Jamaica. Directed by Jim Nelson, music by Olive Lewin, arrangements by Captain Joe Williams, direction by Paulette Bellamy, choreography by Cheryl Ryman.

Cast: Carl Binger, Roger Brown, Marcia DaCosta, Fae Ellington, Leonie Forbes, Barbara Herriott, Barbara McCalla, Brian McLeod, Dennis Morrison, Buddy Pouyat, Buxton Shippin, Curtis Watson, and Kevin Wynter

- ✓ Performed July 1979, Carifesta, Havana, Cuba. Designed and directed by Jim Nelson, with music by Olive Lewin, choreography by Cheryl Ryman, and chorus and band directed by Paulette Bellamy.

- ✓ Performed 7–9, 14–16 Apr. 1983, Nitery, Stanford University. Directed by Sandra Richards, music directed by Michael Britt, choreography by Halifu Osumare.



Belisario illustration of
Jonkonnu player Lovey c1938.

- ✓ Performed 7–9, 13–16 Feb. 1992, Josephine Louis Theatre, Northwestern University, directed by Sandra Richards, choreographed by Althea Teamer.

- ✓ Performed 9 Dec. 1994–14 Jan. 1995, Cochrane Theatre, London, directed by Yvonne Brewster, choreographed by Greta Mendez, designed by Ellen Cairns, produced by Talawa Theatre Company.

Cast included: Allister Bain, Karl Collins, Cy Grant, Jamal Browne, Antonia Coker, Femi Elufowoju, Jr., Hazel Holder, Isira Makuloluwe, Chad Shepherd, Angela Wynter

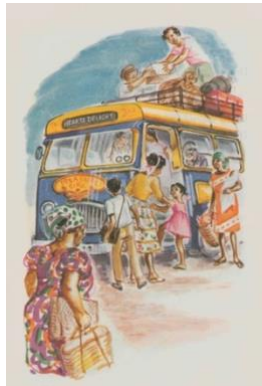
Wynter was inspired to write *Maskarade* (1973) in her critical-imaginative mode after her in-depth

research, in cultural historian mode, into the Jamaican variant of the Jonkonnu ritual festival. She undertook this project for a UNESCO conference and published the results in *Jamaica Journal*. The play appeared first on television, then on stage in Jamaica, Cuba, the United States, and England, saw print in a collection of plays for schools in 1979, was revised in production with director Sandra Richards, further developed into the Lloyd Reckord screenplay *Queen of Jonkonnu* in the 1990s, and most recently was re-issued in a 2012 collection by Yvonne Brewster.

The play takes up the question of “barrenness” Wynter had visited several times previously, along with men setting aside older women in favor of younger women who, lacking other opportunities, concede to being romanced by older men in order to survive. However, this is but one of many themes. The play also critiques the materialism of the culture and the outrageous costs required to take part, while also questioning “divine will,” development, and Third World politics. The rule of “Love” comes into power at the conclusion of the play-within-a-play, when Miss Gatha (Agatha Franklin!) rewrites the end. She goes from being the Queen to being the executioner, but at the same time steps back

and allows the two rivals to kill each other. The new rule is give-and-take, not take alone and the fool gets the girl. What's more, the audience learns, if you don't give back to the Earth, the Earth will rid herself of you. For full discussions, see Walker (2001), Canfield (2001), Boyce Davies (2014).

- 1975 ✓ *Rody and Rena: The Sea Star Readers*, for use in Jamaican schools written in collaboration with Annemarie Wint. Kingston: Jamaica Publishing House/Macmillan, 1975. Children's books.



Rody and Rena's Bus Ride, *Jamaica Publishing House*, 1975, p. 14.

This series of children's stories places Jamaican children in their home contexts, exploring simple conflicts and resolving them, in books about 40 pages long. The short sections of text are accompanied by detailed and colorful illustrations depicting a landscape that would be more familiar to them. The series was meant to provide an alternative to the UK-based primers that contained landscapes and dilemmas almost entirely foreign to Caribbean children, complicating their efforts to learn to read. Wynter conceived of the series as part of a process of decolonizing education, like movements elsewhere to reclaim "home" languages and bring them into schools (see, for example, Ngũgĩ wa Thiongo's *Decolonising the Mind*, 1986, whose argument was first presented as "Writing for Our Children" in 1981). Titles include: *Rody and Rena's Bus Ride*, *Rody Gets into Trouble*, *Rody and Rena on Holidays*, and *Sonny and Nicey's Birthday Presents*.

- ✓ "For Bobby Blue Bland." Poem. University of California–San Diego (UCSD) Digital Archives, poster for Ethnopoetics conference. March, 1975.

In one of many poems that invoke the blues, Wynter delineates the breakthrough capacity she has also claimed for other Black music. However, in this paean to jazzman Robert Calvin Bland, Wynter goes beyond this capacity of music to transcend, identifying it even more fundamentally as a life force, without which the musician is reduced to a "shroud" and "pain unadorned."

- 2010 ✓ *The Hills of Hebron*. Kingston: Ian Randle, 2010. With an introduction by Anthony Bogues and an afterword by Demetrius Eudell. (Reissue of *The Hills of Hebron: A Jamaican Novel*, 1962.) Novel.
- ✓ *Maskarade*, in *Mixed Company: Three Early Jamaican Plays*. Edited by Yvonne Brewster. Oberon Books, London, 2012. (Revised version of 1973 play first published in 1979, then revised again through 1983 production by Sandra Richards). Jonkonnu play. (See above.)
- 2012 ✓ "Bat and Ball." In *The Bowling Was Superfine: West Indian Writing and West Indian Cricket*. Edited by Stewart Brown and Ian McDonald. Peepal Tree Press, Leeds, England, 2012. Story read on BBC program *Caribbean Voices* in 1957. (See above.)

Appendix D

Known Performances During Sylvia Wynter's Singing, Dancing, and Acting Career

These are the singer/dancer engagements and acting roles for which there is some documentary evidence. There may be many more.



Rome, 1956.

Sylvia Wynter and Benjamin Turpin, the Katherine Dunham-trained dancer with whom Wynter trained and danced professionally.

Dancing

1. "Caribbean Cabaret," with Boscoe Holder and his Caribbean Dancers (BBC Television, 24 Aug. 1951).*
2. "Dances of the Tropics," with Boscoe Holder and His Caribbean Dancers show at London's Irving Theater, 22 Jan. 1952 (as in review in *The Stage*, 24 Jan. 1952, p. 10).
3. New Watergate Theatre Revue with Boscoe Holder and His Caribbean Dancers, 12 Feb. 1954.*
4. "Queen and Commonwealth," 6-month exposition, at Imperial Institute, with Boscoe Holder and His Caribbean Dancers.*
5. "International Dance," Kingston, Jamaica, 21 Dec. 1954.

6. "We Got Rhythm," with Boscoe Holder and His Caribbean Dancers, (BBC Television, broadcast 9 Sep. 1955).*
7. "Sylvia Wynter & Her Troupe," in Ward Theater, Kingston, Jamaica, 18 Jan. 1956.
8. Cabaret at "The Open Gate," Rome, Italy, 1956 (*as per BBC documentation*).
9. Cabaret at "The Casino Della Hosa," Rome, Italy, 1956 (*as per BBC documentation*).
10. Cabaret at Villa dei Cesari" Rome, Italy, 1956 (*as per BBC documentation*).
11. Cabaret at "The Astoria," Milan, Italy, 1956 (*as per BBC documentation*).
12. Cabaret at "Casina dei Fiori, Naples, Italy, 1956 (*as per BBC documentation*).
13. Cabaret at "Lido Marquilli," Bari, Italy, 1956 (*as per BBC documentation*).
14. Cabaret at "Chez-Moi," Florence, Italy, 1956 (*as per BBC documentation*).
15. Cabaret at "Oliviero's," Florence, Italy, 1956 (*as per BBC documentation*).
16. Cabaret in Sicily, 1956 (*as per BBC documentation*).
17. Cabaret in Gallipoli, 1956 (*as per BBC documentation*).
18. Choreographed and danced for cabaret at Churchill's, London, England, 1957 (*as per BBC documentation*).
19. "That Old Black Magic," with Boscoe Holder and His Caribbean Dancers, (BBC Television, broadcast 10 Sep. 1958).
20. *"The New Adventures of Charlie Chan," Season 1, Episode 7, "Death of a Don." Produced by Rudolph Flothow, Directed by Don Chaffey. Dancer, uncredited. Episode aired 21 Sep. 1957, rebroadcast 11 Dec. 1960 (*as per IMDb*).

* speculation, based on timeline



Review of "Dances of the Tropics" Show on 22 January 1952, in *The Stage*, 24 Jan. 1952, p. 10.



Still from film Thunder on Sycamore Street, broadcast on ITV Television Playhouse, aired 11 October 1957. Earl Cameron as Joe Blake, Sylvia Wynter as Anna Blake. The British Film Institute restored the film and screened it during an “Earl Cameron Series” October 2021.¹

Acting/Voicing

1. “Trouble in the Sun” by Hugh Popham, as Alwinda (BBC *Sunday-Night Theatre*, TV, directed by Campbell Logan, broadcast 26 July 1953).
2. “Land of the Pharaohs,” uncredited, directed by Howard Hawks, starring Jack Hawkins and Joan Collins, issued by Warner Bros., 1955 (as per IMDb).
3. Two poems by Jan Carew, reader (BBC, *Caribbean Voices*, broadcast 2 Dec. 1956).
4. “The Green Pastures” by Marc Connelly, as Eve (BBC, *Home Service Basic*, broadcast 24 Dec. 1956). See Stephen Bourne, *Black in the British Frame*, pp. 67–68 for description of the rehearsals during the Notting Hill “race riots.”
5. “Women of the Night” [retitled “The Flesh is Weak,”] directed by Don Chaffey, uncredited, produced by Raymond Strauss, issued by Walton Studios, 6 Aug. 1957.
6. “Jumbie Joe,” by J. Field, reader (BBC, *Caribbean Voices*, broadcast 29 Aug. 1957).
7. “Bra’Nancy and the Tiger,” performer (BBC TV, *Children’s Television*, broadcast 12 Sep. 1957).
8. “The River Man,” by Jan Carew, as “Second Girl” (BBC, *Home Service Basic*, broadcast 2 Nov. 1957).
9. “Thunder on Sycamore Street,” by Reginald Rose, as Anna Blake (ITV *Television Playhouse*, episode aired 11 Oct. 1957). This television play is held by the British Film Institute (BFI) and can be viewed at the BFI, Southbank site in their Mediatheque.

¹ <https://www.bfi.org.uk/features/thunder-sycamore-street-reginald-rose-earl-cameron>

10. "For the Defence," by Stanley Mann and Vivian Matalon, as Milly (BBC, *Home Service Basic*, broadcast 16 Jan. 1958).
11. "Christophe," by Robert Adams, as Amethyste (BBC, *Home Service Basic*, broadcast 3 Mar. 1958).
12. "Our Day and Age: A House of Their Own," by Margaret Hotine, as Eurie (BBC, *Light Programme*, first broadcast 4 Mar. 1958).
13. "The Dream in the Chantimelle," by E.M. Thorne, as Priscilla (BBC, *Caribbean Voices*, broadcast 16 Mar. 1958).
14. "Small Island Moon," by Errol John, as Rosa (BBC, *Home Service Basic*, broadcast 18 Aug. 1958 and *Third Programme*, broadcast 27 May 1958 [radio version of *Moon on a Rainbow Shawl*]).
15. "The Legend of Nameless Mountain," by Jan Carew, as First Woman and Singer (BBC, *Home Service Basic*, broadcast 17 Aug. 1958). (The Canadian Broadcasting Corporation holds a recording of this broadcast, which it used in its *CBC Wednesday Night* program 5 Nov. 1958.)
16. "Under the Sun," by Sylvia Wynter, as Rose Brown (BBC, *Third Programme*, first broadcast 5 Oct. 1958).
17. "Anancy and Tiger," by Jan Carew, as Belle (BBC, *Home Service Basic*, broadcast 22 Nov. 1958).
18. "The Barren One," by Sylvia Wynter, as Devil Woman (BBC, *Third Programme*, first broadcast 14 Dec. 1958).

TV AND RADIO **The Prospects**
Travel

By Our Correspondent

THERE will be an added degree of topicality for the first of the new B.B.C. television series *Frontiers of Science* in view of last weekend's news about the Russian artificial satellite. In to-night's programme distinguished scientists and doctors, with the help of studio demonstrations and models, will attempt to show the magnitude of the problems facing future space travellers and discuss how near we are to solving them.

The effect of a next-door tragedy on a small family is the basis of *A Woman's Point of View*, the Canadian television recording to be seen on B.B.C. television. This drama by Patricia Joudry revolves round the girl, Monica, who becomes aware of the tragedy for the first time and the impact this has on her family.

Claude Rains plays an odd ventriloquist in an unusual story of the old-time variety world by Ray Bradbury *And So Died Raibouchinska*. The ventriloquist tells the police a strange story about the body of a juggler found in the basement of an old variety theatre. The police investigation uncovers bizarre psychological phenomena.

B.B.C. cameras will visit Ascot Heath, *Baccara* to televise three of the principal races.

The Midland programme preview of the Motor Show.



Sylvia Wynter, who appears in *Thunder on Sycamore Street* on A.T.V. to-night.

Motoring and the Motorist has been transferred to Network Three, and to-night the Minister of Transport, Mr. Harold Watkinson, will be heard in a recorded interview with Bill Hartley. There will also be a

Birmingham Post & Gazette listing
11 Oct 1957, p. 3.

ON TV

A girl in search of her past



THUNDER ON SYCAMORE STREET

Listing for *Thunder on Sycamore Street* and accompanying article. ca. October 1953. Sources unknown.

The end of the promotional piece quotes Wynter: "I hope... that it will get home my view that a colored man should not have to prove himself to be a nice Negro before he is accepted into the community. He should be accepted first."

Appendix E

Comprehensive Bibliography of Writing by Sylvia Wynter¹

The following bibliography (alpha order) contains all known written texts, published and unpublished, including conference presentations, by Sylvia Wynter to date. She has been meticulous about keeping presentations and talks, so it is likely that copies can be located in the archive of her papers at Duke. Identical or close titles should not be assumed to indicate an unchanged text; they are likely different versions. Not represented on this list are titles for which only a few pages of a manuscript have yet been found. Also excluded from this list are the many course readers she put together, which were not simply “course packs” that reproduced texts by other authors. Wynter would include the key concepts and terminology and ways to approach the material in the readers for her courses. As such, many could have been published as textbooks or anthologies.

A separate list of what Wynter calls her “breakthrough essays” is also reproduced at the end of the bibliography. These are the essays she assesses as having made leaps forward conceptually. Breakthrough essays are displayed with a dagger in the comprehensive list below.

¹ Comprehensive as of late 2022.

Alpha Listing

- “1492, the Ocean Blue and ‘Fables That Stir the Mind.’ To Reinvent the ‘Study of Letters.’” Presentation at *Intertextuality and Civilization in the Americas* Colloquium. Hosted by the Department of Comparative Literature. Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge. June 19-21, 1992.
- “1492: A ‘New World’ View.” *The New World*, Quincentenary Journal of the Smithsonian, no. 2, Spring/Summer 1991. Reprinted in *Race, Discourse, and the Origin of the Americas: A New World View*, edited by Vera Lawrence and Rex Nettleford. Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1995, pp. 5-57. ¶
- “1492: A New World View.” Keynote address for *Smithsonian Quincentenary Symposium, Race, Discourse and the Origin of the Americas*. Hosted by the International Center of the Smithsonian, Washington, DC. National Museum of American History. Derived from my preceding 1991 Spring Quarter Stanford course, “‘Race,’ Discourse, and the Origin of the Americas: A New World View of 1492” examining “the Event of 1492, . . . the formation of a new legitimating basis for structures of New World societies” (Stanford Course Catalog). Oct. 31-Nov. 1, 1991. October 31, 1991.
- “1492: A New World View.” *Race, Discourse, and the Origin of the Americas: A New World View*. Edited by Vera Lawrence and Rex Nettleford. Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1995, pp. 5-57. (Expanded version of 1991 Smithsonian essay.) ¶
- “1492: A Quincentenary Perspective from the Black Americas.” Presentation for *The Schomburg Lecture Series*. The Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, New York. February 13, 1993.
- 1865 — *A Ballad for a Rebellion*. Various typescripts. 1965. Wynter personal papers. Stage play.
- A lo que obliga el honor*. A critical edition of the play by Antonio Enríquez Gómez, with an introduction on the discourse of honor/limpieza and the “marrano” phenomenon. Unpublished. Held at King’s College, the Maughan Library.
- “Aesthetics and the Notion of Order: Rereading, Rethinking Black Poetry of the Sixties.” Presentation for *Rereading the Underread III*. Modern Language Association, San Francisco. December 28, 1987.
- “Africa in the Americas: The Indigenization of the Negro in the New World.” *Linkages in the Black Pluriverse: Africa, Afro-America and the Afro-Caribbean*. State University of New York, Binghamton. October 29-31, 1971.
- Africa in the Americas: Towards an Interpretation*. Unpublished. Wynter personal papers.
- “Africa, the West and the Analogy of Culture: The Cinematic Text After ‘Man.’” *Symbolic Narratives/ African Cinema: Audiences, Theory and the Moving Image*. Edited by June Givanni. London: British Film Institute, 2000, pp. 25-76.
- “Africa, the West and the Analogy of Culture: The Cinematic Text, After ‘Man.’” Keynote address at the international conference *Africa and the History of Cinematic Ideas*. Hosted by the British Film Institute. Sept. 9-10, 1995.
- “Africa, the Western World System, and the ‘Way We Natives Think’: Unparalleled Catastrophe? Or the Rewriting of Knowledge?” Presentation at *The African Diaspora: African Origins and New World Self Fashioning* conference. Hosted by the Department of African Studies. Binghamton University. Apr. 11-13, 1996.
- “‘African Peoples in the Industrial Age’: Beyond the Separate Disciplines? Or Beyond the Western Episteme?” Presentation at *The Remapping of Scholarship: African Peoples in the Industrial Age*. Sponsored by the Center for Afro-American and African Studies (CAAS). University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. Sept. 30-Oct. 1, 1994.
- “Africans in the Americas: 1492–1991” at the Schomburg Center Schools Program, Seminar Teacher Institute. Hosted by the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture. Two-week seminar. July 8–22, 1992.
- “After ‘Man,’ After Marx: Fanon, *Les damnés* and the Autonomy of Cognition.” Presentation at *Frantz Fanon, 1925–1961* Symposium. Hosted by the Center for the Critical Study of Colonialism. University of California, Berkeley. May 2, 1992
- “After ‘Man,’ Towards the Human: Rodney and the Rethinking of Intellectual Activism on the Eve of the New Millennium.” Presentation at *Engaging Walter Rodney’s Legacies: Historiography, Social Movements and African Diaspora* conference. Hosted by the Walter Rodney Committee. SUNY Binghamton. Nov. 6-8, 1998. November 8, 1998.

- “After ‘Man’, Towards the Human: ‘African Diaspora Studies as Césaire’s Science of the Word.’” Presentation on “Connections with Africa” panel at *African Diaspora Studies at the Eve of the 21st Century* conference. Hosted by the African American Department. University of California, Berkeley. Apr. 30-May 2, 1998.
- “After Affirmative Action: On the Why of Black Studies.” Presentation for *On the Why of Black Studies* series. Hosted by the African and African-American Studies Department. Stanford University. October 10, 1997.
- “After Allan Bloom, Beyond Multiculturalism: Towards Epistemic Literacy.” Rewritten version of lectures given in the Ward-Phillips Lecture Series hosted by the Department of English, University of Notre Dame, in March of 1989. Lectures were to be published as part of the Lecture Series by the University of Notre Dame Press. c1989. Unpublished.
- “After Allan Bloom: Towards Epistemic Literacy.” Ward-Phillips Lecture Series hosted annually by the Department of English. University of Notre Dame, South Bend, Indiana. Four lectures. March, 1989.
- “After Feminism: Towards a Teoría for Our Times.” Was to be published in collection edited by Joanne Braxton and Andree Nicola McLaughlin, originally titled *The Tie That Binds: Political and Cultural Imperatives in the Renaissance of Afro-American Writings*, issued under the title *Wild Women in the Whirlwind: Afro-American Culture and the Contemporary Literary Renaissance*. New Brunswick: Rutgers UP, 1990. Unpublished.
- “After Humanism: Black Studies and the Rewriting of Knowledge.” Presentation for the *Seminar Series of the Black Studies Research Center*. University of Santa Barbara, California. May, 1985.
- “After Man, Its Last Word: On Postmodernism, *Les damnés* and the Sociogenic Principle.” (Published in Spanish as “*Tras el ‘Hombre,’ su última palabra: Sobre el posmodernismo, les damnés y el principio sociogénico.*” Translated by Ignacio Corona-Gutierrez. *La teoría política en la encrucijada decolonial*. *Nuevo Texto Crítico*, edited by Alejandro De Oto, año 4, no. 7, primer semestre de 1991, pp. 43-83.) Was to be published in the *Stanford Humanities Review* in 1991. c1991. Unpublished. ✕
- “After Man, the Thought of Sylvia Wynter.” Seminar at the University of the West Indies, Mona, co-sponsored by the UWI Centre for Caribbean Thought and Brown University’s African Studies Department. Seminar series June 14-15, 2002.
- “After Man: Caribbean Literature, the Cyclops Factor and the Second Poetics of the *Propter Nos*.” Mini-seminar for graduate students. University of California, San Diego. May 20-30, 1997.
- “After Marx: Beyond Labor and the Mode of Production.” Presentation for *Centenary Commemoration of Marx*. University of Maryland, College Park. April, 1983.
- “After Post-Modernism, After Marxism: Toward a New ‘World System.’” Presentation for *Speaking for the Subject: Poststructuralism, Postmodernism, and Black Theoretical Practice*. Hosted by the Center for Black Studies, University of California, Santa Barbara, May 26-28, 1989. May 28, 1989.
- “After the New Class: James, *Les damnés* and the Autonomy of Human Cognition.” Keynote address at *CLR James: His Intellectual Legacies, the First International Conference in Honor of the Life and Works of CLR James*. Hosted by the Black Studies Department. Wellesley College. April 19–21, 1991.
- “After the Sixties What Went Wrong? Unparalleled Catastrophe? Or to Rewrite Knowledge/Reimagine the ‘Common Dream?’” Keynote address at conference of the same title sponsored by the African and African-American Studies Program and the Shabazz Center for Intellectual Inquiry. Dartmouth College. May 3-4, 1996.
- “Against a One-Dimensional Degree.” or “Departures from a One-Dimensional Degree.” Prepared for publication in *Caribbean Quarterly*, 1974. (Now published as “Against a One-Dimensional Degree in Literature: Towards ‘Relevance’” in *We Must Learn to Sit Down Together and Talk About a Little Culture: Decolonizing Essays, 19687–1984*, Peele Tree Press, 2022, pp. 585–623.) Unpublished.
- “All in Honour: On Rhetoric and the Artifice of Human Speciation.” Was to be published as part of the Rhetoric Project of the *Journal of Social and Biological Structures*, Carpinteria, California and London, England. c1987. Unpublished.
- “America as a World.” Guest presenter. The seminar was videotaped, and an edited version circulated to educators throughout the university and school system. The basic premise of the seminar was that rather than America being a nation of immigrants as put forward in the Houghton-Mifflin textbook series recently adopted by the

- California State Board of Education in 1990, it is a world civilization comprising both non-immigrants and immigrants. July 2-3, 1991.
- “And Talk About a Little Culture.” *Carifesta Forum: An Anthology of 20 Caribbean Voices*. Edited by John Hearne. Kingston: Institute of Jamaica, 1976, pp. 129-37. (Reprint of “We Must Learn to Sit Down Together and Talk about a Little Culture.”)
- “*Aunque Negro: Limpieza de Sangre [Although Black: Cleanliness of Blood]* in the Symbolic Logic of the Golden Age *Comedia*.” Lecture for *Summer Session on Golden Age Literature*. Duke University. July 17, 1981.
- “Authority in the Church.” *Annual Easter Conference of the Students Christian Movement*, St. Andrew, Jamaica. April 3-7, 1969. April 7, 1969
- “Babylon Zion: Culture and Counter Culture in the Catacombs of Marginality.” Lecture. University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. April 4, 1973.
- “Bad Faith” panel at *Self-Deception (Philosophy, Psychology, Anthropology, Literature) Colloquium*. Respondent. Hosted by the Program of Interdisciplinary Research, Department of French and Italian. Stanford University. February 26, 1993.
- “The Barren One.” (Adaptation of Federico García Lorca’s *Yerma*.) *Third Programme*, produced by R. D. Smith, BBC Radio, 14 Dec. 1958. Play.
- The Barren One*. Undated. Typescript of radio drama. Wynter personal papers. Unpublished.
- “Bat and Ball.” *Caribbean Voices*, produced by Ulric Cross, BBC Radio, 6 Aug. 1957. Short story.
- “Bat and Ball.” In *The Bowling Was Superfine: West Indian Writing and West Indian Cricket*. Edited by Stewart Brown and Ian McDonald. Peepal Tree Press, Leeds, England, 2012. Story read on BBC program *Caribbean Voices* in 1957.
- “Benedetti: The Priorities of the Writer.” c1972. Was to be published in Jan Carew, ed., *Rape the Sun*, New York, Third Press. (Same volume was to include another “comment” on Cortaza’s reply to Collazos.) Unpublished.
- “Bernardo de Balbuena: Epic Poet and Abbot of Jamaica, 1562–1627,” a four-part article in *Jamaica Journal*, 1969–1970.
- “Beyond ‘Western’ Culture and for the Non-Restoration of Deflowered Virgins.” *International Education: Encountering the Other*, special issue of *In Writing*, vol. 4, no. 1, Winter 1987. (Stanford University.)
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- “Beyond the Tangled Wing: Towards a Science of Human Systems.” Presentation for “What Next” panel, in year-long series, *What is an Enemy?: Views on War and Peace*. Hosted by the United Campus Ministry. Stanford University. May 23, 1986.
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- “Black Women Writers on Racism & Sexism.” Panel with Audre Lorde, Gloria Watkins, and Pat Warner, Hult Center for Performing Arts, Eugene, Oregon. January 23, 1983.
- “The Blues of a Jamaican Lady.” *The Sunday Gleaner*, Kingston, Jamaica, 9 May 1965, p. 4. Poem.
- “Brother Man.” *Home Service*, produced by Charles Lefeaux, BBC Radio, 22 June 1964. Radio drama. (Adaptation of Roger Mais’s 1954 novel.)
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- “But What Does Wonder Do? Meanings, Canons, Too?: On Literary Texts, Cultural Contexts, and What It’s Like to Be One/Not One of Us.” *Bridging the Gap: Where Cognitive Science Meets Literary Criticism*, edited by Stefano Franchi and Güven Güzeldere, a special supplement of *Stanford Humanities Review*, vol. 4, no. 1, Apr. 1995.
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- “Can Fuzzies (Humanists) Survive in a World Run by Techies (Technoscientists): Some Notes on Being a Literature and Interdisciplinary Graduate Today.” Talk prepared for Diploma Award Ceremony, Stanford University. June 13, 1993.
- “Can There Be a Human View of 1492?” Presentation for Stanford Centennial Finale Week Seminar, *A New World View of 1492: From Europe to the Americas*. Hosted by the Departments of Spanish and Portuguese and Continuing Education, and the Stanford Alumni Association. Stanford University. September 30, 1991.
- “Can There Be a Human View? Columbus in Perspective.” Invited address given in the week-long *Commemoration of the Quincentennial Anniversary of Columbus’ Arrival in the Americas*. College of Notre Dame, California. October 12, 1992.
- “Can There Be a Human View.” Invited address for *The Cultural Studies Series on 1492*. Hosted by the University of Santa Cruz. April 29, 1992.
- “The Castle at Mina Which We Have Seen: Columbus, Africa, and a Second Realm Beyond Reason.” Rewritten version of a paper presented in the *Discovering the Americas 1492 Lecture Series* hosted by the Department of Spanish and Portuguese, University of Maryland, College Park. c1991. Unpublished.
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- “The Ceremony Found: Black Knowledges/Struggles, the Color Line, and the Third Emancipatory Breaching of the Law of Cognitive Closure.” Eighth Bi-Annual Conference of the Collegium for African American Research (CAAR), Black Knowledges, Black Struggles, Civil Rights: Transnational Perspectives. University of Bremen, Bremen, Germany. Seminar March 26, 2009.
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- “A Charge to Keep: Toward a Transformative Research Agenda in Black Education.” With Joyce King and Tom Piper. American Educational Research Association. Commission on Research in Black Education, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2005. VHS.

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 - “Quincentenary: Caribbean Perspective,” pp. 574-577.
 - “Sevilla la Nueva,” pp. 611-5.
- “CLR James and the Cultural Revolution.” Presentation at *The Revolutionary Legacy of CLR James* conference in honor of CLR James’s 70th birthday, with Walter Rodney, Trevor Monroe, John Higginson, Erick Perkins, Archie Singham, and CLR James. Sponsored by the Center for Afro-American and African Studies (CAAS), Black Matters Committee (BMC), and the Office of Student Affairs. University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. March 31-April 2, 1972.
- “Coding Difference: Race, Class, Sex, I.Q., and the Gender Model.” Presentation for Race Awareness Week. Hosted by the Office of Residential Education. Stanford University. March, 1982.
- “‘Coloniality’ and the Inscription/Production of ‘Man’: Towards the Sociogenic Principle.” Presentation at Second Annual Conference of the Coloniality Working Group. SUNY, Binghamton. Seminar series April 22-25, 1999.
- “Columbus and the Poetics of the *Propter Nos*.” *Discovering Columbus*, edited by Djelal Kadir, special Columbus Quincentenary issue of *Annals of Scholarship: An International Quarterly in the Humanities and Social Sciences*, vol. 8, no. 2, 1991, pp. 251-86. (Detroit: Wayne State UP.)
- “Columbus, the ‘Ocean Blue’ and ‘Fables That Stir the Mind’: A View from the ‘Study of Letters.’” Presentation for *Columbus Quincentenary Symposium*. Hosted by the Departments of American Studies, Comparative Literature, and Literature and Philosophy. Purdue University. Apr. 2-4, 1992. April 4, 1992.
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- “Commentary: Letter from Israel.” *Calling the West Indies*, 16 May 1953, 11:15–11:45 PM GMT, BBC Radio.
- “Coming Off Our/Their Wall: The Politics of Domination and the Rhetorics of Race.” Presentation for *The Politics of Domination* forum. Modern Language Association Conference, Los Angeles. December 29, 1982.
- “Communication and the National Press.” Teach-In sponsored by the New World Group, Kingston, Jamaica. January 30, 1969.
- “Contemporary Literature of/on The Conquest.” Presentation for the *Quincentennial Commemoration Series, Columbus and After: Encounter, Conflict, Challenge*. Santa Clara University. November 10, 1992.
- “Conversation.” Daryl Cumber Dance and Sylvia Wynter. *New World Adams: Conversations with Contemporary West Indian Writers*. Edited by Daryl Cumber Dance. Leeds: Peepal Tree Press, 1991, pp. 276-82.
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- “Creole Criticism: A Critique.” (Part Two.) c1973. Was to be published in *New World Quarterly*. Unpublished.
- “Critical Perspectives Forum on the Culture Wars.” Presentation. Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, New York. October 20, 1994.
- “‘Cultural ‘Dualism’: Theory as Ideology or Critical Consciousness in the Commodity Form Society.” Lecture. University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. March 14, 1973.
- “Cultural Innovation in Advanced Technological Societies,” at *Technology and Cultural Transformation (TACT)*. Member-participant, UNESCO, Washington, DC. September 24-25, 1977.
- “Cultural Nationalism, Marxism-Leninism and the Problematic of the Self in Third World Fiction.” Presentation for *Toward a Marxist Theory of Culture* forum. Modern Language Association Conference, San Francisco. December 28, 1975.
- “Cultural Studies? Back to the Basics? Or Césaire’s Science of the Word? On Canons, Consciousness and the Rewriting of Knowledge.” Presentation at the *Seventh Annual Symposium of the Arizona Quarterly*. University of Arizona. Mar. 21-23, 1996.

- “Culture and Dependency: The Colonization of Consciousness.” Panel discussion “External Dependency Structure and Scientific Development,” for “Violence and Behavior” session at the *Science and Man in the Americas* conference. Mexico City, Mexico. June 29–July 4, 1973.
- “Culture in Our Development.” Talk given at the Annual General Meeting of the Young Women’s Christian Association. April 28, 1964.
- “Culture, Language and Identity: Some Thoughts on a Key Question” (extract). *Foreign Language Newsletter*, vol. 31, no. 3, May 1980. Flanc, Northern California.
- “*Dementia Praecox*, Flaming Madness, and Tenacious Cannibalism: Caribbean Literature, Speaking/Unspeakable *Man*.” Was to be published in *The History of Caribbean Literatures in European Languages*, edited by James Arnold for U of Virginia P. c1995. Unpublished.
- “Dependency Theory, the Third World, and the Economic Sin.” Presentation. University of California, San Diego. May 19, 1977.
- “‘Different Kind of Creature’, A: Caribbean Literature, the Cyclops Factor and the Second Poetics of the *Propter Nos*.” *Annals of Scholarship*, vol. 12, nos. 1&2, 1997, pp. 153–72. Reprinted in *Sisyphus and Eldorado: Magical and Other Realisms in Caribbean Literature*. Edited by Timothy J. Reiss. Trenton, NJ & Asmara, Eritrea: African World Press, 2002, pp.143–67.
- “Discourses of/on the Other: Towards Epistemic Literacy.” Program for Faculty Renewal Workshop, Stanford University. July 26–August 1, 1987.
- “Divine Word: Foundations of African Religion and Philosophy.” Lecture for “African Religious Systems” series. Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, New York. October 22, 1994.
- Do Not Call Us Negroes”: How “Multicultural” Textbooks Perpetuate Racism*. San Francisco: Aspire Books, 1992.
- “The Dynamics of Inequality.” Invited Talk for Peace Studies course under section *Peace as Collaborative Well-Being*, coordinator Byron Bland. Stanford University. May 19, 1992.
- The Earth Is Small: The Rise and Fall of New Seville, Jamaica, 1503–1536*. Intended as an extension of earlier published pamphlets on New Seville, the town founded by Columbus San Diego on the North Coast site where he had been shipwrecked for a year, together with a new reading of the *Lettera Rarissima* (regarding the letter that Columbus wrote to the sovereigns in 1503 from his shipwrecked site). Unfinished. (Published in condensed form as *New Seville, 1509–1536: Major Facts, Major Questions* and *New Seville, Major Dates 1509–1536, with an Aftermath, 1537–1635*.) Unpublished.
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- “Elegy to a Black Girl.” *Caribbean Voices*, produced by Ulric Cross, BBC Radio, 20 Oct. 1957. Poem.
- “Elegy to the South African Dead.” *Fighting Talk: Fighting Talk Committee (Johannesburg)*, vol. 14, no. 7, Dec. 1960, pp. 10–11. Poem.
- “Elite Mass, Settler/Native: The Colonization of the Consciousness in Commodity Form Society.” Lecture. University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. March 28, 1973.
- “Ellison, Wright and ‘Post-Colonial’ Discourse: Towards a New World System.” Lecture for the *Annual Inman Page Lectures*. Hosted by the Third World Center, Brown University. April, 1989
- The End of Exile: Sylvia Wynter’s Creative Works, 1956–1983*. A comprehensive collection of plays, poems, and stories by Sylvia Wynter. (An archival recovery project with materials collected from archives on four continents.) Not yet published.
- “Endangered Earth/Endangered Human, and the Order of Knowledge.” Presentation for Earth Month. Stanford University. April 20, 1993.
- Enríquez Gómez, Antonio. *A lo que obliga el honor: A Critical Edition*, a 1953 University of London Master’s thesis including “an extensive introduction and bibliography” that continues to inform Enríquez Gómez scholars such as Glen F. Dille.

- “The Essay and the Letter-Essay as ‘The’ Literary Genre of the Sixties.” Conference organizer and speaker at the *Martin Luther King, Jr. Commemorative Workshop*. Stanford University. April 7-8, 1978. April 7, 1978.
- “Ethno or Socio Poetics?” *Ethnopoetics*, edited by Michel Benamou and Jerome Rothenberg, a First International Symposium issue of *Alcheringa*, vol. 2, no. 2, 1976, pp. 78-94.
- “Ethno-poetic, Socio-poetic: The Case of the Black Oral Tradition in the New World.” Presentation for the *Conference on Ethnopoetics*. Hosted by the Center for Twentieth Century Studies. University of Wisconsin, Madison. April 9–12, 1975.
- “Ethnopoetics—Sociopoetics? The Case of the Black Oral Tradition in the New World.” The full manuscript of a work whose first part, “The Social Context of Ethnopoetics,” was published as “Ethno or Socio Poetics?” in *Ethnopoetics*, edited by Michel Benamou and Jerome Rothenberg, a First International Symposium issue of *Alcheringa*, vol. 2, no. 2, 1976, pp. 78-94. Part Two, “The Counter Poetics of the Blues,” and Part Three, “The Lumpen Poetics of Reggae,” remain unpublished. c1976. Unpublished.
- “After Eventide: An Open Letter to the Jamaican Intelligentsia” Series. 6 articles. *The Daily Gleaner*, Kingston, Jamaica, June-July, 1980.
- “Extract from *The House and Land of Mrs. Alba*, an adaptation of Federico García Lorca’s *The House of Bernarda Alba*.” *Jamaica Journal*, vol. 2, no. 3, Sept. 1968, pp. 48-56. Play.
- “The Eye of the Other: Aspects of the Black Image in Lope de Vega’s *El Negro del Mejor Amo*.” Duke University. April 25, 1974.
- “The Eye of the Other: Images of the Black in Spanish Literature.” *Blacks in Hispanic Literature: Critical Essays*. Edited by Miriam DeCosta-Willis. Kennikat Press, 1977, pp. 8-19.
- “Fact and Fiction in the Third World: An Interdisciplinary Approach.” Seminar Leader. University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. March–April, 1973.
- “Fiction and Critical Theory in the Third World: Macherey’s Model of Production.” Interdisciplinary Theory Seminar, Cal State University, Northridge. June, 1977.
- “For Us All.” *The Daily Gleaner*, Kingston, Jamaica, 8 Dec. 1968, p. 6. Poem.
- “For Bobby Blue Bland.” Various typescripts. Wynter personal papers. c1975. Unpublished.
- “For Those Killed at Sharpeville—An Elegy.” *Calling West Africa*, and *Caribbean Service*, BBC Radio, 29 April 1960. Poem. Read by Andrew Salkey and Pauline Henriques.
- “Frank Hill: Anti-Colonialist, National Bureaucrat.” 1980. Unpublished.
- “Freedom Dreaming in the Urban South: Education, Research, Public Policy, and the Powers of the Imagination.” American Educational Research Association conference, New Orleans, LA. Seminar, April 9, 2011.
- “From the Mandate(s) of Heaven/the Ancestors to that of Evolution: Towards a Transcultural Perspective.” Presentation at Department of Ethnic Studies Colloquium Series, *Articulating the Intellectual Heritage of Humanity or Multicultural Perspectives in the Curriculum*, for the Centennial Celebration of the San Francisco State University. April 10, 1999.
- “From the Western Antipodes to ‘Women and Minorities’: Towards the New ‘Ground’ of America.” Presentation at Faculty Seminar on the *Western Culture Core Curriculum*, Stanford University. September 22-24, 1986. September 24, 1986.
- “From Tigritude to Africanitude: The Work of the Text in Soyinka’s *Myth, Literature, and the African World*.” Prepared for presentation at the National Humanities Center, 1981, was to have been published in H. L. Gates, ed. *Critical Essays on Wole Soyinka*, Cambridge UP. c1980. Unpublished.
- “Garvey and Bedward.” *The Sunday Gleaner*, Kingston, Jamaica, 12 Mar. 1972, p. 20.
- “The Garvey Papers: From the Ontological Schema of ‘Man/Proletarian’ to a Science of the Human.” Was to be published in special double issue on Black Critical Thought of *Diacritics*, edited by Henry Louis Gates and Anthony Appiah, 1987. Unpublished.

- “Gender or the Genre of the Human? History, the ‘Hard Task’ of *Dessa Rose*, and *the Issue* for the New Millennium.” Presentation for “Meditations on History: *Dessa Rose* and Slavery Revisited” panel at *Black Women Writers and the ‘High Art’ of Afro-American Letters*. Hosted by the Department of Literature. University of California, San Diego. May 15-17, 1998.
- “‘Genital Mutilation’ or ‘Symbolic Birth?’: Female Circumcision Lost Origins, and the Aculturalism of Feminist/Western Thought.” *Case Western Law Reserve*, vol. 47, no. 2, Winter 1997, pp. 501-52.
- “Ghost on Her Grave.” *Calling the Caribbean*, produced by Ulric Cross, BBC Radio. First broadcast 8 Sep. 1957. Short story.
- “Global Perspectives and the Third World: The Role and Responsibility of Intellectuals.” Presentation on panel “Walter Rodney: World Involvement and Concern,” for conference commemorating the life and work of Walter Rodney, *Intellectual Leadership and Responsibility in World Politics*. Howard University, Feb. 20-21, 1981. February 20, 1981.
- “*Green Days by the River* and *The Games Were Coming*, by Michael Anthony.” Review article in *Caribbean Studies*, vol. 9, no. 4, Jan. 1970, pp. 111-8. (University of Puerto Rico.)
- “Grenada and the Failure/Crisis of the Caribbean Intelligentsia.” Intervention in roundtable discussion, *Art, Politics and Vision: Caribbean Women Writers and the Challenge of the 1990s*. Hosted by the W. E. B. Dubois Institute, Harvard University; the Black Studies Department, Wellesley College; and William Burnham Associates. April 11, 1988.
- “Grenada,” panel discussion on invasion. Jamaican Broadcasting Corporation (JBC) TV. October 12, 1983
- “Gwana.” *Calling the Caribbean*, produced by Ulric Cross, BBC Radio, 22 Nov. 1956. Short story.
- Highlife for Caliban*, “Afterword.” Lemuel Johnson. Ann Arbor: Ardis Press, 1973, pp. 129-56.
- “High Standards or New Standards” series. *The Daily Gleaner*, Kingston, Jamaica, 8, 15, 29 March 1970, p. 10.
- The High Voyage: A Film*. Film or television documentary proposal on Columbus’s shipwreck in Jamaica, 1503-1504, and his writing of the *Lettera Rarissima* as part of a historical tourism project, based on the ms. for *The Earth is Small: Columbus, Santa Gloria and New Seville, 1494-1534*. 1984. Unpublished.
- The Hills of Hebron: A Jamaican Novel*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1962. Novel.
- The Hills of Hebron*. Kingston: Ian Randle, 2010. With an introduction by Anthony Bogues and an afterword by Demetrius Eudell. (Reissue of *The Hills of Hebron: A Jamaican Novel*, 1962.) Novel.
- “Historical Construction? Or Cultural Code? ‘Race,’ the ‘Local Culture’ of the West, and the Origins of the Modern World,” for lecture series, *The Historical Construction of Race and Racism*. Sponsored by the A. E. Havens Center for the Study of Social Structure and Social Change, Department of Sociology. University of Wisconsin-Madison. Four lectures. October 16-28, 1995.
- “History as Exile in Camara Laye’s *The Dark Child*.” Presentation on the *Third World Literature Panel*. Modern Language Association Conference, San Francisco. December 27, 1975.
- “History as Theme in the Novels of George Lamming.” Hampshire College. November, 1974.
- “History, Ideology, and the Reinvention of the Past in Achebe’s *Things Fall Apart* and Laye’s *The Dark Child*.” *Minority Voices*, vol. 2, no. 1, 1978, pp. 43-61.
- The House and Land of Mrs. Alba*. An adaptation of Federico García Lorca’s *The House of Bernarda Alba*.” Various typescripts. 1968. Wynter personal papers. Stage play, television screenplay.
- “How to Read the Rhygin Version.” Review article on *The Harder They Come* by Michael Thelwell. *Black Books Bulletin*, vol. 7, nos. 1-3, 1979, pp. 46-50.
- Human Being* as Noun, or *Being Human* as Praxis? On the Laws/Modes of Human Auto-Institution and the *Why* of Our Ultimate Crisis of Global Warming and Climate Change.” c2008. Unpublished. ✕
- Human Being* as Noun, or *Being Human* as Praxis? On the Laws/Modes of Human Auto-Institution and the *Why* of Our Ultimate Crisis of Global Warming and Climate Change.” Invited by Demetrius Eudell to Participate in the Distinguished Lecture and Residency Series at the Center for African American Studies. Wesleyan University.

- ⚡ Note: This was the first public articulation of the concept of the human being as praxis. Seminar series April 23-25, 2008.
- Human Being as Noun? Or Being Human as Praxis? Towards the Autopoietic Turn / Overturn: A Manifesto.* c2007. Unpublished.
- “If It’s Not Race, What is It?: After ‘Man,’ Towards the Human.” Keynotes address for the weeklong seminar proceedings to inaugurate the Chair, in honor of Betty Shabazz. Medgar Evers College, City University of New York. Seminar series April 12-17, 1999.
- “The Image of the Black in Western Literature.” Planned television series, to be directed by Wole Soyinka. Consultant. Project headed by Professor Henry Louis Gates, now of Harvard University. 1980.
- “In Quest of Matthew Bondsman: Some Cultural Notes on the Jamesian Journey.” *Urgent Tasks*, no. 12, Summer 1981. Reprinted in *CLR James: His Life and Work*, edited by Paul Buhle. London: Allison and Busby, 1986, pp. 131-145.
- “*In the Great Silence of Scientific Knowledge*”: *After Man, Toward the Human*. (Book-length expansion of the paper presented at the Seminar, *After Man, Towards the Human*, hosted by the Center for Caribbean Thought, June 14-15, 2002.) c2004. Unpublished.
- Independence Dinner Guest Speaker. YMCA Centre, Kingston, Jamaica. August 8, 1962
- “The Insignia of Doctrine, the Politics of Identity: Notes Towards an Intellectual Reformation.” Presentation for *Reflections on a Decade of Black Studies*. Hosted by the Africana Studies and Research Center. Cornell University. September 25–28, 1980.
- The Insignia of Doctrine, the Politics of Identity: Notes Towards a “Nègre” Intellectual Reformation*. Was to be published as part of the Report of Proceedings for conference hosted by the African Research Center, Cornell University. Later submitted to McGraw Hill. c1981. Unpublished.
- “The Instant-Novel Now.” *New World Quarterly*, vol. 3, no. 3, 1967, pp. 78-81.
- “An Intellectual Journey from ‘Native’ to ‘Human’: On Sailing Out of the Cultural Ontology of ‘Man.’” Presentation to *Faculty Life Journeys*. Hosted by the Black Graduate Student Association, Stanford University. April 19, 1996.
- “Intelligence and Third World Writers.” Presentation for week-long conference on the Caribbean. Princeton University. Mar. 16-20, 1981. March 16, 1981.
- “International Feminism? Or a Contradiction in Terms? From the Isms to Epistemic Literacy.” Presentation for *International Feminism* lecture series. Hosted by the Institute for Research on Women and Gender. Stanford University. October 14, 1987.
- “The Invisibility of the Invisible Man: Towards a Theory of ‘Ethnic’ Literary Criticism.” Presentation for Modern Language Association Conference, San Francisco. December 24, 1975.
- “Is ‘Development’ a Purely Empirical Concept or also Teleological?: A Perspective from ‘We the Underdeveloped.’” *Prospects for Recovery and Sustainable Development in Africa*. Edited by Aguibou Y. Yansané. Westport: Greenwood Press, 1996, pp. 299-316.
- “Is ‘Development’ a Purely Empirical Concept? Or Is It Also Teleological?: A Perspective from ‘We the Underdeveloped.’” Presentation for “Which Way Africa Writers’ Vision of Development in Africa” panel at *Colloquium on Development in Africa*, hosted by the Africa Focus Project, San Francisco State University. April 19–20, 1990.
- Jamaica is the Eye of Bolivar: A Play in Two Acts*. Translated by Sylvia Wynter. By Francisco M Cuevas Cancino. New York: Vantage, 1979.
- Jamaica’s National Heroes*. Kingston: Jamaica National Trust Commission, 1971.
- Jamaican History*. Lecture series sponsored by the Jamaican Youth Council, Kingston, Jamaica. February-May, 1970
- “James and the Castaway Culture of the Caribbean.” *Symposium on the Works of CLR James*. Co-sponsored by the New World Group, the Guild of Undergraduates of the University, and the Caribbean Artist Movement. University of the West Indies, Mona. January-February, 1972.

- “James/ *les damnés*, Notions of Freedom and the Absolutism of Man’s: On the Production/ Producedness of our Modes of Being Human, of ‘Mind.’ Presentation at *CLR James Scholarship Old and New Conference*. Hosted by Lewis Gordon and Paget Henry. Brown University. Seminar series April 14-15, 2000.
- “Jonkonnu and National Identity: Towards a New Unifying Principle.” Presentation for *Caribbean Festival Arts and the Future, 8th Triennial Symposium of African Art*, Washington, DC. June 15–17, 1989.
- “Jonkonnu in Jamaica: Towards the Interpretation of Folk Dance as a Cultural Process.” *Jamaica Journal*, vol. 4, no. 2, June 1970, pp. 34-48. ¶
- “Jonkonnu in Jamaica: Towards an Interpretation of Folk Dance.” *UNESCO Conference on Folk Culture*, Kingston, Jamaica. ¶ July 29-August 4, 1970. July 30, 1970.
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- “The Legacy of Slavery: Conceptual Overview.” Summary/Presentation symposium for *The Legacy of Slavery in The Caribbean and The Americas*. Hosted by the Embassy of Jamaica and the Smithsonian Institution’s Anacosta Museum and Center for African American History and Culture. August 2, 1997.
- “Literature and the Third World.” Presentation. University of California, San Diego. May, 1974.
- “Literature, Marxism, and the Invisible Man.” Presentation. University of California, San Diego. April 30, 1975.
- “The Long Dream: Culture, Consciousness, the Color Line, and the Black Intellectual Tradition.” Presentation at the *5th Annual Project Black Cinema International Film Festival*, Saratoga, Florida. September 20-26, 1996.
- “A Look Back at *The Hills of Hebron* on the Eve of the New Millennium: After ‘Man,’ Towards the Human.” Presentation at *The First International Conference on Caribbean Literature*, Nassau, the Bahamas. Hosted by the College of the Bahamas, Nassau; Purdue University, Calumet; and Morehouse College. Nov. 3-6, 1998.
- “The Lost Steps: The Reinvention of the Past in Fact and Fiction.” Lecture. Stanford University. April 5, 1976.
- “The Lost Steps: The Reinvention of the Past in the Third World Novel.” Presentation. Indiana University. February, 1976.
- Love, Its Moods and Meanings*, with Alex Gradussov. Typescript. Circa 1970. Wynter personal papers. “A meditation to music” for Easter Sunday.
- “Malcolm X: The Movie and the Man.” Presentation on panel hosted by African and Afro-American Studies Program. Stanford University. December 8, 1992.
- “Malcolm X.” *New World*, vol. 2, no. 1, 1965, p. 12. Poem.
- “Marxism and the Black Community.” Panel, with Amiri Baraka. University of California, San Diego. November 16, 1976.
- Maskarade* in *West Indian Plays for Schools*. Edited by Jeanne Wilson. Kingston: Jamaica Publishing House/Macmillan’s, 1979, pp. 26-51. (Wynter’s Note: “This musical play emerged through an unusual coming together of the two strands of my academic and creative work. Jim Nelson, a television producer, having read my scholarly article on Jonkonnu that I had prepared for presentation at a UNESCO cultural conference and published in the *Jamaica Journal*, phoned and said, ‘You have a play in it—write it for me!’ *Maskarade* came out of this suggestion, with a television version first produced in 1973. I later collaborated with him in a staging of the play.”) Pantomime.
- Maskarade*, in *Mixed Company: Three Early Jamaican Plays*. Edited by Yvonne Brewster. Oberon Books, London, 2012. (Revised version of 1973 play first published in 1979). Pantomime.
- Maskarade*, post-performance discussion after its opening night performance at the Josephine Louis Theater at Northwestern University. February 8, 1992.
- A Miracle in Lime Lane*. JBC Radio, 23 Dec. 1959. Typescript. Wynter personal papers. Radio drama. (“A Nativity Play in a Jamaican setting... Suggested by the [Shearmen and Tailors] Coventry [Cycle] Miracle Play”).
- “Moritat for a Lost Leader.” *Jamaica Journal*, vol. 3, no. 4, Dec. 1969, pp. 2-6. Poem.

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- “Natives in a New World: The African Transformation in the Americas.” Prepared for a Schomburg exhibit catalog, 1991. Unpublished.
- “The Necessary Background: Reflections on West Indian Writing and Criticism.” *Critics on Caribbean Literature: Readings in Literary Criticism*. Edited by Edward Baugh. New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1978, pp. 19-23. (Reprint of “We Must Learn to Sit Down Together and Talk about a Little Culture.”)
- “Négritude to Africanity: Strategies of the Text in Wole Soyinka’s *Myth, Literature and the African World*.” Presentation for the *Conference on African Literature*. Hosted by the Berkeley-Stanford Joint Center for African Studies. March 13–14, 1987.
- “New Intellectual Frontiers and the Afro-American Experience.” University Seminar. Stanford University. March 2, 1978.
- “A New Model as a ‘Demonic Model: Representation, the Color Line, and the Sociogenic Principle.’” Presentation for *A New Model for American Studies: Using Black, Ethnic and Feminist Studies to Integrate the Sciences and Humanities*. Hosted by the American Studies Department, Tufts University, held at the High Mowing School in Wilton, New Hampshire. June 9–12, 1988.
- “The New Model as a ‘Demonic Model’: Representation, the Color Line, and the Sociogenic Principle.” Rewritten version of presentation for conference at Tufts University, 1988. Was to be published in collection of conference papers to be edited by Saul Slapikoff. Unpublished.
- “A New Paradigm in Issues of Race of Prejudice.” Presentation to *Poverty and Prejudice Seminar*. Hosted by EDGE (The Ethics of Development in a Global Environment). May 14, 1997.
- “A New Science of the Human? A View Towards Curriculum Development.” Faculty seminar, San Diego State University. January 18–23, 1988.
- “New Seville and the Conversion Experience of Bartolomé de las Casas.” *Jamaica Journal*, vol. 17, nos. 2 & 3, May/Aug. 1984, pp. 25-32 & 46-55.
- New Seville, Major Dates 1509–1536, with an Aftermath, 1537–1635*. A monograph published by the Jamaica National Trust Commission, Kingston, Jamaica, June, 1984.
- New Seville, 1509–1536: Major Facts, Major Questions*. Kingston: Jamaica National Heritage Trust, 1984.
- “Nigger Minstrel/Nigger Monster, Noble Savage/Indio Bruto: Western Humanism, Plantation America, and the Role of the Stereotype.” Lecture. University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. March 21, 1973.
- “No Humans Involved: An Open Letter to My Colleagues.” *Aesthetics, Vision, and Urban America*, a special issue of *Voices of the African Diaspora*, vol. 8, no. 2, Fall 1992, pp. 13-16. (The CAAS Research Review, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor.)
- “No Humans Involved?: An Open Letter to My Colleagues.” *Forum NHI: Knowledge for the 21st Century*, vol. 1, no. 1, Fall 1994, pp. 42-73. (Expanded version of 1992 article in *Voices of the African Diaspora*.) ✕
- “The Novel and Critical Theory in the First World.” Lilly Program for faculty renewal summer program, international and comparative programs, Stanford University. August 2–12, 1976.
- “Novel and History, Plot and Plantation.” *Savacou*, no. 5, June 1971, pp. 95-102. ✕
- “The Novel and History: The Plantation and the Plot.” Presentation for the *Conference of the Association for Commonwealth Literature and Language Studies (ACLALS)*. University of the West Indies, Mona, Jamaica, Jan. 2-9, 1971. ✕ January 8, 1971.
- “The Novel in First/Third World Literature: A Comparative Approach.” Presentation for the *Interdisciplinary Paradigms of North/South Global Relations* conference. UCLA Conference Center, Lake Arrowhead. October 28-30, 1977. October 29, 1977.
- The Novel in the Third World*. Was to be published by The Third Press: Joseph Okpaku Publishing Company. 1972. Unpublished.
- On Cultural Selection: Essays Towards a Unifying Idea for Black Studies*. Unpublished.

- “On Disenchanted Discourse: ‘Minority’ Literary Criticism and Beyond.” *The Nature and Context of Minority Discourse II*, edited by Abdul R. JanMohamed and David Lloyd, special conference issue of *Cultural Critique*, no. 7, Autumn 1987, pp. 207-44. (Department of English, University of Minnesota.) Reprinted in *The Nature and Context of Minority Discourse*, edited by Abdul R. JanMohamed and David Lloyd. New York: Oxford UP, 1991, pp. 432-69.
- “On Disenchanted Discourse: Minority Literary Criticism and Beyond.” Presentation for *The Nature and Context of Minority Discourse*. Hosted by the Department of English. University of California, Berkeley. May 23-26, 1986. May 26, 1986.
- “On How We Mistook the Map for the Territory and Re-Imprisoned Ourselves in Our Unbearable Wrongness of Being, of *Desêtre*. Black Studies Toward the Human Project.” *Not Only the Master’s Tools: African-American Studies in Theory and Practice*. Edited by Lewis R. Gordon and Jane Anna Gordon. Boulder: Paradigm Publishers, 2006, pp. 107-69. ✕
- “On Post-Colonial Theory and the ‘Way We Natives Think’: Towards Césaire’s Science of the Word.” Presentation at *On the Subject of the Post-Colonial and the African Caribbean Diaspora* workshop, convened by Professor Robert Hill, Center for Modern and Contemporary Studies. University of California, Los Angeles. April 4, 1997.
- “On Teaching Literature to an Ethnically Diverse School Population.” Discussion hosted by the *Herald* organization of the San Francisco Unified School District. January 10, 1990.
- “On the Death of Our Prime Minister.” *The Sunday Gleaner*, Kingston, Jamaica, 30 Apr.-14 May 1967, p. 4. Poem.
- “On the Relativity, Nature-Culture Hybridity and Auto-Institutedness of Our Genre(s) of Being-Human: Towards the Transculturality of a Caribbean/New World Matrix.” Distinguished Lecture, Caribbean Cultural Studies Institute, Faculty of Humanities. The University of the West Indies. Seminar series November 10-26, 2002.
- “One Love—Rhetoric or Reality?—Aspects of Afro-Jamaicanism.” *Caribbean Studies*, vol. 12, no. 3, Oct. 1972, pp. 64-97. (University of Puerto Rico.)
- “The Origin of the Americas: the Implications of the Conversion Experience of Bartolomé de las Casas. OP.” Talk for the Sunday Morning *Faith Exploration Series*. Hosted by St. Thomas Aquinas Parish, the Catholic Community of Palo Alto and Stanford. 1984
- The Outsider as Hero: The “Negro as Hero” in the Spanish Golden Age Comedia*. Unpublished.
- “Paramour.” *Caribbean Voices*, produced by Ulric Cross, BBC Radio, 25 Nov. 1956. Short story.
- Poems from the Lost Poems File*. Unpublished.
- “The Plantation Novel: From the Melodrama of Cecilia Valdes to the Magical Realism of *El reino de este mundo*.” c1973. Was to be published in *Blacks in Hispanic Literature: Critical Essays*. Unpublished.
- “The Polemic Over 1492: The Missing Factor of the Motif of Evangelization.” Presentation at “Evangelization in the Americas: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives” Symposium, *Quincentennial Institute, Columbus and After: Encounter, Conflict, Challenge*. Santa Clara University. Oct. 1992. October 9, 1992.
- “Politics and Ideology in Recent Latin American History.” Lecture for university seminar. Stanford University. May 6, 1977.
- “The Politics is the Aesthetic: Pseudo Populism in Caribbean Fiction.” Presentation for the *Rompiendo Barreras: Escritoras del Caribe* conference. University of Puerto Rico, Oct. 5-7, 1979. October 7, 1979.
- “The Politics of Literature in the Caribbean.” Lecture for *Black Liberation at Home and Abroad*. Stanford University. February 16, 1977.
- “The Pope Must Have Been Drunk and the King of Castile a Madman’: Culture as Actuality, and the Caribbean Rethinking ‘Modernity.’” Presentation on the panel “Cultural History in the Americas” for the Annual Conference of the Canadian Association of Latin American and Caribbean Studies (CALACS), *Culture and Development: Rethinking Modernity*. Carleton University, Ottawa. Oct. 21-24, 1993.
- “The Pope Must Have Been Drunk, The King of Castile a Madman’: Culture as Actuality and the Caribbean Rethinking of ‘Modernity.’” *Reordering of Culture: Latin America, the Caribbean and Canada in the Hood*. Edited by Alvina Ruprecht and Cecilia Taiana. Ottawa: Carleton UP, 1995, pp. 17-42.
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- “Poverty, Joblessness, the Black Diaspora and the Institution of Knowledge.” Presentation for Malcolm X Week on the theme “To Marry Our Thought to the Plight of the Poor and Jobless: By Any Means Necessary.” Sponsored by the Black Student Union, Stanford University. May 20, 1993.
- “Poverty, Joblessness, the Black Diaspora and the Institution of Knowledge.” Presentation at *Malcolm X Week*, Stanford University. May 20, 1993
- “Pre-Feasibility Study on the Development of a Centre for New World Studies at New Seville, Jamaica, A.” Report with respect to establishment of a Research Institute prepared for the Inter-American Development Bank and the Government of Jamaica after working for a year (1983–84) as a full-time consultant on the historical and cultural studies aspects of the restoration of a town, New Seville (first founded by Columbus San Diego, in 1509, in Jamaica), as a part of the OAS commemoration projects of the Quincentennial of 1492. On the basis of a new interpretation of 1492, which linked Columbus’s voyage to the rise of the natural sciences, it was proposed that the new Institute spearhead the development of a new science of the human or human systems. August 31, 1984
- “Project Sevilla la Nueva. Report on Research Mission to Spain (Madrid, Sevilla, Granada). Consultant to the government of Jamaica and a United Nations special agency with respect to the preliminary aspects of the excavation and restoration of the Sevilla–Los Angeles Nueva complex in Jamaica. Prepared a 550-page typewritten report on the research mission to Spain’s historical archives of the Indies. August–October, 1981
- “*ProudFlesh* Inter/Views Sylvia Wynter.” By Greg Thomas. *ProudFlesh: A New Afrikan Journal of Culture, Politics & Consciousness*, vol. 4, 2006. Reprinted as “Yours in the Intellectual Struggle.” *The Caribbean Woman Writer as Scholar: Creating, Imagining, Theorizing*. Edited by Keshia N. Abrams, Coconut Creek, FL: Caribbean Studies, 2009, pp. 31-70.
- “Race and Our Biocentric Belief System: An Interview with Sylvia Wynter.” By Joyce King. *Black Education: A Transformative Research and Action Agenda for the New Century*. Edited by Joyce E. King. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 2005, pp. 361-6.
- “Race and Revolution in Caribbean Literature.” Presentation for the *Caribbean Unity Conference*. Howard University. April, 1974.
- “Race and Revolution in Hispanic America.” Lecture. University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. April 10, 1973.
- “Race and Revolution in the Hispanic Literature of Spain and the Americas.” Presentation for *Puerto Rico and the Caribbean: Political Alternatives* Conference. Queens College, City University of New York. April 13–15, 1974.
- “Race and the Metaphor of the Natural in the Literature of the Americas.” Talk for the series *Images in Black and White*. Hosted by the American Studies Program in collaboration with the Afro-American Studies Program. University of Chapel Hill, North Carolina. March, 1981.
- “Race as a Cultural System.” Afro-American Studies Conference. Stanford University. Seminar series, March, 1994.
- “Race Riots: Sylvia Carew Answers James Harrison, M.P.” on *Right to Reply*, Associated Television (ATV), Britain. September 1, 1958
- “Race, Sex, and Class: Elements of Their Fact and Fiction.” Discussion for *Women, Culture, and Theory: Bread and Roses and a Critical Perspective* Conference, University of California, Irvine. April 6-8, 1979. April 7, 1979.
- “Racialism Is a Non-Party Issue.” *The Daily Gleaner*, Kingston, Jamaica, 20 Jul. 1959, p. 10.
- “Rastafarians in Jamaica: Religious Community and Political Action, a discussion of Millenarian Movements and Religions of the Oppressed.” Lecture. University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. March 14, 1973.
- “The Re-Enchantment of Humanism: An Interview with Sylvia Wynter.” By David Scott. *Small Axe*, vol. 8, Sept. 2000, pp. 119-207.
- “Rediscovering 1492: A Perspective from the Black Americas.” Presentation for the *Quincentenary Series*. Hosted by the Center for Latin American Studies. University of Florida, Gainesville. November 12, 1992.

- “Regions Caesar Never Knew: Beyond Disciplines and the Predictability of Paradigms.” Presentation at the *Conference on Black Studies Curriculum Development*. Hosted by the Institute of the Black World, Atlanta, Georgia. July, 1982.
- “Rethinking 1492: Towards a Human View.” Program for Faculty Renewal Follow-up Workshops. Stanford University. Two-day seminar. June 26–28, 1992.
- “Rethinking Aesthetics: Notes Towards a Deciphering Practice.” *Ex-iles: Essays on Caribbean Cinema*. Edited by Mbye Cham. Trenton: Africa World Press, 1992, pp. 237-79.
- “Rethinking Origins/ Knowledges/The Achievement Gap: Black Education After ‘Man.’” American Educational Research Association Working Colloquium, Commission on Research in Black Education. Seminar series June 30–July 2, 2000.
- “Return of the Native.” West Indian Literature Exposition Guest Speaker, Kingston, Jamaica. September 14, 1962
- “Reviewing the Rhygin Version.” *The Daily Gleaner*, 15 Aug. 1980, p. 5, 23.
- “Revolution and Change in the Third World.” Lecture. University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. April 3, 1973.
- “Richard Wright Revisited.” Presentation for the *Richard Wright Series*. University of Massachusetts. November, 1974.
- Rockstone Anancy: A Magical Morality*, with Alex Gradussov. Various typescripts. 1970. Wynter personal papers. Pantomime.
- Rody and Rena: The Sea Star Readers*, five children’s stories for use in Jamaican schools written in collaboration with Annemarie Wint. Kingston: Jamaica Publishing House/Macmillan’s, 1975. Children’s books.
- “The Role of the Theatre, Film and Television in Emergent Countries.” International P.E.N., British Guiana (present-day Guyana), 1962.
- “Royal Court Forum on West Indian Culture,” with Barry Reckord, Jan Carew, and Stuart Hall. Royal Court Theatre, English Stage Society, London, England. June 5, 1958
- “Sambos and Minstrels.” *Social Text*, vol. 1, Winter 1979, pp. 149-56.
- “Scarlet Poinsettias.” *Home Service*, produced by Leonie Cohn, BBC Radio, 16 April 1958, 9:10 PM GMT. Commentary.
- Sbb... It’s a Wedding*. Produced at Town Hall, Spanish Town, January 1963; Ward Theatre, Kingston, Jamaica, February 1963. Unpublished.
- “Should We Celebrate or Mourn on Columbus Day.” Presentation for “Discovery, Exploration, and Migration” symposium. Hosted by Conjunctions in Western Culture, Western Culture Subcommittee on Gender and Minorities. Stanford University. February 19, 1986.
- “The Significance of Césaire’s ‘King Christophe’.” Presentation for the *Black Theater Workshop Seminar* on “Césaire’s King Christophe in the Context of the Négritude Literary Movement.” University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. April 12, 1973.
- “The Social Implications of Carnival—Mardi Gras and Jonkonnu.” Discussion with Errol Hill for the *Stanford Drama Forum*, Sandra Richards moderating. Hosted by the Drama Department and Black Performing Arts. Stanford University. April 6, 1983.
- “Social Laboratory Learning Center, Educational Testing Services, Princeton, New Jersey. Talk on the implications for educational testing. March, 1981.
- Soundings*, radio interview on the series put out by the National Humanities Research Center, Chapel Hill, North Carolina. July 25, 1981
- “Spaces Of Otherness from Sky Watching to IQ Measuring, God To Gene: On the Paradox of Western Civilization’s Self-Thinking.” *Civilizational Thinking*, University of California, Santa Cruz. Presentation January 22-23, 1998
- “Spaces of Otherness’ from Skywatching to IQ Measuring, God to Gene: On the Paradox of Western Civilizations Self-Thinking.” Presentation at the *Conference on Civilizational Thinking*. Hosted by the Center for Cultural Studies. Oakes College, University of California, Santa Cruz. Jan. 22-23, 1999. January 23, 1999.
- “Speaking and Unspeaking ‘Man’: The Americas and the Second Poetics of the *Propter Nos*,” for *The Poetics of the Americas* of the Summer Institute for College Teachers. Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge. Two-day lecture. June

- 29-30, 1994.
- “The Spinster.” Adaptation of García Lorca’s *Doña Rosita la soltera*. Typescript. c1968. Unpublished.
- “The Strange Presences.” *Vogue* [London], vol. 114, June 1958, pp. 95-96, 145. Essay.
- “Sylvia Wynter: An Oral History.” By Natalie Marine-Street. Stanford Historical Society, Nov. 2017. 103 min. Audio.
- Sylvia Wynter: On Being Human as Praxis*. Edited by Katherine McKittrick. Durham: Duke, 2014.
- “*That the Future May Finally Commence*: Essays for Our Ecumenically Human’s Sake, 1984–2015. Edited by a collective of former students and colleagues (the Sylvia Wynter Editorial Collective), to be published by Wesleyan University Press.
- “Theory Onstage: The Creative Process behind *Maskerade*.” Panel presentation for discussion session. Hosted by the Theatre and Interpretation Center. Northwestern University. February 7, 1992.
- “Thinking in/about Our Disciplines: Towards Epistemic Literacy.” Interdisciplinary faculty workshop, Wooster College, Ohio. May 18, 1988.
- “The Third Event: Africa, Laws of Culture, and the Invention of the Human.” Inaugural lecture of the lecture series hosted by the Campus Diversity Advisory Committee Forum. University of New Orleans. October 2, 1996.
- “To ‘Open/Restructure’ the Social Sciences? Or a New Science of the Human, of the Word? To Reenchant the World? Or to Disenchant ‘Man?’” Presentation at *Which Sciences for Tomorrow? A Symposium on the Gulbenkian Commission Report: Open the Social Sciences*. Hosted by the Department of French and Italian. Stanford University. June 2-3, 1996.
- “To End Our Patience with Injustice: Race, Rodney King, The Ecology and the Rewriting of Knowledge.” Keynote address for the Martin Luther King, Jr. Birthday Commemoration Conference, *Changing Times, Changing Crimes: Will Violence and Injustice Ever Cease?* Stanford University. January 14, 1993.
- “To Get Our Own Joint, To Reconfigure the Isms: Interpretive Cannibalisms and the Law of the Code.” Respondent presentation on panel “White Reading/Black Writing” at *Psychoanalysis in African-American Contexts: Feminist Reconfigurations* conference. Hosted by Oakes College Learning Center, University of California, Santa Cruz. October 25, 1992
- “To Restore the Castle Where It Belonged [Belongs]: The ‘Word of Man’ and the Epochal Threshold of Lamming’s *In the Castle of My Skin*.” Presentation for seminar “The Sovereignty of the Imagination: The Works of George Lamming,” hosted by the Center for Caribbean Thought of the University of the West Indies and the Africana Studies Department, Brown University. Seminar series June 5-7, 2003.
- “To Rethink ‘Pedagogy’: On Caribbean Studies, After ‘Man.’” Presentation at *Caribbean Crossroads: An Interdisciplinary Conference on the Emergence of a Field*. Hosted by the Department of Spanish. New York University. May 2-3, 1997
- “To Unrobe the *Egungun* of the West: Africa, Its Intellectual Traditions and the Second Emergence.” Presentation for session “Linking African Intellectual Traditions,” for the *African Dispersion and Cultural Continuity* Symposium at the National Black Arts Festival, Atlanta, Georgia. August 3-5, 1994. August 4, 1994
- “Towards a Black Theoretic Frame: The Insignia of Doctrine, the Politics of Identity.” Presentation for the *Seminar Series of the Institute for the Advanced Study of Black Family Life and Culture*, Oakland, California. August 27, 1982.
- “Towards a Unity of Vision for the Caribbean: On Reinterpreting 1492.” Presentation at the *Conference of Women Writers*. University of the West Indies, St. Augustine, Trinidad. Apr. 24-27, 1990. April 27, 1990.
- “Towards an Authentic Unity: Some Parallelisms in the Popular Cultures of the Caribbean.” Presentation for the *Caribbean Unity Conference*. Howard University, Apr. 21-23, 1972. April 22, 1972.
- “Towards New Intellectual Frontiers.” Talk given to the Fresno branch of the Stanford Alumni Association. October, 1985
- “Towards the Discontinuity of a Sex/Race/Class/Culture Criticism.” Presentation for the *Marxist-Feminism: Sex, Race and Class* forum. Modern Language Association Conference, Los Angeles. December 28, 1982

- “Towards the Sociogenic Principle: Fanon, Identity, the Puzzle of Conscious Experience, and What It Is Like to Be ‘Black.’” *National Identities and Sociopolitical Changes in Latin America*. Edited by Mercedes F. Durán-Cogan and Antonio Gómez-Moriana. New York: Routledge, 2001, pp. 30-66. ¶
- Tras el ‘Hombre,’ su última palabra: Sobre el posmodernismo, les damnés y el principio sociogénico.*” Translated by Ignacio Corona-Gutierrez. *La teoría política en la encrucijada descolonial. Nuevo Texto Crítico*, edited by Alejandro De Oto, año 4, no. 7, primer semestre de 1991, pp. 43-83. Reprinted in *La teoría política en la encrucijada descolonial. Nuevo Texto Crítico*, edited by Alejandro De Oto, compiled by Walter Mignolo. Buenos Aires: Ediciones del Signo y Globalization and the Humanities Project. Durham: Duke UP, 2009, pp. 51-124.
- “Two Reservations and ‘Race’ as a ‘Cultural Question’ The: After ‘Man,’ Towards the Human.” Presentation at *The Two Reservations: Western Thought, the Color Line, and The Crisis of the Negro Intellectual, Revisited* symposium. Sponsored by the Program in African and Afro-American Studies. Stanford University. Mar. 3-5, 1994.
- Uncle Tom Revisited: Toward a Genealogy of the “Negro” as Stock Character in Western Literature*. Unpublished.
- “The Uncreated Features or Its Face’: Gordon Parks’s Choice of Weapons from a Postmodern Perspective.” Presentation for Symposium “The Life and Times of Gordon Parks,” organized by the Oakland Museum, as part of the touring exhibit, “Half Past Autumn: The Art of Gordon Parks,” organized by the Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington DC. June 30, 2001.
- “Under the Sun.” *Third Programme*, produced by Robin Midgely, BBC Radio, 5 Oct. 1958. Radio drama.
- Under the Sun*. Typescript for stage play. Date unknown. Unpublished.
- UNESCO Roundtable Conference on Technology and the Arts. Participant. Co-sponsor: Johnson Foundation at Wingspread, Racine, Wisconsin. August 25–27, 1986
- “The University of Hunger” with Jan Carew. *Third Programme*, produced by Charles Lefeaux, BBC Radio, 17 Aug. 1960. Radio drama, later adapted for television as *The Big Pride*.
- “Unparalleled Catastrophe for Our Species? Or, to Give Humanness a Different Future: Conversations.” With Katherine McKittrick. *Sylvia Wynter: On Being Human as Praxis*. Duke UP, 2015, pp. 8-89.
- “Unsettling the Coloniality of Being/ Power/ Truth/ Freedom: Towards the Human After Man Its Overrepresentation – An Argument.” Special issue, edited by Greg Thomas. *CR: The New Centennial Review*, vol. 3, no. 3, Fall 2003, pp. 257-337. ¶
- “Unsettling The Coloniality of Being/Power/Truth/Freedom: Towards the Human, After Man, Its Over-Representation.” Keynote address at annual Coloniality Working Group Conference, *Unsettling the Coloniality of Power*. SUNY, Binghamton. Seminar series Apr. 27-29, 2000.
- “Unspeaking/Unfeeling ‘Man.’ To Rethink the Challenge of the Black Aesthetic.” Presentation for the *Black Avant-Garde and the Black Aesthetic Conference*. Hosted by the Committee on Black Performing Arts. Stanford University. April 25, 1992.
- “The Utilization of Black Cultural Resources in the Struggle for Liberation.” Trotter House Discussion. University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. March 21, 1973.
- “Utopia from the Semi-Periphery, A: Spain, Modernization, and the Enlightenment.” *Science Fiction Studies*, vol. 6, no. 1, Mar. 1979, pp. 100-7.
- “We are Dying Under the Weight of the Evidence: Africa and the Decolonization of the Human Mind.” Presentation for the *Colloquium on African Literature*. Hosted by the Berkeley-Stanford Joint Center for African Studies. February 26–27, 1988.
- “We Know Where We Are From’: Politics of Black Culture from Myal to Marley.” Presentation for a joint conference of the African Studies Association and the Latin American Studies Association at the University of Houston. November, 1977.
- “We Must Learn to Sit Down Together and Talk about a Little Culture: Reflections on West Indian Writing and Criticism,” a two-part article in *Jamaica Journal*, 1968-1969. ¶
- We Must Learn to Sit Down Together and Talk About a Little Culture: Decolonizing Essays 1967–1984*. Edited and with an introduction by Demetrius Eudell. Peepal Tree Press, UK, 2022.1

- “What Will Be the Cure?: A Conversation with Sylvia Wynter.” By Bedour Alagraa. *Offshoot*, Jan. 2021. Conducted Dec. 2020.
- “Who Are We? Black Identity, the Carnival Complex, and Africa in the Americas,” written for *Working Paper Series* hosted by the Program in African Studies and Department of Theatre, Northwestern University. c1992. Unpublished.
- “Who Are We? Black Identity, the Carnival Complex, and Africa in the Americas.” Invited address for weeklong series sponsored (in relation to the production of my play *Maskerade*) by CIRA, Theatre and African-American Studies Department, the Program in African Studies, and the College of Arts and Sciences. Northwestern University. February 6, 1992.
- “Who is Speaking, Multiculturally Speaking: To Reform Knowledge? Or to Rewrite It?” Presentation at the *Roundtable on Multiculturalism*. Hosted by the African Studies Center. Brown University. April 22, 1991.
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Appendix F

Future Research Possible Sources

The following list of archival possibilities and keyword possibilities is by no means exhaustive. These are merely associations I encountered in my research that I noted for possible follow up. Clearly the richest source of material will be hundreds of boxes of correspondence, typescripts, articles, manuscripts, books, photos, recordings, and more held at the John Hope Franklin Research Center for African and African American History & Culture of Duke University, which should be open by 2026.

Institutional

African Research Center at Cornell University (they were supposed to publish her monograph *The Insignia of Doctrine, the Politics of Identity: Notes Towards a Nègre Intellectual Reformation*)

Alma Jordan Library, UWI–St. Augustine, Trinidad and Tobago, Anne Walmsley special collection may have some material, because Walmsley was Wynter’s liaison at Longman. (Walmsley donated her papers there 2016–2017).

BBC Written Archives Centre holds business correspondence, editorial notes, etc., in addition to the

Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, which might have recordings, since Michael Eldridge found one of Carew’s radio dramas, *The Legend of Nameless Mountain*, there and *CBC Times*, Vol. 12, No. 52, 20–26 Dec. 1959 has a write-up of the play and the intention of a Canadian producer to produce their own version there.

English Stage Company at the Royal Court Theatre papers at the Harry Ransome Center, UT–Austin

Guyanese drama

Guyanese literature

Guyanese radio

Institute of the Black World (IBW) papers, Schomburg and elsewhere

Jamaican Broadcasting Corporation (JBC)

Jamaican radio

National Archives of Guyana (she did radio and tv work there)

National Humanities Center (NHC) (Wynter was a fellow 1980–1981)

National Sound Archive, British Library, London (hereafter NSA), Stephen Bourne Interview Collection.

Stanford University special collections

Theatre Museum Archive (hereafter TMA), London, Blackgrounds oral history project on the experience of Black Theatre and Black Theatre Professionals

Third Press, founded by Joseph Okpaku

UCSD institutional collections; Literature and Society major; Mandeville Special Collections

University of Michigan institutional collections

University of the West Indies–Mona institutional collections

Personal

Abrahams, Peter

Braithwaite, Kamau (Edward) (friend and colleague)

Carew, Jan Rynveld, personal papers (still being processed, but some open to researchers).
University of Louisville, University Libraries, Collection Identifier 2020_052, dates 1953–2010.

Clarke, John Henrik

Cruse, Harold (friend and colleague)

Cunelli, Georges papers? According to a 17 Oct. 1957 *Gleaner* article, Wynter studied under him at the time. (He was the voice teacher for James Joyces's son and David Whitfield, Danish opera tenor Peder Severin, Danish contralto Else Brems. Not clear if he coached Robeson, but Robeson wrote a preface for his book.) Indications are that he specialized in vocal restoration.

D'Costa, Jean (Creary) from UWI (friend and colleague)

Drake, St. Clair papers (1935–1990), NYPL Archives & Manuscripts (friend and colleague)

Franklin, John Hope (friend, NHC fellow 1980–1981)

Harding, Vincent papers (friend and colleague), Emory University

James, C. L. R. (friend)

Jameson, Frederick (friend and colleague)

Marcuse, Herbert (colleague)

Merriam, Stella E. and Joan Christiani, eds., *Commonwealth Caribbean Writers: A Bibliography*.
Georgetown: Guyana Public Library, 1970

Nettleford, Rex (colleague)

Sertima, Ivan Van

Spanos, William (friend and editor)

Strickland, Bill (colleague)

Taylor, Clyde (friend and colleague)

Williams, Sherley Anne papers (friend and colleague). Special Collections & Archives, UC San
Diego, Identifier MSS 0493.

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