Practicing Freedom With Care: The Development of Warrior-Caregiving in Contemporary Literature From the Americas.

Joanna Barszewska Marshall
Louisiana State University and Agricultural & Mechanical College

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PRACTICING FREEDOM WITH CARE:
THE DEVELOPMENT OF WARRIOR-CAREGIVING
IN CONTEMPORARY LITERATURE FROM THE AMERICAS

A Dissertation
Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Louisiana State University and
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in
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by
Joanna Barszewska Marshall
B.A., Regis College, 1969
M.A., Purdue University, 1971
M.A., Truman State University, 1990
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ABSTRACT

Taking my cue from Toni Morrison's *Playing in the Dark*, I read three contemporary Black writers in the Americas—George Lamming, Barbados; Michelle Cliff, Jamaica; and Jess Mowry, United States—for signs of a response that was ignored when prevailing conceptions of freedom were formulated in early America. Suggesting that the vision embodied in the name of one plantation, *Sans Souci*, characterized attempts to deal with the anxieties of a slaveholding free republic, I argue that these writers provide an alternative vision by attempting to reconcile the practices of freedom and care, and I engage their vision in dialogue with several theoretical discourses that currently inform the practice of freedom. In *In the Castle of My Skin* and *Natives of My Person*, Lamming moves toward a definition of freedom that encourages responsiveness and allows political agency by criticizing classical notions of independence and promoting notions of intersubjective and dynamic autonomy. Cliff's *Abeng* and *No Telephone to Heaven* and Mowry's *Way Past Cool* similarly critique notions of freedom associated with theories of moral development. Situating their work on a continuum with slave narratives that negotiated ideologies of domesticity, I argue that they contest assumptions that an ethic of care is naturally aligned with confinement and the private sphere. Care can function like an *abeng*, a tool that can be used for oppression or liberation. Cliff and Mowry pursue freedom and justice through a practice that I formulate as warrior-caregiving. Cliff retrieves this revolutionary practice for the relatively privileged from the model of Maroon warriors; Mowry encourages it among the least privileged by combining the models of the Little Rascals and the Black Panthers in an adolescent gang I describe, nonpejoratively, as "Buckwheat Panthers." I conclude that care must complement the practice of freedom for either homemaking or travelling to move beyond the master-slave dynamic. I combine Lugones’s concept of "world"-travelling with Lamming’s image of mobile homes to identify an
alternative mode of habitation and travel and then with the notion of privilege-cognizant scripts to
describe a practice that could replace the typical tourist's mode of carefree travel.
INTRODUCTION

PRACTICING FREEDOM WITH CARE:
THE DEVELOPMENT OF WARRIOR-CAREGIVING

In the summer of 1996 Escape magazine, Air Jamaica, and SuperClubs’ Breezes Runaway Bay sponsored a contest for a free trip to Jamaica. Their promotion promised that the winner and a companion could “go to Jamaica for a song,” “be chillin’ in August on slow-mo Jamaican time,” and “realize an immediate reduction in Di-Gel consumption.” I was tired and easily seduced. I began to picture myself entering and winning their sweepstakes. But the wording of one enticement made me pause: “You’ve been slaving all year,” they told me; “You need out, and we’ve got the escape hatch.” Slaving?

The idea that tourists who travel from the United States to Jamaica might imagine themselves in the discourse of slavery is unsettling. For, as one character in Michelle Cliff’s No Telephone to Heaven observes, the tourist hotels in the novel with names like Paradise Plantation and Sans Souci, at places with names like Runaway Bay, indicate that “we have taken the master’s past as our own” (127). The “we” to whom the character refers are the Jamaicans themselves, but the criticism applies equally well, I think, to those of us who visit, or dream of escaping to, these places. If we had a sense of irony or history, that character in Cliff’s novel suggests, we might call such hideaways for the rich The Triangle Trade; or, if we were really imaginative, The Middle Passage (123). I remember that Runaway Bay was the site of a slave plantation owned and lost by the ancestors of Cliff’s protagonist, Clare Savage. As developers prepare to construct tourist homes in the image of plantation homes, Clare notices the traces of slave cabins etched in the earth (Abeng 23-27). I wonder now about the origins of that name, Runaway Bay. Whose escape does it memorialize? The captives who ran from the slave ships when they docked? Or their would-be masters, the men who dreamed of escaping a life of limitation and hard work in Europe for a life of...
opportunity and leisure in the New World? And the discourse of escape and carefree living, with which travelers might imagine one of the principal means to and appeals of "living freely," and which that 1996 promotion tied so casually to the discourse of slavery, begins to seem less innocent than its casual use would imply.

Sans Souci. Now a tourist resort. Once a slave plantation. Both places promise a Garden-of-Eden-like appeal—for certain inhabitants. Literally, sans souci means free from worry, or anxiety: carefree. But also, it means free from responsibility, which suggests, implicitly, free from the ability or need to respond to others. In a basic sense, the carefree life is premised on a freedom from the need to care for or about others. Those who are carefree are free from caring (about others) and free of care (worry) precisely because those others, themselves uncared for, are made not only to take care of but also to care about those who wish to be carefree. If the carefree mentality was reprehensible in the context of the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century practice of freedom and slavery, it may also be suspect in the context of the twentieth-century imagination of freedom that presumes to exist beyond slavery. For the twentieth-century Eden, in Jamaica for example, is maintained by the labor of darker-skinned Jamaicans who enter the playgrounds of the rich, or of carefree travelers, only to serve. And the care (worry, anxiety) with which these laborers support the carefree suggests, as Cliff notes in her first novel, that the freedom "which followed on abolition," simply turned "slavery-in-fact, which was distasteful" to many, "into veiled slavery, the model of the rest of the western world" (Abeng 28).

The etymology of the French term, sans souci, suggests that the freedom from anxiety enjoyed by the carefree may be both illusory and even an attempt to conceal underlying anxiety. To be carefree, according to the etymologically related synonym, "insouciant," is to be blithely unconcerned. To be concerned, according to the etymologically related antonym, "solicitous," is not simply to pay attention to the needs or wishes of others, but to pay close attention. Such close attention is unsound; it implies that the concern for the welfare of others verges on anxiety. Yet the
desire to be free from anxiety acknowledges, by definition, that reasons for anxiety exist. And the fact that solicitude, the strongest term for attention to the welfare of others, is understood not as altruistic or beneficial concern but as excessive anxiety, suggests that the anxieties being avoided and rationalized as excessive relate to a reluctance to acknowledge, in any meaningful way, disparities in the welfare of many. Ethical and political demands for attention to the welfare of the many can then be characterized as an unsound response to anxiety rather than a sound concern for justice.

Thus far, I have been speaking of "freedom" indirectly, and only in terms of a particular "image" of freedom. But that image of freedom as carefree, and the escape from anxiety and responsibility that is bound up with that image, have consequences, I believe, for the ways we constitute and practice freedom politically, socially, economically, and interpersonally. When Toni Morrison reads the imagery of early American literature, in Playing in the Dark, she argues that the imagination of freedom is inscribed with fears and anxieties that the authors attempt to explore and conquer. While those anxieties relate to such potentially race-, sex-, and class-free, and power-neutral issues as the fear of "boundarylessness" or "loneliness," they also, she suggests, have much to do with the fact that the freedom which the early nation sought had to coexist with an "unsettled and unsettling" Black population (6, 36-37). The idea of the "carefree," I suggest, is both similarly bound to anxieties associated with "unsettled and unsettling" populations and also hobbled in its attempt to conquer those anxieties imaginatively. And "freedom" itself, as imagined and socially constructed in the west, is both unsettled and unsettling.

Unsettled, because the definition of "true" freedom, and the conditions necessary for it, have been contested from the beginning. Competing political factions, religious factions, economic factions, and philosophies have all claimed to promote freedom, even as they acted at cross purposes. The concept of freedom, Eric Foner argues, is unsettled, or "problematic," not simply because it is ambiguous, but also because it is formed on a "terrain of struggle" (“Meaning of
And these conflicting appeals are each plausible because, as Orlando Patterson observes in his award-winning analysis of how and why freedom was constructed as the supreme value of the Western world (Freedom in the Making of Western Culture), freedom is and always has been a tension-filled value.

Unsettling, because, in the democratic political system whose history is so closely aligned with that of freedom, the "worst violence is mixed in with the very spirit of [its] promise" (Derrida, The Other Heading 6). The problem with freedom is not simply that wars, for example, are fought in the name of freedom, or that totalitarian regimes are established in the name of freedom from other states, or that some people are exploited in the name of freedom for others. Even more unsettling is the possibility that such activities are not simply abuses of freedom, but practices of freedom as we have come to imagine and construct it socially. For freedom, presumably one of the west’s most humanitarian values, was paradoxically founded upon and often remains closely tied to its most inhumane practices. Like many pairs of qualities that have been developed as dichotomies in the intellectual and social history of the West, the idea of freedom has long been conceived in contrast to a polar opposite, the idea of slavery. As Patterson strikingly observes in an Oxford Amnesty lecture, Locke’s "celebrated definition of freedom in the second treatise on government . . . was written under the chapter entitled not ‘Of Freedom,’ as one might have expected, but, as this wisest, if most contradictory, of dead white English males correctly figured, under the title ‘Of Slavery’" ("Freedom, Slavery, Rights" 178). And, as Patterson more controversially, but convincingly, argues in his historical sociology, not just the idea but the very practice of freedom was generated from the practice of slavery.

It is possible that both the virtues and the crimes of freedom have their source in that tragic etiology of the value. Perhaps freedom is such an unsettled value, in part, because it is unsettling. Many of the contests over the definition of freedom, Eric Foner and other historians demonstrate, were shaped conceptually by various attempts to reconcile or transcend the oppositional, and thus
interconnected, relationship between freedom and slavery, and practically, by physical struggle among the various classes of slave and free peoples. And it is possible that the desire to avoid anxiety, which informs the notion of freedom as carefree, may also be related to a desire to avoid such unsettling contradictions in the history and practice of freedom even now.

***

Challenging the image of “freedom without anxiety,” or freedom without care, may be vital for reconceiving the social and political practices of freedom. The etymology for the concept of freedom in the English language makes room for an image of freedom that focuses on an alternate root which describes free relations as caring relations. In *Keywords*, Raymond Williams notes that the English concepts of freedom derive from two roots: one Latin, *liber*, and one Teutonic, *freo*. Because the meaning of both roots depend on an opposing term that refers to slaves or those outside the household, Williams observes, the “root sense of the *free* words is *dear*, as applied within the *free* household or family” (182). This notion of the *free* household has survived in successive ideas about the freehold, such as free enterprise. It has survived, that is, and even flourished, in those ideas which emphasize the sense in which these properties, activities, or relations are free from outside control. But the complementary notion of *free* people as those who are held dear, on the other hand, seems to have been muted. This notion seems counterintuitive today, even though the exclusions on which it is based—the denial of “free” status to those who are not held dear—have undergirded development in and of the free world.

The apparent incongruity between free people and people who are held dear may rest on yet another duality, one that assumes and attempts to enforce a split between so-called public and private spheres. As Nancy Hartsock argues in *Money, Sex, and Power*, the Greek construction of freedom relied on a split between freedom and necessity, which were associated, respectively, with the public and the private spheres. “Freedom” was a political matter that had meaning primarily in the public sphere of the polis, which was populated by (male) citizens who were equal. In this
duality, which was connected to the freedom-slavery pair, freedom's opposite was understood as "necessity," for example, as "necessary labor." And this necessary labor belonged to the private sphere of the household, whose relations, even its loving ones, were decidedly unequal (187). Even as the practice of necessary labor was excluded from, and deemed contrary to, the practices of freedom, that practice of necessary labor made the practice of freedom possible. For the person who could practice freedom was carefree because necessary labor was performed by those who, insofar as they labored necessarily, were not free. Since these practices that were divorced from freedom were associated with the household, even with those who might be held dear, it is possible that this conception, and construction, of a public-private split helped to divorce the practices of freedom from the practices of love, care, or caregiving.

The practice of many black slaves upon emancipation in the Americas, however, may recover some of that muted meaning in the understanding of free people. Black conceptions of freedom were often more expansive than those of white abolitionists. Because slavery was, in part, a condition of bondage precisely and paradoxically because slaves were denied the extended bonds of kinship and love, persons who escaped slavery and those who were emancipated sought to reconstruct family life and to become involved with a wider network of persons. The prevalence of Maroon settlements among fugitive slaves and their descendants in the "wilderness" of Jamaica, 1

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1 Foner notes, for example, that the "attempt to reconstruct family life by withdrawing women and children from plantation field labor" was a nearly universal response of West Indian blacks to emancipation, and that this response was strongly resisted by planters (Nothing But Freedom 19). Breen and Innes provide evidence not only that blacks who became free on Virginia's eastern shore during the middle years of the seventeenth century sought to acquire property in order to secure their freedom, but also that, unlike the white indentured servants who were transformed as small planters into aggressive, competitive, highly individualistic Virginians, black freemen consciously reached out to other blacks and formed a small community despite significant geographical impediments ("Myne Owne Ground"). Patterson observes that even persons captured in the non-Western world often desired "involvement with, and closer bondage to, a wider network of persons"; escaped slaves often sought the protective bondage of a kin-based group (Freedom 24, 44).
the United States, and the Americas generally, supports a vision of freedom made possible by and in, and even of freedom practiced as the construction of, community.

Patterson suggests that the desire for the bondage of a kin-based group explains why the non-Western world failed to establish "freedom" as a supreme ideal. Arguing that the "removal of restraint" or the "absence of impediments" in doing what one desires constitutes the "only meaningful sense" of the term, Patterson claims that referring to "membership and belonging as a kind of freedom" is an "abuse of language" (*Slavery and Social Death* 340-342; emphasis added). Admittedly, the desire for community, and the willingness to surrender some degree of autonomy for membership in, and perhaps even some degree of rule by, a group, diverges from the ideal of full autonomy that currently measures the ideal of freedom in the West; and total submission to external control, however protective and benevolent, is incompatible with freedom. But to dismiss the desire for community in an alternative vision of freedom, to deny the name of freedom to participation in such community, because this vision limits the primacy assigned to autonomy in standard conceptions of freedom, is to foreclose prematurely the possibilities for practicing freedom in varied ways. And it preempts a response to the challenge Patterson himself identifies when he considers the fact that there would have been no freedmen without slavery: "We arrive then at a strange and bewildering enigma: are we to esteem slavery for what it has wrought, or must we challenge our conception of freedom and the value we place upon it?" (342; emphasis added). It may be precisely to extricate conceptions of freedom from master-slave dynamics, to imagine a freedom conceived and practiced without masters and without slaves, that a challenge to prevailing conceptions of "meaningful" freedom is needed.

If the central feature of slavery—control or domination to the point of ownership by another—sets up an opposite notion of autonomy as the ideal of freedom, a second feature of slavery—the denial of kinship that Patterson characterizes as "social death"—suggests that an opposite notion of community and affiliation might also constitute an ideal of freedom. Slavery was a
"peculiar" domestic institution, in part, because its practices couldn't, as Hortense Spillers argues, sustain the "private realm, even though such practices were central to the 'home,'" to the very stuff of domesticity as planter-aristocrats envisioned it" ("Changing the Letter" 25). I would suggest that the desire for "dear" relations as a characteristic of and contribution to freedom challenges both the conception of freedom as escape from community and family and also the conceptions which seek to keep the features of freedom as a public, impersonal, and "political" activity distinct from private, engaged, and "non-political" relations.

Although notions of family or community and of love or caring relations are certainly not without dimensions of constraint and "unfree" practices, the desire of ex-slaves for community raises the possibility that free and unfree relations and practices are not as divorced as they might seem in such prevailing mental categories as those based on a public-private split. Attempts to reclaim and reorient notions of the free might seek, for example, to reorient the concept of freedom toward holding others dear without embracing the historically exclusionary basis of such care. I read in the literature of several contemporary writers from the Caribbean and the United States evidence of a struggle to reconcile practices of freedom with practices of care, of a struggle to articulate the two kinds of practices so that each supports and reinforces, or enables, the other. But their vision of a freedom practiced with care, and for care practiced as freedom, is introduced with another kind of care, a caution or concern that attempts at such reconciliation not be used, for example, to ignore systemic constraints on practices of freedom or such other expansions to the concept of freedom as autonomy and economic power.² The beneficial aspects of autonomy may be addressed by revisions to the concept of autonomy that do not place it in strict competition with care.

² I am calling attention to multiple meanings of "care," including one in which practices carried out with care may refer to practices carried out with a degree of caution. The American Heritage Dictionary, however, advises its readers not to confuse the antonym carefree with careless, or lack of caution. I would suggest, on the contrary, that the inattention of the carefree to the welfare of those who too often must care for them is indeed careless, because the sense of freedom enjoyed by these carefree individuals is based more on an incautious denial of anxiety, or refusal to admit that reasons for anxiety exist, than on any reduction of the grounds for anxiety.
and connection. The concern for systemic constraints on freedom may be addressed by a vision of care that emphasizes, rather than eliminates, the need for radical politics. The move toward the articulation of freedom and care is complicated, even inconsistent, and sometimes uneasy; even so, I would argue, it is strong and compelling.

Central to the vision I see developing in these novels, to the attempt at reconciling practices of freedom and care while recognizing the need for radical politics and allowing for other expansions to the concept of freedom, is a practice that I name warrior-caregiving. As I will explain in more detail below, a pantheon of warrior-caregivers in these novels undomesticates the practice of care, uncoupling it from practices that are tame, confined to the private sphere, and too frequently associated with conformity, limitation, and subservience. By the same token, these warrior-caregivers seek to couple the practice of revolt, even of armed insurrection, with the practice of care, and modify the extent to which such revolt is connected with excessive self-interest and independence and with a practice that too frequently reinstalls the freedom of the few without concern for the justice of the many. In these novels, warriors may be caregivers, and caregivers may themselves be warriors, but the hyphen that connects and separates the two is important. The hyphen is vital to their revolutionary attempt to practice freedom with care. It insists that we practice each in mind of the other without collapsing either into the other. But just as "hybridity," as Homi Bhabha discusses it, "is never simply a question of the admixture of pre-given identities or essences," a hybridized "practice" of warrior-caregiving suggests that neither activity retains any pre-given meaning in the fullness of their articulation ("DissemiNation" 314).

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In part, I view my work as both extending and modifying the project undertaken by Toni Morrison in *Playing in the Dark*, in which she argues that the formulations of freedom in the social imagination of the New World were connected to and even based on unacknowledged contradictions in the social practice of freedom—contradictions whose formative power have been eloquently
demonstrated by such historians of "American" freedom and slavery as Edmund Morgan and David Brion Davis. During the formative years of "America's" literature, Morrison argues, the young nation "distinguished itself by, and understood itself to be, pressing toward a future of freedom" and "a kind of human dignity" that it believed was unprecedented (33). But, Morrison continues, "[f]or a people who made much of their 'newness'—their potential, freedom, and innocence—it is striking how dour, how troubled, how frightened and haunted our early and founding literature truly is" (35). She suggests that early immigrants who, fleeing oppression and limitation, coveted freedom and possibility, also understandably feared the practice of freedom. The genre of romance, with its gothic understanding, allowed their writers to explore the "terror of human freedom" and to "conquer fear imaginatively" (36-37).

Race, Morrison insists, mattered much in constructing this freedom and in allaying its anxieties. Citing the work of Patterson, she notes that slavery, in the new world enterprise, highlighted, and may even have created, the concept of freedom (38). In a "nation of people who decided that their world view would combine agendas for individual freedom and mechanisms for devastating racial oppression," no romance that explored their anxieties could be free of "the power of blackness" (xiii, 37). The American imagination played upon the slave population, who were assumed to offer themselves up as "surrogate selves for meditation on problems of human freedom, its lure and its elusiveness" (37). And writers who took the "architecture of a new white man" as

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4 Morrison's analysis here complements my earlier suggestion that the anxiety being avoided in the desire for a carefree existence may be related to an unwillingness to acknowledge and address inequities in welfare.
the concern of United States literature used the denotative and connotative power of blackness as a "mechanism for testing the problems and blessings of freedom" (7, 15).

What is distinctive in this white imagination is a vocabulary that disguises the contradictions of a free republic deeply committed to slavery and the parasitical nature of a whiteness that depends on blackness as its companion. That disguise of the racial subject, or the slave, was so fundamental to the construction of white freedom, that even the work of writers who attempted to "unhobble" their imaginations from the demands of racially inflected language "could not coexist with a response from the Africanist persona" (50; emphasis added).

My project reads contemporary Black literature from the Americas—the literature of those whose ancestors served as a vehicle for, and often suffered from, without being allowed to "respond" to, the understanding and practice of freedom in the colonies of the "Free World"; the literature of those who continue to dwell in tension, or even conflict, with those former colonizers—precisely for indications of that response which was ignored when prevailing conceptions of freedom were formulated in the white imagination. I focus on literature written in the twentieth century because I believe early formulations of freedom continue to prevail in the contemporary imagination of freedom in the Americas. And I focus on Black literature of the Americas rather than African-American literature more narrowly defined because I believe that the contradictions and anxieties that Morrison explores in literature of the United States inflected the imagination and construction of freedom in the Anglo-Caribbean colonies of the New World as well as the United States. As Patterson argues in his 1994 Oxford Amnesty lecture, "Freedom, Slavery, and the Modern Construction of Rights," differing views of freedom brought over to the New World account for differences among, for example, New England, Old South, Middle Colony, back country, and black slave conceptions of freedom. Nevertheless, certain commonalities among British colonial societies, including "colonial America and, to a remarkable degree, the horrendous slave societies of the British West Indies," especially Jamaica and Barbados, contributed to the development of
Anglo-American contractions of freedom that have been pivotal in the development of modern free societies (148-156). In the Caribbean, the struggles for freedom on the national level, for self-determination or independence from colonial authorities, as well as the experiences of post-independence politics, have created a powerful impetus for attempting to reconstruct the language, the imagination, and the practice of freedom in decolonizing movements.

Both the formative literature of American freedom and the "response" I read in contemporary Black literature from the Americas concern themselves with "risk," but in different ways. For this Black writing, to translate Cornel West’s words from another context, "puts black doings and sufferings, not white anxieties and fears, at the center of discussion" (Race Matters 7). The early literature, as Morrison observes, explored and tried to conquer the "risks" of freedom. While that founding imagination superficially, or indirectly, entered the imagination of the slave to define freedom as slavery’s polar opposite, it accepted uneasily the existence of master-slave relations in the domain of freedom. But the slaves, whose situation informed the white imagination of freedom, had a different "access" to the imagination of freedom developed by white immigrants and a different position from which to evaluate its "risks." When their descendents attempt to unhobble their imagination from the master-slave construct that governs ideas about freedom, they enter a different danger zone, one that puts freedom itself, or freedom as it has come to be conceived, "at risk" by introducing elements of care into the conception of freedom.

The authors I read include George Lamming from Barbados, Michelle Cliff from Jamaica, and Jess Mowry from the United States. I begin with George Lamming and concentrate on two of his novels: In the Castle of My Skin (1953), which describes the constraints on and desire for freedom in the still-colonial Barbados, in the decades just before 1950; and Natives of My Person (1972), which allegorically explores the imagination of freedom among the Europeans who invaded the Caribbean in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. My discussion of Michelle Cliff focuses on two novels: Abeng (1984) and No Telephone to Heaven (1987), which trace the
development of a revolutionary consciousness of freedom in their common protagonist, from her adolescence in the soon-to-be-independent Jamaica of the 1950’s through her young adulthood in the post-independence struggles of the early 1980’s. I also refer to Cliff’s *Free Enterprise* (1993), which explores some of the competing perspectives on freedom that came together during and after the nineteenth-century African-American War for Independence, particularly among the forgotten black revolutionaries who participated in the 1859 rebellion that has come to be known as John Brown’s Raid on Harper’s Ferry. I conclude with the work of Jess Mowry and focus on the novel *Way Past Cool* (1992), which he addresses to young African-American males in US ghettos and which explores the constraints on, desire for, and attempts to obtain a degree of freedom among pre-adolescent gang members who are confined to an urban ghetto in late twentieth-century California. By choosing to work with Mowry’s fiction, I am deliberately including a novel written as popular fiction rather than high literature and for a nonliterary audience, specifically young black males, not simply because I believe that the vision I identify in such writing from the contemporary Americas crosses such lines of genre and audience in significant ways. I also choose to work with *Way Past Cool* because the location of this vision in a novel like Mowry’s is important for contesting the denigration of youth that marks much contemporary political discourse, for expanding the realm of cultural democracy, and for expanding the notion of where alternative visions may be found. The location of this vision in a novel addressed to urban youth is also significant because it represents one important place where, in the words of Henry Giroux, “knowledge needs to surface and emerge in order to be consequential” with respect to expanding the possibilities for radical democracy” (17). By reading Lamming, Cliff, and Mowry together, I do not mean to subsume the discussion of “internal colonies” within the United States under the rubric of postcolonial studies, but to reveal certain alignments in the vision of these writers who are all part of the African diaspora in the Americas.
I read these novels in concert with theoretical essays written by the novelists themselves and also engage them in dialogue with certain theoretical discourses that influence the imagination and practice of freedom in the twentieth-century Americas: psychoanalytic theory, ethic of care debates, and theories of home, travel, and mobility. In some instances, I use my reading of these theories to aid in my reading of the novels; in others, I use my reading of the novels to enter my voice, and the vision of these authors, into the theoretical debates.

Before I detail the highlights of my analysis, I should probably say a few words about my use of the term "practice" for talking about the imagination of freedom. I use the term practice to contrast with the notion of freedom as a legal status or a state of being, as something to be achieved, and to emphasize instead a notion of freedom as an activity. I use the term to highlight three interrelated dimensions in my approach to understanding and evaluating the kind of freedom imagined in these works: the performative, the practical, and the experimental. My emphasis on performative aspects of freedom is based on the premise that the nature or state of freedom depends closely on the activity of freedom. Accepting the Marxian notion of praxis—that reality is shaped by human activity, that humans change, and are changed by, the world through their own activity—I mean to emphasize my belief that the state of "freedom" is produced by human work, by the practices of freedom and by the images of freedom which guide those practices. For the practices of freedom are both shaped by and themselves shape the worldview of those who wish to live "freely." I wish to emphasize not only that freedom is constituted by a series of individual, social, and cultural practices and meanings, but also that human activity constructs freedom as historical and changing.

In addition, I use the term to highlight my concern with the practical aspects of freedom, with human activity that produces a practical, as opposed to a nominal, kind of freedom. With this emphasis I am responding, for example, to Cliff’s concern that such common markers of political freedom as emancipation or independence might be “independence-in-practically-name-only” (Abeng
“Practical” activity in this context has at least two meanings: activity that acts upon and changes the world, and activity guided by notions of what can be practiced or done, in the attempt to live what might appear to be a utopian or impossible freedom.

Finally, I wish to emphasize that the activity of freedom is something we can practice, activity at which we can develop skill. But I simultaneously hope to redirect this concept of practice away from its common association with apprenticeship and towards an association with experiment. The notion of an apprenticeship to freedom is problematic for conceptual and historical reasons. Historically, the idea of an apprenticeship to freedom is contaminated by the ways in which the concept was enacted, for example, when the "emancipation" of slaves in the British colonies of the Caribbean in the 1830's was instituted as a gradual process so that "former" or "sometime-to-be-ex" slaves could serve an apprenticeship to freedom, under the presumed "masters" of freedom, their ex-in-practically-name-only slave-masters. I hope to redirect the term practice, therefore, away from its historical imbrication in relations between masters and slaves or masters and apprentices and also away from the notion of repeated practice, of repetition of the same activity that leads to mastery or perfection. The idea that we might "master" freedom in this way is unacceptable both because it assumes that we already know what perfect freedom is and also because learning to practice freedom by repeating what has already been done more than likely leads to a freedom characterized by relations between masters and slaves rather than between human beings as human beings. So I use the term practice to suggest experimentation, activity that is ongoing and changing.

This dimension of experiment may be necessary since, as Patterson's history of freedom notes, the "factors that bring a process into being" are often distinct from those "that account for its perpetuation" (Making of Freedom 97). Further, as Edward Said argues, we cannot act "as if freedom happens, and having once happened goes on happening undeterred and unconcerned"
("Identity, Authority, and Freedom" 78). Rather, freedom must be continually renewed by practice.

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If the literature of the early United States took as its concern "the architecture of the new white man," the architecture of the man who both desired and feared freedom, as Morrison argues, the protagonist, "G," of Lamming's first novel, In the Castle of My Skin, appropriates that concern in an attempt to construct an architecture for the black man who wishes to escape the force of colonization. In Part One, I argue that G's desire for freedom focuses on the image of escape from the cage in which he is controlled by authority, or captured by the eyes of others. G adapts the architecture of the colonial master to imagine the "architecture" that might afford such escape. Symbolically translating the bricks and mortar of the Great House into the castle of his skin, G imagines that he is protected from invasion; within his epidermal castle, he imagines he is independent, in control of his own being. If Lamming's novel illustrates the force of this image of freedom from control, it also suggests its inadequacy. Ironically, G has escaped his cage by choosing to hide in another enclosure, a symbolic fortress. Because he imagines other people as potentially controlling or invasive, he can only conceptualize freedom in terms of an independence that requires escape from almost all relations with others. His image of a freedom that protects himself from external control transmutes into an image that protects him from the risks of freedom, from the anxieties of "world" traveling, understood literally, interpersonally, and metaphorically.

I argue that G's imagination of freedom is inherited from the kind of men Lamming depicts in Natives of My Person, European men who wish to escape what they consider to be the oppressive and whorish institutions of their native land and who dream of establishing a new kind of society with a new kind of man in the islands of the Caribbean. Two fundamental ideas are linked in the men's imagination of freedom: escape from their old world, and starting over in a new world, that is, on uninhabited, unpossessed, virgin territory. Both conceptions mar their enterprise from the
very start, limit their possibilities for practicing freedom, and eventually contribute to the failure of their enterprise. These would-be new, free men lack a sense of responsibility in two meanings of the term: they are unable to care about, and unable to respond to, others. They have not only exterminated the populations of the lands they hope to settle, but are also driven to abandon their relationship with women, whose demands for intimacy and partnership the men interpret as control. They are "care-ful" mainly in the sense of being anxious, and so practice "care" by being cautious about establishing relations with others. That caution, however, often leads them to incautious acts that may destroy their own welfare as well as that of others.

But Lamming also begins to sketch an alternative, if idealized and imperfectly realized, vision in *Natives*. In the context of the failed colonial enterprise, Lamming attributes that vision to the women, principally "ladies," who are abandoned by the men and who prophecy that they "are a future" the men "must learn" (345). That future, which Lamming only hints at, has something to do with the women's ability to regard others as "natives of [their] person" (328). Although this title phrase is enigmatic, its use in the novel suggests that, because the women do not separate others, even the natives of the islands, from themselves, they can focus on an ability to welcome, empathize with, and respond to others, rather than on a desire for freedom that compels them to escape from one group, and to invade, control, or exterminate others. The vision of the women challenges the traditional notions of autonomy, sovereignty, independence, ownership, and control that comprise the discourse of freedom, as well as the ideas of "development," whether personal, socio-economic, or political, that are so closely aligned with notions of freedom. I argue, therefore, that contemporary revisions to psychoanalytic theory, like those advocated by Jessica Benjamin, John Brenkman, and Evelyn Fox Keller, which redefine "autonomy" in terms of dynamic, intersubjective relations and mutual recognition, become important resources for conceptualizing how the future that Lamming introduces at the end of *Natives* might be lived, not in utopia, but on land and among the living.
In Part Two, I read the work of Michelle Cliff and Jess Mowry in the context of nineteenth-century slave narratives which also attempted to "respond" to the vision of freedom that guided development of the Americas. In particular, I link the literature of the two centuries by suggesting that they share a concord of sensibilities about the possibility for practicing freedom with care. While nineteenth-century writers negotiated the sentimental ideology of domesticity in their narratives of freedom, these twentieth-century writers can be read in terms of the way they negotiate contemporary concerns about freedom, sympathy, and moral development, especially as those concerns are manifested in ethic of care debates. I argue that the ethics which both authors associate with struggles for survival and freedom demonstrate that a revolutionary sense of "care" is necessary for, rather than opposed to, a revolutionary practice of freedom that strives for justice and embraces radical politics.

Like Lamming did in Natives, Michelle Cliff reimagines freedom through the struggles of women. Although she writes about characters who, like her, are relatively privileged in Jamaican society, because they are light-skinned, educated, or at least middle class--about characters who, as descendants of colonizers, are meant to be ladies--she wishes to reject the legacy of empire's ladies. For that legacy is one in which freedom, or independence, means that the colonized have changed places with the colonizers. They have become "insensitive," able "to walk through a shantytown in Kingston and not bat an eye" (Land of Look Behind 71). So when Clare Savage, the protagonist of Cliff's first two novels, Abeng and No Telephone to Heaven, wishes to rebel, she turns instead to other ancestors, literal and figurative, to the warrior women who fought against slavery and empire. Her position of privilege, however, unsettles her location in contemporary resistance movements. For the privileged character who would be a freedom fighter, "care," the ability to care about and to take care of others who are less privileged, emerges as one of the most compelling features of resistance. For those who have lived sans souci, true freedom, or meaningful decolonization, does not mean escape from the corruption of an inequitable society in which care is provided by some
and received by others, but a willingness to fight for change, to reciprocate that care by confronting corruption, to combat injustice by caring for and about others.

I use Cliff’s fiction, therefore, to introduce a postcolonial and class perspective to feminist debate on an ethic of care. For the care her characters practice is neither maternal, nor domestic, nor apolitical, but militant, revolutionary, and insistently political. Its practitioners are not women who serve masters, but a pantheon of warrior-caregivers who refuse to separate revolution and care, who take care out of the cradle and onto the battlefield. And it is only their willingness and ability to care for and about those who are excluded from wealth and power that compels the more privileged to engage in freedom struggles that challenge political and economic inequality. The imagination of freedom in the settling and the development of the Americas was simultaneously coupled with and separated from the imagination of love, by assigning the practice of freedom to the white man or woman and the practice of love to the slave or the servant who cared for the free man or woman. While early American literature, as Morrison argues, addressed its anxieties about freedom in part by imagining a limitless love of the black man for the white man (56), someone whom the slave or servant not only takes care of but also cares about, Cliff’s fiction responds to that legacy by insisting that white and nearly white men and women must be willing to confront their own anxiety and to care for those who are yet ex-slaves and ex-servants in-almost-name-only.

If Cliff’s imagination of greater freedom, of a freedom that demands greater socio-economic equality, depends on the practice of care by the privileged, she also insists, in the title and first line of one of her poems, that “Love in the Third World/ exists”; the love among Black women living in packing crates is “just as powerful,” as “complicated” and “long-standing” as love “in the First or Second Worlds—maybe more so” (Land of Look Behind 102). Jess Mowry’s Way Past Cool similarly addresses the potential of and need for the underprivileged to care for and about each other.
Mowry's characters, the black members of a primarily pre-adolescent gang, live in one of the most confined and least free spaces in the self-proclaimed freest society in the contemporary Americas, an African-American urban ghetto. Their freedom of movement, physical and social, literal and metaphorical, is limited not only by inequitable and oppressive socio-economic and governmental structures, but also by the ways that the members of their community cope with, collude with, or combat those structures. The members of this gang, like many of the characters in Cliff's and Lamming's novels, sometimes dream of escape. In imagining Jamaica as an island paradise, however, they ironically adapt the fantasy of an escape to freedom that guided the would-be colonizers whom Lamming describes and also substitute a fantasy image for the historical reality of contemporary Jamaican society that Cliff describes. Whether Mowry's novel does or does not recognize that particular dream of escape as ironic, it does recognize that the dream is largely fantasy; that particular escape is unattainable for most of its characters. Perhaps because the young members of the gang, who call themselves The Friends, cannot escape to freedom, they are compelled to imagine and institute other practices of freedom where they live.

What does increase their freedom, however slightly, is an ability to increase the level of trust between and care about the members of rival gangs. While the practice of trust and care among themselves does little to effect change, or increase their power, in the political and economic system that confines them, it does allow them a degree of freedom, of movement and of personal security, that they did not have before. What Mowry is careful to show, in addition, is that these adolescents have the ability to transform their relations with each other by reflecting on and appropriating the practices of the world around them, especially as they come to know that world through encounters with authority and by watching television. The boys recognize parallels between their efforts and such international struggles for freedom, territory, and a "Balance of Power" as those in the Middle East. To counter the "showtimey" quality of televised images of gangs at war with cops and themselves, they turn to images of the homeboy brotherhood and togetherness of The...
Little Rascals on reruns of the "Our Gang" series. But they combine this model with one from the black power movement of the late 1960s and early 1970s, that of the Black Panthers. Based on the blend of warrior-caregiving that they develop from this combination, I call them, nonpejoratively, "Buckwheat Panthers."

The adolescents also appropriate the model of The Law which oppresses them, by governing themselves according to rules and responsibilities which are, however, open to negotiation. And they experiment not only by changing rules and responsibilities through "civic" debate, but also by abandoning the security of rules and risking the uncertainty of trust based on sympathy or "heart." Like the members of the kind of counter-cultural groups that Henry Giroux labels *Fugitive Cultures*, they develop a pedagogy that attempts to subordinate questions of management and culture to questions of politics and ethics (14). As they learn to risk exchanges, based not on barter, but on trust, they learn to offer that trust "for free." The Friends do not abandon their notion of territory or the need to protect themselves and that territory they call their own. But they discover that they only increase the scope and range of their own freedom when they take the risk of relaxing their control over the boundaries of that territory. As they risk allowing members of rival groups to cross into their territory, their ability to cooperate, however slightly and briefly, allows them, at least partly, to resist complete control by the more dominant force, and even the alliance, of the cops and established drug dealers.

The power of imagination and the vision that Mowry attributes to these gang members complements the call for a culture or politics of conversion in the work of two other contemporary African-American thinkers, bell hooks and Cornell West. In many ways, Mowry's vision responds to hooks' complaint that cultural productions that deal with young black people are anti-utopian and anti-revolutionary because they "shut down the imagination"; these productions, which Mowry's work serves to counter, suggest either that such youth "have difficulty imagining any way out of their lives" or that those who manage to dream of a way out do not survive the genocide.
His work takes to heart hooks' claim that "as long as we refuse to address fully the place of love in struggles for liberation, we will not be able to create a culture of conversion where there is a mass turning away from an ethic of domination" (243). It similarly responds to West's concern that a gangsterization marked by high levels of despair and distrust undermines the effort to forge a more democratic project and to his contention that meaninglessness, hopelessness, and lovelessness are the major enemy of black survival and that only a politics of conversion centered on a love ethic will establish black freedom struggle as a matter of ethical principles and wise politics (23, 29, 38, 49, 155). West contends that continuing division, or a focus on escape from interdependence rather than on connection, is precisely what binds us tightly to the common destiny of domination, opposition, and anxiety that the practice of escape seeks to avoid (7-8). Mowry's novel suggests that the desire to escape from control and anxiety to freedom may similarly bind us tightly and inevitably to a continuing destiny of control, anxiety, and escape.

The Friends in Way Past Cool focus on territory and understand freedom as a balance between control over or autonomy within that territory and the possibility of increased mobility, either through escape or through the ability to cross boundaries with a degree of personal safety. Mowry's novel could be used to support increasingly fashionable propositions that celebrate deterritorialization in its multiple forms, like exile, migration, nomadism, homelessness, diaspora, and all sorts of traveling and border crossing, as the condition of freedom. But Mowry's novel challenges uncomplicated alignments of mobility and freedom by suggesting that mobility contributes to greater freedom only when mobility is practiced with and/or because of an ethic of love.

The practice of care, as I noted earlier, has historically been associated more with necessity, submission, and subservience than with freedom, partly through its association with the private, confined territory of the home. Coupling the figure of the caregiver with the figure of the warrior partly addresses this dilemma. But because the notion of home is still fraught with tension.
as a location of freedom, while the notion of travel and mobility is sometimes uncritically associated with freedom, the way these novels address the issues of home and travel also becomes crucial to their vision of practicing freedom with care. These novels remind readers that travelers who seek their own freedom are often traveling potentates, and, contrary to conventional expectations, they suggest that home may sometimes provide the ground of freedom. If either traveling or home-making is to be compatible with a practice of freedom that moves beyond the master-slave dynamic, each must concern itself with the complementary practices of freedom and care.

In Part Three, I introduce the concept of "World'-Travelling" that the feminist philosopher Marfa Lugones proposes, as a way to conceptualize notions of home and travel that are compatible with a practice of freedom with care. In the penultimate chapter, I refocus on Lamming's *Castle* and pay close attention to the features of the village and natural landscapes—like fences that collapse, a cherry tree that simultaneously separates and joins yards, walls that serve more as platforms than barriers, sand castles, beaches whose contours shift, and the crabs who inhabit those beaches and whose bodies are like houses on stilts—that challenge both the effectiveness and the desirability of rigid architectural boundaries, ownership of private property, and the rigid separation of mine and yours. If castle architecture is designed to protect its inhabitants from being seen and invaded, these alternative structures attempt to balance protection and the risk of welcome by encouraging a mutual practice of seeing and being seen.

To conclude, I return to the realm of the tourist and use the work of Jamaica Kincaid and writers of travel guides to reassert that the typical Caribbean tourist is more than happy to revive the model of the plantation in his or her desire to vacation *sans souci*. June Jordan's discussion of her travels, by contrast, provides evidence of an attempt to practice the kind of "world"-travelling that Lugones advocates and offers an alternative model for tourists. Finally, I adapt Alison Bailey's formulations in "Locating Traitorous Identities" to conceptualize the notion of a traveler who attempts to practice freedom with care by travelling to the "worlds" of those who serve tourists in...
the Caribbean in order to animate "privilege-cognizant scripts" that contest the practice of freedom
sans souci.

The theme of tourism also has more personal relevance for my project. In working with
these authors, I hope to avoid the kind of "theoretical tourism" to which the first-world critic can be
susceptible when dealing with literatures from the so-called "margins." As Caren Kaplan cautions,
if critics are not careful travellers, the margin can become "a linguistic or critical vacation," the site
of "a new poetics of the exotic" ("Deterritorializations" 191). I attempt to read these writers, then,
as the kind of "world"-traveller that Lugones advocates—to listen to the voices of these insider-
outsiders in the domain of American freedom in order to recognize "privilege-evasive" scripts and
to develop a potentially "traitorous" account of freedom with care. At the same time, I wish to
recognize, as Bailey observes, that developing a traitorous character requires my own work and
vision. Although I attempt to "see through the lens of their insights," I do not read them like a
"robot" but take responsibility for my analysis of the "world" I see in their writing.

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The "social death" that characterizes slavery, in Patterson’s analysis, is closely related to a
lack of "trust" and "love" in the master-slave relationship (Slavery and Social Death 12). A
practice of freedom that moves beyond the master-slave dynamic must address the practice of care.
My focus on practicing freedom with care is not intended to depoliticize the practice of freedom—to
suggest that either I or these novelists and theorists wish to deflect attention away from other
political, social, and economic practices that are necessary to reconfigure the practice of freedom.
It is not intended, as Cornel West argues conservative discussions of ethics do, to "wrench" talk
about values and responsibility "out of historical context and personal responsibility" (22). Rather,
it is meant to suggest that potentially satisfactory political and economic practices depend on
attention to practices of care, that political and ethical dimensions of freedom are intertwined. And
it is meant to counteract a hesitation to talk about the realm of meanings and values, which West
identifies with "sheer failure of nerve" on the part of liberal structuralists, who hesitate because this talk "seems to lend itself too readily to conservative conclusions" and who "resist talking too much about values because such discussions remove the focus from structures and especially because they obscure the positive role of government" (20). It is often a lack of care rather than a call for a practice of care that allows us to ignore the political and economic consequences, the inequalities, of how we practice freedom. And a belief that freedom is so precious that we can’t challenge its formulations keeps us from recognizing that there might be other ways to practice freedom and from trying to imagine those alternatives.
PART ONE

GEORGE LAMMING AND CRITIQUES OF PSYCHOANALYTIC THEORY:
INTRODUCING FREEDOM AS A WAY OF BEING TOGETHER

For Caliban has learnt that democracy is a way of being together, most desirable as an arrangement for peaceful living—but he knows that the Form will be betrayed if he ignores the specific human elements which are the substance of that Form. . . .

Freedom is an evil experiment if it means, among other things, the freedom to betray freedom by a gratuitous exploitation of freedom.

. . . Democracy should not be conceived by the graduates from colonialism as a background to which they are condemned to refer. That is a cricket match with a fixed history of rules. Democracy is an atmosphere and a future towards which you work.

(Pleasures of Exile)¹

Contrasting African independence struggles with the complacency of his native West Indies in 1960, George Lamming was troubled that the West Indies was, "perhaps, the only modern community in the world where the desire to be free, the ambition to make their own laws and regulate life according to their own impulses, is dormant" (Pleasures 34-35). Arguing that these British colonies had met the criteria for independence at least a decade earlier, he attributed their reluctance to claim sovereignty to a deep-seated dependence on the political, economic, and cultural structures of colonialism. The work of freedom, he wrote, would have to begin by changing the basis of their values; the novelist could contribute to that work by attempting to "grapple with that colonial structure of awareness" (Pleasures 36).

¹ When I cite Lamming’s work in the rest of Part One, I will use the following abbreviations: "Coming Home" for "Coming, Coming, Coming Home," Castle for In the Castle of My Skin, Natives for Natives of My Person, Pleasures for The Pleasures of Exile, and Season for Season of Adventure.
Two of Lamming's novels, *In the Castle of My Skin* (1953) and *Natives of My Person* (1972), attempt to grapple with such structures. They present characters who have a strong desire for individual freedom, understood as personal sovereignty or independence, and who expect that such freedom will afford them greater social and economic opportunity as well as freedom from the dangers of betrayal and tyranny. While the novels explore the values that guide this pursuit of freedom, they grapple with the kind of awareness supported by one particular colonial structure, that of the Great House, a West Indian translation of the European castle. The significance of this architectural symbol is most explicit in the first novel. Near the end of the story, the protagonist, a young man who has come of age in the pre-independence Barbados of the 1930s and 1940s, prepares to leave the island. On the eve of departure, he attempts to claim his freedom, and simultaneously to protect it, by symbolically appropriating the architecture that he associates with the sovereignty of the king and the landlord—he attempts to secure himself, as the title suggests, within the "castle of [his] skin." In the latter novel, a group of late sixteenth- or early seventeenth-century men migrate from the Old World to an island in the New World, where their Commandant plans to establish a new kind of society with a new kind of man, in the company of women. It could be said that these allegorical precursors to the colonial planters and landlords hope to form a free community in which they "make their own laws and regulate life according to their own impulses." The vehicle to this sovereign community is a stolen ship which the Commandant imagines as a "great castle on the water." A number of narrative complications cause their enterprise to fail. These complications highlight the importance of certain ethical considerations in the pursuit of freedom. The men fail, in part, because of anxieties, or a desire to avoid anxieties, that stem from their relationships, or lack of relationship, with others, especially women and natives of the islands. Taken together, Lamming's two novels also suggest that the men fail because their ambition to claim sovereignty is influenced, like the West Indies' *reluctance* to claim sovereignty,
by a dependence on colonial structures—a dependence which cannot sufficiently change the basis of their values.

Lamming’s attention to architecture recognizes that the structures of colonialism are simultaneously material and metaphorical. Physically, the architecture of the Great House in the West Indies separates the free and landowning masters from the dependent and subservient masses. Metaphorically, the architecture of the castle correlates with the ideas about individual development and interpersonal relationships that are most commonly associated with classical theories of psychoanalysis and masculinized concepts of autonomy that depend on rigid separation from others. Taken together, Lamming’s novels explore the attractions and limitations of the kind of freedom supported by such models. The questions they raise about autonomy and independence struggles are commensurate with the kind of issues that Jessica Benjamin (*The Bonds of Love*) and John Brenkman (*Straight, Male, Modern*) address in their cultural critiques of traditional psychoanalytic models. Like these critiques, Lamming’s novels suggest that a model which emphasizes the development of interdependence and mutual recognition, or reciprocity over simple autonomy, may be important to a more desirable practice of freedom.

Several critics have observed that Lamming’s work attempts to shape a vision of freedom appropriate to the West Indies and that psychological transformations are crucial to that vision. In a review which argues that the novels written before *Natives of My Person* constitute a “search for freedom,” Wilfred Cartey observes that freedom, for Lamming, is “natural” to people, an “attribute” waiting to be recognized and claimed through political action. But recognition of this fundamentally existential freedom has a profound “psychological” effect and “independence” is marked by a new “way of seeing” and “being seen” (127). While Ian Munro does not elaborate on the nature of freedom when he concludes that Lamming’s fiction seeks to shape “a new vision of human freedom,” he also observes that such change, for Lamming, “must be accompanied by a profound psychic transformation which it is the artist’s responsibility to articulate” (143).
Taylor cites Lamming as one of two Caribbean authors (the other being Derek Walcott) who have been able to write liberating narratives. In such narratives, freedom is opposed to destiny; and opening the world to possibility requires activity. Free people choose to make, rather than suffer, history. Taylor reflects on Frantz Fanon’s attempts to theorize beyond the master-slave dynamics in Hegel’s philosophical understanding of freedom struggles, explains that he shares Fanon’s dissatisfaction with the dualism that Lacan’s psychoanalytic theory sets up between individual liberty and social existence, and concludes that truly liberating narratives must conceive a relation between liberating psychiatry and liberating politics. Key aspects of such “true” liberation include: a notion of the group as a liberating entity; a movement toward mutual recognition; and the activity of individuals who, in Sartre’s terms, are mutually responsible “quasi-sovereigns.” Taylor concludes that Lamming’s Castle is a liberating narrative that “leaves future possibilities implicit and unstated” (222). He believes that the novel provides a basis for a revolutionized understanding of the social world because Lamming uses the imagery of the castle to shift focus from outer to inner experience; Lamming’s appropriation symbolizes a move from domination to historical struggle and recognition of inherent dignity (194).

I agree that the possibilities for freedom in Castle, and also in Natives, are implicit and directed towards the future and that a principle of mutual recognition may be central to Lamming’s vision of the future. As the headnote suggests, the freedom Lamming works toward must be based on a new “way of being together.” But both novels also contain a certain ambivalence about the pursuit of freedom. That ambivalence suggests that the structures, mental and physical, with which these characters seek to establish and practice freedom are inadequate to the implicit vision. Transformations of the castle, whether internal or external, are not sufficiently revolutionary to change colonial values and promote freedom as a new way of being together.
"THE ONLY CERTAINTY THESE ISLANDS INHERIT WAS THAT SAILOR’S MISTAKE":
CASTLES AND THE FAILURE OF RESPONSE-ABILITY

IN THE CASTLE OF HIS SKIN:
G’S ATTEMPT TO SECURE SOVEREIGNTY AND FREEDOM FROM INVASION

Throughout *In the Castle of My Skin*, G and other village boys share a sense that they live in a "cage." They are often anxious because they can be seen, and thus captured, by the eyes of others. Because they think that they are "part of the other's world, and therefore no longer in complete control of [their] own" when others can see them, they feel most free, most able to control what they do and say, when they are alone and hidden from view. They speculate that a king, the ultimate sovereign, is most free, or autonomous, because he is alone and unseen. Ironically, the boys feel more free in such confined spaces as a darkened cinema or even a lavatory with the door closed than they do in the open air (54-57, 72-74).

When the boys try to make their own rules, adults ask if they think they are kings and reproach them for wanting to live above their station. But the reproach reinforces their desire, because "It was a big thing to be a king. It meant that you were getting the feeling that you lived in a big room all by yourself where no one could see you and you were your own man. Free and alone" (54). And Lamming seems to approve the boys' ambition when he observes that he wrote the novel to "restore the castle where it belonged."

In a critical essay, he writes that he appropriated the title image from a phrase with which a Derek Walcott poem assaults "some white presence": "’You in the castle of your skin, I among the swineherd.’" Lamming appropriates the image to reject the idea that either his godfather, Papa Grandison, or other villagers should see themselves "among the swineherd" rather than in their own
castles (*Pleasures* 227-228). Within the novel, G appropriates the image as he prepares to move from boyhood to manhood.

On the eve of his departure from Barbados, G reads the latest entry in his journal, written the day before. He looks forward to living in Trinidad because no one knows him there and he can "start with a clean record and try to make an impression. If you aren't native to a place," he reads, "you have an excellent chance of becoming a gentleman in it." But the entry betrays an ambivalence in his attitude toward this imagined future and the quality of the relationships he may or may not enjoy. In Trinidad as well as Barbados, he imagines, the "likenesses will meet and make merry, but they won't know you. They won't know the you that's hidden somewhere in the castle of your skin." He is disappointed because he believes that he will not be "able to strike an identity with the other." But he is also grateful because he is "terrified of being known." He believes that anyone who knows him will use this knowledge to destroy him (260-261). His response to that fear is to prevent both the threatening knowledge and the comforting identity by hiding in the castle of his skin. From G's perspective, the forward movement of the novel works to convert naked skin from an image of vulnerability to one of protection.

Taylor approves of G for restoring the castle to its "rightful place," for borrowing the image to recognize his own dignity rather than moving into a physical castle as the bourgeoisie who succeed the colonial landlords have done (194). Lamming's fiction does condemn the bourgeoisie for moving into more literal castles, but I believe it suggests that a symbolic appropriation, which understands "dignity" in terms of such imperial structures of awareness, is also problematic.

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1 The "assault," in the third canto of Walcott's *Epitaph for the Young: XII Cantos*, is actually stated: "You in the castle of your skin, I the swineherd." The line epitomizes the position of a black boy who has an impossible passion for a white girl; his unrequited love yields a light that is "deceptive, equivocal," and full of "bewildering clarity." Ironically, Lamming's inverted appropriation of the image mimics the result which Canto IV attributes to the experience: "denied satisfaction/ Of union, . . . we think of turreted castles," and "practice the pieties of [our] conquerors."
Joyce Jonas insightfully argues that colonial structures in the Caribbean have been imposed on both the topographic and the psychic landscape (50). Claiming that the plantation landscape, with the landlord in a Great House on the hill and the folk in a surrounding village, ritually expresses the master-servant structure of relationships that develops within a polarized worldview, she argues that such polarities must meet in a liminal zone, in a space between the worlds of the master and the servant, if new structures and new ways of relating are to be created (8, 45).²

Reading Castle as a Bildungsroman, Jonas concludes that G "searches for a means to exchange imprisonment within the perceiving eye of another person for a 'castle' of the self that defies invasion." In terms of the plantation landscape, G moves from the outside to the inside of the "landlord's 'castle,'" or from the "cage" to "freedom" (62).

If translating the castle from bricks and mortar to skin affords G some sense of protection as he escapes the eyes of Barbados and braves travel to other worlds, however, his use of the image to structure and maintain his sense of freedom is at least ambivalent. Jonas's own analysis undermines the character of the freedom she says he gains. Even as she argues that G takes "possession of the boundaries of the self," her metaphor, which claims that he "converts the cage of the already defined into the fortress of the ever signifying," suggests that he is as likely to be exchanging one imprisonment for another as to be moving from imprisonment to freedom (emphasis added). And if she notes, at one point, that this castle is "impregnable," she concedes at another that its protection is a "frail counterpart" of the landlord's (60-62). Jonas concludes that, overall, Lamming merely inverts rather than changes the colonial structures (134).

For Jonas, the faulty vision belongs not only to G, but to Lamming and the novel as a whole. But the fault may just as readily lie in the expectations with which critics read a novel they

² In a similar vein, Paquet argues that Lamming is most concerned with the way that structures of society shape individuals and that he embodies what is most significant in these structures in his characters and the confrontations between them (1-5).
identify as a *Bildungsroman*. In an early analysis of the "typical *Bildungsroman," W. H. Bruford observes that "The novel usually ends when [the hero] has attained to some degree of maturity" (30). This expectation suggests that the final position of the protagonist reflects the novel's mature vision; the novel is as wise or limited as the final vision of the hero. But in an alternative reading, the history of the village and the perspective of other characters are as crucial as the story of G's development to evaluating the vision of the novel. As I will argue later, other images in the novel, including a cherry tree and a crab, whose body is like a house on stilts, contribute to possible alternative visions. In this reading, the limitation associated with the image of the castle belongs less to the vision of the novel, which may contest that image, than to G and the limits of the colonizing education he has received, as well as the limits of his prospects for success in the colonial context.

As I noted earlier, G himself recognizes certain limitations in his image of the castle. But he does not reject it because he sees no preferable alternative. At least one important reader, however, refrained from embracing the image and its meaning. Lamming records that his Papa Grandison, in whose honor Lamming chose the image, complained that "the Castle and the Skin made no sense at all" when Lamming's mother shared the book with him (*Pleasures* 229). Lamming seems to account for Papa's lack of identification with G and with the image by

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3 See Part Three for a discussion of other architectural and quasi-architectural images in *Castle* and of the extent to which they allow or encourage relationships based on mutual recognition.

4 The story of G's development may fit more closely with the contestatory tradition identified by Patricia Alden in her analysis of *Social Mobility in the English Bildungsroman*. The early examples of this genre espouse a faith in progress and in the value of the individual characterized by a bourgeois humanism. The individual who experiences upward social and economic mobility also matures morally, spiritually, and psychologically and concludes his development with some kind of adjustment to society. But, Alden argues, "in the course of the nineteenth century this sanguine view of social mobility is not sustained by most major writers." Instead, the genre increasingly exposes contradictions in the ideology; "upward mobility which formerly led to freedom and self-development now leads only to alienation and moral compromise." The final position of the protagonist who is able to advance socially and economically may thus reflect the powerlessness of the individual to mature morally, spiritually, and psychologically in a society that values bourgeois individualism (1-4).
explaining that Papa was both dying and a colonial. But an incident that is significant to Pa, the character who represents Papa Grandison and other old villagers in a biographical reading of the novel, may point to an alternate basis for rejection. An unidentified voice in a dream first takes Pa back to the "land of the tribes" and the passage of Africa's best "produce" to the Caribbean islands and then speaks to those who will come after Pa. Alerting them to "the limits of the freedom they talk," the voice reminds: "The beginning had the best intentions. A sailor called Christopher followed his mistake and those who came later have added theirs. . . . The only certainty these islands inherit was that sailor's mistake, and it's gone on from father to son 'mongst the rich and the poor" (211). The character of that mistake can be examined in one of Lamming's last novels, Natives of My Person. The legacy of that mistake, as the voice in Pa's dream laments, continues in the story that Castle describes. While the dream occurs before G prepares to leave the island, the voice is prophetic, and a comparative reading of the two novels shows that the legacy of that mistake continues in G's embrace of castle architecture.

MALE-FEMALE RELATIONS AND THE FOUNDING MISTAKE: WHOREDOM, VIRGINITY, AND THE PURSUIT OF A FRESH START

With Natives of My Person Lamming tells, in an allegorical mode, a story of Europeans who sail to the Caribbean in the late sixteenth or early seventeenth century with, in the language of Pa's dream, "good intentions." They are lead by the Commandant, who, on five previous

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5 A broad use of the Prospero-Caliban analogy, in which the figure of Prospero from Shakespeare's The Tempest represents European colonizers and the figure of Caliban represents colonized natives, draws together several enterprises with "good intentions." The voyage of Columbus, as noted in Pa's dream, provides the original example. But the more immediate example for the enterprise in Natives is, as Lamming claims, the late sixteenth-century voyages reported by Hakluyt, which also influenced Shakespeare (Pleasures 12-13, Kent 13-14). This enterprise offers an alternate but unrealized version of San Cristobal's past. While Lamming focuses on the colonization of the Caribbean, his use of the 1589 Hakluyt Voyages broadens the potential application of his allegory to all the Americas. Edmund Morgan, for example, in his history of American Slavery, American Freedom, extensively describes Hakluyt's role in the failed dream of Roanoke, which thought of English freedom in global terms and hoped to liberate the oppressed people of the New World. Morgan's work is particularly apt for my project since the failure of this dream, in his analysis, constituted the pretext to "the American paradox, the marriage of slavery and freedom."
expeditions, had slaughtered the Tribes of the Indies and trafficked in cargoes of black flesh. The scene of his earlier expeditions was named, idyllically, as "Sans Souci," but also described, pejoratively, as the "Demon Coast." On this particular return journey, however, he intends to reverse his ambition. Rather than extract a fortune from the isles, he intends to bring a fortune—the men and the women who will form a new and enlightened society—to San Cristobal (10-11, 25, 228).

The primary purpose of the Commandant, his officers, and his crew is to assure their own freedom outside an oppressive, corrupt, and divided kingdom. The nature of the most powerful and tyrannical institution in that kingdom, the House of Trade and Justice, indicates a primary source of its corruption—the House links and even subordinates the system of Justice, meaning Law, to the interests of Trade. The "House" is not only the "vital center of all commercial affairs," but also the "heart and flesh and conscience of the Kingdom." It commands "ultimate obedience" and very few manage to live outside its attention and the restrictions it places on individual liberty and economic opportunity (7). But the men on board the *Reconnaissance* are going to try. In the words of their Steward, they seek "some escape to freedom" (292). The Commandant, who once worked for and with the House, now has another vision of Justice; although he has not informed most of the men of his plans, he hopes to establish a freer kingdom, a kingdom without slavery, slaughter, or other terror. The enterprise is risky, not least because the Commandant has stolen the ship and undertaken the voyage without the authority of the House, which makes their effort "a crime on the scale of treason" (7).

G can be linked to two key figures in this enterprise, the Commandant and the pilot, through descriptions that echo the "castle of skin" imagery that G uses to describe his situation at the end of *Castle*. The Commandant, who has "inherited a name [unspecified] which . . .
ancestors had conferred on a castle and a battle," now considers his ship, the vessel with which he
will break loose, "a great castle on the water" (8, 11). Like G’s, his castle is mobile; unlike G’s, it
is more a mode of travel than a mode of habitation, although the Commandant spends so much time
travelling that his ship also becomes his main dwelling. Both G and the Commandant focus on this
castelike architecture in journal entries that record their desire to become or create new men,
specifically "gentlemen," in a new place (Castle 260-261; Natives 10-11).

The pilot is both foreigner and stranger, as G expects he will be when he leaves Barbados.
His behavior among the rest of the crew reflects G’s desire for privacy and mimics the seclusion G
intends to practice. One crew member complains that the pilot "doesn’t spare a word that would
help you see inside him. Keeps everything shut tight" (13). And the narrator describes him as
"friendless," inhabiting "his solitude like skin, incapable of any other possession but his own" (13,
283). As Jonas remarks, the pilot’s "strategy for survival in a world that seeks to penetrate the
self" is, like G’s, to "retreat into the masking ‘castle’ of one’s skin from which one can observe,
reflectively, while remaining unseen" (112). According to Jonas, this strategy allows the pilot an
integrity and freedom unknown to the others; her reading thus excuses him from the errors of the
enterprise. This freedom, however, is less that of the artist, as Jonas suggests, than that of the king
or the Great, whose power the boys in Castle and the philosopher Derrida describe in similar terms.
Derrida associates the figure of "The King" with the "incomparable power" of the mask, which
shares what may be the "supreme insignia of power" with the visor on a suit of armor: "the power
to see without being seen" (Specters of Marx 8-9).6 The language of Lamming’s text suggests a

6 Although Foucault does not use similar images to describe such supreme power, this
definition is consistent with Foucault’s master concept in Discipline and Punish. As later discussion
will indicate, Derrida’s description is especially appropriate for evaluating Lamming’s use of such
images. Just as Derrida seeks to speak to and with ghosts, namely the specters of Marx, so Lamming
seeks to speak with the ghosts of G’s ancestors in a kind of Ceremony of Souls. And just as
Lamming attempts to deal with the legacy (or the ghosts) of Shakespeare’s Prospero (The Tempest) in
his work, Derrida frames his analysis by reflecting on the legacy of another Shakespearean character,
the ghost of Hamlet’s father.
sinister quality in the pilot's "power." The pilot is "a vast agency of secrets, a central intelligence" whose "power was wordless, invisible" (283).

The attitude of the pilot is not excused from, but complicit with, the errors of the enterprise—one of those errors being a suspiciousness that only allows the men to imagine autonomy, or freedom from invasion and control by others, in terms that require isolation. That suspiciousness is not only inherited from their experience with the House of Trade and Justice but also reinforced by their anxieties about women and the power they believe women try to exert over men. One of the chief reasons for their failure to establish the kind of progressive society the Commandant imagines is because they can't create a new way of being together that includes women as equal partners. Despite the Commandant's plan, the men are ultimately unwilling to include women who are not sufficiently submissive. The enterprise is aborted when the men abort their relationships to women who are already waiting on the island.

In a conversation with George Kent, Lamming explains that the major obstacle to the enterprise is the difficulty the men experience in relating to women: The relations between men and women are "far more complex and far more challenging than the question of managing men or establishing a new colony" (6). Chafing under the tyranny of the House of Trade and Justice, the men on the *Reconnaissance* are concerned with "restoring their manhood" (16). The men do not question the structure of authority per se, but rather their own place in the structure. The way the men see it, restoring their manhood requires them to "mutiny," in a manner of speaking, against the authority of the House and also against the power they impute to women. According to the view of the men, the "power" of each is corrupt and abusive. While most of the crew do not oppose the power of the House to enslave or exterminate those outside the Kingdom, they oppose abuses which can be inflicted on them—the power, for example, to brand, hunt, and imprison poor or rebellious vagabonds inside the Kingdom, to hang all "suspects" in a murder, and to appropriate the wealth of
the Kingdom for itself. But the men consider any power exercised by women, indeed any effort to extract commitment, relationship, or fidelity, as an abuse of power.

The Steward illustrates the way the men obfuscate the dynamics of power to justify both their refusal to depend on women and their inability to respond to the affections and desires of women. Although his wife believes she has given up all "claims to privilege" and all "family connections" so that the Steward might "feel complete master in [their] life," he complains that she has the "evil ambition" of getting "power over" him (178, 202). As Lamming notes in his interview with Kent, the Steward unfairly interprets "her affection and gestures not as positive help, but as her strategy of colonizing him, for keeping him in a particular relation to her" (8). The tension between them develops because she is cousin to Tate de Lysle, the Lord Treasurer of the House of Trade and Justice; in the Steward's mind, the power of the House and the power of his wife are aligned. The Steward has been cheated out of some rare maps by the Lord Treasurer, whom he is unwilling to confront, and he is unable to succeed in any of his other endeavors. But he interprets his wife's desire to intercede on his behalf as evidence of envy, ambition, and a desire to restore her connections to the House. He is unwilling to be in her debt, which he equates with being under her power, and displaces his grievances toward the House onto her.

The way he responds to the case of an orphan girl who arrives at their door illustrates the way he perverts notions of his wife's ambition and excuses his own faults by blaming women. The girl insinuates that the Lord Treasurer seduces the girls at the orphanage he patronizes. Rather than let his wife make use of her connections to confront the Treasurer, the Steward makes his own deal and arranges to keep the girl as his maid. He seduces, and perhaps rapes, the girl, believing he has simultaneously triumphed over the Treasurer and reduced his wife in her own eyes. When he later discovers that the girl was his own daughter from a youthful "escapade," and that the Treasurer had been aware of the relationship, the Steward absolves himself from responsibility for the "weight of incest" by blaming his wife. He charges that she arranged for his destruction by taking the orphan
Complaining "that such a thing should be done to man like me," he reclaims his innocence and justifies himself as her victim (190-200).

Reflecting on the major "challenge" the men face on this enterprise, Lamming suggests that true "innovation," and the possibility of a "new liberation," would require men to "reorganize" their emotions regarding women" (Kent 6-7; emphasis added). The way the men organize their emotions regarding women, and also regarding freedom from tyranny, is with the polarized concepts of whoredom and virginity.

When the Steward's wife rages against his habitual neglect, cowardice, and other failures, for example, he dismisses the basis of her complaints by focusing on a lack of respectability in her behavior. He judges that "The common whores were dumb virgins by comparison" (179). One voice of the common men illustrates the utter conventionality and indiscriminate application of this habit of thought. He complains that all women who have moved from the Northern to the Southern part of the Kingdom are whores, that all women in the South are harlots before they are wives, and that all women, in fact, are whores: "I say you were born to a whore if your mother was a woman" (17-19). He concedes that men would then be "whoresons," but he directs his diatribe against women. Even when he challenges other men, he does so by faulting their women.

And it is the charge of a woman's whoring that brings the enterprise to a halt. The charge is directed against the current Lady of the House, who was once, and expects to be the future, mistress of the Commandant. The charge is made by the Boatswain, an officer whose ambition is to "seek a chance," to be "a man on the inside" of power (256-257). In pursuit of that ambition, he had "assisted in the plundering adventures that had brought glory to Lime Stone" and had saved the Commandant's life on previous expeditions (246, 256). When this service was not sufficiently

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7 Lamming's observation matches Orlando Patterson's analysis in Freedom in the Making of Western Culture. Patterson observes that "no sociological trend more decisively correlates with the growth of commitment to the value of freedom than men's willingness to accept the equality of women" (395).
rewarded, he sought a chance to make contact with the Lord Treasurer through the "special privilege" of the Lord's wife, the Lady of the House. The Lady refused to make that contact.

After a period of "intimate" relations, she brings his service to an end by offering him a place on this new enterprise with the Commandant. Because he wished to be loyal to the House, he complained that her "whoring" was innocence compared to the treason of the enterprise (338-340). In anger, he attempted to, and believes he did, kill her. He escapes retribution by taking the place she had prepared for him. In a "confession" that "requires no promises on his part," he justifies his action by claiming that the Lady was corrupt, treated him like "a stud," and subjected him to the indignity of her licentiousness, requiring him to choose between her "cunt" and his "grave" (249-254). But he is now troubled because one of the crew, a painter, has a vision that the Lady of the House is waiting for them at the island of San Cristobal (236-237, 249). A revealing anxiety punningly connects his desire for power with masculine impotence. He fears that the Lady will subject him to disgrace by giving "evidence of his failure to be a man on the inside" and he suffers a nervous breakdown, swearing in front of the crew that "The Lady of the House was nothing but a whore" (261-263). The enterprise comes to a halt when the Commandant learns about the charge.

The Commandant designed this enterprise as a response to the Lady's charge that his former "work" for the House, which included the slaughter of natives, was no more than "butchery" (72). The Lady's words also characterize the "work" of the House in terms the men use to denigrate the behavior of women as "whoring," but she extends the terms to condemn the behavior of men as well. She describes situations in which wives and husbands unite out of self-interest, for monetary or political advantage, for example, rather than out of care for their spouse. The Lady includes her own marriage to the Lord Treasurer in the indictment. She explains that the Commandant, whom she loved, had become like a ghost to her. Each time he returned from one expedition, he would stay briefly and then set out on another; although he promised to return
Shortly, his absences were long. Concluding that the Commandant "had lost all sense of the
difference between the coming and the going," she offered herself for "rescue" to the Lord
Treasurer. He offers her possessions and comfort; she provides him a "'Lady for his parlor'" and
allows him to "'rummage like a common dog for his sex outside.'" The Lady then concludes that
husbands and wives in the Kingdom act the roles of whores and keepers of whores because "'their
whoredom is also the whoredom of the House of Trade and Justice.'" Whoredom is "'the national
principle'" of Lime Stone, both the citizen's "'private vice'" and the "'nation's religion'" (344). It
is such whoredom, such abuses in marital relations and in the nation's commercial and juridical
institutions, that the men and women of the enterprise seek to escape.

When the Lady, now married, offered the Commandant this ship and refused to return to
the comings and goings which had become "'names for the same activity'" in their previous
relationship, the Commandant devised this plan to colonize the island of San Cristobal as an attempt
to reclaim her as his mistress in a new kind of relationship in a new society (72, 268-277, 342).
But he believes himself humiliated when the Boatswain accuses her of whoring, and the
Commandant orders that they "will proceed no further." On account of the Lady's alleged
"treachery," he aborts an enterprise which, according to the pilot, had begun as "'the fruit of love.'"

Although the pilot urges him to consider the Lady's behavior in another light, the Commandant is
unable or unwilling to focus on the gift she made him of this ship, on her waiting for his arrival, or
on the chance of renewed life on the island (263-267).

Part of his difficulty arises from the way he, as well as several of the other men,
characterize their enterprise. Believing that they have been subject to oppression in a whoredom,
the men seek to restore their manhood and attain their freedom in virgin territory. The Surgeon
expands on their line of thinking when he associates the blessings of such a place with "'the
privilege" of starting life "'afresh," "from scratch." He envisions an experiment in which he
becomes famous, a pioneer in the arts of healing, and explains: "'You can only manage it in virgin
lands where you have the chance to start from scratch” (112-113). For the Surgeon, the promise of virginity requires new women as well as new land. In order to exercise the “privilege of starting from scratch” in the “blessed territory” of “virgin lands,” he must first get his wife “out of the way.” Because she has been faithful rather than a whore, however, she gives him no “honorable reason for abandoning her,” and he gets her out of the way by imprisoning her in an asylum (165-169). While the Commandant is hoping to rejoin rather than abandon his mistress, and the Steward denies that he is united with the Surgeon “by the experience of private tyrannies,” these men are susceptible to the Surgeon’s error because they share his error of thinking.

The novel begins to indict this line of thought when the Commandant reads his journal shortly before he hears the news of the Boatswain and the Lady. He comes across an entry that describes the genesis of this enterprise in terms that match the Surgeon’s. When he comes to his intention, “‘Now my ambition is in reverse; and I reckon it is a more noble preference to plant some portion of Lime Stone in the virgin territories of San Cristobal,’” the Commandant stops to repeat the phrase, “‘virgin territories.’” The narrative voice comments that he talks “to himself as though he had suddenly discovered some error in his meaning” (245). He does not pursue that discovery, however, because he is interrupted by the arrival of the Boatswain.

Critics rightly note that the “error” refers to his previous extermination of the natives; the territory becomes virgin only through their death. But the “error” of trying to build a utopia on “virginity” also indicts the men’s attitudes toward women. As Jonas argues, linking the land with “a promise of virgin delights” associates the colonized with a feminine image that the masculine colonizer attempts to dominate and control (89-93). She further notes that the Surgeon’s repetitive

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8 Avis McDonald, for example, argues that the island becomes “virgin territory” and “suitable . . . for the founding of a new, free state, only as a result of the extermination of the indigenous inhabitants” (81). Helen Tiffin also argues that the “crucial flaw in . . . the enterprise is exposed” by recognizing that the “virgin territory” is “the site of a succession of punitive expeditions . . . that have annihilated the original inhabitants” (36).
"talk of starting 'from scratch . . . in virgin lands'" identifies his ambition with conquest, domination, and a "suggestion of rape" (101). I would argue that the error is even more fundamental and applies more broadly. If the ideal of virginity is flawed, then so is the mindset that condemns whoredom as the opposite of virginity. And if starting from scratch means starting in virgin territory, then the practice of freedom as escape from existing connections, as starting fresh or new (even, or especially, when that fresh start is imagined as an escape from corruption, from whores and whoring), is tainted by the same flaw. The flaw is also one that hints at endless repetition; because women and lands cannot remain virgin once they are possessed, the pursuit of freedom as a fresh start requires a continuous "breaking loose," as the title of Part I names their activity, from existing connections. Since the promise of virginity underlies, in one way or another, many of the men's utopian expectations, the error of virginity indicts not only their desired relationship to women as well as to natives and foreign lands, but also the ideal of freedom as they imagine it.

The error belongs not just to the Commandant, but to the men in general. If there were any possibility of continuing the enterprise once the Commandant gave his order to halt, that possibility was killed by the other officers. Even though their connections with women differ from the Commandant's, these officers also want a "fresh start," which they associate with virginity. If the Commandant began this enterprise in order to reunite with his mistress, the officers joined him in order to escape from their wives. If the Commandant wishes to halt the enterprise when he hears that the Lady is a whore, the officers wish to abandon it when they hear that their wives are waiting for them at San Cristobal. Yet, in the words of the pilot, the Commandant and the officers share an "absolute deficiency," a "common failure to accept reunion with their women" (314).

According to the pilot, that deficiency stems from a "lack of courage"; the officers are frightened by "real power." They want "'to feel authority over the women,'" but not "'to commit themselves fully to what they felt authority over'" (319). There is much merit to the pilot's
analysis, and several critics essentially repeat his words in accounting for the failure of the enterprise.\footnote{Paquet, for example, argues that the enterprise fails as a result of "a debilitating power struggle between the sexes," characterized by a "conflict of power and responsibility," and must be redressed by "restructuring . . . the balance of power" (101). McDonald argues that the men wish to escape the "burden and responsibilities" of their past and refuse to accept reunion because they refuse "to accept a future in which the old power relationship is abandoned" (82).} Success, according to these critics, would depend on a change in power relationships. The case of the Steward, however, illustrates both the strength and the limits of this diagnosis.

The Steward's concern over his relationships to women is marked by symptoms of anxiety. He feels as if the skin on his chest is rippling and fluttering, as if water were "spinning under his skin" (178). He wears his wedding ring on a chain around his neck because it feels like "a prison around his flesh" when he puts it on his finger; but then he plays with the ring compulsively and repeatedly slips it on and off his fingers. He looks to the Surgeon as if he is working through "an early hysteria" (100, 180-183). The Steward admits to one "anxiety," that the orphan girl who left his house after he seduced her might soil his name or blackmail him; he suspects that the girl and his wife, over whom, in the pilot's words, he has tried to feel authority without committing himself fully, have devised a plot to exercise power over him. But he only feels a brief "liberation from all his fear" when he hears that the girl has died (195-196). What this case helps to illustrate, however, is not simply a faulty exercise of power, but also a failure of care.

Critics who read the pilot's statement to mean that the men need to rehabilitate their exercise of power by balancing it with responsibility emphasize the sense in which responsibility refers to a duty or obligation the men must be willing to assume. And one of the Steward's faults is his desire to be free from obligation. But he is as averse to being obliged to others as he is averse to being obliged for others and his case shows that the two forms of obligation are connected. He refuses his wife's connections and her help because he has an "aggressive self-regard"; he wants to do things for himself (179-181). When he arranges to take in the orphan girl
as his maid, he is able to settle things with the Lord Treasurer only because he "had taken nothing" from the Treasurer. He is "free," able to act as he chooses, only because he owes no one a debt (191). He doesn’t want to be obliged to others because he doesn’t want to be obliged for others; he doesn’t want his sense of freedom, which he understands as complete autonomy and open possibility, to be compromised by a need to respond to the needs and desires of others.

What the critics, as well as the pilot, do not articulate clearly is the sense in which the men’s lack of responsibility is a failure of responsiveness, of the ability to respond to and receive a response from others. The distinction between the two is crucial to the exercise of freedom with care because, as Uma Narayan argues, colonizers used the rhetoric of responsibility, meaning obligation, to justify paternalistic guidance and rule as "care" for their inferiors (134-135). When the pilot suggests that the men must be able "to commit themselves fully to what they felt authority over," his language echoes the rhetoric of paternalistic power. Narayan charges that such "responsible" colonizers fail "to be genuinely attentive and responsive to the needs, interests, and welfare of others" (138, emphasis added). The Steward, a hopeful colonizer, is a case in point. He is unwilling to respond, for example, to his wife’s charge of neglect, to the orphan girl’s request for asylum (instead, he substitutes his seductions for those of the Treasurer), or to the recognition that his behavior might destroy the comfort and intimacy that was developing between his wife and the girl. Instead, he sees his wife’s requests for intimacy, as well as the intimacy she shares with the girl, as threats. He wishes to be free from any obligation to or for them and also free from the anxiety that accompanies his lack of trust in them. The symptoms that continue are evidence that his strategies for freeing himself are unsuccessful. He experiences a contradiction at the heart of the way he attempts to secure his freedom from tyranny, imagined or real: he cannot be free of
care, meaning anxiety, because he refuses to exercise care, meaning active concern for the welfare of others and a willingness to listen to their needs, particularly in his relationships with women.  

When the men on the *Reconnaissance* are unable to respond to women, and to allow women to respond to them, they are also unable to respond to the possibility in new situations. As Derrida reflects in *The Other Heading*, those who deny others the "right of response" in any but the most restricted sense deprive themselves of the ability to respond, to invent "another gesture" or to open the future to chance (30, 35, 105). Ironically, what the men lose in the search for a new start on virgin territory when they undermine their relations with women they consider whores is, according to Lamming, a liberated future, a future that "would be an innovation rather than a continuation of the past" (Kent 7). By focusing only on escape from the past, the men deny themselves the opportunity to respond either to that past or to the present and future. Paradoxically, freedom as escape inhibits the possibility of freedom as experiment; the escape from old restrictions and anxieties, on which the Commandant builds his enterprise, does not promote thinking differently. The charge that the officers exercise authority without commitment shows itself to be closely related to an implicit charge that they practice freedom without response-ability, without care for others and without possibility of a different future.

This deficiency, which is only indirectly acknowledged by the pilot, indicts the pilot along with the other officers. The pilot admits that he joined this enterprise because he wanted "'power; I have never had power over anyone'" (152). His lack of commitment and responsibility in exercising that power, however, is highlighted by a narrative comment that is juxtaposed to his criticism of the officers. Here the narrative voice comments that the interests of the pilot, who is "resolute about his multiple choice of direction," come "to an end with the certainty of his survival."

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10 Munro comes closest to my analysis when he argues that the "ultimate cause of the expedition's failure" is the failure of the officers "to show humanity and compassion towards their women" and suggests that the pilot's remark gives their failure broad significance (139).
Not only does he reject any national attachment, but also any commitment to a woman. He tells the officers, "'I have no woman. I shall have no woman'" (152). Having enjoyed one moment of prior intimacy with the Surgeon's wife in the asylum, he claims that the only thing he missed without women was "'degradation'" (153).

Once the officers learn that their wives are waiting their arrival at San Cristobal, their "escape to freedom" requires that they "escape from the future of the enterprise, from a reunion with" their wives (293-296). Unaware of the Commandant's orders to halt their progress, the Steward and the Surgeon murder him and are themselves killed by his cabin boy (306-311). The crew, who object to a rumor that the enterprise will be abandoned, mutiny, take to the boats, and "continue the enterprise as [they] see fit" (307-308).

After condemning the officers as representatives of middle class men who fail "to show humanity and compassion toward women" and who thus continue "the colonial legacy of conquest, command and exploitation," Munro suggestively comments that "the determination of the men . . . to continue the expedition without the officers may be seen as a statement of the role of the common man in shaping a future West Indian society" (139). On a theoretical level, this shift to the common men might hold promise for renewing the enterprise in a way that is less subject to the corruption and failure of the officers. Baptiste, who leads the mutiny, characterizes their action as

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11 My analysis departs significantly from that of Jonas, the only other critic who draws a connection between the pilot and G. Jonas views the absolute condition of exile embraced by the pilot in an unequivocal and positive light. For her, the pilot "opts for the freedom of the crossroads"; he is a liminal figure who is able to practice "a freedom not experienced by men within the boundaries and under the dictatorship of ideologies" (112-113). While I share a skepticism toward national loyalties that inhibit cross-cultural affiliations, I am arguing that if the novel endorses the pilot's lack of commitment at all, it does so much less strongly and much more equivocally than Jonas seems to imply. The pilot is less a liminal figure capable of various and multiple affiliations than an outsider who refuses all affiliation.

In this particular, my reading is closer to that of Paquet, who considers the pilot as an example of "amoral power." If he is "untouched by the crippling psychological and spiritual torments" of perverted male/female relationships, he is "motivated purely by profit and the desire for power" and is "ready to strike any bargain that will be to his advantage" (113).
"an act of justice" which compensates the common men for their labor. Noting that "it is a fearful thing for common folk to act on their own orders," he presents their "independence" as an act of courage against corrupt authority (300-308). And the crew's insistence on reaching the island without the officers might afford the potential to practice freedom in a way the Commandant advocated in an early speech: "We have broken loose and will continue free from the ancient restrictions of the Kingdom. This is the essence of the matter. Whatever you were before, the question now is what you must become. Such freedom is a vocation you have to learn and plant, now and long after the enterprise is complete" (52). The men have broken loose from old restrictions and have redefined "justice." On a practical level, however, the possibility that the men will be able to establish a liberated future in which individuals can practice freedom as a new way of being together is restricted by the character of the crew who take over the enterprise and the principles that guide them.

For Baptiste, the powder maker who leads the mutiny, and finally considers himself "alone and free," is a crew member who heard the Commandant's orders against taking slaves as a "breach of contract" (131-132, 300). "Justice," for Baptiste, would allow him to realize the promise of his labor through the fortune of black flesh. He decides to continue without concern for the officers' interests because he believes the "common hands were too far gone in the just expectations of the future to be distracted" (308). Pierre, another crew member prominent in the redirected enterprise, considered the mass suicide of the slaves they captured before the Middle Passage a "great inconvenience" and a "grievous loss of fortune." He considers the Blacks of the Guinea Coast a "people who will prostitute themselves, granting free access to their continent" and cannot understand this "unreasonable" death; he finally attributes it to their ignorance and absence of soul (105, 121). As Lamming observes, the journey had turned Pierre into an "imperialist" (Kent 11). If Paquet is correct in identifying the exceptional aspect of the Commandant's utopian enterprise as its noncommercial purpose, then its appropriation by the crew, for whom the promise of freedom is
associated with the promise of gold, holds little promise for a future that is not based on economic exploitation (102-105). The crew wildly "dream of gold and glory" and consider the Lord Treasurer the "summit of achievement" (21). Since the common men's attitudes towards women is no better than that of the officers and no better than their own attitudes toward black slaves, there is little reason to expect that their behavior toward the women who are waiting on the island will produce an innovative, free society. 12 Early in the journey, an anonymous voice of the common men dreams about lying in the "kind of bed" the Lord Treasurer has made— one in which he sleeps with "virgins" while he keeps his wife like a "domestic beast," a "cow or a dog or some such animal of convenience" (17). As Jonas argues, we can expect that the "same flaws that doomed the 'breaking loose'" will be "evident in the new generation of reformers" (97).

THE LEGACY OF THAT MISTAKE: LONELINESS AND DISTRUST

Lamming has observed that you could read his work, from In the Castle of My Skin to Natives of My Person, as one work. If Castle begins the cycle of works that moves from the colonial period through independence, Natives is both the work that rounds out the cycle and the work that "might have opened that cycle"; "the end is the beginning" ("Africa and the Caribbean" 18-19). Unlike the men of the Reconnaissance who focus on the future as a completely fresh start divorced from the past, Lamming can only imagine the future, what may happen beyond the present, by returning to the past.

Lamming concedes that engaging in a dialogue with ancestral figures, even if those figures are imagined, can function something like the Haitian ceremony of the Souls (Kent 95). During this ceremony, as Lamming explains it, the dead return to speak to the living. This confrontation between present and past is necessary for the dead as well as the living. In order to be redeemed,

12 Paquet also associates the crew's desire to "restore their manhood" with their potential for tyranny, economic exploitation, and a general tendency to perpetuate the injustices they expect to leave behind (105-107).
the dead must "go into matters which they did not, for one reason or another, when alive" (Kent 94). They must "offer a full and honest report on their past relations with the living," so that each may be forgiven (Pleasures 9). The dialogue is also intended to guide the living who need to reform their present condition (Pleasures 10). Since the world of the living is "also the creation of the dead," this dialogue is needed to change the "architecture of the future" (Kent 94). By choosing to go "forward by making a complete return to the beginnings," Lamming allows the dead to speak to the living through Natives of My Person (Kent 96).

Because the dialogue in the Ceremony of Souls focuses on past mistakes, participating in this ceremony is particularly important for the present practice of freedom. As Sandra Pouchet Paquet suggests in her reading of Lamming's Season of Adventure, the dialogue is "mutually liberating," freeing both dead and living "from the errors of the past" (69). Several parallels indicate that dialogue with these particular ancestors, the characters in Natives, might be especially appropriate for G when he prepares to leave Barbados at the end of Castle. G's potential "ancestors" in this novel include not only the Commandant and the pilot, but also the other officers of the Reconnaissance, its crew, the women on the sister ship Penalty, and the Tribes who have been dispossessed or exterminated.

When Lamming tells George Kent that Natives comments simultaneously on "two sets of historical circumstances," the period of colonization and the contemporary world of post-colonial...
territories, he focuses on the "parallel relationships" between the leaders and the masses in the two circumstances. Neither he nor Kent attempt to evaluate the "parallel relationships" between men and women even though, as I noted earlier, Lamming argues that the major obstacle to creating "a new order of relations between men" in the period of colonization is the inability of the men to "reorganize their emotions regarding women" (Kent 5-6). I would argue that similar difficulties with male/female relationships inhibit the development of a truly innovative order of freedom in the contemporary world of San Cristobal, the world portrayed in Castle.

If we consider G's attitude at the end of Castle with the benefit of the backward glance that the Ceremony of Souls provides through Natives, we can see that his "mistake" is close to that of the Commandant, the pilot, and the other officers. His image of freedom as escape from tyranny and protection from invasion corresponds closely with that of the men because the society in which he is raised is similarly corrupt and characterized by difficult relations between men and women; and G's mistake similarly involves anxieties about relationships with others and an inability to practice the kind of responsibility that emphasizes responsiveness. If the castle image in Walcott's poem denies union to the black boy, G's inverted use of the image rejects union.

It is noteworthy that G comes upon the title image as he rereads a diary entry. Like the Commandant reading his own journal, G encounters a disturbing image, an image which could alert him to possible error. As I noted earlier, G's attitude toward the protection afforded by the title image is ambivalent at best. Like the Commandant who repeated the phrase "virgin territories" in his journal entries, G repeats the "castle of skin" image twice in the one entry and makes it the last thing he intends to record in his journal, because he finds himself saying "the same things over and over." Between the two repetitions of the image, however, he records the "last engagement" he has on the island, a meeting with a prostitute (261). It is after this engagement that he writes about wanting to hide in the castle of his skin.
His meeting with the prostitute is a curious one. He responds to her touch and the sight of her shiny, dark skin by belching. When she takes offense, he tells her a story about a boy who tricks others by getting them to grab a stick covered with bird shit. When the prostitute doesn’t understand why he tells her this “funny” story, he records ambiguously that he “couldn’t wait to explain” (261). Whether he means that he doesn’t take the time to explain, or that he loses no time in explaining the unflattering connection, is unclear. The incident, in either case, is degrading and ultimately hostile.

Jonas suggests that “the boy in the story epitomizes the impulse to . . . use another’s humiliation and shame to prove one’s own manhood.” Arguing that the prostitute unwittingly acquiesces in this process when her customers prove their manhood on her body, Jonas suggests that G “refuses to win ‘manhood’ so cheaply.” Instead, he turns “shit” into “medicine” by confronting his own darkness (70). My reading, by contrast, suggests that G responds precisely and problematically out of concern for his manhood. If Walcott’s poem describes a self-denigrating admirer of a white mistress, as Jonas claims, G’s appropriation of the poem’s castle imagery tends to denigrate others as it protects himself.

Not only do images of beset manhood recur throughout the novel, but stories of beset manhood introduce significant changes in the life and thinking of the community.14 It is after the head teacher learns about his wife’s adultery with the schoolmaster Slime, for example, that Slime resigns from teaching and opens the Friendly Society and Penny Bank that eventually dispossesses the villagers who join it (76-77, 233-257). When G and the boys spend a day at the beach reflecting on the state of their world, they focus on two stories of men, Jon and Bambi, who are forced to choose between two women. Interpreting the tragedy that results, the boys conclude that

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14 I am borrowing the phrase, “beset manhood,” from Nina Baym’s analysis of masculine theories of American literature as “Melodramas of Beset Manhood.” Her phrase is especially felicitous for my study since she argues that the idea of America, as a land of promise, was developed by male authors as a myth of the male who must escape social, or female, constraint in order to realize his individuality, or freedom, in an unsettled, or virgin, wilderness (71-73).
the "trouble" comes from marriage, which, according to an old saying, "ain't make for everybody.'" Trumper announces that he will never marry because there are so many bad things about it, "you don't sort of get 'bout as you like, an' the woman always seem to think she's got some special kind of claim on you, as if you're a kind of pigeon or fowl" (141-142). Their adolescent discussion echoes the thinking of the men on the Reconnaissance.\footnote{Lamming observes that the groupings of the men in Natives are similar to the groupings of the boys in Castle and that those "long speculations and so on between the men on the deck in Natives of My Person are really an extension of the long speculations of the boys on the beach in In the Castle of My Skin." But he only notes a similarity in their "talking about a world which exists only as an idea in your head" rather than a similarity in their discussion of men and women ("Africa and the Caribbean" 18).}

Paquet is one critic who interprets the novel from a masculine perspective that identifies with the boys' anxieties. Focusing on the colonial society's attack on manhood, she interprets these stories as a loss of village harmony and integrity and free spirit and ascribes their tragedy to the "imposition of an alien social contract that has no relevance." Claiming that the church and the school in this setting are "emasculating," she finds that the novel endorses Trumper's politics of black identity, criticizes the villagers' inability to organize in their own interests, and suggests that their inability to recognize the "function of power" reflects a "loss of manhood." She concludes that the novel argues for a complete break with such "crippling traditional restraints," in particular, by showing that G must separate from the authority of his mother (20-27). While Paquet's analysis is perceptive as an explanation of G's choices, it is less convincing as a description of a positive message that the novel endorses.

Paquet perceptively highlights the significance of G's struggle with his mother for his developing ideas of freedom and manhood. For example, the day on the beach, when the boys rehearse the village stories of beset manhood and elaborate their philosophy of life, takes place after his mother tells him that he must choose between her and the men on the corner, between her knowledge and their knowledge, since he "can't serve two masters" (113). As he returns from the
beach he prepares a lie to keep his disobedience from her; the quality of that lie, according to the boys, places him in the ranks of lawyers and politicians (157-158). He also chooses to spend his last morning reading those significant passages from his own diary instead of responding to his mother’s calls for attention and respect. She has been packing his things for nearly a week and is preparing one last celebratory meal, but he ignores her, treating her, as she says, as if she were his "maid." When she insists that he treat her with the dignity she deserves, he tries to "appease" her, but fails because he cannot recognize that her complaints against him have any merit (260-267). His behavior replicates that of the Commandant when the Lady demeans his work as butchery and angrily complains about his decision to leave her in order to continue that work. As the Commandant and G listen to the women berate them, they each reflect that such bursts of anger are becoming familiar and respond, almost peevishly, with the same question. Aggrieved at what they consider unfair assaults, the Commandant asks his mistress, "'What have I done now?'" and G asked his mother "outright what [he] had done this time" (Natives 69-70; Castle 263-264). While G’s mother tries to make him understand that he will be able to respect others only if he remembers to respect her, he refuses to listen and thinks only about "escape" (260-267). The "need" for a complete break thus corresponds well with G’s perspective. But his perspective does not go unchallenged and does not represent the novel’s argument.

What Paquet’s analysis misses is the way a perspective that focuses on manhood can translate social constraint into female constraint or social struggle into a struggle between men and women, or mothers and sons. While Paquet recognizes that the emphasis on manhood is a source of error for the colonizing enterprise in Natives, she suggests that restoring manhood offers a solution to the colonized in Castle. But the parallel contexts in which G and the Commandant read their diaries and discover a hint of error or ambivalence suggest that the situations of the male colonials, both the colonizers and the colonized, may be more similar than she acknowledges. If the Commandant turns to his journal as he prepares to meet his mistress on the island, G turns to
his diary as he prepares to leave his mother on the island. The fact that one is coming and the other is going seems to set up a certain distinction, but that distinction is blurred if we recall the Lady’s caution that the two movements were collapsed in the Commandant’s travels. G’s difficulty with responding sympathetically to his mother echoes both the Commandant’s inability to respond to the Lady’s needs each time he leaves and also his inability to reorganize his emotional response to her as he approaches the island.

In one intriguing comment on *Castle*, Ngugi implies that the boys substitute a contest with mothers for economic, political, or social struggle. “[T]he boys think it is the stupidity of their mothers which drives them from home,” because they do not understand that the root of their situation lies in slavery and economic necessity. Ngugi suggests that this misunderstanding arises from their ignorance of the relationship between slavery and freedom; this ignorance results in an effort to “find their roots in a general human predicament of sin, death, resurrection and salvation by grace” (113-117). If we accept that the *general* idea and practice of freedom is historically linked to the *specific* practice of slavery, as Orlando Patterson and Edmund Morgan, among others, argue, then the boys have inherited an attitude toward freedom that is connected to the history of slavery whether or not the boys understand that connection. They may continue the practice of freedom developed in master/slave relationships in other forms of relationship, particularly those which involve authority and potential domination. When the boys displace the authority of the master onto mothers, as the men in *Natives* displace the authority of the House onto women, they may localize that authority in a way they can resist, without fundamentally challenging the dynamics of master-slave interactions.

16 See Patterson’s *Freedom in the Making of Western Culture* for an argument that the connection between slavery and freedom began with the development of Athenian democracy. See Morgan’s *American Slavery, American Freedom* for his impressive analysis of this connection in the development of American democracy.
One generalization that emerges when we consider the image of freedom that underlies the boys' understanding, or misunderstanding, of slavery and their own relationships with women, family, and others, is that the freedom developed within this understanding is marked by a sense of loneliness. Freedom, as the 9-year-old G intuits when he reflects on his lack of family relations, is a blessing that takes the form of a consolation for loneliness: "[L]oneliness from which had subsequently grown the consolation of freedom," he notes, "was the legacy with which my first year opened." Like the less than certain "consolation" of the showers which "bless" his ninth birthday, it is, at best, a mixed blessing (9-15).

This concern with the connection between freedom and loneliness underlies the boys' discussions of beset manhood and different worlds on the beach, Trumper's embrace of race politics, and G's retreat into the castle of his skin. Trumper, for example, embraces the politics of race as one way to avoid being "alone in a world all by yourself" (295-301). In a significant sense, G's choice is in direct contrast to Trumper's. Where Trumper believes he can be known as and can act as a citizen of a larger world, the world of race, G prefers not to be known and, risking loneliness, chooses to be alone in his world, in the castle of his skin. What G avoids with his choice is "responsibility." He tells Trumper that he avoids politics, and thus race, because "I don't like the idea of being responsible to hundreds of people" (292). What both choices have in common, however, other than being determined by skin, is that both seek protection from the "pop, pop," the "something goin' off in yuh head," that they expect when worlds collide or change and people feel they don't belong (142-145). Both seek protection from conflicting worlds by inhabiting a single world—the world of race or the world of the individual. In order to protect, both must exclude others as not native to their world. What both choices restrict is a broad sense of responsibility, the ability to respond to and change others unlike them and to let those others

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17 See Cooke, "The Strains of Apocalypse," for another reading of G, with his need for independence, as a "lonely 'I'" (28, 39).
respond to and change them. G looks forward to travelling in another world precisely because he is "not native" to that world; for he expects that he will enjoy greater freedom and mobility as an outsider and a non-native (260). His choices match those of the pilot, the only non-native of Lime Stone on the *Reconnaissance*, who feels momentarily that he would like to "be part of another's understanding," but ultimately chooses to "create himself as an absolute foreigner" (316,319). G's prospect of unsettling himself from his native sphere is also unsettling in another sense; his source of hope is also a source of anxiety. Paradoxically, G prepares to unsettle himself and travel in other worlds by attempting to protect himself from becoming unsettled by those worlds.18

What underlies this fear of other worlds is a lack of trust. The boys fear betrayal because they fear that others hide a secret self inside them. Boys who move from the village school to the High School, for example, feel excluded from both worlds and can neither trust nor be trusted because they believe that "hidden somewhere in each was the other person which wondered how far the physical surface could be trusted" (220-221). For this reason, G would have difficulty trusting in the solidarity of race politics that Trumper embraces. G's choice echoes that of the Steward. Because he had been betrayed by the Lord Treasurer who had stolen his maps, he was "afraid that any confidence might be used against him" and any "gesture of collaboration" was only a "pretext for some future theft"; consequently, the Steward "closed his doors against all offers of comradeship" (*Natives* 329). But G's choice, hiding within the castle of his skin, reinforces rather than resolves this fear. The "hiding" that he sees as necessary for freedom is both his protection and the source of his greatest fear. Practicing a freedom that excludes others creates a seemingly insoluble dilemma: this kind of freedom promotes the very loneliness for which it provides the only consolation.

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18 See Part 3 for further discussion of connections between modes of habitation, travel, and the practice of freedom with care in Lamming and the other authors in this study.
The experience of the village, like the competition and discord in Lime Stone, provides ample reason for distrust. Both Slime and the head teacher, who believe they share two worlds, the world of the village and the world of the school or authority, betray the villagers. The head teacher suffers his own betrayal, his wife's infidelity with Slime. The "explosion" that occurs in his head echoes the "pop, pop" that the boys fear, and it forces him to contemplate a "novel response," something to replace the ready responses which had all become inoperative, if he is to overcome the impotence of inaction. As he reflects on questions of trust, on concern for his own power and authority, and on concern for Slime's wife and children, he feels his mind becoming "undisciplined" and ends up "farther away from a decision than he was when he had started to think of one" (64-68). His general inability "to get a ready response, a new tactic for a problem which had never appeared before," prefigures the difficulty the villagers face when they try to decide on an appropriate response to having their land purchased away from them. But his specific inability to develop a just solution that combines concern for the effects of his choices on himself and on others highlights the paucity of the heritage within which he is working.

And the way G hopes to resolve the challenge of betrayal when worlds collide is simply based on a fantasy. That fantasy is exposed when the boys invade the landlord's home, which is as large as a castle and as different from their world as the place they call "the other world," heaven. Even as they demonstrate that this fortress is subject to intrusion and a kind of "house-breaking," they imagine that their presence creates no disturbance, that they can keep each of their worlds separate, intact, and fundamentally impregnable. When Trumper suggests that everything's in order, "'[b]ig life one side an' small life a next side,'" the phrase he uses to describe their feeling of harmony, "'you get a kin' o' feelin' of you in your small corner an' I in mine,'" uncannily echoes the structure of the poetic lines from which the title image is drawn: "You in the castle of your skin, I among the swineherd" (171-175). This house-breaking episode suggests that G's skin, which he inhabits as a castle even as the landlord becomes "a relic of another time," will be far
from impregnable and that his attempt to keep himself to himself is based on a similar fantasy of sovereign autonomy (230).

The image G adopts is a fantasy not least because, as the voice in Pa’s dream cautions, "there’s always two worlds to one man" (211-212). It is precisely this worry, that moving in another world might bring out another person in themselves, someone different from who they think they are, that creates the greatest anxiety among the boys, that makes them worry that something in their heads will go "pop, pop," and that encourages them to avoid feeling (142, 153). The integrity of their worlds, and their belief that they can be free in those worlds, are threatened not simply by their inability to know the person hidden inside the other, but also by their inability to trust the other inside the self.
"WE ARE A FUTURE THEY MUST LEARN": RE-IMAGINING FREEDOM AS A WAY OF WELCOMING OTHERS

IN DIALOGUE WITH AN ALTERNATE LEGACY:
SHIFTING ATTENTION FROM PROSPERO TO CALIBAN AND FROM MALE TO FEMALE ANCESTORS

One of the "others" G must be open to is "Caliban" and the legacy of the native that Caliban represents. As a contemporary West Indian, G has dual ancestors in the European and the native (Pleasures 15). In his critical essays, Lamming explores not only the freedom inherited from Prospero but also the freedom native to Caliban. He concludes that each legacy involves a different "mistake" in the way people relate to each other, and he proposes that the Prospero and the Caliban within the divided West Indian subject must work together if the West Indies are to practice a freedom that is masterless and slaveless (Pleasures 85, 159). 1

The Commandant in Natives, like Prospero, "a new man intent on being a new master"; like Ahab, he is a master-builder obsessed with a master plan (Pleasures 151). His own freedom in his new enterprise requires that his power and independence be recognized and protected. The loneliness and distrust that precedes and continues with G's appropriation of the master's symbol of freedom with or through protection illustrates one of the limitations of his legacy. 2

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1 Although the figures of Prospero and Caliban are taken, as I already noted, from Shakespeare’s 1611 play, The Tempest, the characters and plot of The Tempest do not provide the exclusive referent for Lamming’s analysis of a Prospero-Caliban relationship. In a more general scheme, he figures colonizers as Prosperos and the colonized as Calibans. Accordingly, my "summary" of the Prospero-Caliban relationship in his work is not restricted to his direct analysis of Shakespeare’s play, but includes several pertinent features of his broader analysis.

2 This reading of the Commandant challenges the one presented by the Boatswain within the novel. The Boatswain says that his own rule of conduct is to distrust, to consider another a crook, until his conduct proves he can be trusted and claims that the Commandant follows an opposite code, trusting others until they prove unworthy of such honor. He concludes that either way can be "grievous error" (213). The Boatswain may be perceptive in describing two approaches to interactions with others and in suggesting that each may involve error, but he is inaccurate in describing the Commandant’s tendency. The Commandant certainly never trusted the natives of the
While Prospero's mistake corresponds broadly with that of the man who becomes the master in Hegel's description of the master-slave dialectic, Caliban's mistake is not originally that of the man who becomes the slave in the same dialectic. Lamming focuses instead on Caliban's original situation, which illustrates the legacy of the native before master-slave relations. Although Caliban becomes Prospero's slave, his original mistake is one of spontaneous generosity, rather than concession in a struggle for recognition. As Lamming describes it, Caliban's mistake is a "tendency to welcome." The danger of this mistake is the betrayal that G fears. When Caliban's offer of affection is betrayed, he is both dispossessed and enslaved. The solution, however, is not simply to adopt Prospero's strategy. To the extent that an enslaved Caliban identifies with Prospero's notion and with his limited offers of freedom and equality, Caliban is actually colonized by affection (Pleasures 76, 101, 114).

Even though Caliban's generous welcome carries great risk in encounters structured by Prospero's intentions and fears, his mistake is yet a "source of some vision." For Caliban's mistake affords "a kind of creative blindness" (Pleasures 115). Prospero's mistake, by contrast, presumably involves a destructive blindness.

As I noted in the previous chapter, Lamming enters into a Ceremony-of-Souls-like dialogue with one of these West Indian ancestors, Prospero, through his portrait of the Commandant and the officers of the Reconnaissance. That same novel also explores the legacy of Caliban, but does so chiefly by entering into dialogue with the women who, travelling on the sister ship Penalty, have arrived at the island ahead of the men. Natives of My Person explores the legacy of the Prospero-Caliban pair, in part, by figuring it in terms of allegorical male-female pairs.

Lamming's critical analysis of The Tempest connects the two pairs. Prospero condemns Caliban's mother, Sycorax, as a "so-and-so" and takes "refuge in the lesson of chastity in order to
evade or obscure talk about* Miranda’s mother, “the woman who is supposed to be his wife.” Since these women are dead in *The Tempest*, they are silent, unable to respond. Lamming suggests that it will take “some arrangement similar to the Haitian Ceremony of Souls” for them to return and “tell us what we should and ought to know.” He concludes that hope for the future lies in the children of these two mothers; for Caliban and Miranda now “share an ignorance that is also the source of some vision” (*Pleasures* 115-116). In the final section of *Natives*, Lamming arranges a kind of Ceremony of Souls that allows some of these “mothers” to speak, if only briefly.

Lamming presents most of *Natives* in a way that mimics the histories of the European colonizers—in a way that depends on the invisible presence of blackness and also on the invisible presence of women. In *Playing in the Dark*, Toni Morrison eloquently argues that the invisible presence of blackness conditions the literary imagination of whiteness and freedom. Lamming similarly argues that our social institutions treat “the female as an invisible presence, . . . made absent when she is most present” (“Coming Home” 50). In *Natives of My Person* he makes it clear that the invisible presence of natives and women conditions the imagination of manhood and freedom. While the natives of the islands never speak, the women waiting on the island do.

Unaware that the Commandant, Surgeon, and Steward have been killed, the Lady, the wives of the two officers, and perhaps the other anonymous women, provide a “creative legacy” that shifts the focus of the novel from the failure of the aborted enterprise to an end of open possibility (Kent 88). As the Lady of the House prophetically and enigmatically concludes, these women “are a future” the men “must learn” (345).

Her comment adds several ironic twists to the ambitions of the men. In his reading of *Prospero and Caliban*, Lamming suggests that “future is the very name for possibilities” (*Pleasures* 109). Throughout the journey in *Natives*, the men have focused their hopes on the “future.”

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3 See my introduction for a fuller discussion of Morrison’s text and the extent to which it influences the shape of this project.
habit of mind was so endemic that long before the Steward had trained his wife "to feel and think of the future as the only important aspect of time" (202). And the "future" throughout the men's journey has been somehow bound up with the promise of the islands ahead. The Lady's phrase picks up the language of the men and reorients it. The "future" does wait for the men on that island. But it is not so much the gold and the glory the men had been imagining; rather, the future is the women from the kingdom the men had left behind. If these women are the men's "future," they are also connected to the men's "past." Their dual status reflects two key ideas: there is no completely "fresh start" as the Surgeon and others had hoped, but neither is there any possibility of simply returning to the old kingdom and its ways.

What it means for the "women" to be the future, however, is highly ambiguous. The words might simply mean that the future must be lived with these particular women. Or that it must be lived as these particular women have lived. Or that it will be lived by these women, perhaps in some new way that even they are only beginning to glimpse. Or, further, that it will be lived between these women and must be lived as they manage to live with each other. The meaning of the future is also ambivalent. If the notion of the "future" presented in the novel has involved a sense of promise and of potential fortune, it has also involved a sense of anxiety, of something unknown, mysterious, hidden from present knowledge. The men have tried, on the one hand, to fix that future by planning it and taking charge over it, or they have tried, on the other hand, to get a glimpse of some unknown, unplanned future through prophetic visions. Neither practice has yet been particularly rewarding.

Lamming, as a novelist, tries a different method when, in culminating his series of novels about his contemporary world, he hopes to glimpse the possible future of the Caribbean islands after independence by exploring the past, by imagining a dialogue with the characters in Natives. Applying that method internally, by looking into the women's past within the world of the novel, may be the most fruitful for glimpsing what kind of future they might portend.
Although Lamming criticizes the men’s inability to carry out a creative future with the women and sets up a gendered structure that opposes the women’s practice to the men’s, and seems to endorse their practice over the men’s, the women are not simply victims to the men and their portrait is not simply positive. The Steward’s wife, for example, did try to use the orphan girl who showed up at their door as a “pawn,” in her attempt to influence her husband, as well as in their attempt to best the Lord Treasurer (203, 335). The Lady, when she was simply the Commandant’s mistress, wanted to feel a “pride of conquest” over him, to divorce him from the sea; she forbade him, unsuccessfully, to leave her again (56-60). The Lady did commit adultery with the Boatswain, although she claims she reached out first in sympathy rather than in domination and then continued in submissive indifference and self-debasement; and the Surgeon’s virtuous wife did have intercourse with the pilot, although it was only once and only when she had been abandoned by the Surgeon and unjustly confined in an asylum (170, 337-340).

But there is perhaps something more promising in their past, something which indicates at least a potential for a more creative responsiveness to others—one that allows sympathy with another to influence their own feelings and behavior even as they hope to influence the feelings and behavior of others. The Steward’s wife, for example, learns to appreciate the orphan girl as a companion. The way she thinks about the “gift” of this companionship provides a striking contrast with the way G thinks about relationships with others and reflects a legacy that he may need to consider in his desire for independence. For the Steward’s wife had experienced the “solitude” she knew in her marriage as a “prison”; her home had been an unwelcome “fortress.” So she experiences the companionship with the girl as release rather than confinement—even though the mutual affection releases painful feelings. When she learns about the sexual relations between the girl and her husband, the experience is horrifying and enlightening. She is finally able to see the girl not simply as a gift to her, but as a “person” with separate feelings. She recognizes both that the girl is afraid of her husband’s attentions and that the girl feels powerless to complain partly
because the girl is responding to the wife's need for companionship (335-336). In part, what she is able to see when she recognizes the suffering of another is the role she plays in the suffering.

It is the related "virtue" of "self inquiry" in the Commandant's mistress (before she marries the Lord Treasurer) that the Commandant fears and seeks to avoid so assiduously. He, like the Steward, likes to think of himself as innocent; when accused, like G, he is aggrieved. The difference in the gendered approaches to self inquiry when such inquiry relates to the suffering of others is highlighted in how the Commandant and his mistress react to the slaughter and the subsequent response of the Tribes on Sans Souci during earlier expeditions. For him, the slaughter, as well as the torture he inflicted to make the Tribes work in the mines, had been part of his "duty," or responsibility, a way of securing command. The resistance he encounters from the Tribes on a subsequent expedition is an unallowable "liberty." Because they have defeated, and almost killed, him by digging and concealing "graves" on the beach and then retreating underground, he vows that he will never leave them alone. If he is to practice his independence sans souci, without care for their needs and without concern for his life, they must consent to subjugation. He is most offended when his mistress makes a "trial of their [his and the kingdom's] triumphs." He reminds her that her own father led the expedition during which the Tribes were first slaughtered and suggests that he has acted in her name. He offers her the jewels he took after the Tribes went underground at Sans Souci and insists that they are not souvenirs of conquest, but souvenirs of her (56-65, 70-82, 219).

His mistress is briefly seduced by the jewels and his acts of affection, but she cannot long enjoy the jewels from Sans Souci without care. She knows their price too well—for herself and for the Tribes. She considers her experience and that of the Tribes in parallel and develops her sympathetic response partly by recognizing something similar in their situations and partly by imagining how she and the kingdom would suffer if their experiences were even more closely aligned. She had been on the Demon Coast of Sans Souci when her father, who was assisted by the
Commandant, sent the men of the Tribes to the mines and she had seen the suffering of the women who remained to farm like cattle and to "wait" for the return of their men. Since she now knows the pain of being separated from the Commandant, she begins to condemn the kingdom's "work" even more forcefully than she had in the past. She suffers when she remembers that 10,000 women and uncounted children had died in one month, that the women, in madness or resistance, had drowned their own children before the kingdom's bullets cut them down, and that the kingdom considers her father, who is responsible for the slaughter, a "decent" man because he is loyal and affectionate to his own family. She concludes her reflections by trying to calculate how quickly the people of the kingdom would become extinct if they were killed at a similar rate. The Commandant is indignant at her accusations and appalled by her attempt to imagine the people of the kingdom in the position of the people of the Tribes (76-82). It is possible to read the Lady's final statement, that she and the other women "are a future" the men "must learn," as the novel's response to the words with which the Commandant refuses to accept her "demonic" way of understanding the kingdom's relations with the Tribes: "She is a virtue I cannot satisfy" (76).

He prefers a woman of fantasy, as the moment he is most happy with her behavior indicates. On the day that, unknown to him, she marries the Lord Treasurer, he sees "her the way he wanted her to be": smiling softly and reflectively, "yet warm with attention" and no hint of "recrimination" (270). The real woman, however, is someone who has both married the Lord Treasurer and is beginning to plan the Commandant's rescue from prosecution for finally opposing the interests of the House; she is capable of self-inquiry and of judgment.

Unwilling to judge himself according to her "virtue," the Commandant searches for some failing in her. When he later hears the Boatswain's charge that she is a "whore," he latches onto her "betrayal" as an excuse to end their connection. As the pilot phrases it, the Commandant, like the Surgeon, uses a woman's infidelity to "make peace with himself" (317). Each has been
defensive about his own failings and finds a certain relief in discovering an "honorable" reason for ending their relationships.

The women, by contrast, choose to help their men and to rejoin them even though the women are aware of the men's failings and even though the men have betrayed them. The women explain their own behavior as a practice of "love," which to them means that they choose to act, at least sometimes, in the men's behalf even if that choice means acting against their own "interest" (202, 328).

Another way to account for the women's attitudes, however, is to see them attempting to reconcile Prospero and Caliban in ways that Lamming says the contemporary West Indian must learn to do. Intrapsychically, they must recognize both Prospero, or the element of power, and also Caliban, or the element of generosity or the tendency to welcome, as part of themselves, and must reconcile the two aspects within themselves. Interpersonally, when they identify themselves in the position of Caliban, they must "work together" with and reconcile themselves to Prospero in the figures of such men as the Commandant, the Surgeon, and the Steward. For if, as Lamming suggests, the future must derive from the past, which includes Prospero as well as Caliban, and the "women" are the "future," then any possibility the women embody must also incorporate the legacies of Prospero as well as Caliban. When one of the wives defines the "interests" involved in her choice in terms that hint at this possibility, because those terms suggest that the men's and women's interests are not completely separate and that the interest of another is not necessarily foreign to her, she says that her husband has become "a native of my person" (328).

REALIZING THE FUTURE IN "NATIVE SOIL"

Like the notion of a "future," the notion of a "native" has been both prevalent throughout the novel and used in a number of ways. Those who are indigenous to Lime Stone use the term to define themselves. They commonly use the designation, "native of Lime Stone," to identify those who come from the same place as potential comrades and as knowable. Those who are "not
native,* like the pilot, do not share their habits and are excluded from their company and treated with suspicion. One of the crew insists that the pilot is not a "safe" companion, because he is "not native to Lime Stone, where the word is necessary as blood. We call on it in and out of season, for good reason and bad, or no reason at all" (13). When the pilot then chooses to identify himself as the polar opposite of native, and to disassociate himself from them, and eventually all others, by becoming the absolute "foreigner," he thinks of this position as being "impervious, remote, and devoid of all interest in [others'] personal destiny" (294).

The pilot, who was born and raised on Antarctica, and is thus "native" to it, has refused that identification and deserted because he was branded as a traitor for objecting, like the Commandant, to the peace treaty being negotiated between their nations. The pilot expresses his freedom through his insistence on foreignness, by which he radically separates his interests from those of all other people. The freedom of the "foreigner," moreover, is one which allows him to be "resolute about his multiple choice of direction," to live without any allegiance or commitment to others (321). Such lack of involvement with others may be Prospero's most damning quality; for Lamming calls "total indifference . . . . a perfect example of human degradation" (Pleasures 116).

By considering others as natives of rather than foreign to themselves, the women designate another way of being together as their path to the future and its freedom.

The people of Lime Stone do not use this opposing term, "foreigner," to describe those who are indigenous to the islands rather than to Lime Stone. Instead, they use the same term they use to name themselves, "native," but often in a different sense. Those who come from the islands are seldom described as "natives of" or "native to" Sans Souci or San Cristobal, for example, but simply as "natives" (or "tribes"). The word takes on ontological connotations when it is used to characterize those inhabitants as savage or beastly and different from the inhabitants of Lime Stone. If the women also embody this sense of the term when they consider others as natives of themselves, then they are refusing such strict ontological distinctions between themselves and
others, and, figuratively, between Prospero and Caliban. And their use of the phrase would reclaim the word "native," as another Lamming novel puts it, from that list of names "that start with 'n'" and that twentieth-century intellectuals, like their seventeenth-century predecessors, use to deride the islands' indigenous and dark inhabitants (Season 71).

The image the women use institutes a new mode of connectedness with others and relocates the place of identification from a nation or land to the self, to the body and the psyche. The image adds another irony to the ambition of the Surgeon, who had joined this enterprise because he believed that "fate had deprived [him] of a chance to realize [his] visions in the native soil of Lime Stone" (51). As I noted earlier, he can only envision success on "virgin" territory. The position of the women at the end of the novel suggests that one thing the Surgeon and the other men must learn to do is reorganize their understanding of "native soil" as well as "virgin territory" and their relationships to both. The future will be lived on "native soil." That "soil," however, must now be understood in its multiple and shifting meanings, which include the character of the land they left behind and of the islands toward which they are heading, the past and the future and the connections between the two, as well as the women who are connected to the soil and even identified with it.

The novel makes at least one explicit connection between women and soil when the Commandant has intercourse with his mistress following his fourth voyage, the one during which he was defeated by the Tribes through their "strategy of the graves." Even as he enjoys her body, his mind turns to the assault he will mount against the natives on another voyage. The narrative describes his preoccupation by observing that "his . . . sperm was nurturing a different soil" (65). The use of the word "different" draws the land, the woman's body, and perhaps his thoughts about the future, together in the idea of "soil." By the end of the novel, the women have come to stand, figuratively and in all its meanings, for the "native soil" on which the future must be lived.

The bodily image with which the women begin their journey to the future also provides a useful contrast with the attitude that G embodies when he sets out on his journey. G's "castle of
skin* imagery embodies the promise and the risk that Lamming associated with Prospero; since it promises independence by emphasizing separation from others and self-protection, it risks isolation and loneliness. In the language I have been using to describe the characters in Natives, G assumes that others are foreign beings, with interests hostile to his own, who will try to invade and destroy him. The other is like an antigen, a toxic substance that the body must attack if the antigen is not to weaken and possibly destroy the body. G’s metaphor, moreover, assumes that his body may not be able to produce the antibodies necessary to eliminate the antigen and seeks to establish the skin as a barrier to invasion. 

The women’s image, by contrast, assumes that the other is native and they are willing to incorporate the other. It is possible to read such incorporation as a dominating gesture, as Paquet does, when she claims that the women view the men as “extensions of themselves” and attempt to possess and control the men and their exploits. Arguing that the women’s desire for mutual fulfillment means the death of the men, she concludes that this dangerous result is the penalty the women extract for being excluded from mutual power (108-111). The interests of the two are still hostile, but the women are not, as they assert, acting against their own interests, but against the men’s interests. The body in Paquet’s argument treats the other as food; the women have simply mimicked the colonizing man who consumes the body of the native, but they treat the colonizing man as the native.

This reading would mean that the women have more or less taken over the men’s ambitions. But the difference in their attitudes toward the native Tribes of the islands suggests that the women’s practice will be different from the men’s. In their real relations with the Tribes, the men have invaded, responded to welcome with betrayal, and dominated the natives. Even on this

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4 Tiffin draws on a similar biological analogy. But she uses it as a metaphor for “writing back” to evaluate the novel, Natives. She argues that Lamming’s text treats the imperialist as an invader and produces antibodies [she mistakenly identifies these as antigens] that replicate the antigen with a view only to expelling it (31).
final enterprise in which the Commandant intends to reverse his former ambition, he thinks that even "the basest men" under his command will be able to "erect themselves into gentlemen" because "orders to seize command over the savage tribes" provide a "perfect school of conquest and command" (11). The Lady, by contrast, has developed a sympathy for the Tribes by identifying with their suffering. For the women to treat the men as natives indicates that the women somehow identify with the men; such identification also suggests that their interests may be connected rather than simply opposing.

The women's gesture is closer to that associated with Caliban in Lamming's analysis—it suggests generosity and welcome more than possession and control. The moment of welcome anticipates that their interests will be mutual. The female body may treat the other as it does sperm, a foreign substance that may be incorporated by and may fertilize the egg. Their interests may be cooperating rather than antagonistic, and the sperm may "become" native in a limited sense, because it unites with the egg to produce the entity which will become the fetus. The fetus, which embodies both, is only partly native to the mother, but their interests are mutual, though different; and they are protected from mutual destruction by each other through the specialized, intrauterine environment which the mother's body provides.

This last reading of the bodily metaphor is consistent with the argument offered by Jonas. She claims that the phrase, "natives of my person," embodies a goal—specifically, that the self must recognize the Other as native to its own psyche and must draw polarized opposites together within itself (91-95). The reading is also supported by the reason Lamming offers for choosing the phrase as his title—that he was impressed by a man from Ghana who called his children "natives of my person." He observes that everything in the book, and everything created from its experience, is a native of his person (Kent 4).

Jonas suggests that the risk associated with such a gesture is minimal. Recognition of the other within the self may overthrow the ego, but the kind of dominating ego which would reject the
other should be overthrown (91-95). But the risk of welcome, as Lamming describes it in his
analysis of Caliban, is not small, particularly when the other is dominating. When this welcome is
betrayed rather than reciprocated, Caliban may be sacrificed and enslaved. The dangers of betrayal
and destruction represent the kind of threat that G seeks to protect himself against through the
contrasting mechanism of withdrawing within the castle of his skin.

As I noted earlier, Lamming indicates that the welcome which Caliban practices is the
source of a vision that needs to be developed even though the practice opens him to the risk of
betrayal. Lamming's novels, however, are highly allusive about what kinds of attitudes and
behaviors, especially regarding the self and its relationships with others, might embody that vision.
One argument that Eve O'Callaghan makes when reviewing the work of Jamaican novelist and
sociologist Erna Brodber suggests that the concepts involved in psychoanalytic theory might offer a
way of understanding the "future" that is promised at the end of Natives.

When Brodber discusses Jane and Louisa Will Soon Come Home with O'Callaghan, she
explains how and why her novel works as a "case study" for her social work students. The novel
describes the kind of "therapeutic tool" that is needed to heal the "dissociative personality" that the
students will encounter in the contemporary Caribbean. The therapy, as Brodber explains it,
requires a certain kind of "'going back' to the past": "you have to know them (the ancestors) and
you have to know that these were the problems and this was how they dealt with them; . . . you
have to look and you have to shake their hands still and know that this was their way of coping.
But it does not necessarily mean that you have to do it this way" (O'Callaghan 64). O'Callaghan
connects this process with Lamming's work by suggesting that the process Brodber describes works
mainly by allowing "you" to know and assess the "natives of your person" (64). The therapy--
which also describes the central activity of the Ceremony of Souls--consists in reclaiming,
reassessing, and perhaps even transcending, the past, which is "native" to you.
When the women describe their connections to "natives of [their] person" at the close of Lamming's novel, they may be struggling to articulate the kind of new meanings, values, practices, and kinds of relationship that comprise what Raymond Williams calls an emergent or even pre-emergent "structure of feeling"—"affective elements of consciousness and relationships" that are "active and pressing but not yet fully articulated" within a dominant social order and which depend "crucially on finding new forms or adaptations of form" (Marxism and Literature 123-134). Some contemporary critiques of psychoanalysis present the attitudes about autonomy and interpersonal relationships that are described and endorsed by traditional psychoanalytic theory in terms that connect those attitudes with the ideology embraced by G and the men on the Reconnaissance; that ideology serves to describe and endorse the dominant social order. The revised understandings of autonomy and interpersonal relationships that cultural and feminist critiques of psychoanalysis offer, by contrast, may articulate that active and pressing structure of feeling that begins to emerge at the end of Natives.5

CONCEPTUALIZING THE "FUTURE" IN CRITIQUES OF PSYCHOANALYTIC THEORY

Classical psychoanalysis, according to these critics, focuses on development as individuation and independence. Its developmental norms promote a kind of autonomy that requires radical separation from others. Ideally self-regulating, self-determining, self-possessive, and self-sufficient, this mode of autonomy conflicts with intimate, caring, reciprocal interpersonal relationships.

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5 It is important to keep in mind that a "critique," as I will be using the term, proceeds from within and is not simply negative. When Terry Eagleton represents his work as a "critique" of ideology rather than a "criticism," for example, he explains that a "critique," like the techniques of psychoanalysis, "seeks to inhabit the experience of the subject from the inside." It does so not simply to recount what is awry in the situation, but to "elicit those 'valid' features of that experience which point beyond the subject's present condition" (Introduction xiv). Brenkman, in his cultural critique of psychoanalysis, also uses this sense of the term. These critiques of psychoanalysis seek to redefine rather than simply overthrow such concepts as autonomy.
In *Straight Male Modern: A Cultural Critique of Psychoanalysis*, for example, Brenkman observes that the norm of autonomy in psychoanalytic theory has traditionally been expressed as individual self-sufficiency and assumes rivalry between persons. Even when Paul Ricouer challenged Freudian theory by showing that the “form of personhood implied in the Freudian account” derives from capitalist forms of property and contract, his revisions ended up defending “possessive individualism” (30-31). “The autonomy of one’s person” that Ricouer envisioned beyond the master-slave relation is a “mode of possessiveness.” Like G within the castle of his skin, this autonomy “is protected against the intrusions of others just like one’s property” (35).

Feminist critics identify this form of autonomy, one that must be protected against intrusion, as defensive and isolating. Psychological autonomy is a key concept in Evelyn Fox Keller’s *Reflections on Gender and Science*. Arguing that scientific objectivity is the “cognitive counterpart of psychological autonomy,” she identifies traditional attitudes about psychological autonomy as the emotional substructure that joins science with masculinity (71). She contends that the form of autonomy which is presented as a developmental goal in traditional psychoanalysis assumes that “autonomy can only be bought at the price of unrelatedness” (72). Because this form of autonomy is threatened by connections with others, it can never be relaxed. It requires a rigid, vigilant, defensive separation between self and others; if the separation offers comfort when it allays the anxiety of intrusion and control by others, it also results in loneliness (82-102). The defensiveness and ambivalence that Keller describes characterize G’s behavior and feelings when he retreats behind the castle of his skin. The connections Keller establishes between psychoanalytic and scientific theory and practice helps to explain the basis of G’s anxiety. Autonomy, according to Keller, is the psychodynamic root that equates knowledge and power, opposes each to love, and connects each with domination (71-72, 116). Within this dynamic, the act of knowing is felt not as communion, but as the conquest that G fears.
Keller’s contention, that such autonomy is “pseudo-autonomy” and “signals vulnerability rather than security” echoes the claims made by Benjamin, a psychoanalyst whose critiques of traditional accounts Brenkman and Keller repeat, endorse, and expand upon (102). Noting that the feminist critique of the autonomous individual in psychoanalytic theory parallels the Marxian critique of the bourgeois individual, Benjamin explains that the ideal of individual “freedom” in each of the contested concepts denies real dependency and is essentially negative: it “consists of protection from the control or intrusion of others.” Such “unfettered individuality,” freed from bondage, is “stripped bare of its relationship with and need for others” (187-188). Benjamin also argues that this self-protective, inward-turning “free” individual—the kind G hopes to be—may simply accept “powerlessness in the guise of autonomy” (179).

But the “powerlessness” that takes the form of such pseudo-autonomy, by distancing itself from others and pretending it can control the self even if it cannot affect the world, avoids other ethical considerations. For this defensively autonomous self who is powerless may rationalize his failure to exercise agency, especially with regard to others. In particular, Benjamin suggests, the powerlessness that takes the form of pseudo-autonomy may express itself as a denial of “responsibility to care for others” (179-180). Her analysis fits G’s situation at the end of Castle. When G seeks to protect himself from others by withdrawing within the castle of his skin, he simultaneously accepts “powerlessness in the guise of autonomy” and abdicates the responsibility of caring for others. When he watches a house collapse as the villagers try to move it, for example, G notes: “I tried not to think about it since there was nothing I could do” (Castle 301). His lack of responsibility is also connected to a failure of response-ability. G justifies his form of self-protection by arguing that the people on Barbados, and probably elsewhere, can never really know each other. He accepts, in Benjamin’s terms, an inability “to get through to the other, or to be gotten through to,” and suffers the “solitary confinement” that is a “modern form of bondage” (84).
Such response-ability, which the men on the *Reconnaissance* also lacked, is key to the revised understandings of autonomy and of self in connection to others that Brenkman, Keller, and Benjamin develop. Brenkman, for example, proposes that autonomy can be understood as the "capacity to participate actively and on a par with others in a widening network of interactions" (206). These self-developing interactions with others are facilitated by "dialogic receptivity" (216-221). Keller argues that a "dynamic," fluid conception of autonomy is preferable to the static, fixed conception of autonomy that denies connections with others and protects itself through defensive separation. The differentiation that marks personal growth can be understood less as a separation between self and other and more as a "particular way of being connected" (107). Dynamic autonomy promotes that particular kind of connection by acknowledging that "ebb and flow" is necessary between self and other and by allowing a temporary suspension of boundaries in the self's interactions with others (100-101). Keller picks up on Benjamin's argument, which is also Brenkman's, that such autonomy is fostered by "responsiveness" between two or more developing subjects (113).

The possibility that the women at the close of *Natives* may be trying to develop this kind of responsiveness when they pay attention to the men's needs and welcome the men inside themselves is suggested by one further comment that Keller makes about dynamic autonomy. As the boundaries between self and other become more "flexible," Keller argues, "the distinction between self-interest and altruism begins to lose sharpness" (100). By extension, altruism, or acting in the interest of another, as the women say they are acting, is not simply self-sacrifice. Instead, the women's capacity for empathic experience may, in Keller's words, give "rise to a sense of agency in a world of interacting, interpersonal agents with whom [they feel] an essential kinship while still recognizing and accepting their independent integrity" (101). When the women suspend the boundaries between themselves and their husbands or lovers, they neither equate the men's interests with their own nor fully oppose their own needs to the men's needs; instead, they use their sense of
kinship with the men to act in a way that fits their own desires to participate as "partners" in this enterprise.

As I noted earlier, the meaning embodied in designating others as "natives of my person" has been read negatively, as a gesture of the women's domination over the men, and could also be read negatively in an opposite way, as an indication of the women's abandonment of self to the men. The notion that the women engulf the men or lose themselves in the men may reflect the influence of another key concept within the reigning ideology of classical psychoanalytic theory—the concept of symbiosis. Within the classical model, the earliest stage of human development is characterized by a symbiotic attachment between the child and the mother, a relationship in which the child is wholly dependent on the mother for care—for love as well as physical care. The connection between the child and the mother is fantasized as one of merging, in which the two exist as a unity with little or no boundary between them. To mature, the child must become free of this dependency by separating from the mother. In the "crudest formations" of this theory, as Brenkman puts it, "the mother's emotional power and significance simply compromise" the child's growth toward autonomy; their relationship is reduced to a "mere autonomy-robbed dependency" (163, 201). The child who remains attached may accept heteronomy, or subjection to another's rules, interests, and ideas, in place of autonomy. When freedom is understood as separation, connection is seen as regression. Connection becomes a "return" to symbiotic attachment, and qualities that are associated with the supposedly symbiotic bond, like empathy, nurturance, and care, are also assumed to impede autonomy. In terms of this concept, the women at the end of Natives would be viewed: either, like the mother in this formation, who impedes the men's freedom by overidentifying with them and attempting to "care" for them to such an extent that the men can no longer act—the men's sole autonomy, like that of the child who can do little more than refuse his
food, would be to refuse to continue the enterprise; or, like the child who does not manage to separate from others and becomes overattached and subservient to the men.⁶

The flaw with such thinking, as Brenkman explains it, proceeds from a misunderstanding of the "relation of dependence and autonomy" in real mother-child relations. Even though an infant is dependent on its mother, such dependence is not simply the opposite of autonomy, but its "precondition"; and "autonomy is not the opposite" of connection with others, "but the corollary of unconstrained, self-developing interactions with" them (216). While "autonomy-robbing" mother-child relationships exist, they represent "pathogenic" rather than "normal" relationships. For the description of more normal mothering, as well as its implications for psychoanalytic theory and concepts of autonomy, Brenkman, like Keller, refers to Benjamin.

Benjamin develops her descriptive as well as normative revisions to psychoanalytic theory by paying attention to actual mother-child interactions rather than to retrospective fantasies of that interaction. The idea of "primal oneness," she concludes, "is a retroactive fantasy" (173). Observations of actual interactions indicate that "from the beginning there are always (at least) two subjects," a mother and a child who are both individuals who have and act on their own needs, at least to some extent, rather than a symbiotic, undifferentiated unity. One key premise in the study of intersubjective relationships (of the experiences that occur between as well as within individuals) is that connection and separation exist simultaneously rather than sequentially in developmental stages which posit them as opposites. Even though a mother (or father) and an infant are unequal, Benjamin posits, they can and do engage in an active exchange characterized by mutual influence.

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⁶ Mary Donnelly relies on this notion of symbiosis and on the need for G to separate from his state of pre-Oedipal unity with his mother in her reading of *Castle*. Donnelly cites Benjamin to describe this state of unity in the Freudian account as a state of "oceanic oneness" and to characterize the mother as "engulfing," but then accepts the classical theory of development to argue that G must separate himself from "the unity Benjamin posits," as if Benjamin's critique follows the traditional script on this point (8-12). As will become clear, my reading of *Castle* and of the significance of Benjamin's critique of psychoanalytic theory for evaluating the nature of G's "autonomy" is diametrically opposed to Donnelly's reading.
From this beginning of unequal mutuality, development toward the equality that characterizes relationships in a free social order does not move toward an individuation that is opposed to connection, but rather "toward increasingly mutual and self-conscious recognition" (emphasis added). In Benjamin’s account, the desires for independence and intimacy, for self-assertion and connection, exist in tension, but not as opposites. The pleasure involved in recognizing others is as important as the pleasure involved in being recognized by others. The reciprocal practice of mutual recognition can balance these needs. The mother can take pleasure in the child’s growing autonomy and the child can take pleasure in recognizing the mother as a person. And growth toward autonomy is promoted as much by connection as by individuation. Even as growing recognition of each other’s difference can moderate the fear of merging that sometimes leads to radical separation, continuing connection, informed by recognition of each other’s kinship, can create the opportunity for autonomy because it moderates the fear of loneliness that can accompany such movement. The struggle to individuate is not seen as a hostile defense against connection but as a positive effort to become a "more active partner" in affectionate interactions with others. Rather than striving to "grow out of relationships" in order to become free of the other, Benjamin argues, we can learn to become free persons who are "more active and sovereign within them" (10-45, 96).

The "future" that the women at the close of Natives represent may be one in which the practices of autonomy and freedom are based on such mutual recognition. When they acknowledge others as "natives of [their] person," the women may be struggling to articulate emergent feelings of "recognition" rather than feelings of a symbiotic oneness. They may be neither tyrannous, nor heteronomous, but struggling towards the kind of intersubjective, dynamic autonomy described by these critiques of traditional psychoanalytic theory. Their feelings that the men are "native" to them may represent the temporary and partial "excursion" into unity that characterizes recognition, rather than a complete merger. For the intersubjective mode, as Benjamin describes it, is based on the recognition that "someone who is different and outside shares a similar feeling"; when attunement
becomes intense, self and other can "feel as if momentarily 'inside' each other" (126, 174; emphasis added).

Recognition is not based on identity, or complete identification with another, but on acknowledging that different selves have something in common. The Commandant's mistress, for example, begins to "recognize" the natives of Sans Souci when she realizes that she and the women of the tribes share something similar, namely, waiting for their men who are away, and still sees that the fate of those women is harsher than hers because they are forced into labor and are being exterminated. These women are "different" from her, but they are not "foreign" to her.

"Difference," as Benjamin explains, "is only truly established when it exists in tension with likeness, when we are able to recognize the other in ourselves" (169). In other words, likeness and difference are mutually constituting in the practice of recognition, and both become possible when the women begin to view others as "natives" of their person.  

The mutuality that Benjamin, Brenkman, and Keller posit is only an unrealized possibility in terms of the women's connections with the men. In Lamming's terms, the women's "blindness" to the men's inability or unwillingness to reciprocate such recognition may allow them to create a "vision" of the future that differs from the present. But the potential for mutuality does emerge in

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7 See Taylor, whose work I mentioned in the introduction to Part One, for another evaluation of Afro-Caribbean literature that redefines freedom as an unrealized possibility of mutual recognition and argues that liberatory narrative must move toward a society based on mutual recognition (xii). Developing his argument from the philosophical work of Hegel, Kant, and Sartre, and the psychoanalytic, political work of Franz Fanon, he also emphasizes the importance of responsibility and of becoming a lover in order to tell a story of lived freedom that perceives the world and history as possibility. But his focus, taken from Fanon, on the group as a liberatory entity, leads him to privilege the creation of national culture more than the mutual recognition between individuals and across worlds that I emphasize in the work of Benjamin (35, 81). He also follows Hegel more closely, suggesting that mutual recognition follows from the secondary struggle in the master-slave dialectic, when the slave compels the master to recognize him (84). The mother, for Benjamin, is not necessarily in the position of the master who must be forced into recognizing her child, but someone who may actively foster and create the conditions for the child's autonomy. I resist Taylor's approach because it tends to justify slavery as inevitable, as Taylor concedes, even though its point is to emphasize the necessity of realizing freedom. Benjamin's theory, by contrast, introduces the possibility that mutual recognition may develop, and grow best, in relationships that do not break down into the positions of master and slave.
the novel, most strongly in the interactions among the women themselves. Their exchanges in the final chapter are marked by the kind of "ebb and flow" that characterizes the kind of "dynamic autonomy" that, as Keller describes it, allows for empathic experience through a temporary suspension of boundaries (100). In alternating voices which respond to, blend with, and differentiate from each other, the women recognize, for example, that they have each been betrayed by the men they love and experience troubling signs of that betrayal. The signs are similarly physical, but different: the Lady’s hair has changed color, the Steward’s wife has begun to “see” (for example, the fear that the orphan girl experiences), and the Surgeon’s wife hears her husband’s voice, and particularly his laugh, in her ear.\(^8\) The women share their histories and continue to explore what is similar and different in their relationships with men and in their responses to different forms of desertion. Despite betrayal, they have each chosen to help the men they love.

As the women empathize with one another’s stories, however, they occasionally shift their concern from their husbands to the welfare of each other, pausing when they think one of them is in pain and making an effort to help one another through the pain by reminding each other that it does pass (340). The practice of care supports rather than impedes their attempts to develop a more dynamic autonomy.

These women, as I noted earlier, are, like the men and the tribes, ancestors whose vision affords G another inheritance. And Lamming’s *Castle* is a complicated novel which engages the concepts that are central to classical accounts of autonomy and freedom in dialogue with the revisions to those concepts that are central to contemporary critiques of psychoanalytic theory. The possibility for mutual recognition may be as limited in the colonial context that G inhabits in *Castle* as it was between the women and the men in *Natives*. But the limitations are not equally strong in

\(^8\) The Surgeon’s wife has responded to her husband’s infidelities with steadfast loyalty. In an effort to compromise her virtue, he had invited men to their home and encouraged them to seduce her if they could. When she finally “informs” him of their attentions, he simply laughs at her naivety; it is this laugh which haunts the wife and keeps her from seeing “who was behind that laugh” (327).
all his relationships, even though the strategy he plans to adopt, that of hiding within the castle of his skin, assumes that all intimacy is primarily one-sided and destructive. One problem with this strategy is that it "protects" him from the pleasure involved in relationships based on mutual recognition as well as from the fear involved in relationships based on hostile interests and domination.

As I have also noted earlier, two key parallels between the situations in Natives and in Castle show that the reasons for G’s choice may be partly appropriate and partly inappropriate. Like the men and women who are subject to the oppressive and corrupt control of the House in Natives, G and other villagers in Castle are subject to the oppressive power of authorities and traitors. But like the men who can only see women as obstacles to freedom in Natives, G sometimes treats his mother as if she is nothing more than an "autonomy-robbing" authority. Both G and the men in Natives share a tendency to fear and denigrate women’s real or fantasized power and to dismiss women’s requests for recognition.

But G’s relationship with his mother is actually more complicated than he imagines it to be in moments of defensive separation. Like the actual mother-child interactions on which Benjamin bases her revised accounts of psychoanalytic theory, G’s interactions with his mother are complex and have the potential to support the kind of dynamic autonomy that is characterized by connection and individuation. Significantly, one particular occasion of caregiving on the part of G’s mother reveals the complicated ways in which the practices of separation and connection shift in a dynamic balance. Just before his departure from the island, she packs his trunk and fixes them a final meal. On one level, her acts are meant to assist and celebrate his departure, for she has shared, and may even have initiated, his ambition to better himself by getting an education and moving beyond the life of the village. On another level, she performs these acts of care in a way that she hopes will continue their connection with one another even when they live apart. When she packs his books in his trunk, for example, she also gives him a little book containing the gospels to read on the plane.
because she is a practicing Christian and concerned for his salvation. She reminds him that she has
often heard him reading chapter fourteen of St. John’s gospel and the lines she chooses to cite now
suggest an alternative to the vision embodied in his castle of skin image: “‘Let not your heart be
troubled,’” she reads to him; “‘In my Father’s house are many mansions, . . . I go to prepare a
place for you . . . that where I am, there you may be also’” (280). The meal she prepares is a
special occasion which simultaneously marks his departure and reminds him of his connection to her
and the food he has enjoyed on the island.

When his mother first calls him to the meal, G ignores her. Her reaction reveals her
frustrated desire to be recognized by him even as he separates from her: “‘I’m not sayin’ at all that
there ain’t going to come a time when you got to make your own decisions all by yourself, . . . But
even then you got to respect me’” (265). But he has been absorbed in reading his journal and his
idea about hiding in the castle of his skin and is predisposed to reject her attempts at influencing
him and to think of her requests as simply intrusive and domineering. His vision of autonomy, at
least at the moment, reflects the classical notion of self-sufficiency in which mature understanding
develops without guidance from another rather than an alternative vision of intersubjective autonomy
in which, as Benjamin argues, “the other must make a difference” (221). Mature understanding,
according to this ideology, develops by active participation with others in a state of parity.
Although G’s mother has not always treated him in a way that might promote a mutual
interdependency between them, her flawed efforts on their last day together suggest that she at least
desires a different kind of connection.

If G is prone to keep his mother at a distance, he also takes pleasure in her care and in
their final meal together. His complicated attitudes reveal that desires for individuation and
intimacy, as Benjamin posits, are both strong. The tension between the two is relaxed, as
Benjamin’s account suggests it might be, in a moment that switches their conflict to laughter.

Benjamin observes that “play” between a mother and child affords some of the earliest experiences
of the reciprocity and mutual influence that can build intersubjectivity (26-27). Her theory suggests that play can provide an arena for "practicing* freedom within, rather than outside of, a caring relationship with another.

When G’s mother tries to hit him with a stick, for the first time in many years, he grabs the other end and they become involved in a tug of war. He suddenly bursts into laughter and she ends up following his lead. The pattern is a familiar one. It confirms that G’s mother promotes his autonomy in one way that Benjamin’s account describes a mother’s contribution to a child’s developing autonomy, by letting him struggle with her and particularly by letting their conflict evolve into playfulness (121). Their capacity for such interaction has been building at least since G was nine.

When G, who was still too young for the public bath, gets a "shower" in his back yard, for example, the mothers are angry at their children who, having crowded the fence to look and laugh, break the fence and destroy a pumpkin vine. G’s mother also becomes angry as G tries to get away from her in “a game of cat and mouse.” But soon the mothers are laughing indulgently when the boys escape them by "playing bear’ (16-24). In this instance, the "hiding" that allows the boys to escape in the shape of a bear is effective precisely because it is playful camouflage. The mothers can "see through" the boys’ stratagem and affectionately accept it. Within an affectionate relationship, the boys’ "escape" is a temporary game; "return" is voluntary and welcome.

Another moment of play occurs years later when G’s mother punishes him for paying attention to the gang on the corner rather than to her. He cries as she swings the belt, but something "switches over" in his head when she says, “‘Hard ears you won’t hear, hard ears you must feel,’” to indicate that she must make him listen to the belt if he won’t listen to her words. Because the boys often mock a pot-bellied teacher who uses the same expression, G bursts into laughter. When G explains, his mother experiences the same switch-over and soon they both “laugh and cry all together like children at a circus” (113-141). The mutuality may indicate that each has

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become "native" to the other's person. Once again, when conflict is experienced as a moment in affectionate relations, it becomes possible to convert that conflict to mutual recognition. It suggests that vigilance on behalf of the self can be relaxed, that self-respect, and the respect of others, can coexist with a sense of humor about the self and about the self's exchanges with others. The spirit of playfulness allows relative unequals, like G and his mother, to interact as relative equals.9

The similar moment of conversion during their final meal allows G and his mother a space in which they can be alone in the presence of the other, laughing quietly as they eat. The moment allows G to enjoy the food his mother has prepared and to remember her preparations with fondness; it also opens the space for them to engage in a dialogue that is marked by greater recognition and mutual respect even as it acknowledges their differences. The recognition is not perfect, and their interactions are not on a par, but mother and child are engaged in a process that may move them toward a more dynamic autonomy, toward a kind of freedom that not only allows for but depends on the continuation of a caring relationship between them. This kind of autonomy, as Brenkman suggests, is never realized once and for all, but exists in the continuing work of dialogic interaction (217).

Castle, like Natives, hints at a vision of autonomy and freedom outside the master-slave dynamic, but that vision is not contained exclusively, or even chiefly, in the title image. If there is a particular place in which this potential is contained, it will not be found within the walls of a castle, nor within the outhouse in which G and the boys used to hide in order to be alone, but perhaps within the space of play where one can be alone in the presence of another.

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9 See Jonas for a complementary interpretation of the significance of playfulness in one of Lamming's other novels, Season of Adventure. Following the argument of the theologian Harvey Cox in The Feast of Fools, she locates in play the alternative to the brutal Puritan-capitalist ideology of San Cristobal. She argues that art itself can be viewed as this kind of play, which "imagine[s] other situations than those existing in fact." By celebrating "the otherness that lies outside each successive structure," it deconstructs society's fictions (54-56).
Revised conceptions of psychological autonomy and the development of interpersonal relations that follow the intersubjective model described by Benjamin, Brenkman, and Keller cannot, in and of themselves, effect the kind of political freedom that Lamming encourages the "graduates from colonialism" to work toward in the essays he has collected in *Pleasures of Exile* and with which I began this discussion. Changes in the nature of the intrapsychic self and the nature of interpersonal relationships cannot take the place of more direct political action and social transformation. But the way we envision and practice freedom in the personal and the political realms are connected; for both have something to do with our understanding of dependence and independence and of their connection with the notion of "development."

Benjamin, for example, illustrates how "Hegel's notion of the conflict between independence and dependence," which informs much political thinking about freedom, "meshes with the [traditional] psychoanalytic view" about the development toward autonomy that she critiques (33). And Lamming himself, in one of his later essays, suggests that traditional ideas about psychological, economic, and political development are connected and similarly "toxic" for the practice of a more revolutionary freedom in the contemporary Caribbean. He discusses the economic heritage of the West and its impact on the "family" of nations and submits that "development... is, perhaps, the most dangerously toxic word in our vocabulary." Since evaluating a society in terms of material development ignores the human content of societies and the dynamics of social relations within them, focusing on economic development "encourages a wide range of distortions about the meaning of human personality, and the material base that would allow for the cultivation of a critical and reflective self-consciousness which is, ultimately the *raison d'etre* of a human existence" ("Coming Home" 44). Such "critical and reflective self-consciousness" must inform ideas about development of the "material" base. Significantly, it is in the context of this discussion that Lamming criticizes contemporary thinking about economic and
political institutions for ignoring the practices of women. This thinking, like the thinking that informs classical psychoanalysis and the practices of the men in Natives, is flawed because it is masculinized. Making the presence of women visible is part of the necessary correction in all these realms.

The vision of Lamming’s backward glance in Natives, in which he tries to make the presence of women more visible, suggests that encouraging a development toward classical notions of autonomy in interpersonal, social, economic, and political existence, may be similarly “toxic.” If the psychic and political realms are intertwined, as Lamming suggests, then the “independence” that separates colonial from post-colonial history and that measures political development toward freedom and democracy may also need to be reassessed in terms of a more dynamic conception of autonomy. Within that conception, the practices of care may be not only compatible with but even necessary to revolutionary practices of freedom.
PART TWO

FREEDOM STRUGGLES IN MICHELLE CLIFF AND JESS MOWRY:
WARrior-CAREgiving AND ETHIC OF CARE DEBATES

When did we (the light-skinned middle-class Jamaicans) take over from them as oppressors? I need to see when and how this happened. . . . When the house nigger became master. . . .

The houseworker/mistress relationship in which one Black woman is the oppressor of another Black woman is a cornerstone of the experience of many Jamaican women.

. . . To be colonized is to be rendered insensitive. To have those parts necessary to sustain life numbed. And this is in some cases—in my case—perceived as privilege. The test of a colonized person is to walk through a shantytown in Kingston and not bat an eye. This I cannot do [now]. Because part of me lives there—and as I grasp more of this part I realize what needs to be done with the rest of my life. . . . Jamaica is a place in which we/they/I connect and disconnect—change place.

(Cliff, "If I Could Write This in Fire")

"All what you tellin me? Bout hearts an shit? Sound magic. Gotta be magic for cause I don’t unnerstand. Like churchy shit."

. . . [Lyon had] been a strange sort of boy, so delicate-looking yet so totally self-sufficient: like a prototype of something new or a reprogram of something very old that was better equipped to survive. Evolution in action. The shape of things to come. Shape changers.

. . . "It like you like puttin your stupid life in somebody’s hands . . . like you checkin to see if they know what it worth . . . now you go an do it again! Put it on ME! Like a magic curse!"

Ty’s knuckles paled as he clenched his fists and thought about a race of people, and a whole generation within that race, being punished for the sins of a few. . . . And who were that few . . . really? Were they the hungry or unwanted kids who’d never had anything good in their lives and saw no future ahead? Or were they the unseen white tip of the pyramid who sucked up the profit from it all?

(Mowry, Way Past Cool)
The notions in classical psychoanalytic theory, that mothers, by virtue of their function within the family, encourage dependency, and also that autonomy requires a break from attachments that are understood to be symbiotic and confining, have antecedents in the notions promoted by the nineteenth-century cult of domesticity. That ideology, which separated the world into the public sphere of politics and citizenship and the private sphere of home and family, relegated women to the "domestic" realm of affective relationships and of actions guided by moral sentiment. If contemporary cultural critics like Benjamin and Brenkman have attempted to "correct" for what they consider to be the masculinized bias of psychoanalytic theories of development by making space for the practices of care in a notion of intersubjective autonomy, other contemporary cultural critics worry that a renewed focus on care and caregiving could serve to remove women from the public realm of contemporary politics and return them to the confines of the home and to private matters of affective relationships.

These concerns have arisen chiefly in response to contemporary theories that argue for the recognition of an ethic of care in descriptive and normative accounts of moral development. Like the revisions to theories of psychoanalytic development that I have discussed, these theories have been introduced as an attempt to critique limited, masculinized formulations of moral development that focus, according to Carol Gilligan, for example, on the blind application of universal principles of justice. Because of its "blind" conception of "equality" and "fairness," the traditional formulation ignores, or even dismisses, a contextual approach to moral issues that concerns itself with the consequences of moral choices on specific people, including others, the self, and the relationships between them. The revised formulations, which are highly concerned with maintaining caring relationships, assign a significant role to care in moral decision-making. These emphases, as
explained in ethic of care theories, are grounded in traditionally female activities of nurturing, though they are not exclusive or even essential to females.\footnote{Two early visions of an ethic of care to which the subsequent debates most frequently respond were articulated by Carol Gilligan in \textit{A Different Voice}, 1982, and Nel Noddings in \textit{Caring: A Feminine Approach to Ethics and Moral Education}, 1984. Sara Ruddick's vision of a related ethic in \textit{Maternal Thinking: Toward a Politics of Peace}, 1989, has also generated much debate, as has Jean Bethke Elshtain's vision of maternal values in \textit{Public Man, Private Woman}, 1981, and subsequent writings. The literature which engages these visions is extensive. Just a few of the significant contributions, and the ones which I address most explicitly, include: the collection of essays edited by Eve Browning Cole and Susan Coultrap-McQuin, \textit{Explorations in Feminist Ethics}, 1990; Mary J. Dietz, "Citizenship with a Maternal Face: the Problem with Maternal Thinking"; Joan C. Tronto, "Women and Caring: What Can Feminists Learn about Morality from Caring?"; and Joan C. Williams, "Domesticity as the Dangerous Supplement of Liberalism." One special issue of \textit{Hypatia} (Winter 1996) contributes an indirect, but interesting philosophical perspective to the debate by critically examining "The Family and Feminist Theory" (Feder and Kittay).}

An ethic of care can be, and is often, challenged as an inappropriate tool for feminist freedom movement because it was precisely by assigning caregiving roles to women that nineteenth-century patriarchy was able to justify and, more or less successfully, maintain a system of inequality that confined women to the domestic sphere. As Cole and Coultrap-McQuin note, contemporary feminists worry that an ethic of care caters to a patriarchal fantasy which enshrines women in the image of the Angel in the House (5-6). Margaret Urban Walker, who instead chooses to defend caregiving as an alternative epistemology, eloquently summarizes such objections to feminist reconstructions of care: the ethic is seen as "retrograde." As part of "our oppressive history, not our liberating future," it can only create "a familiar ghetto rather than a liberated space" (166).

While "melodramas of beset manhood," like the stories told by many of the men in Lemming’s fictions, worry that \textit{domesticating} women confine men and inhibit male freedom, many feminist thinkers who object to an ethic of care worry that \textit{domesticated} women are themselves confined and denied freedom.

Other critics, however, define and dismiss an ethic of care, like the nineteenth-century ideology which promoted domesticity, as a \textit{sentimental} practice—one that ignores issues of freedom, justice, and the need for political change. John Broughton, for example, challenges Gilligan's
defense of care as a mature ethic by noting that, "Nowhere in Gilligan's ethic is the need for freedom voiced" (615). Mary Dietz goes so far as to argue that an ideology of care cannot and should not play a central role in political struggles for freedom and justice. She claims that "the language of love and compassion" is inadequate to such struggle because it does not "challenge nondemocratic and oppressive political institutions"; the vocabulary of care does not connect conceptually with the values of egalitarianism and the exercise of freedom that are central to democratic politics, nor does it help bring those values about (34). But Dietz also argues that an ethic of care is an inappropriate basis for democratic political activity because love and attentiveness to others are not only "exclusive" but are also "most valuable" when they are "deeply personal and intensely intimate"; they lose their meaning when they are "diffused" or "applied to a people as a whole or marshalled for political ends" (32-33). Although Dietz argues that politics transcends the public/private split, she insists on reinforcing that split when it comes to caring activities; she simply rejects any attempt to make care public or political and any effort to create an ethical polity that challenges such social structures as an unjust economic system through a politics of compassion (20-23). These objections appear to be neutral with respect to gender, but, like the notions of autonomy in psychoanalytic theory, are closely connected with ideas about mothering. Dietz implicitly accepts the equation of compassion and caregiving with the maternal perspectives and activities practiced in traditional family arrangements and denies that mothering does or can contribute to freedom and the development of a democratic polity.

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2 Other critics also question the value of care for political activity. In their introduction to a collection of essays that question whether the values inherent in care-giving can be expressed in ways that are liberating, for example, Eve Browning Cole and Susan Coultrap-McQuin suggest that the difficulty of applying an ethic of care or a relational ethic to the public sphere or to larger-scale, impersonal situations is one of the major grounds of caution in valorizing an ethic of care (3, 6). Although Anne Phillips does not argue that an ethic of responsibility or compassion can play no role in increasing democratization and freedom, she cautions that this ethic is "potentially" limited to those we can understand (50).
Even one critic who recognizes that the public/private split is as much ideological construction as fact, and that the communal values promoted by an ethic of care are not incompatible with democratic political activity, criticizes the sentimental aspects of current theory which connect it with a feminized, domesticated practice of care. In an essay which characterizes "Domesticity as the Dangerous Supplement of Liberalism," Joan C. Williams suggests that the humane and communal values associated with domesticity had been part of the republican critique of self-interested liberalism in the formation of the United States. In the republican critique, these virtues belonged to the public sphere. They were domesticated, however, as republicanism and liberalism struggled to define the guiding principles of social life in the nineteenth century. The development of domesticity, Williams argues, depoliticized and effected the marginalization of public-spiritedness by denigrating it as inherently feminine: "The development of domesticity was part of a process whereby gender taboos were mobilized to help brand as inherently nonpolitical the communal values republicanism defined as quintessentially public" (78). Williams also argues that current [white?] feminists who attempt to mobilize domesticity's critique by advocating an ethic of care often diffuse its "political critique by translating it into personal choice" (80).

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But the discourse of sentimentality and domesticity in the nineteenth century, to which contemporary evaluations of an ethic of care often refer, had a complicated relationship to the history of freedom and freedom struggles, not least because it was intimately connected with the contemporaneous debates about slavery and abolition. Contemporary critics of African-American literature note the connections between domesticity's sentimental novels, slave narratives, and early

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3 Even though Williams believes that the kind of care advocated by Gilligan and her followers diffuses the creative political potential of care, she concedes that even this ethic of care is not synonymous with domesticity. She notes, for example, that three elements of domesticity—submissiveness, piety, and passionlessness—are noticeably absent (71).
African-American fiction. Hazel Carby, for example, observes that Black women writers simultaneously used and questioned the ideology of true womanhood (Reconstructing Womanhood 40). While Carby focuses her attention on the way Black women handled the vexed issue of sexual purity, other critics focus attention on the way these writers negotiate the practice of empathy and compassion. Dana Nelson suggests that Harriet Jacobs, for example, sought to "kindle a flame of compassion" in the nineteenth-century readers of her Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl, but also showed that sympathetic identification is unreliable and that its efficacy could be "coopted by social models of domination." Nelson argues that Jacobs subtly encouraged her readers "to use sympathy unconventionally," to understand the "real, material differences that structure human experience in a society based on unequal distribution of power." Noting that this radical vision depends "on the willingness of its audience to listen and to accept the challenge of self-critique," Nelson concludes "that its message might be just as relevant today" as it was in the nineteenth century (137-145).

Although the model presented by Jacobs denies that sympathy is "axiomatically" liberational, it does, as Nelson acknowledges, believe sympathy is "potentially" liberational (138). Jacobs' renegotiation of the practice of sympathy challenges the notion, common to nineteenth and twentieth-century critics, that sympathy assumes sameness and that the practice of care is politically limited because compassion, by its nature, can only be extended to family, friends, or those we understand.

Even more significant for my purposes is the recognition that the practice of care and compassion has also been linked to more militant revolution and political activism. When Lora

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4 See the introduction to Harriet Wilson's 1859 novel Our Nig, by Henry Louis Gates, Jr., for an extended description of the ways in which that novel uses and modifies the plot conventions of nineteenth-century "women's fiction" that itself was often written to defend or attack the institution of slavery. Hazel Carby, observing that the plot conventions of sentimental novels were also found in many slave narratives, refines Gates' analysis to conclude that Wilson's "particular use of sentimental conventions derives from the sentimental novel via slave narratives" and that this particular "blend" accounts for the ways in which Wilson's novel does "not conform to the parameters of... domestic fiction" (Reconstructing Womanhood 45, emphasis added).
Romero, for example, analyzes the accounts of the domestic woman that domestic ideologues as well as their critics made popular in the antebellum United States, she concludes that “domestic womanhood left itself open to different kinds of enactment” (88). She describes one different kind of enactment in the example of Maria Stewart, a free-born black abolitionist who spoke in the 1830s and who, according to Romero, not only invoked, but even embraced the norms of domestic womanhood in order to secure a space for female activism in black nationalist struggles (62).

Romero argues that Stewart challenged the masculinist paradigm of violent, redeeming struggle, a paradigm in which women’s sentimental natures were supposed to sabotage patriotism (52, 59). What interests me most in Romero’s analysis is her claim that Stewart challenges that paradigmatic split by engaging the vocabulary of domesticity with the vocabulary of black activism and voicing “connections between violence and nurture” (69). Justifying her distinctly political activity, Stewart “represents herself as both maternal and militant,” as someone who aspires to the honor granted white ladies and yet “flagrantly risks” the moral difference claimed by those domestic women when she places “sword, shield, and helmet on the woman warrior” (62, 68-69).

And in the literature of slavery and freedom, the discourse of care is not restricted to the lives of women. Eric Sundquist, for example, claims that the “literature of American slavery transplants the language of oppression and liberation from the continental Romantic tradition into a new national setting where it is bound together with the language of sentiment derived from the Revolution.” And he argues that the autobiographies of Frederick Douglass, which commonly associate freedom with manly resistance and the virtues of self-reliance, also remind us “that the language of revolutionary liberation and the rising language of sentiment, with its cultivation of the virtues of compassion and sympathetic identification with an inferior class or the oppressed, are virtually synonymous, not just in the best antislavery writing but in the whole era’s grappling with the problem of bondage” (108, 109, emphasis added). He demonstrates that Douglass paid increasing attention to the value of fraternal bonds in his struggle for freedom when he revised his
narratives to denounce wrongs and to interpret the meaning of his life rather than simply to narrate the facts of slavery which the abolitionists had requested (90, 131). In an argument which builds on such analyses, Stephanie Smith agrees that Douglass used a "strategic sentimentality" in his autobiographical revisions to "enable a new politics," but she turns the discussion away from strictly fraternal bonding to a focus on community and even potential female rebellion in those revisions (196). According to Smith, his sentimental revisions complicate the associations of freedom with Emersonian and masculine self-reliance that the earlier *Narrative* emphasizes and "seek to rescript a politics of community so that the ties that bind the flesh do not mean enslavement" (194, 202).

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Contemporary debates on an ethic of care are taking place in a context that has several striking resemblances with the nineteenth-century context in which domesticity, sentimentality, slavery, abolition, and issues of freedom—for women, Blacks, and other members of "minority" populations—were interconnected. At the end of the twentieth century, the freedom struggles of women and African-Americans (among others) are again central to social and political life in the United States and are sometimes violent; and these multiple struggles for freedom have dynamic connections and disconnections that generate both solidarity and conflict. Conservative politics,

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5 P. Gabrielle Foreman also focuses on Douglass's "complicated negotiation of sentiment" in his later writings which become increasingly concerned with political agency, but she criticizes the male bias inherent in that negotiation (191). Foreman argues that he uses a discourse of "sentimental abolition" to gain "status as an independent agent in the sphere of political rights." When he translates the rhetoric of affection from the maternal to the fraternal sphere, however, he creates an "erotically fraternal" version of sentimental abolition that "writes women's voices out of his texts" (195, 200).

One critic has observed, and condemned, a similar focus on "homosocial bonding" in the freedom narratives of contemporary male revolutionaries like Che Guevara. Ileana Rodriguez argues that male guerillas have used the discourse of "tenderness" in their narratives of insurgency and state construction to express and solidify a male solidarity that excludes women from the political life of the country ("Tenderness").

As will become evident, the presence of "tenderness" and sympathy as a component of revolutionary movement in the narratives I examine, whether that discourse is embraced by men or women, is not so hostile to the interests of women. In the analyses by Foreman and Rodriguez, the discourse of tenderness and love is eroticized, connected to *eros*; in mine, it is more closely associated with care or *caritas*. 

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now as then, also promote an ideology of "care," this time in the rhetoric of "family values," in order to counter demands for radical justice and systemic change; in attempting to re-domesticate and re-privatize the practice of care, this political movement seeks to diffuse the political potential of care. And just as the nineteenth-century struggles in the United States took place within, and were consciously connected to, more widespread struggles for emancipation, the twentieth-century struggles within the United States are taking place within the context of global struggles for independence and decolonization.

In contrast to arguments which reject the practice of care as opposed to the practice of freedom, a growing body of theory suggests, for example, that the ability to enter and sustain caring relationships is a necessary feature of free society. A global perspective, moreover, suggests that the arguments which reject care because it confines women are ethnocentric. For such arguments against the role of care in political action often fail to respond to those who must struggle for survival. Charlotte Bunch, for example, demonstrates that ethics is at the heart of human survival and is thus "a critical part of politics not to be confused with moralism; ethics should inform political decisions which then embody and make concrete ethical commitments." Bunch then suggests that feminists should develop their understanding of politically meaningful ethics by looking at the survival struggles of various disenfranchised groups to consider the ethics which come out of

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6 Several contributors to the *Hypatia* Special Issue on "The Family and Feminist Theory" (Feder and Kittay) focus on the caregiving aspects of family life, or other forms of intimate association, and suggest, more or less implicitly, that the ability to enter and sustain caring relationships is a necessary feature of free society. Two of the more detailed and perceptive arguments are presented by Martha Minow and Mary Lyndon Shanley, "Relational Rights and Responsibilities: Revisioning the Family in Liberal Politics and Law" (4-29), and by Karen Streuning, "Feminist Challenges to the New Familialism: Lifestyle Experimentation and the Freedom of Intimate Association" (135-154). While they characteristically describe individual rights, chiefly to be free from interference, as a matter of freedom, and the care involved in relationships as a matter of responsibility, they also suggest that freedom demands the freedom to enter caring relationships. Recent attempts to legalize gay or lesbian marriage in the face of strong opposition also illustrate the fact that the ability to form intimate associations is a fundamental kind of freedom (I would add that freedom might demand that the ability to form such "marital" arrangements be extended to include partnerships formed not simply on a sexual or procreative basis, but on any basis, including socio-economic ones). Without that ability, the practice of freedom is seriously curtailed.
such struggle (177-178, 182). I look at the work of two contemporary writers who concern themselves with such struggles for survival in two different locations to consider the ethics which they associate with struggles to achieve and practice freedom.

Michelle Cliff, like George Lamming, comes from the Caribbean—specifically, Jamaica. The protagonist of her first two novels, Abeng and No Telephone to Heaven, like G in Lamming's In the Castle of My Skin, has dual ancestors in Prospero and Caliban. That dual ancestry is highlighted in Cliff's protagonist, Clare Savage, because she has a "white" father and a "dark" mother. While G's relative privilege over his peers in the village arises solely from his ability at school, Clare enjoys a greater relative privilege both because she is light-skinned and also because her socio-economic status, though decidedly modest in comparison with the standards of the American middle class, is higher than that of many others in Jamaica at the time of the story. In a sense Cliff's character inherits the legacy both of the ladies and also of the slaves and household servants—the female versions of Prospero and Caliban—for whom the ideology of domesticity and sentiment were so central in the nineteenth century. Cliff's work struggles with that particular dual ancestry to negotiate an appropriate role for that female character of relative privilege in contemporary politics of freedom and survival. Clare is presented as a character whose initial concern with freedom is to worry about her own confinement, especially as a female, and to struggle for personal autonomy; her practice of freedom is guided by her sense of her own oppression. As Clare matures, she begins to recognize the different oppression of the darker and poorer classes in Jamaica and to rethink her notion of freedom; she learns to broaden and revise her practice of freedom by connecting with the struggles of those who are less privileged.

The characters in Jess Mowry's work, by contrast, are possibly even more confined and less privileged than those in Lamming's village. Like G and his friends, they are young boys,
primarily Black, but they seem to have even less prospect than G of freeing themselves through the traditional education system. While Cliff considers the connection between care and freedom for those who are relatively privileged, Mowry examines the connection between the two practices for those who are among the least privileged in the United States. Some feminist critics may be worried that an ethic of care may return women, as Margaret Urban Walker observed, to the "ghetto" of the private home and domesticity, but the boys in Mowry’s Way Past Cool must struggle to achieve some degree of freedom within the confines of a literal ghetto in Oakland, California. Their struggle for freedom and survival is presented, from the start, as a group struggle as much as an individual one. In this context, Mowry presents the practice of care as a means to greater rather than lesser, even though limited, freedom.

Contemporary critics of African-American literature like Henry Louis Gates, Jr., observe that slave narratives have provided the basic paradigm for more than two-hundred years of African-American literature. With her novel Free Enterprise, Cliff places herself in the growing body of novelists since 1960 who write "neo-slave narratives" that deal directly with slavery and the struggle for freedom in the last century; her novel rewrites the story of John Brown’s 1859 rebellion and its aftermath from the perspective of Black females who helped to finance and also participated in that rebellion. Although Jess Mowry has not written a "neo-slave narrative" that deals directly with slavery, Reggie Young classifies Mowry’s Way Past Cool as a "contemporary slave narrative" that

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8 See, for example, Gates’ analysis of the continuities in that tradition in his introduction to The Classic Slave Narratives as well as in The Signifying Monkey.

9 See Deborah McDowell, for example, for her recognition of the "flood" of novels that have been written, post-1960, about slavery, and for an extended discussion of one—Shirley Anne Williams’ Dessa Rose. In Ashraf Rushdy’s analysis, the growing number of contemporary narratives of slavery that have been written post-1968, after the publication of Styron’s Confessions of Nat Turner and the collection edited by John Henrik Clarke, William Styron’s Nat Turner: Ten Black Writers Respond, have their origins in a set of interrelated factors that included, together with a desire to respond or react to Styron’s novel, generational shifts within the African-American community that took up the duty of supplementing oral ancestral tales and that emerged with the Black Power movement that began in the late 1960s.
addresses urban bondage and freedom rather than slavery itself (371-372). The continuities between the two kinds of work may evidence continuities between slavery-in-fact and what Cliff herself has called emancipation-in-practically-name-only. In setting the work of Cliff and Mowry in the context of this earlier tradition, however, I am less concerned with the formal similarities that Gates, for example, has identified in this African-American tradition, than in exploring one example of what Gates calls a "concord of sensibilities" between Cliff and Mowry, in whatever genre they write, and the nineteenth-century slave narratives to which I have been referring (Signifying Monkey, 128).

That concord of sensibilities concerns their interconnected negotiations of freedom and care. The complexity of the nineteenth-century enactment of care, especially within the African-American tradition, suggests that care is not necessarily a purely domesticated practice that is divorced from political action or even revolutionary violence. That tradition is expanded in the twentieth-century texts by Cliff and Mowry. While Cliff continues that tradition in the realm of "high" literature, Mowry continues it in the realm of "popular" literature and, like revised accounts of the nineteenth-century's domestic literature, reclaims that realm for serious cultural work.

In these twentieth-century "descendants" of those nineteenth-century texts, two aspects of care become vital to the imagination of freedom with justice: the emotion of empathy or compassion and the act of nurturing. As Joan Tronto argues, in order for caring to be more than good intentions, acts of caring for others must fulfill the feeling of caring about others ("Women and Caring" 185). Cliff and Mowry appropriately join the two dimensions in a politicized practice that challenges care's history of domestication. "Caring about" slaves, the poor, the oppressed, motivates characters to engage in struggles for freedom; and "taking care" of others--feeding and healing them, fighting for them, or simply living and working alongside them--becomes a vital practice in struggles for freedom and for living in a more free, just community.

Care is redefined as a quintessentially "social," rather than a "private," act, and both love and hate exist in complicated relationship in this revolutionary practice of care. For, in the context
of freedom struggles, care is not simply associated with the home, but with the battlefield—or the “home front.” Mowry and Cliff both attempt to negotiate the terrain of violence and care and do so with a practice I call warrior-caregiving.¹⁰ To help conceptualize that negotiation, they each refer back to earlier freedom fighters. In retrieving ancestors for her practice, Cliff highlights the legacy of the Maroons, who fought the British in Jamaica from 1655 to 1740, and of one particular leader in that first Maroon War, Nanny. Mowry appropriates the legacy of the Black Panthers who were active in the late Civil Rights and the Black Power movements of the late 1960s and early 1970s. Like the violent actions of the characters in their novels, the violent activities of the Maroons, the slaves, and the Black Panthers are condemned by the dominant culture as insurrections, unlawful rebellions, or simply crimes, rather than heralded as revolutions or wars of independence, emancipation, or freedom. But one way that Cliff and Mowry each attempt to deal with the issue of violence is to retrieve and highlight a practice of care—of empathy and of nurturing, especially in the form of healing—in the actions of these earlier freedom fighters.

They re-fuse the absolute separation between the work of war or contest and the work of care that Nel Noddings posits in her feminist examination of morality, *Women and Evil*. The virtue of war, according to her reading of the nineteenth-century philosopher William James, is "hardihood," and the test of that tradition is winning contests and defeating others. The test of an alternative tradition of service and of caring for others, she argues, is enhancing the quality of "relations" between people, meaning the quality of connections "characterized by some affective

¹⁰ The connections between care and violence or peace, generally, is a subject of debate. Sara Ruddick and feminists who adopt her prescriptions for revolutionary politics according to the practices of maternal care argue that acts of nurturing and identification with the mothers of enemy soldiers tends, as indicated in the subtitle of her book, "toward a politics of peace." That formulation has been contested with arguments that mothers support wars precisely because they are concerned with the interests of their own children which compete with the interests of "enemy" children. The slave tradition, moreover, acknowledges that mothers may do violence to their own children out of care for those children; recent novels like *Beloved* by Toni Morrison show how and why some slave mothers murdered their own children in order to save them from the horrors of slavery and also as a means of combatting the interests of slave masters.
awareness" (180-184). The warrior-caregiving portrayed in the work of Cliff and Mowry joins the tradition of agon or contest with the tradition of service or care.

If the stories that Cliff and Mowry retrieve and create show that care is an intricate part of violence rather than opposed to violence, they also demonstrate that the connection between care and caregiving with violence is fraught with tension. While they undomesticate care by joining it to violence that seeks to be revolutionary, they also seek to explore the contexts in which caregiving itself is redefined as a revolutionary act.

Their focus on care as potentially revolutionary activity places them in a growing body of thinkers within the African-American community like bell hooks and Cornell West, who, following the lead of Martin Luther King, Jr. and other civil rights theologians, argue for a politics that recognizes love and care as practices of freedom and for a politics that reconnects discussions of care with the political, social, and economic practices that inhibit or promote freedom. Like any political ideology, the rhetoric of care can be mobilized for conservative or progressive ends. Kobena Mercer has brilliantly demonstrated how conservative politicians in England have appropriated the signs of the democratic revolutions of the 1960s, such as their recognition of links between student protests, civil rights and Black power movements, and decolonizing revolutions, to promote counter-revolutionary policies and attitudes ("1968"). The discourse and practice of care also lend themselves to competing interests. As Shirley Samuels observes in The Culture of Sentiment, the discourse of sympathy in the nineteenth century could be deployed in a conservative way, to endorse a "passive sympathy," or in a more radical way, to mobilize action (5). In their twentieth-century texts, Cliff and Mowry attempt to model and promote a practice of care that tends toward political action on behalf of greater freedom. And their particular combination of warrior-caregiving, I argue, is an expression of care that is particularly threatening to counter-revolutionary

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11 See, for example, bell hooks, "Love as the Practice of Freedom," in Outlaw Culture, and Cornell West, Race Matters. 

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movement. The significance of that threat is indicated by a conservative insistence on distinguishing the nurse from the warrior, the Angel in the House from the Destroying Demon, and the gentle, happy, nurturing Negro servant from the fierce and vengeful savage.

If conservative ideologies which advocate care and domesticity have demeaned and depoliticized care, women, and others who are connected with caregiving activities, including domestic servants, ideologies which seek to be progressive by refusing an ethic of care may support the conservative cause by reinforcing the notion that care is apolitical and that those who practice care are engaged in demeaning work. Care and caregiving are neither inherently conservative nor progressive, but the context in which and the conditions under which they are practiced may make them one or the other or some combination of the two. As Tronto’s work suggests, the important point to consider is not whether to care, as much moral theory does, but how to engage in the activity of caring (“Women and Caring” 175). The solution may not be to refuse care, but to revalue and repoliticize it and to broaden its practice.

The nature of autonomy, as I discussed it in Part One, is a crucial issue in theories of moral development. Kohlberg’s theory of moral development, which is put into question by an ethic of care like Gilligan’s, requires a sense of an autonomous self that is clearly differentiated from others (Tronto, “Women and Caring” 180). As Jessica Benjamin suggests, however, the desire for freedom in the form of self-sufficiency and radical autonomy is sometimes an admission of, and perhaps a substitute for, social and political powerlessness. The desire to join the practice of freedom with a practice of care may attempt to provide both a motive and a means to powerful action. And “individuals who view themselves as connected to others” may have a greater ability to use “both an ethic of care and claims about justice” in moral and political decision-making (Tronto, “Women and Caring” 180). 12

12 Observing that such moral decisions require one to balance interests of self and others, Tronto concludes that “autonomy is a problem that people must deal with all the time” in moral
Still, Cliff and Mowry must each negotiate the possibility of failure or only limited success in their effort to attain power through a practice of freedom with care. That potential compels them, in part, to couple the possibility of success with a long historical imagination that sees one "failed" revolution as leading to another more successful revolution and also with a belief in "magic" that they inherit from the legacy of conjure. The possibility for success also lies largely in the response of their readers. Like the authors of slave narratives, they are interested not simply to represent these dynamics in the actions of their protagonists, but to mobilize readers towards an "unconventional sympathy" that may catalyze action.

choices (180, emphasis added). Part of that "problem," however, may be resolved by revisions to the concept of autonomy like those proposed by Benjamin, Brenkman, and Keller.
In an essay called "The Garden," Michelle Cliff demonstrates that she is susceptible to the kind of thinking that defines and dismisses care as a "sentimental" practice. In that essay, she metaphorically relates gardening to nurturing and then observes that she "garden/nurtures in response to her "mother's challenge that everything will die." While she worries, on the one hand, that her inability to keep all the plants alive might indicate that she is, as her mother charged, unloving and unnurturing, she also worries that her self-imposed "challenge to assure that everything lives" may have become a "sentimental obstacle" (Look Behind 49).

But the Jamaican freedom struggles that Cliff concerns herself with are deeply entwined with matters of survival. When she searches, as a person of relative privilege, for an appropriate role in such struggle, she cannot simply dismiss an ethic of care as sentimental, because she knows that lives depend on its practice and she recognizes a moral obligation to discern and alleviate real suffering and injustice. She knows that the freedom of persons of relative privilege in an unjust system has often been tied to the attitude enshrined in a common plantation name, Sans Souci.  

1 When I cite Cliff's work parenthetically, I will abbreviate her titles as follows. For her novels and her collections of essays and short stories: Abeng (Abeng); Claiming an Identity They Taught Me to Despise (Claiming); Free Enterprise (Free); The Land of Look Behind (Look Behind); No Telephone to Heaven (No Telephone). For selected essays from The Land of Look Behind: "Claiming an Identity They Taught Me to Despise" ("Claiming"); "If I Could Write This in Fire, I Would Write This in Fire" ("Fire"); "A Visit to the Secret Annex" ("Visit"). For interviews with: Opal Palmer Adisa ("Interview," OPA); Judith Raiskin ("Interview," JR); Meryl F. Schwartz ("Interview," MFS). For articles published separately: "Caliban's Daughter: The Tempest and the Teapot" ("Caliban's"); "Clare Savage as a Crossroads Character" ("Clare").

2 Cliff's focus on survival, which responds indirectly to Charlotte Bunch's call for an ethics that arises in struggles for survival, addresses concerns raised by Bill Puka, who suggests that an ethic of care may only be appropriate for liberation among those who are subordinate and powerless and may not be valuable for thinking about freedom in broader terms. Cliff's work, however, does not draw clear distinctions between those who have some power and those who are victims. And
In Cliff’s first two novels, *Abeng* and its sequel *No Telephone to Heaven*, Clare Savage, a light-skinned, middle-class Jamaican, grows to question an insensitivity that allows the privileged not to care about or for the poor and the oppressed. When a young Clare questions why white teachers simply stand by as a dark girl suffers an epileptic seizure, she concludes that proper ladies do not become involved in the sufferings of people beneath their station. Cliff’s “ladies” are not the ministering angels of domestic ideology. But Clare also believes that her mother Kitty, even though she is no “lady” and often helps the poor, would not have helped the girl. Then and later, Clare wonders “What was missing” (*Abeng* 99).

As an adult, Clare attempts to distinguish herself from those women who held back and begins to take seriously her mother’s final request to “help your people” (*No Telephone* 103). After living and studying in the United States, England, and other places in Europe, she abandons the kind of life that would align her more closely with the values of those powerful countries, and returns to Jamaica. She uncovers and teaches a history of resistance and tenderness to the poor and dark-skinned children of Jamaica and joins a revolutionary group that wants to improve conditions for the poor who are starving and dying because of a corrupt political system and an unjust economic order. Clare’s attempt to ensure that “what was missing” in the women she remembered from her childhood is not “missing” in her leads her to redefine the practice of care so that it is neither sentimental nor an obstacle to political activity.

In part, Cliff deals with potential sentimentality by setting up an uneasy tension and a complicated relationship between care and hate. She introduces one collection of essays, *The Land of Look Behind*, with an epigraph from Marcus Garvey that warns about the cycles of retribution that develop from the close connection between hate and injustice: “There is no sense in hate; it comes back to you. Therefore, make your history so laudable, magnificent, and untarnished, that those who are relatively privileged are called upon to concern themselves with the survival of others and to include an ethic of care in their own practice of freedom.”
another generation will not seek to repay [you]. . . . The bones of injustice have a peculiar way of rising from the tombs to plague and mock the iniquitous” (9). The collection details the hate with which the powerful justify their treatment of those over whom they take power. In "Battle Royal," for example, Cliff cites hate as the final "rule for invaders," the rule which justifies all others: "these people are your enemy. Take my word for it. Do not love them" (101). And in the penultimate piece, a satirical poem called "A Visit from Mr. Botha," she condemns the church’s complicity in making such hate and injustice permissible in South Africa. On a 1984 visit to Europe, Mr. B advises leaders of several whitish states: "Using the Bible, conjuring arguments and tricks/ We’ve figured how hatred can be holy and exist successfully" (113, emphasis added).

As Garvey predicted, outrage against the colonizer’s hate generates its own hatred. Just before she launches into a scathing indictment of the bloody British empire in "If I Could Write This in Fire, I Would Write This in Fire," Cliff notes that her athletic team at school was named for a white national martyr, Edith Cavell. As she faced a German firing squad in World War I, Cavell refused to hate her executioners, saying: "Patriotism is not enough. I must have no hatred or bitterness toward anyone." Cliff, aware of continuing injustice, rejects that model and concludes wryly: "Sorry to say I grew up to have exactly that" (62). If Cliff agrees with Garvey that the hate of the powerful and the unjust "makes no sense," she makes it clear that the hate with which the victims or opponents of injustice respond makes very much sense. For the hate that develops in response to the hate of the powerful is closely connected with a concern for justice.

One of the crucial moments in Clare Savage's *Bildung* presents the development of a similar understanding. It occurs when Clare reads an account of the 1963 bombing at a Birmingham church in front of her New York City homeroom, trying not to be moved, not to embarrass herself in front of the classmates who appear to ignore the news. The piece notes that the explosion occurred in the middle of a Sunday School lesson, which was "Love thy neighbor."
Reading that "a man standing in the rubble" screamed, "Love them? Love them? I hate them,"
Clare wonders, "How could he not?" (No Telephone 100-101).

Even though Michelle Cliff and Clare Savage were raised not to hate, it is, ironically, a
developing sense of love that motivates their hatred. Cliff, like Clare, "grew up" to hate her
oppressors by learning to care about others who are even less privileged than she. Their motives
are not simply altruistic. They grow up to hate the white, privileged classes because they feel the
personal consequence of being raised to emulate those upper classes, which means to reject poorer
and darker-skinned Jamaicans. Arguing that the "background changed places with the foreground"
when "we (the light-skinned middle-class Jamaicans) [took] over for them as oppressors." Cliff
grows up to realize that the most damning mark of colonization is insensitivity: "The test of a
colonized person is to walk through a shantytown in Kingston and not bat an eye." Cliff, an adult
who has learned both to love and hate, says "This I cannot do" (Look Behind, "Fire" 62, 71). The
burden of Cliff's writing suggests that the person of relative privilege who wishes to engage in
broader freedom struggles must negotiate this connection between love and hate in an unladylike
practice of care. Because her participation also depends on negotiating between her positions of
privilege and oppression, she relocates the practice of care, from the domain of the lady, through
the realm of the domestic servant, to the field of the warrior. The blend of love and hate that is
involved in this relocation shapes the practice I identify as warrior-caregiving in Cliff's work.

"Ladies," in the world Cliff describes, have little to do with an ethic of care. Like the
teachers who simply watch as a dark-skinned student suffers through an epileptic seizure, ladies are
colonized persons who do not become involved in suffering. Empire depends on such "ladies." In
one of her most scathing early essays, "If I Could Write This in Fire, I Would Write This in Fire,
Cliff condemns the way the English "tend to use their ladies. Name ages for them. Places for
them. Use them as screens, inspirations, symbols." Noting that even the "swearword 'bloody' is a
contraction of 'by my lady'--a reference to the Virgin Mary," she charges that their "bloody"
empire, with its economy based on the traffic in human beings and its maps tellingly colored red, is built on such bloody inspiration (Look Behind 66-67).

Cliff’s work reminds readers that caregivers, in this world of ladylike detachment from the suffering of others, are the servants who take care of ladies and gentlemen. It is their work that has been "domesticated" by ideology, especially in contemporary reenactments that idealize plantation life as being sans souci. At the time of Clare’s childhood, in Abeng, the old family property at Runaway Bay is being subdivided for American vacation homes in a development called "Paradise Plantation." In this romance of the past, the discourse of slavery is replaced by the discourse of paradise; as the land is cleared for development, the reminders of the slave quarters are erased and the canefields are burned, but the “Great House” is left standing (23-27). The way is being prepared for those offering tours and "preserving history" to speak not of slaves, but of "‘servants’ who helped in the garden" or of "‘villagers’ who "pitched in" ("Interview," JR 67; emphasis added).

By translating both forced and paid work into seemingly private and personal acts of generosity and care, the continuing discourse of the slavocracy sanitizes or "domesticates" the labor extracted from slaves and servants. Patriarchal engagements with the discourse of domesticity attempt to depoliticize the work of care not only by domesticating the work of women within the family circle, but also by domesticating the business of empire and its successors, i.e., the work done by men and women who are said to be "like one of the family."

Cliff’s focus on such "domestic" labor suggests that more privileged women who resist patriarchal "domesticity" by rejecting the practice of care may, wittingly or unwittingly, implicate themselves in the continuing business of empire and domination where "slavery-in-fact" is replaced by a "freedom" equivalent to "veiled slavery, the model of the rest of the western world" (Abeng 28). Refocusing discussions of care from the lady of the house to the servant of the house suggests that past and contemporary devaluations of care may reflect a class bias that is unacceptable in broad freedom struggles. If it is true, as Joan Williams argues, that an ethic and practice of care...
was domesticated and depoliticized when it was gendered as feminine, it is also true, as Shellee Colen argues, that the work of care is *devalued* even further when the work passed on from men to women within the household is then passed on again "from one woman who chooses not to do it and can pay for it, to another woman who performs it in someone else's household" (54).

The practice of care in freedom struggles, in Cliff's writing, simultaneously revalues the work of those who serve and repoliticizes the practice of care, partly through an imagined connection with the figure known as Nanny. As the narrator in *Abeng* observes, some women who are "like one of the family" in contemporary Jamaica "are called Nanny, because they cared for the children of other women." Because "they did not know who Nanny had been," however, the name has become associated with a domestic caregiver rather than a revolutionary woman (21). The novel informs readers that the historical Nanny lead Jamaica's Windward Maroons during the First Maroon War against the slavocracy, a war that lasted from 1655 to 1740. The contemporary use of the name indicates that the Nanny who led the Maroons may once have been seen as a caregiver and Cliff's portrait of her retrieves that dimension of her work. History, however, has replaced the figure of the warrior-caregiver with that of the caregiver alone. As Cliff observes in an interview, the Black woman who participates in revolution, when she is remembered at all, is converted into a servant ("Interview," JR 65-66).

Cliff's work seeks to recuperate the revolutionary in this figure of mammydom. Rather than abandon her caregiving legacy, however, Cliff combines it with the warrior legacy, and reformulates care as a militant practice. Cliff's work is filled with a pantheon of characters who are both warrior and caregiver, including Clare Savage who chooses to fight against continuing imperialism in the name of Nanny.\(^3\) When Clare Savage elects to carry on the work of the

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\(^3\) In Cliff's third novel, *Free Enterprise*, Mary Ellen Pleasant is another character who fits within this pantheon. A historical black woman who financed and fought alongside John Brown in the 1859 rebellion that Cliff calls the African-American War for Independence, she has been converted into a servant remembered only as "Mammy" ("Interview," JR 65-66). John Brown himself may be seen as another figure in this pantheon. He was a fierce fighter in the cause of
caregiver and the warrior, she re-fuses the distinctions that the patriarchal practice of care
maintained between ladies, servants, and warriors.

When Cliff draws on Nanny for her model of caregiving, she dematerializes the practice.
Although Cliff treats Nanny as one of the mothers or grandmothers of continuing resistance, she
highlights a practice of care that shifts its focus from the work of mothers to the work of healers,
like nurses and others who care for those who suffer. Caregivers who are also warriors, especially
Black female ones, are not part of the patriarchal male fantasy that enshrines women as Angels in
the House. When these women, or men, transfer the care they practice out of the cradle and onto
the battlefield, caregiving itself is translated from mammydom to militancy.4

When Joan Williams theorizes how the potential political critique in an ethic of care might
be made effective, she advises that domesticity must be transformed "so that it no longer functions
as the voice of the victim" 980-82). The warrior-caregiver enhances the potential political
effectiveness by transforming caregiving so that it functions as the voice of the revolutionary. The
articulation of the warrior with the caregiver, which highlights a connection between militancy and
healing or other forms of care, makes two complementary features important in the revolutionary
abolition who was also a nurse and who fought because he was tender-hearted, and moved to pity
over the misery of slaves. As his son said of him, "the suffering of others . . . brought out the
woman in him, for he was ever the nurse in sickness, watchful, tireless, tender" (Wyatt-Brown 17).

4 The allusion here is to Trudier Harris's influential synopsis of the stages of domestic
servitude, in Black history and fiction, as a progression From Mammies to Militants. Mammies are
domestic servants who adopt the values of the families they serve and remain subservient to them; militants are "freer" domestic servants who refuse the values of these families and eventually confront those families violently, and often murder them (23-34). Where Harris identifies a variety of
domestic servants, some more militant than others, I am arguing that Cliff reformulates the practice
of caregiving itself to include a militant dimension. This formulation provides an alternative to the
either/or tendency in Harris's schematic. As I will discuss further in the body of this chapter, Cliff's
portrait of Christopher in No Telephone to Heaven presents a contrast to Harris's valorization of the
militants she describes. Christopher, a temporary servant who murders his former employers, is a
servant who most resembles the militant domestic in Harris's typology. But Christopher's violence is
not the kind of militancy that Cliff advocates. His violent act is presented as an understandable, but
contrasting alternative to the kind of militancy practiced by her revolutionaries, like Clare and the
other freedom fighters.
practice of freedom. For when Cliff’s writing reformulates care, so that caring emerges as a revolutionary as well as, or instead of, a domestic practice, it simultaneously reformulates revolution, so that revolution emerges as a caring practice. The practice of care in both forms, as I trace them in the history of Clare Savage and her involvement in freedom struggles, emerges as an eminently social act performed in the name of a freedom that strives for greater socio-economic justice.

**ESCAPE FROM LADYDOM: THE SHIFT FROM AUTONOMY AND INDIVIDUAL FREEDOM TO CARE AND SOCIAL REVOLUTION IN THE FREEDOM STRUGGLES OF CLARE SAVAGE**

Clare Savage begins her struggle for freedom, much like the males in Lamming’s fiction, as a struggle for autonomy and escape from confinement. In particular, she seeks to escape the destiny of becoming a lady, a destiny she is supposed to regard as a sign of privilege.

Clare flees the efforts of her parents to mold her in their preferred image: as heir to her father Boy’s white, plantation- and slave-owning ancestors; or as heir to her mother Kitty’s black, red, and brown ancestors, who were often victim to Clare’s white ancestors. As an adolescent, Clare focuses her desire for freedom on the attempt to invent herself, in opposition to her parents and to the societies that they represent. Clare resists their rules chiefly by crossing lines of race, sex, and class. Clare insists that she is mixed—white and black and red—as she attempts to join the two worlds of her experience: the town life of her father’s privilege and the King’s English, and the country life of her mother’s heritage and the island patois.

While each parent encourages Clare to choose a racial affiliation, neither parent allows Clare to stray from her proper role as a middle-class female, whether black or white or red. When Clare takes her grandmother’s gun to hunt a wild pig, for example, she imagines that she is acquiring some power and independence by taking up the male Maroon ritual (*Abeng* 111-115). Although her parents are distraught because she accidentally kills her grandmother’s bull, they also punish her because she “had stepped out of line. . . . She had been caught in rebellion. She was a
girl" (*Abeng* 149-150). Kitty, agreeing with Boy, insists that Clare has "to learn once and for all just who you are in this world." And who Clare is, for her parents, is a girl who is getting to the age when she needs to be "a lady" (*Abeng* 150). Although Clare will modify her thinking about racial identity as she matures and becomes politically active, she will continue to reject the role of the lady for that of the Maroon warrior. In other words, she will reject the role of the woman who is used by empire and those institutions which have replaced it for the role of the woman who fights back against empire and those institutions.

Broadly speaking, the politics of self-invention is a significant form of liberation from the continuing effects of empire in the Caribbean. Clare's struggle to define herself serves, on the individual level, as an example of the collective effort of many people in the Caribbean to loosen identity from the rigid categories that colonial rulers used to classify and separate the ruled from the rulers and also from each other. Since the Caribbean has been inhabited by a wide variety of people from Europe, Asia, Africa, and the Americas, many of whom interbred through force or choice, this politics of self-invention often appeals to the notion of a complex, hybrid, and even shifting identity. Cliff's writing highlights and broadens this form of liberation. In *No Telephone To Heaven*, for example, the character Harry/Harriet, a male who considers himself a mix of female and male, serves as an example of someone who takes Clare's emphasis on multiplicity to the level of sexual identification. As part of her attempt to counter, or liberate Jamaicans from, the legacy of empire, then, Cliff develops an "identity" politics defined by choices that challenge supposedly natural categories of race, color, nationality, gender, and sexuality, and by choices that rebel against the social prestige assigned to dominant categories.⁵

⁵ Many critics who write about Cliff have praised those aspects of her work which show either that characters define themselves with hybrid identities or that these characters choose identities that oppose their "natural," meaning socially ascribed, positions. Judith Raiskin offers perhaps the most extensive and subtle treatment of Cliff's transgressive identity politics in "Inverts and Hybrids: Lesbian Rewritings of Sexual and Racial identities"; she concludes, however, that Clare's and Harriet's final choices, one to be black, the other to be female, are "not . . . chosen freely nor do they guarantee freedom" (167). For other analyses of the construction of identity or subjectivity in
As an adolescent and a young adult, Clare’s perspective on freedom is much like that of the men who want to escape a corrupt Kingdom in Lamming’s *Natives of My Person*. She repeats their voyage in reverse, when she travels back from the new world island, whose social and political systems she considers corrupt, to the British motherland. An older Clare, however, recognizes that she “courted escape.” Like the men who flee what they consider a whoredom, she “focused her mind on her escape from this mess of a place”; for the place once considered virgin territory by the colonizers has itself become a kind of whoredom, a place where “tourism is whorism.” And like those men, she felt “free” when she was apart from others, when “she could walk away” from someone with whom she had been intimate “and be glad they were done with each other” (*No Telephone* 22, 87-89). Although being unattached meant that she was “unclaimed,” and thus free, she also, like G inside the *Castle* of his skin, felt “locked off”; she felt bereft because neither “the giving or the receiving” of love or affection came easy to her (*No Telephone* 154).

Cliff’s writing, see Thomas Cartelli, “After the Tempest: Shakespeare, Postcoloniality, and Michelle Cliff’s New, New World Miranda”; Belinda Edmondson, “Race, Privilege, and the Politics of (Re)Writing History”; Simon Gikandi’s chapter on Michelle Cliff, “Narration at the Postcolonial Moment,” in his *Writing in Limbo: Modernism and Caribbean Literature*; Lemuel A. Johnson, “A-beng: (Re)Calling the Body In(To) Question”; Maria Helena Lima, “Revolutionary Developments: Michelle Cliff’s *No Telephone to Heaven* and Merle Collins’s *Angel*” (Lima, however, interprets Cliff’s goal to be essentialist, since, Lima argues, Cliff wishes to create wholeness from fragmentation (38)); Franfoise Lionnet, “Of Mangoes and Maroons: Language, History, and the Multicultural Subject of Michelle Cliff’s *Abeng*”; and Raiskin’s chapter on Cliff, “With the Logic of a Creole,” in her book, *Snow on the Cane Fields*. Cliff’s own analysis of her work supports readings that associate changes in identity with freedom: in portraying Clare Savage as a crossroads character, for example, she explains that her work attempts to draw together “everything I am and have been, both Caliban and Ariel and a liberated and synthesized version of each” (*Clare* 264); see also her interview with Judith Raiskin.

But even as she focuses on a kind of hybrid identity that is common in the Caribbean imagination of freedom, Cliff introduces an element of care that modifies the relationship between certain kinds of identity and the struggle for freedom. Clare is able to enjoy a certain sense of freedom, coupled with an anxiety that she defines as being split, from rebelling against natural, meaning socially assigned, categories and from crossing boundaries. Her desires for autonomy and independence lead her to resist rigid, socially valued categories. But a growing sensitivity to the situation of others who are less privileged than she is eventually guides her to choose among politically available categories.
Cliff's writing neither rejects nor condemns the practice of escape. On the contrary, she often endorses the act and the value of escape. In "Filaments," one of her early essays, for example, she defends her own attempt to separate from her mother as an "earned departure" and is pleased that, despite her mother's symbolic attempts to remove her arms and legs in order to make escape impossible, she is able to remove herself under her own power (Claiming 12). In another essay, she identifies with a slave woman whom she dreams of as the first black navigator; arguing with white women historians who insist that the manuscript which pictures the woman at the helm is a fake, Cliff takes her lesson from the title of the manuscript, Emergam, which is the first-person future of the Latin verb that means "to rise up, emerge, free oneself" (Look Behind, "Claiming" 44-45). And Cliff has Annie Christmas, the non-slave Jamaican protagonist of her third novel, Free Enterprise, emigrate to the nineteenth-century United States; like Clare and "other runaway women," Annie begins "her revolting behavior with her own escape" (10-11).6

At the same time, however, Cliff's writing also suggests that the freedom attained through escape is both limited and potentially disturbing. A "runaway," per se, is not free; "escape," Cliff implies, is not freedom unless it is respected by others.7 As even one of the emancipated slaves in

6 Unlike Nanny and Mary Ellen Pleasant, Annie Christmas is a fictional character created by Michelle Cliff. She shares many characteristics with Clare Savage—she is a mixed-blood light-skinned Jamaican who is born into relative privilege and who rejects that privilege in order to fight oppression—and, if real, might have served as a nineteenth-century precursor for Clare. Annie's name, however, is a nom de guerre taken from a legendary African woman, with the physical prowess of a John Henry, who lived and fought at the time of the American Revolution (Free 27-29). As Cliff observes in an interview with Raiskin, this fictional, legendary character is based on an historical figure, Lucy Parsons, who was "an American revolutionary, a black woman who came north, whose husband was one of the martyrs at the Haymarket riot," and Lucy/Annie should be included in Cliff's pantheon of guerrillas (64).

7 In Free Enterprise, for example, Cliff highlights the greater degree of freedom enjoyed by a person with "free papers" than by a "runaway"; even the fact that a Black person whose free papers are ripped up is subjected to slavery emphasizes the tenuous freedom of an escapee, because the loss of those papers reclassifies the person as a runaway (115). The importance of respect in strengthening the freedom of the runaway is emphasized in Abeng, when Cliff remembers that the first Maroons on Jamaica hoped that their freedom would be more secure under the Spanish, who "agreed to respect the freedom of all the Africans on the island, if the rebels won the colony back for Spain" (22).
Free Enterprise suggests, you're not "free" if you must "run for your life" (90). If escape were respected as freedom, moreover, those who escaped would not have to live in isolation, but would be free to create community or even to return. But the potential problem with focusing on escape in defining the ideal of freedom does not arise simply from the fact that this freedom is partial and circumscribed.

Another potential problem arises from the fact that the desire for living free of and separate from others has a troubling history of exclusion, both in the settling of the Americas and in the twentieth-century Holocaust, on which Cliff frequently dwells. The idea, and the practice, of living Judenrein and Schwarzenrein raises the disturbing example of those who wish to live without others, to live "free of Jews" or "free of blacks." Finally, as I already observed, Clare's own practice of freedom through escape, and as disconnection, disturbingly mimics the practice of the colonizers described by Lamming. A freedom that contents itself with such escape does nothing to confront and change the personal, social, political, and economic situations it characterizes as whoredom. Rather than confronting whoredom, it pursues virginity; and the virgin conditions it establishes are as disturbing, if not more disturbing, than the whoredom it leaves behind intact. A freedom that is more than, or other than, independence and freedom from control, a freedom that confronts the injustice which enhances freedom for some and curtails it for others, requires some action and some guiding idea that is more than, or other than, escape.9

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8 Cliff, whose thoughts about freedom or its absence frequently compares the situation of the Jews and the dark races, juxtaposes the concepts of Judenrein and Schwarzenrein in two consecutive essays. One, "A Visit to the Secret Annex," describes "A Pilgrimage" to the house where Anne Frank hid with her family, next door to a church whose congregation thought they were Judenrein. The other, "Europe Becomes Blacker," is offered as "A History Lesson": although "all those gypsies shoveled into ovens . . . were dark people," she cites a long list of dark people who have always lived in Europe and of "more colored folks [who] are coming home to roost," to claim that "Europe has not been Schwarzenrein for a long time now" (Look Behind 104-109).

9 The notion that freedom requires confrontation rather than, or in addition to, escape may have broad application in the development of a politicized Caribbean literature that is "skeptical about any liberational claims for modernism and modernity." In the conclusion to his analysis of modernism and Caribbean literature, for example, Simon Gikandi suggests that Caribbean modernism
That other practice and guiding idea emerges as a form of care. At thirty-six, Clare acknowledges a "longing for tribe," a desire for connection rather than separation (No Telephone 91). As she attempts to create a community for herself, she joins with a group of freedom fighters, and attempts to create a different kind of freedom for herself and others. Her effort is made possible by a developing sense of and capacity for care. Clare joins the freedom fighters because she learns to care, for example, that 167 old women were burned up in an almshouse fire or that children in the Dungle, Kingston’s homeless, are crippled by polio, and that their suffering is the result of government policy (No Telephone 194-196).¹⁰

It could be said that Clare now recognizes that "the act of liberation is not sufficient for establishing the practices of liberty." This phrase, from Jana Sawicki’s essay on the potential of Foucault’s emancipatory theory for feminism, is particularly felicitous for describing the concern with freedom that underlies Clare’s emerging sense of care. For Sawicki is reading Foucault’s essay on “The Ethic of Care as a Practice of Freedom”; and she reads that essay to conclude, as Foucault does, that there are more possible freedoms than those envisioned by traditional humanism (Disciplining Foucault 122-125). For Cliff and Foucault alike, an ethic of care becomes integral to the practice of freedom. The ethic of care that Foucault invokes, however, is an ethic of the self, a freedom practiced as self-invention, the kind of freedom that guided Clare’s early efforts at independendence. The ethic of care that Cliff’s writing invokes in Clare’s later freedom struggles is closer to the moral vision introduced by Carol Gilligan and Nel Noddings and subsequently debated is "radically different from ‘high’ modernism," in part because "it seeks to confront rather than escape" history (2, 254). And Jeannette Charles, identifying herself with Maroon ancestors, with whom she is "one in de spirit," reminds that "We ain’ only run to de hills fe hide yuh know, we use fe attak" (270).

¹⁰ Meryl Schwartz identifies a similar movement in Clare’s bildung. Schwartz focuses on Clare’s own needs, however, as the motivating factor for Clare’s developing desire for community; acknowledging that Clare attempts to forge a politically-defined community, Schwartz argues that such community is the only "cure" available to heal Clare’s own fragmentation or sense of self-division (291).
in feminist theory. That vision emphasizes empathy or compassion and the willingness to care for others as well as the self.

This focus on care and community that I identify as an alternative to escape and independence in Cliff’s imagination of freedom shares many features with the emphasis on mutual recognition and the effort to become free within caring relationships that I associate with the alternative to escape and independence in Lamming’s portrait of the women in *Natives of My Person*. In particular, both challenge traditional approaches to autonomy as they attempt to imagine what kinds of attitudes and practices might be necessary to develop a sense of freedom that is neither antisocial nor fearful of domination. While the ethic of care holds a revised sense of maturity in common with these revisions to traditional psychoanalytic theory, the focus on care as a social act rather than a focus on individual or interpersonal psychology brings notions of morality, justice, and caregiving to the fore in Clare’s practice of freedom.

**THE SHIFT FROM DOMESTICATED TO POLITICIZED CARE:**
**THE CONNECTION OF CARE AND JUSTICE IN REVOLUTIONARY FREEDOM STRUGGLE**

When Carol Gilligan formulates the stages or levels of moral development that comprise an ethic of care in *In a Different Voice*, she contrasts them with stages that evaluate levels of fairness and justice to measure moral development. As I noted in the introduction to Part Two, a number of critics object to an ethic of care as a basis for political activity because its practice is too personal and because it ignores issues of freedom and justice. Gilligan, however, suggests that a mature level of moral development would recognize the complementarity between the values of care and justice (164-165).11 The work of Michelle Cliff, as I read it, suggests an even more profound connection between the two values: a proper focus on justice depends on the practice of care.

When critics suggest that the political potential of care or compassion is limited because “care” is only extended to family, friends, or those we understand, they often present this limitation

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11 Gilligan presents the complementary approaches as having the potential to resolve conflicts between integrity (or identity) and care (or intimacy).
as if it were inherent in, or "natural" to, the practice of care. Their criticism, however, is limited and limiting to the practice of care. As Joan Tronto suggests, "the impoverishment of our vocabulary for discussing care" may result from the "way caring is privatized, [and is] thus beneath our social vision" ("Women and Caring" 185). Part of the social and political context that such privatized notions ignore is the different practice of care by domestic servants and any number of other individuals or groups.12

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12 My argument has much in common with those made by several contributors to a "Symposium on Care and Justice" in the Spring 1995 issue of Hypatia. Monique Deveaux introduces the papers in the symposium by asserting simply and forcefully that care "entails a deep commitment to transformative politics" (117). Asserting that "caricatures of care theory"—as endless self-sacrifice, for example—"serve to perpetuate social and political inequalities," she identifies instead thinkers whose works "show the inextricable links between care and justice, and the extent to which the concerns of each overlap and presuppose one another" (116, 117).

In "Colonialism and Its Others: Considerations on Rights and Care Discourses," for example, Uma Narayan acknowledges that some "strands of the ethic of care" may resonate with "a colonialist care discourse" that thinks about responsibility in a paternalistic framework—that assumes care of the enslaved by the powerful as a burden (134). Such paternalistic caring can be a form of domination. Narayan argues that an alternative practice of care would be connected less with this sense of responsibility or duty and more with an ability to "be attentive and responsive" to the suffering of the powerless (138). Her analysis makes clear the distinction I am drawing between responsibility and response-ability. Narayan also concludes, on the one hand, that improved considerations of justice might provide "enabling conditions" for the provision of adequate care, and, on the other hand, that improved considerations of care "might provide the 'enabling conditions' for more adequate forms of justice" (139). If the kind of responsible care provided by the masters is a colonialist practice, the kind of responsive care that Cliff presents as necessary for improved justice may be considered a postcolonial response to that colonial practice of care.

In "Care as a Basis for Radical Political Judgments," Tronto asserts that "care provides the basis for the most important form of contemporary radical political thinking" because it "creates the best climate for good political judgments" (141). She argues that thinking about care as simply private or parochial leads to "simplistic avoidance of the elements of care" and counters that care "can concern institutions, societies, even global levels of thinking" (145). An ethic of care incorporates such elements as "the broad economic concerns that shape the material conditions of people's lives, the very local scope of interpersonal psychological mechanisms, and social interactions" (144). Tronto also highlights the importance of "attentiveness" in the practice of care: "until we care about something, the care process cannot begin" (145). And an endnote suggests that such responsiveness is distinct from "responsibility." For the "assumption of responsibility [that is] inherent in the work ethic" is more closely associated in welfare debates, for example, with the position that "justice" and "fairness" demand that people "earn" whatever they have; in a care ethic, by contrast, "justice" may entitle people to what they need (146, 147). In the name of greater justice and fairness, Tronto advocates taking care "seriously" and suggests that "greater and wider forms of care" will contribute to the "self-interest" of society by maintaining and repairing "our 'world' so that we can live in it as well as possible" (142, 146).
The phrase that "employers" so commonly use to describe the status of their domestic servants, that they are "like one of the family," participates in naturalizing this conflation of caregiving activities and intimacy. Clare Savage grows to question that conflation and to recognize that being "like one of the family" is not like being "one of the family." The narrative voice in Abeng makes the distinction very clear: being "like one of the family" meant staying in a small room with one light and a table and a bed; it meant waiting for tea-time and preparing lap trays, cleaning, mopping, cooking, caring for babies lighter than their own, doing other people's laundry, buying other people's goods. Being like one of the family meant that the family they served was often more familiar to them than their own family, than the children whom they saw perhaps once a week, the children who were cared for by mothers and sisters and aunts (17). Being "like" one of the family is all too often a status that translates a family "bond" into a condition of "bondage."13 Neither the care that servants provide, nor the response that they receive for that care, are naturally associated with feelings of care or intimacy.

A more reciprocal and equitable practice of care would, by contrast, emphasize feelings of care even when those feelings are not "natural." When Shellee Colen interviewed West Indian women who migrated to New York to better themselves and found employment as domestic workers, for example, she found that these women feel the oppressiveness of their position most in being treated neither like members of the family they care for nor as human beings with families of their own. These women often require "employer sponsorship" in order to obtain the green cards which will allow them residence status and the potential for reunion with their children. But, as one observes, "'They just somehow figure because they're sponsoring you, they own you'" (51). In an

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13 In an early feminist analysis of race, sex, and class in domestic labor, Bettina Aptheker forcefully links the positions of the domestic and the slave. The household worker enters into a "slavelike arrangement" in which she is forced to sell not only her power to labor, but also her person as a condition of labor, and is treated more often than not as chattel. And the majority of domestic workers well into the twentieth century were Black women, Aptheker argues, "precisely as a result of their [own or other Black women's] status as former slaves" (119-122).
analysis that echoes Orlando Patterson’s depiction of slavery as social death, another comments:

“‘There is not much difference between working in this situation and slavery. . . . There is no human recognition’” (52, emphasis added). In fact, what they seek more than material compensation, according to one worker, is “‘a little respect and feelings’” (56). The absence of reciprocal care and respect is particularly degrading because, as another remarks, “‘when you’re living that close to someone for 4 1/2 years, if there is no bond between you, then something has to be radically wrong’” (61). Like the fugitive slaves and ex-slaves who seek to practice freedom in community, these women find isolation from family and friends one of the hardest facts of their situation and often “seek out and recreate networks of kin and friends” (65).

Clare Savage learns, from her mother and grandmother, some of that need for reciprocity. The example of her female ancestors teaches her that relatively privileged persons ought to take care of “strangers,” meaning people outside their family, even if that care for strangers leads members of their family to feel neglected and to accuse them of caring more for such strangers than they do for their own family. Clare’s grandmother Mattie, for example, adopts homeless children and shares “her family’s food with people who had nothing but the enamel cups and bowls—their ‘utensils’—they held up at her back window” (Abeng 137). Kitty, Mattie’s daughter and Clare’s mother, feels neglected, for Mattie has the daughter of a neighbor take Kitty to the hospital for a tonsillitis operation, instead of accompanying Kitty herself (Abeng 138-141). But Kitty continues the pattern; saving some of her paycheck every week, Kitty buys dry goods and other necessities and has her husband Boy “drive her to the country to find people to give these things to.” And Clare responds as Kitty did to Mattie; yearning for more natural affection from Kitty, Clare objects that her mother saves “most of her tenderness for people she barely knew” (Abeng 52). When Kitty dies, however, Boy accuses Clare of being “‘too much like [her] mother,’” abandoning her family for the sake of “strangers” (No Telephone 102). Noting that Clare cried when the young girls died in the Birmingham church explosion, but does not cry not when Kitty dies, Boy accuses,
"'I suppose you have more feeling for niggers than for your own mother'" (No Telephone 104). As Boy accuses, Clare begins to accept this alignment with her mother; she eventually chooses to turn her own attention to the strangers she feeds from her grandmother's farm as she prepares for revolution.14

When Clare joins the group of freedom fighters who are strangers to her, she joins a group who are, in many senses, strangers to each other. They vary widely in "the shades of their skin, places traveled to and from, events experienced, things understood, food taken into their bodies, acts of violence committed, books read, music heard, languages recognized, ones they loved, living family" (No Telephone 4). As a light-skinned daughter of landowners who joins with many who are bitter towards others of her kind, Clare prepares to fight "alongside people who easily could have hated her" (No Telephone 5). Clare risks their bitterness and potential hatred only because a sense of care has informed her notions of justice and freedom.

When Cliff expands the notion of whom her characters should care for and about, she aligns her vision with those who criticize privatized notions of care as irresponsible and who charge proponents of such privatization with responsibility for constructing a narrow vision that contributes to inequity and injustice. As Tronto observes:

To say that we should only care for those things that come within our immediate purview ignores the ways in which we are responsible for the construction of our narrow sphere. When Noddings says that she will respond with caring to the stranger at her door but not to starving children in Africa, she ignores the ways in which the modern world is intertwined and the ways in which hundreds of prior public and private decisions affect where we find ourselves and which strangers show up at our door. ("Women and Caring" 182)

The way Cliff's characters take care of "strangers" as much as or more than their own families may be a way of "changing places" with the darker, and poorer, live-in servants who neglect their own

14 This connection between political activity and the accusation or practice of caring for strangers permeates all of Cliff's writing and is especially revealing in the title story of her collection, Bodies of Water. When a mother accuses her daughter of caring more for strangers than for family, the space is cleared for the "hotheaded" girl to fight for strangers, even though her mother argues that her desire to change the world is "impossibly dangerous" (149).
kin as they care for lighter-skinned, surrogate families instead of changing places with the colonial masters. This way of "changing places" may enact Cliff's revision of the Rasta concept of "I and I," in which "we/they/I connect and disconnect—change place" in an attempt to reduce injustice without having that change mean that the more privileged characters are submitting to domination (Look Behind, "Fire" 76).

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A redefined sense of care may be required for progressive political activity because the socio-economic injustices of current political systems are based, in part, on the very split between freedom, justice, and care that the critics of a politicized practice of care assume to be natural, inevitable, or even desirable. As Orlando Patterson argues, that split between political freedom, or democracy, on the one hand, and socio-economic justice, on the other, was instituted in the Greek origins of freedom. When he seeks to explain how and why freedom was constructed as the supreme value of the Western world, he observes that the Greek conception of freedom was developed in a slave society, which was based on a slave economy that generated wealth and a move toward political equality among dominant males of the master class, but mass inequality for the many. When the Attic lower classes demanded greater equality through land redistribution and a share in the wealth, the master class offered them civic freedom or citizenship instead, and raised this freedom which separated citizens from slaves, aliens, and women into a prized value. As Patterson observes, "political equality was the price the elite was going to pay for its growing wealth and increase in the size of the slave population" (59-74).

As Patterson describes it, the development of Christianity contributed to the split when the values of freedom and love competed for dominance in the development of the early church (296-315). And, contrary to prevailing political theory which argues that an ethic of care is an

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15 The relevance of the early Greek situation for Cliff's contemporary perspectives in Jamaica is reinforced by Harry/Harriet in No Telephone when he ironically compares conditions in Socrates' and Plato's Greece to conditions in Jamaica (122-123).
inappropriate basis for political justice, the issue of justice in the early church was aligned with the command to love others rather than with the concern for individual freedom. When the value of freedom triumphed over the value of love, it also triumphed over the value of justice and equality.

Patterson explains that this development undid the kind of radical social change that Jesus tried to institute. The supreme value that Jesus preached, and by which he lived, was not freedom, or even the freedom to love, but the command to love. But his message of love, which was also reflected in his life, was radically egalitarian rather than honorific and hierarchical. Because he shows that "we express our love of God by loving our fellow human beings and by recognizing their complete equality with us," the implications of his life and message for changing the organization of the social world are demanding and potentially subversive—so demanding and subversive that even his followers were unwilling to live by such an ideal. Patterson considers this valuation of love and equality an "insistence on," and "celebration of, a value infinitely more challenging, more humane, and more divine" than the valuation of freedom (303). But Jesus’s followers created a religion that made individual freedom its central dogma. In the Pauline version that triumphed in the early church, the focus shifted from the life and message of Jesus to the salvation he made possible by his sacrificial death. "Freedom in the literal sense of redemption became the central religious goal"; and the promise of spiritual freedom was "expressed in terms completely isomorphic with the sociological experience" of release from slavery (315).

Liberal democracies, as Anne Phillips describes them, bear the legacy of this tension between equality and freedom. For individual freedom, secured by rights and liberties, may be threatened by efforts to deal with social and economic inequalities. The balance between the two is often struck by a focus on political equality, which appears to be more compatible with individual liberties, in place of socio-economic equality (39-40).

If it can be said that the concept of freedom is shaped by the reason one thinks about freedom in the first place, it might be argued that the early Greek and early Christian conceptions of
freedom were shaped, at least in part, by a desire to circumvent or replace demands for love and social and economic equality. The concept of freedom in such instances is defined in a way that pits it against the values of love and economic equality. When current attempts to theorize or extend the practice of democracy avoid such contradictions and inequities, according to Anne Phillips, they retreat from freedom's grander promise and suffer from failure of the imagination (127-128).

I would argue that Cliff attempts to restore some image of the "grander promise." Her writing not only addresses the demands for love and for greater socio-economic equality that are often split off from concepts of political and individual freedom, but also suggests, in a manner that echoes Jesus's call for a radically egalitarian love, that the splitting of these two demands from freedom are connected.

The structure of Cliff's third novel, *Free Enterprise,* might suggest that the two values are competing rather than reconcilable or even necessarily connected, because each value is emphasized by different key characters who set the values in opposition. Mary Ellen Pleasant, the entrepreneur who helps to finance "John Brown's rebellion," argues that "freedom without the means to be self-sufficient is a one-armed triumph" (*Free* 146). When John Brown contends that "liberation is one thing," but that her arguments about redistributing wealth or seizing private property are "something else entirely," he reinforces the perspective that split the value of economic parity from freedom two millennia earlier (144). The complementary notions that materialism is tawdry and that people freed from oppression should prefer the nobler or morally superior goal of freedom are frequently advanced by those, like John Brown, with more privilege and greater economic advantage. When Mary Ellen argues against his attempt to make them "better than capitalism," or a "shining example of the impossible" (143, 147), she responds more generally to the nineteenth-century abolitionist idealism that viewed slavery and emancipation in moral, but not material terms (Littlefield 72-73).

In *Free Enterprise,* the path preferred by John Brown is followed more closely by Annie Christmas,
a relatively privileged, light-skinned Jamaican, who moved to the United States and fought alongside Mary Ellen and John Brown. After the Civil War, she chooses to live on the edge of the world, in poverty and obscurity, and alongside some of the most despised and disinherited people of her time, the lepers at Carville.

Because the path chosen by Annie and the path followed by Mary Ellen after the failure of their insurrection are never reconciled, it could seem that Cliff is setting them up as the competing or opposing approaches that the argument between John Brown and Mary Ellen Pleasant assumes they are. It is important to notice, however, that the positions from which Annie and Mary Ellen adopt their strategies are quite different. When Annie, a light-skinned Jamaican from the wealthier classes, abandons materialism and chooses to live among the poor, she is rejecting a system that grants her unfair privilege over others. Annie is revolting against the pessimism and callousness with which her mother insists that "the poor are an investment that will leave you penniless. This business can lead nowhere but heartache" (9). When Annie settles by the lepers, who elsewhere in Cliff’s imagination are “confused” with residents of the almshouse (Look Behind, “Claiming” 47), she is making a kind of rebellious investment in the poor. When Mary Ellen demands the right to pursue material wealth, she is rejecting the system that grants others unfair privilege over her. Both Mary Ellen and Annie reject the same inequity, and the same system, from different headings.

Both Annie and Mary Ellen “care” about poverty, economic injustice, and the disinheritance of the poor. Both revolt against such inequity and neither is willing to engage in any form of business, commerce, enterprise, or revolution whose currency is “every man for himself” (7).

The novels which trace the development of Clare Savage highlight Cliff’s insistence that a person of relative privilege must re-fuse the split between between the practice of care and freedom

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16 According to Tronto, the traditional separation of spheres assumes that market relations and caring relations cannot coexist and resolves the problem by assigning one to the public sphere and the other to the private sphere. A more radical solution, if they are indeed incompatible, is to discover a way of life that replaces market relations (“Women and Caring” 179).
in order to re-fuse the split between freedom and greater socio-economic justice or equality. This pair of novels suggest that a certain degree of care is needed simply to recognize structural inequality as unjust in a “free” society and even more to engage in political and revolutionary attempts to change both the socio-economic structures and the structures of feeling that support them. When Clare and Kitty Savage challenge the systems of sexual and racial prejudice without considering the consequences of their acts for others who have even less standing than they do, for example, their rebellious impulses are recognized as “acts of luxury.”

When the Savage family moves to New York City some time after Clare’s rebellion, Clare’s mother Kitty fails to anticipate the consequences of her activity for her co-workers when she begins to “embellish” the “helpful hints” she inserts into the packages of completed laundry at White’s Sanitary Laundry because she is angered by the racism she has encountered in the United States. Signing herself as “Mrs. White,” which is part of her job, she attempts to reprimand the businessmen who are the laundry’s customers, which is not part of her job, with such homilies as “WE CAN CLEAN YOUR CLOTHES BUT NOT YOUR HEART.” But frustrated at her seeming lack of effect, she eventually darkens the pink face of Mrs. White and announces: “HELLO. MRS. WHITE IS DEAD. MY NAME IS MRS. BLACK. I KILLED HER.” When customers finally complain and withdraw their business, the owner fires the laundry’s Black women packers rather than Kitty, because he believes that their “kind” is “no good,” “unstable,” meaning black and lower class, while Kitty is a “nice girl,” meaning relatively light and not quite so poor.

17 The practice of care in Cliff’s fiction approximates the conjunction of care and justice that Elizabeth Ann Bartlett identifies in Camus’s ethic of “rebellion.” Where Camus’s rebellion refers to an “action that simultaneously rejects injustice and oppression and affirms human dignity,” the rebellion in Cliff’s work is often literal. Whether the rebellion Cliff depicts is the literal rebellion of guerrilla warfare or the kinds of rebellion inherent in revising history or going where one has no business, for example, her focus on care corroborates three principles with which Bartlett summarizes the ethic of rebellion: characters demand justice precisely because they care, because they have a passionate concern for their own dignity and a compassionate concern for the oppression of others; this conjunction of justice and care implies an obligation to community; and demands for justice that do not remain faithful to their origins in care become vehicles of oppression rather than justice (84-87).
72-84, emphasis in original). Even though the blame belongs more to the laundry owner than to Kitty, a Cliff character in this instance is called upon to recognize the potential "luxury" in even symbolic acts of violent rebellion.

The charge is also applicable to Clare's earlier attempt to rebel against being confined like a girl, when she attempted to act like a Maroon by hunting for a wild boar. In this instance, it is one of the less privileged characters in Cliff's novels, Clare's poorer and darker-skinned country companion, Zoe, who attempts to educate Clare about the costs of her personal rebellion. Those costs potentially include dispossession for Zoe and Zoe's mother (Abeng 111-122, 131-132). Clare acknowledges Zoe's point that the consequences for Zoe are greater than the consequences for Clare and regrets her rashness, even though she is unwilling to believe that the differences between them extend beyond the morning's hunt. The narrative voice continues to educate readers about a certain naivete in Clare's insistence on crossing rigid boundaries of sex and race. Noting that Zoe had emphasized their different relation to "property," and that Clare had admitted that she had selfishly thought of the hunt as "her right—her property," without thinking about the consequences for Zoe, the narrator continues:

Clare's people owned property and Miss Ruthie [Zoe's mother] and her daughters had to beg a piece from Miss Mattie [Clare's grandmother] to live on. But Clare thought that she and Zoe were removed from property as it related to deeds and acreage—in her naivete she limited the bounds of property there. After all they were girls and this was country, where Clare thought everyone crossed the lines of possession—indicated by dry walls and barbed wire—and picked fruit and cut cane from other people's land. And dug yam wherever they saw a yam hill rise. She had no sense of the nuances of ownership—of the unevenness of possession. Or that if she saw a stranger picking oranges from one of Miss Mattie's trees, this did not represent privilege but payment—for mending a break in the fence or helping with the harvest. She did not realize that it was only she who moved across the lines of ownership—because she was Kitty's daughter and Miss Mattie's granddaughter. (Abeng 121).

But Clare does care about Zoe and the seeds of recognition have been planted. The incident illustrates that, for a progressive politicized practice of freedom with care, the other must be allowed to respond and to speak her own needs. As Tronto observes in her reflections about "how" to practice care in a feminist way that pays attention to the political context of caring: "There is no
simple way one can generalize from one's own experience to what another needs" ("Women and Caring" 177). Zoe's challenge initiates the process through which Clare learns that "love" must become the "bottom line" (Look Behind, "Within the Veil" 89). For it is only when love becomes the bottom line that she begins to see the economic bottom line in terms of equity. It is care about the consequences of inequitable ways of practicing freedom in an "independent" Jamaica for people like Zoe that motivates Clare to engage in a different kind of freedom struggle when she, as a young woman, joins the guerillas who wish to fight against the system.18


When Clare learns to question the limits of the kind of freedom she hoped to attain when she attempted to imitate the Maroons in her youthful and aborted hunt for the wild boar, she does not abandon the model of the Maroons. Instead, she and the other freedom fighters she joins as an adult evoke "the name of Nanny" in order to move closer to each other (No Telephone 5).

While fugitive slaves sought freedom from the control of others, they also recognized, as I indicated in the Introduction to this work, that freedom meant the ability to enter and sustain caring relationships. If one feature of slavery, control or domination to the point of ownership by another,

18 The sensitivity that Clare begins to develop to distinctions like those between her situation and Zoe's also influence her practice of freedom in the matters of identity. She begins to recognize that the freedom she hopes to enjoy by choosing a mixed identity and by traveling between worlds is a luxury that is unavailable to her friend Zoe. Clare may be free not to choose between categories of identity; both her "natural" features, which classify Clare as "white" in the Jamaican color system, and her economic privilege, even on the "colored" side of her family, leave Clare relatively free to shift between racial, if not sexual, identities. That freedom is a luxury Zoe does not enjoy; blackness and poverty make the privilege of choosing or not choosing a particular identity impossible for Zoe. At 36, an older and more politically sophisticated Clare comes to accept Harry/Harriet's decree that "the time will come for both of us to choose. For we will have to make the choice. Cast our lot. Cyaa live split. Not in this world" (No Telephone 131). Because she cares about people like Zoe, who are less privileged than she is, and because she hopes that Harry/Harriet is right when he/she promises that "Things can change here," Clare, without denying her whiteness, chooses the Blackness with which she joins the struggle to make Jamaica a freer place for its Black people (No Telephone 127). Her shift from the apparent openness of a hybrid or shifting identity to the seeming restrictiveness of a single, committed identity, accompanies her switch from a focus on individual, personal freedom to a focus on collective, social freedom.
sets up an opposite notion of autonomy as the ideal of freedom, a second feature of slavery, the
denial of kinship that Orlando Patterson characterizes as "social death," suggests that an opposite
notion of community and affiliation might also constitute an ideal of freedom. In the tradition of
the Maroon communities which the fugitive slaves established, freedom does not have to replace
connection with isolation and disconnection. For if connection, in slavery and domination, is
experienced as belonging to, in freedom, it is pursued as belonging with.

Belonging with configures an alternative basis of connection that contrasts not only with the
connection defined by ownership, but also with the connection defined by family ties or blood line.
Cliff's fiction emphasizes the importance of such belonging not only for the first Maroons who
settled with Nanny in Jamaica, but for many fugitives in the Americas, including Mary Ellen
Pleasant's mother who joined a Maroon settlement in the Berkshire Hills, near Tanglewood, and
raised her baby there (*Free* 129). She also describes such connection in the history of the *marrano*
Jews who "had company" as they formed "companies" of rebels "in their hiding places, guerrilla
bands, in the prisons, in the processions, on the ships of Colón and Magellan, across the seven
seas, . . . in the thick undergrowth of the New World" (*Free* 181-183). Citing the belief mentioned
early in *Abeng*, that all island children were descended from one of two sisters, Nanny who fled
slavery and Sekesu who remained a slave (18), and the narrative comment that "it is important to
take it all in, the disconnections and the connections, in order to understand the limits of the
abolition of slavery" (28), Lemuel Johnson aptly characterizes Cliff's fiction as a genealogy of
necessary connections, disconnections, and reconnections that "aims at affiliation" (112, 122, 128).19

With this form of affiliation, the people with whom one establishes bonds may change even
as the importance of connection and care remains vital. So Clare Savage separates from her family.

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19 In the instance cited, the narrative comment about understanding necessary connections and
disconnections specifically refers to the connections and disconnections between slavery and other
forms of employment in the western world, between "slavery-in-fact" and "veiled slavery." But
Johnson appropriately extends the comment to epitomize a general methodology in Cliff's fiction.
and travels through Europe and the States, only to return to Jamaica and join with freedom fighters on her grandmother’s farm, the same land she once "shared" with her childhood companion, Zoe.

In *Free Enterprise*, a character who could be Clare’s spiritual ancestor, Annie Christmas, leaves her family in Jamaica to seek her own redemption, but successively joins with abolitionists and suffragettes, then Mary Ellen Pleasant and associates of John Brown, and finally a colony of lepers at Carville. Like the former slaves, these lepers live in quarters out back while the sisters of St. Vincent de Paul, who "care for" the lepers, use the handsome brick house for a convent. Yet it is the fact that these lepers have families with whom they are forbidden contact that seems to make their situation most resemble the plight of slaves taken from Africa to the colonies of the new World. Isolated and wondering whether they are even remembered back home, the lepers attempt to make life in this "colony" more like the free world outside by forging new kinships (*Free Enterprise* 38-43). When Annie settles beside them, she offers and receives "company" as they visit and share stories of conquest and resistance.

This "exchange of partners" emphasizes that the connection and care which accompanies this revised practice of freedom is not being represented as connection within a one-on-one relationship like that of the heterosexual or even gay/lesbian couple or a nuclear family. This kind

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20 Lionnet also notes the importance of "a different narrative of belonging, inclusion, and kinship" in the genealogies of slave societies and diaspora, as represented in Cliff’s novel, *Abeng*. But she relates the significance of this different narrative of belonging more explicitly to the construction of identity and less explicitly to other constructions of freedom. Identifying the mother as the site of both filiation and affiliation, Lionnet highlights the significance of a "web of multicultural influences" and a broad idea of community for establishing a multicultural, Creolized subjectivity (339-340). Lemuel Johnson’s analysis, which focuses on the connections, disconnections, and reconnections that allow female bodies to "make generations," or not, is similarly oriented toward the definition of a New World consciousness or identity through these connections and generations (120-124, 138). Meryl Schwartz describes Cliff’s attempts to "forge imagined communities" that disrupt associations between social position [or family] and political alliance, but she also focuses on such community as a cure for psychological fragmentation (288, 291).

21 In an interview with Meryl Schwartz, Cliff observes that these lepers are "a colony of political activists who have been incarcerated" (598). In part, then, they form another community of resistance like the Maroons, even though they are brought together by force.
of connection can be seen both as a result of slavery's domestic arrangements and as resistance to
the dominant ideology that enshrines the patriarchal nuclear family as the most desirable form of
kinship. That idealized family is marked by an equation of kinship and property relations—children
"belong to" (are the property of), and inherit property from, their parents. The "mythically revered
privilege of a free and freed community" in the West, as Hortense Spillers presents it in "Mama's
Baby, Papa's Maybe" in a description whose emphases already criticize that arrangement, is a
"family" that values both the vertical transfer of a bloodline, of a patronymic, of titles and
entitlements, of real estate and the prerogatives of 'cold cash,' from fathers to sons and . . . [also]
the supposedly free exchange of affectional ties between a male and a female of his choice." In
part, the condition of slavery is defined by a disruption of these kinship and property relations:
"'kinship' loses meaning, since it can be invaded at any given and arbitrary moment by the property
relations"; children don't belong to the mother and are not related to their owner. As a result,
Spillers surmises in language that highlights the points about connection and an ethic of care that I
am making, "it is probably truer than we know at this distance . . . that the captive person
developed, time and again, certain ethical and sentimental features that tied her and him, across the
landscape to others, often sold from hand to hand, of the same and different blood in a common
fabric of memory and inspiration" (74-75). But if the legal arrangements of slavery "force" slaves,
fugitives, and freed slaves, to modify their practice of care and connection, of family and domestic
relations, that modified practice, in at least some instances, can be seen as a rejection of the
dominant form of domestic relations. If the dominant form of the "family" values the conjunction
of kinship and property relations, but allows property relations to supercede those of kinship in the
case of the slave, sometimes by narrowing the definition of kin, i.e., denying the blood ties of the
owner/father, the resistant form values kinship over property relations and broadens the definition of
kin to include many outside the blood relation.
The exchange of partners that Cliff portrays accurately represents a historical pattern of disconnection and reconnection that continues after emancipation and simultaneously highlights the importance of "emotional accommodation" in the practice of freedom. As a social anthropological study of the oldest generation of Jamaican women alive in the 1960s concluded, one of the most distinctive traits of this first, and successful, generation of freeborn women is "the ability to adjust without trauma to changing domestic units and/or relationships" (Cobham 53, 62).

Cliff's writing repeatedly grieves that "so much was ranged against the upkeep of . . . connections" (Abeng 17). And she suggests to Judith Raiskin that she plays up these connections, this "bonding between oppressed peoples," because playing down the connections serves to tone down the history of resistance. When she observes that it is "heartbreaking" to realize that these connections in the struggle for freedom are made only to be broken because "they were so close to succeeding so many times," she confirms the close association she draws between connections among people and the successful pursuit and practice of freedom ("Interview," JR 66).

But the history of Nanny and the Maroons, in whose memory Clare and the other guerillas fight, has been retrieved by unorthodox historians like Clare to reveal Nanny's "tenderness" as well as her "resistance" against slavery (No Telephone 196). For Clare, Nanny has become a "Magnanimous Warrior," a "warrior who places the blood-cloth on the back of the whipped slave," a warrior who "can cure" as well as "kill" (No Telephone 163-164).

In her early study of The Rebel Woman in the British West Indies During Slavery, Lucille Mathurin confirms this combination of militancy and nurturing in the example of the Maroons. She notes that the communities of Jamaica's first freedom fighters "were not merely camps, but homes for families." Cultivating the land and supplying food was among their most important activities, and one of the essential white strategies against them was the attempt to starve the Maroons out of resistance (29-30). Nanny, who had no children of her own, took care to secure the safety of the children in Maroon communities, so that "Grannie" Nanny became revered as the mother of these . . .
people (36). Although Mathurin reports that the fighting and nurturing activities were generally divided by sex in the Maroon towns, she otherwise emphasizes the fighting spirit of the black women who were slaves or fugitives. And Nanny’s case, which demonstrates that the division between warrior and caregiver, between male and female roles, was not absolute, is the one which most informs Cliff’s imagination.²²

The importance of this history for continuing freedom struggle is highlighted by the target of the rebel group’s revolt—an American and British-backed movie set that is filming a romanticized version of Maroon history which translates the story of resistance and tenderness into a story of erotic attachment between two Maroon leaders, Nanny and Cudjoe. Among other things, the script ignores Cudjoe’s bargain with the British and his betrayal of Nanny in order to secure the freedom of his own group.

The forgetting of this history is associated in Cliff’s political vision with the continuing subjection of Jamaica’s poor, especially her old women. Asking what has become of the magnanimous warrior who can cure and kill and who is needed now more than ever, the narrative voice in No Telephone to Heaven answers that she has burned up in an almshouse fire, or starved to death, or lies in a bed in a public hospital with sores across her buttocks. By heralding such women as potential warriors, Cliff simultaneously asserts the need for care in bringing this kind of warrior back. She reproaches those who do not take care of these women: “No one turns her in the bed. . . . We have forgotten her. . . . The nurses ignore her.” And she concludes with an appeal: “Can you remember how to love her?” (No Telephone 163-164).

²² This focus on caring activities insists on recognizing a dimension that is missing in Barbara Lalla’s recent discussion of “marronage” in Jamaican fiction. In Lalla’s reading of Jamaican fiction from the nineteenth century to the present, the “Maroon consciousness” is associated with characters who are vagrants, rebels, outcasts, lunatics, and other rejects. And the primary perspective that the Maroon embodies is that of “alienation” (19-20). When Lalla reads the story of Clare Savage in Cliff’s two novels, she focuses almost exclusively on isolation and violent resistance, or the tough, violent hero, as the Maroon legacy that informs Cliff’s work (186-188).
In Cliff’s imagination, compassion is not a trap that keeps people from acting politically, even violently, but the very motive for confronting injustice. In the unjust contexts Cliff describes, acts of nurturing do not necessarily tend toward peace politics, as they do for Sara Ruddick and feminists who adopt her prescriptions for reformulating politics according to the practices of maternal care, but may instead tend toward revolution and even violence.

The kind of care mothers show children in Cliff’s fiction, as in the history of slavery, can differ considerably from the kind of care on which Ruddick premises her argument. When Mary Ellen Pleasant is a child, for example, her mother teaches the Maroon settlement in the Berkshires of Massachusetts how to explode gunpowder; what Mary Ellen inherits from her mother is the hand-wrought revolver her mother forged as the pupil of a master smith (Free 129-131). In No Telephone to Heaven, Cliff also reminds readers that a slave “mother’s” care for her “children” might manifest itself as a refusal to reproduce. When Clare remembers this history, she reflects that she might be able to join the guerillas precisely because she does not have children (92-93).

In part, Clare’s participation in rebellion reflects a translation of the “maternal” that she inherits from Nanny, who had no children but became known as the “mother” of her people only because she exercised care for children in a highly political and explicitly revolutionary context.23 Clare and the freedom fighters agree that they are willing to kill because they love Jamaica’s malnourished, hungry, or dying children and because they care about changing the possibilities for these children (No Telephone 190-196). And perhaps because they join in revolution through awareness of such need, the revolutionaries frequently engage in other caregiving activities. When Clare and the freedom fighters farm her grandmother’s land in order to buy weapons, she and the soldiers distribute the surplus food, as Mattie and Kitty used to do, to “people around who did not have enough land to support them” (No Telephone 12, 106).

23 In Free Enterprise, Mary Ellen Pleasant is also called a “mother of freedom,” but not because she cares for children. Her “motherhood” is specifically associated with serving as a warrior and as an entrepreneur in the Cause of freedom (203).
On one front, Cliff de-maternalizes, and undomesticates, the ethic of care by associating care, even literal or figurative "maternal" care, with revolutionary violence. On another front, she also de-maternalizes, and undomesticates, care by refocusing her portrait of care more on the practice of healing than on the practice of mothering, even though the two are sometimes joined.

That focus begins with Clare’s name, which honors the memory of a dark girl from the Maroon country, Clary, who, unknown to Clare, cared for Clare’s mother Kitty during a case of severe tonsilitis, by accompanying Kitty to the hospital and “holding her hand night after night, singing to her, jumping up to get her cool water from the well out back.” While Clary is not a warrior, she exercises her care for Kitty in a fighting spirit; she refuses to let the doctor operate on Kitty, for example, unless he allows Clary to remain in the surgery with her (Abeng 140-141). Clare ironically takes up the Savage family motto, “To me the care of the future,” when her own turn to caring unknowingly honors the legacy she inherits from Clary (31).

Cliff’s fiction is filled with a pantheon of caregivers who are healers as well as warriors. Nanny may be known as the mother of her people, but Cliff’s portrait of the Magnanimous Warrior emphasizes her healing powers. Mma Ali is an obeah-woman on the plantation of Clare’s great-great-grandfather, Justice J.E.C. Savage. She is a "one-breasted warrior" who takes care of slave women with "troubles" and men in "pain" and also helps the dark woman Inez whom J.E.C. forced to be his mistress to avenge herself on the justice by getting rid of the baby she carried and by counseling her about how and when to escape (Abeng 34-35, 39). For Clare, however, the most significant figure in Cliff’s pantheon of warrior-caregivers may be Harry/Harriet, whose model and counsel is central to Clare’s Bildung.

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24 I am borrowing the notion of a "pantheon" of characters in Cliff’s fiction from Deborah McDowell’s review of Free Enterprise. In that review McDowell identifies a "pantheon of revolutionaries" in Cliff’s fiction (32). My use simultaneously extends the application of the term and changes its significance.
Harry/Harriet is the son of one of Jamaica’s contemporary domestics and is politicized by the poverty and the injustice that “she” witnesses and also experiences. Harry/Harriet befriends Clare on one of Clare’s early visits to Jamaica as an adult, persuades Clare that Jamaica needs her help, and then encourages Clare to join the freedom fighters. During their conversations, for example, Harry/Harriet: criticizes the whole system of western education, ironically suggesting that Jamaica must be in its “golden” age since the Greeks in Plato’s golden age kept slaves and locked up women; complains that Jamaicans take on the master’s past as their own when they “punish people by flogging them . . ., expect people to live on cornmeal and dried fish, . . . [and] name hotels Plantation Inn and Sans Souci”; and informs Clare that it is “time” to join the guerillas when homeless people are reduced to eating an iguana that they steal from a local zoo (No Telephone 123, 127, 188).

Harry/Harriet is a nurse who carries on the work of ancestors like Mma Ali and Nanny, studying “healing practices” both “at the university and with old women in the country, women who knew the properties of roots and leaves and how to apply spells effectively” (171). “She” nurses Clare back to health after a miscarriage; and after “she” completes her duties at the hospital where “she” works, “she” also nurses all manner of sickness and wound among the poor who inhabit Kingston’s downtown. Clare looks to Harriet for inspiration because “she” continues to care for Jamaicans who, Clare suspects, might indulge in elaborate name-calling, or even stoning, if they suspected that “a male organ swung gently under her bleached and starched skirt.” The question that guided Clare’s formative development was “what was missing?” in people who held back from helping others. The question that inspires her continuing development is trying to understand how

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25 As I observed earlier, Harry/Harriet parallels Clare’s desire to cross boundaries of identity, on the level of sexual identification. Eventually Harry/Harriet decides, and persuades Clare, that living “split” is a privilege that neither can enjoy in the context of injustice. As Clare chooses to identify herself as dark or Black, Harry/Harriet chooses to become Harriet and to identify herself as “she” (without any operation that changes her body). When I refer to Harry/Harriet with a pronoun, I will use the feminine form in quotation marks to indicate this choice of identity.
Harriet is able to love and nurse even those who do "not suffer freaks gladly" (171). The fact that Harriet is able to care for others, despite the anxiety that accompanies such care, becomes a model for Clare’s own participation with those who might have hated her. The importance that all the guerillas assign to the role of the nurse in revolution is highlighted by the fact that Harry/Harriet, the medical officer, is the only freedom fighter who owns a camouflage jacket to herself, while the other soldiers wear the few jackets they own in strict rotation (No Telephone 7).

Even though Cliff demonstrates that revolutionary freedom struggle is necessarily bound with the practice of care, she does not simply glorify violence. The figure of Christopher, for example, exists as a counterpoint to the kind of revolutionary violence that is practiced with care. Christopher is a part-time groundskeeper who brutally kills his employers when they refuse to grant him a plot of land to bury his grandmother properly, so that her spirit will be at peace. Christopher comes close to the kind of domestic that Trudier Harris identifies as a militant in the recent work of black writers. His case further highlights the distinction between the militant and the mammy because he also kills the maid who has served the family faithfully, “obliterating” her (No Telephone 24-49). Without condemning Christopher’s act, however, Cliff refrains from endorsing its brand of militancy or equating it with the practice of Clare or Harry/Harriet. Instead, the novel explains his act. Cliff makes Christopher and his violence understandable, even sympathetic, as she describes a boy who is orphaned at ten, who spends his childhood in the Dungle, whose spine is curved because of malnutrition, who fails at begging because he is too ragged and dirty and does not charm the tourists because he hangs his head sullenly instead of entertaining them with a lilting Jamaican turn of phrase, and as she details the arrogance of the family who hires servants when it needs their labor, then dismisses them without concern for their livelihood, not knowing where their family is or even if they have one. Christopher’s violence is an act of retribution. Understood in the context of general patterns of exploitation and insensitivity to the poor, it cannot be dismissed as an "incident," or random act of irrational violence, as Jamaica’s middle class prefers to call it. His
violence is tragic, understandable, and perhaps even justified. But it is not revolutionary violence and contributes little to the practice of freedom in community. As Cliff notes in an interview with Schwartz, it is only because Christopher has a spark of decency that he realizes what he did was wrong, but internalizes that knowledge as insanity. It is not Christopher who provides the preferred model for revolution, but Harry/Harriet (613-614).

In another interview, Cliff highlights the difference between the two characters when she describes Harry/Harriet both as the most "complete" character in the novel and as heroic, not because "she" is willing to kill or to die in battle, but because "she" is able to love and willing to nurse those who most need help, whether or not they respect "her" (OPA 276). Harriet is courageous, but does not represent the kind of individualistic, militaristic hardihood that Nel Noddings condemns in the west's idealization of war heroes (Women and Evil 180). Harriet contributes to revolution not only because "she" fights the powerful in the hopes of changing the system, but also because "she" actively helps to change the lives of the poor.

Because revolution, even violent revolution, is reformulated to include care in the practice of the warrior-caregiver, the way is opened to imagine care itself as potentially revolutionary. It becomes possible for those who abandon or reject violence to claim the legacy of the warrior-caregiver as they practice revolution by other means. The practice of militant healing can be translated from the literal to the figural sense. In the former, militancy and healing are connected by being practiced together in battle; in the latter, healing itself emerges as militant practice. Care

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26 This reading disagrees with Maria Helena Lima, who sees Christopher's revenge as the truly revolutionary gesture in the novel (42). In Lima's reading, Christopher provides an alter ego to Clare, who is seen as tragically individualistic and as a literary figure whose unsuccessful revolution is inferior, because more fatalistic, to the communally oriented protagonist of Merle Collins's Angel, who affirms that social transformation is possible, if not guaranteed, through group struggle. Fiona Barnes challenges Lima and offers a reading that complements mine. Christopher's violence, in Barnes's reading, is an isolated personal revolt that is contrasted both with the alternative model embodied in Harry/Harriet and with "Clare's gradual movement toward collective popular resistance" (29). Meryl Schwartz also presents Christopher as a counterpoint, but to Clare rather than to Harry/Harriet. Following Cliff's observation that Christopher murders the maid out of self-hatred, Schwartz suggests that Clare must resolve her own self-hatred by another means (292).
is not opposed to violence; it doesn’t keep us, as Ruddick suggests, from going to war. But care
can form the basis of revolution without violence.

Even so, the role of the warrior-caregiver emerges as the most revolutionary one in Cliff’s
fiction. Just how objectionable, and potentially threatening, the role that combines caregiving with
militancy was to the nineteenth-century patriarchy that promoted domesticity is indicated by a
contemporaneous reaction to the activities of the abolitionist writer, Lydia Maria Child. Wendy
Hamand Venet reports that an 1859 article in the New Orleans Picayune argued that Child “did not
deserve the job of nurse” because she “lacked the ‘soft touch and . . . eyes that beam with gentlest
sympathy’; rather, this woman with her ‘shrewish treble’ spouted only ‘hyena hatreds.’” As Venet
concludes, “Child might be forgiven her abolitionist polemic, . . . but she could not be forgiven for
being both an activist female and one who made claims to be a ‘ministering angel’” (110). The
discursive and practical attempts to separate nineteenth-century slaves into one of two stereotypes—
the gentle, happy, nurturing servant or the fierce and vengeful savage—believe a similar anxiety about
caregivers who might also be warriors.

One instance in Abeng highlights the retribution that slaveowners might inflict on warrior-
caregivers. After Mma Ali, the obeah-woman, helps Inez escape shortly before the British
emancipation of slaves in the Caribbean, Justice Savage burns the people who were still his
property; the narrative observes, “the fire began at the cabin of Mma Ali,” the warrior and healer
(40). The act of Clare’s paternal ancestor is both retaliation and an attempt to control the anxiety
he feels about the impending freedom of his former slaves. The desire of slaveowners and their
spiritual descendents to control or erase the anxiety that warrior-caregivers arouse, to live “free
from care,” by enforcing the split between the warrior and the caregiver, is a desire that Cliff
refuses to accommodate. In her world, revolutionary freedom must be practiced with a certain
amount of anxiety, and with care.
In her depiction of warrior-caregiving, Michelle Cliff focuses on two scenes of revolutionary violence and care: in *Free Enterprise*, the nineteenth-century "rebellion" of John Brown, Mary Ellen Pleasant, Annie Christmas, and their comrades in the United States, just before the Civil War; in *No Telephone to Heaven*, the twentieth-century guerrilla action of Clare Savage, Harry/Harriet, and the group of self-styled freedom fighters in Jamaica, in the decades following independence from England. In Jess Mowry's *Way Past Cool*, the scene of violence and care moves to a twentieth-century location that is still, in an image made famous by Stokely Carmichael at the height of the Black Power movement in the late 1960s and early 1970s, a "colony" within the United States—a black ghetto that can only "be liberated" if a "totally different America [is] born" (601-602). Carmichael’s analysis connects the struggles for freedom that take place within the urban ghettos of the United States with the independence struggles of colonies like those in Africa and the Caribbean. And the picture that Mowry draws, of the struggles of young boys in a 1990s Oakland enclave that they name "Oaktown" to liberate themselves from the traps created by governmental and economic structures and also by the ways, including drugs, that some inner-city youth have developed to deal with those traps, complements and expands the vision of freedom struggle that I identified in the work of Lamming and Cliff. Where Cliff advocates warrior-caregiving as a practice of freedom for the relatively privileged, however, Mowry advocates a version of warrior-caregiving for those who are among the least privileged, for blacks whose experience of "freedom" is among the most restricted in the United States today.

Mowry’s novel provides a vision that could serve as a counterpoint to imaginative recreations of ex-slaves as "folk emerging from and still influenced by the slave condition"—recreations that, according to Hazel Carby, dominate the concerns of African-American critics and
repress "the urban imagination and urban histories" of African-Americans and deny "the transformative power of both historical and urban consciousness." When the ex-slave consciousness becomes a "folk" consciousness that romanticizes the selfhood and humanity of ex-slaves, the vernacular that expresses that consciousness is the "blues" ("Ideologies of Black Folk" 126-127, 140). When Mowry's picture of urban youth is read as a contemporary urban slave narrative, by contrast, the vernacular of that struggle for freedom is aligned more closely with hip-hop or rap culture. The subject and style of his novel, urban gangs and the rap that is associated with them, are both vilified in the popular imagination. The "folk" figures who populate mass cultural representations of blacks are, as Carby observes, often devoted servants who allay white anxiety about black emancipation. The young black males who populate the urban ghettos and Mowry's novel, by contrast, more often epitomize the fear of chaos that is associated with black emancipation in mass culture mythology. In that anxiety-ridden mythology, as Carby analyzes it, "free" black males are "uncontrolled" black males who threaten to destroy civilization. The only way to preserve civilization and decrease that anxiety is to control those males and restrict their freedom ("Ideologies of Black Folk" 130-131).

Mowry sympathizes with the plight of young black boys who are confined to urban ghettos and rejects the nearly automatic equation of these boys, and neighborhood gangs, with drugs, destruction, and the mindless killing of their own. He writes his novels for them and

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1 In "On Stepping into Footprints," Reggie Young identifies his own novel, Crimes in Bluesville (1990), and Mowry's Way Past Cool as contemporary slave narratives that narrate struggles for liberation from states of urban bondage. The language of Way Past Cool makes it a "rap novel," but one that "distinguishes itself from the commercialized forms of rap music," especially the forms of "gangsta" rap which focus on "glorified images of violence" rather than contributions to true liberation (372). I will discuss the "rap" motif and Young's evaluation of this "slave narrative" more fully below.

Ishmael Reed, in a positive discussion of the novel and of Mowry himself, concludes that the "brilliant wordplay of rap music and the prose of Jess Mowry, the Homer of inner-city youth, indicate a full-blown word renaissance among black youth" (164).

A review that criticizes the novel for its clichés also associates it with "rap," but not necessarily in a way that challenges the vision of "gangsta" rap. For Nelson George, Way Past Cool "is the literary equivalent of "Juice" or of Ice Cube's latest single" (21).
observes: "I think the only thing I done that ain’t been done before is try to show these kids as human beings" ("Goodbye, Cool World"). In *Way Past Cool* he recovers the sense of care and resistance that mark their struggles for survival and greater freedom, and that connect their violence with revolution and their story with the slave narratives of the nineteenth century.

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The main action of *Way Past Cool* takes place over the course of two days, a Thursday and a Friday. A kiddie-gang named the Friends are drive-bysed on Thursday morning and a neighboring gang named the Crew are drive-bysed that afternoon. Both drive-bys have been arranged by Deek, a drug dealer who hopes to trick one of the gangs into working for him and who murders the outsiders he hired to do the drive-bys on Thursday evening. The Friends and the Crew get together on Friday afternoon to decide how they will respond to the drive-bys and then engage Deek and two corrupt cops in a shoot-out at an abandoned car wash on Friday night. A brief denouement occurs on Sunday when Ty, Deek’s bodyguard, recovers from a wound he received during the shoot-out.

The boys, who are mostly between twelve and fourteen and refer to each other as “kids,” are trying to free themselves from two kinds of traps that threaten to keep them caged. One kind, represented by the cops, is a white trap created by the dominant economic and political order which restricts their opportunity to participate in the benefits of the wider society and threatens to confine them in the ghetto for life. Another kind, represented by the drug dealer, is a black trap created by inhabitants of the ghetto in collusion with the cops and the outside order—a trap that often leads to further confinement, in prison, or to death.

The neighborhood in which the Friends live is itself a kind of cage. Its borders, which they create and defend in order to protect themselves and to allow themselves some freedom of movement within, simultaneously lock other gangs out and themselves in. The borders, however, are often breached. Cops, drug dealers, and criminals surveil, and sometimes attack, them within these borders. Markita, a young single mother who becomes involved with Ty, reflects that, sooner
or later, anyone without money ends up in a cage and she wonders whether black men and boys
seem weaker than women simply because they wear "themselves out so fast by shaking the bars of
their cages" (160, 165). The sensitivity to being caged is so strong that a wounded boy refuses to
get assistance at a youth center because he thinks it is "just like prison," a place where they lock
you in; and Markita's friend Leroy warns her that love can also be confining, that she should not let
Ty think he's in some kind of cage, "even a nice one" (53, 247). Ty himself observes that life
seems like "'nuthin but some long line of cages'" and that those cages "'keep on gettin smaller and
smaller'" (169).

Markita recognizes that acting cool is one way boys pretend that they don't care. Being
bad is the only protection Ty has that can't be stolen (292). The youth know, however, that this
kind of protection is ineffective. It only puts them in another cage, a black one. Deek, for
example, prepares his own downfall by refusing to believe that kids can figure any other way out.
Pointing out that the "juvies" [homes for juvenile offenders], jails, and prisons are full of "stupid"
black kids, Deek tells Ty that "'all them little suckers think it so way fuckin past cool to be endin
up dead or spendin their lives in cages like animals cause they figure it the badge of bein black.'"
The irony, he jokes, is that they think being "'stuck behind the bars of whitey's cage'" is what
makes them bad (101). But when one member of the Friends, Lyon, tests Ty's little brother Danny
by remarking that the "word" on the street, or the accepted wisdom, says being caged goes with
being black because it "'mean you way past bad,'" Danny responds, "'word fulla shit sometimes'"
(139).

But it is Ty, the character who feels trapped in the world of drug dealing, who most
directly articulates the knowledge that a black cage is no better than whitey's cage. Like the black
and white cops who seem to "look alike" (16), the black and white cages both confine black youth.
Having stepped into the trap of being cool, Ty reflects that blacks who are sucked into drug dealing
simply "decorate their cages with gold chains" (238). When Deek, in Ty's presence, murders two
outsiders whom he hired to execute the drive-by shootings near the Friends and the Crew. Ty tells
Markita that "'It like a cage he make for me'" (169). In essence, Ty recognizes that the white cage
and the black cage are intimately connected. "Being bad" places kids in one or the other and
frequently both.

In presenting a model that might help young black readers free themselves from the cages
that they also live in, Mowry rejects two forms of freedom that are connected with each other—
individual independence and escape. Ty's brother Danny, for example, enters the novel as a
character who, like G in Lamming's *Castle* and the young Clare in Cliff's *Abeng* and *No Telephone*,
insists that his freedom depends on complete independence or sovereignty over himself, on his sense
that nobody "'gots no say over me'" and that his life belongs only to him: "'It MY life,'" he insists,
"'MINE!'" (110). By the close, however, he realizes that independence is more of a trap than
community is and that community holds more promise for freedom, or getting out of the cage, than
independence does. And even though Mowry allows one character to "escape," like the young
Clare Savage or many of the males in Lamming's fiction, by moving out of the ghetto, Mowry
objects to the model provided by the successful few who get out and abandon those who remain. In
*Way Past Cool*, he has one of the Friends criticize M. C. Hammer for a lack of "'sponsibility*
when he remembers a story about Hammer "'scorin himself a six-million-dollar house an bail
Oakland'" (74). Mowry, whose own life provides the basis for the grim reality as well as the
hopeful vision of his fiction, also rejects that path of escape for himself. When he earned enough
money from writing to move from an abandoned bus in a junkyard to an apartment, he chose to
return to the ghetto. He maintained the bus for his office, kept collecting cans to stay "in practice,"
and used his money to help neighborhood youth (MacRae 126). And the place where he requires
his characters to transform the practice of freedom is also within that community. The way to a
"future" that is not defined by the Uzi that a 16-year-old Deek offers these 12-to-14-year-olds
involves collective fighting, with guns if necessary, but fighting that is guided by practices of "heart" and that might be called a homey version of warrior-caregiving.

If a large, strong boy named Gordon leads the Friends officially, a fragile-looking skinny boy named Lyon leads them unofficially. The Friends look to Lyon for the kind of imagination that bell hooks complains is absent from far too many portraits of black youth (*Outlaw Culture*, "What's Passion Got to Do With It?"). Lyon helps them learn the power of what he calls "heart" magic, whose primary weapon is trust. The traditional weapons they use in their fight against the drug dealer Deek and two corrupt cops supplement, but also complement, the weapons of the heart. Trust allows the two adjoining gangs, the Friends and the Crew, to establish rules that allow them to negotiate peacefully with each other, and it also allows them to kill the drug dealer, who alternates between threatening them and attempting to seduce them. Lyon recognizes that heart magic alone is not yet sufficient to combat the forces that threaten to trap the boys in cages of crime and despair. But he prophecies that heart will be sufficient someday if its practice starts with the pre-adolescents they all think of as "kids" (200).

When Lyon dies in the gun battle against Deek and the cops, the novel might seem to fit hooks' definition of anti-utopian, and thus anti-revolutionary, fiction: fictions that "shut down the imagination" because the only characters who dream of a way out are "blown away." But Mowry escapes this charge by focusing on a second character, Ty, who also begins to imagine a way out and who does, as hooks might say, "survive the genocide" (*Outlaw Culture* 46).

As Deek's bodyguard, Ty seems an unlikely candidate to lead a revolutionary movement. Early in the novel, he even characterizes himself as someone for whom it is "too late" to escape the cage. Although his faith is less steady than and not quite as optimistic as Lyon's, he also sees the kids who are "standing at the door of the cage" as a "last defense" (61, 169). Attracted by the figure of Lyon, whom he sees but does not know, Ty independently begins to reflect on the system that traps them and on the power of love for offering a way out.
Ty's faith in kids and the possibility of another way is strengthened when the actions of his little brother, Danny, bring Ty in contact with the Friends and the Crew. Once Ty recognizes the power of the kids' resolve to save him while they fight Deek, he shifts his own efforts at protection from Deek to the kids. He is redeemed by Lyon, the kids, and also by the imagination which has prepared him for this response to them. At the close of the novel, Ty has emerged as Lyon's complement, an unofficial leader who prophecies that a new game is just beginning (310).

If Lyon serves as the prototype of something new, Ty is the figure who will carry his promise through. By setting Ty up as a character who joins the kids in the search for a way out, Mowry's novel has the advantage of suggesting that it is not too late for redemption, provided someone cares. Ty's case is especially appropriate for challenging what Cornell West identifies as the nihilistic threat to black survival: the "loss of hope" that shuts down the future, the "absence of meaning" that prevents struggle, and the "lovelessness" that fosters both (Race Matters 22-23).

READING *WAY PAST COOL* AS A CONTEMPORARY SLAVE NARRATIVE:
ON LITERACY AND NOSTALGIC ENGAGEMENT WITH SENTIMENTAL AND REVOLUTIONARY CULTURE

When Reggie Young reads the boys' struggle to liberate themselves from ghettoized bondage as a contemporary slave narrative that "examines literacy and violence as methods of revolt," he calls *Way Past Cool* "one of the most interesting narratives of African-American urban bondage produced in the early 1990s" ("On Stepping" 372). But he concludes, in essence, that Mowry narrates a failed attempt at liberation. While I believe that Mowry's novel extends the tradition of the slave narrative, especially the tradition begun by the autobiographies of Frederick Douglass, I question two assumptions that contribute to Young's judgment.

One is that liberation is synonymous with escape, because those who remain in the ghetto can attain nothing better than survival. Young concludes that Ty, for example, merely survives the violence, but "does little to escape not only his physical enslavement but also the disenlightening, dehumanizing, social and psychological nature of his bondage" (374). Young's formulation implies
that Ty (and perhaps Mowry) could remain within the ghetto physically and yet escape bondage psychologically—a situation that would mirror Douglass's claim, after his fight with the overseer Covey, that he might "remain a slave in form," but not "in fact" (299; ch. 10). But the bulk of Young's writing suggests that even psychological escape requires physical escape. He argues that the boys exist in an "unenlightened setting" where many boys suffer the consequences of being "real cool," ignoring the fact that Mowry focuses on boys who struggle to be 'way past cool' (375-376).

Young also reinforces the connection he makes between physical escape and even psychological freedom when he describes himself as someone who, like Douglass, physically "escapes to give voice to" the story of those in bondage in "the outside world" and defends his own choice to remain a "refugee" from the Chicago ghetto in which he was raised because return would mean separation from the enlightened world and going back to bondage ("Literacy" 57, 73-74). But Mowry's novel, as I already indicated, is written by someone who believes in return and who writes for those inside the ghetto as much as or more than for those in the outside world. Young's perspective may also be inappropriate for evaluating Mowry's choices because it seems to involve a class bias that regards certain kinds of labor as demeaning—a bias that is absent from Mowry's vision. I would argue, for example, that Mowry presents Ty's choice—to follow in his father's footsteps (footsteps similar to those taken by Mowry's own father) by buying a truck in order to salvage scrap—as a choice to support his family with honorable labor and as a sign of Ty's escape from at least one kind of dehumanizing bondage; indeed, regarding such labor as denigrating can lead youth in the ghetto into the black trap of drug dealing. Young, however, reads Ty's choice as a "kind of urban menial sharecropping" and implies that all such choices are disenlightening and dehumanizing ("On Stepping" 376).²

² I would argue, with Young, that his defense of his own choice to live in and to write for the "outside world" represents a position that must be allowed if African-Americans are not to be confined to limited possibilities. But I would also argue, against Young, that his choice is not necessarily more liberatory than the kind that Mowry depicts in his novel.
Young’s other assumption deals with literacy and is connected with his bias toward physical as well as mental escape. He cites Robert Stepto’s study of African-American narrative in *From Behind the Veil* (1991) to emphasize the association of freedom with literacy (“On Stepping” 375). Even though Frederick Douglass identifies his physical fight with Covey, as well as literacy, as steps to freedom, Young argues that the violence in Mowry’s novel is part of their day-to-day existence of bondage rather than an act associated with liberation. And even though Young suggests that African-Americans can use various “forms of literacies” to liberate themselves, he privileges a “specific type of literacy,” the literacy of the “written word” that is dominant in the outside society, a “book learning” to which Mowry’s characters, according to Young, do not have access (369, 372, 375). Young concludes that neither the violence nor the other literacies of the residents of Mowry’s Oaktown are liberatory because they do not allow the boys to move beyond survival to an escape defined by getting out of the ghetto.

Mowry’s characters, however, do use literacy as a path toward greater freedom. At least one of the main characters, Lyon, does read. Even though he only owns a few clothes, he owns many books that he arranges neatly on shelves along one wall of his room and is familiar with at least one William Blake poem, “The Tyger” (74, 120). He becomes a leader whom the other boys respect partly because his literacy, which comes from reading books as well as reflecting on street life, often helps to save the Friends from the violence that threatens them and also informs Lyon’s faith in a liberation achieved by trusting the “heart.” In Mowry’s story, the practices of literacy are not divorced from, but connected with the practice of violence, and both are connected with the practices of care.

But another kind of literacy, one that deals with popular or mass culture, is equally important in the boys’ struggle for freedom from the white and black traps that threaten them and for freedom to interact with each other more freely and cooperatively. The potential that Mowry associates with such literacy is highlighted by his own choice of genre, a young-adult novel that is
more readily classified as part of mass culture than as the kind of "literature" which Young and the
dominant society associates with book learning. Inner-city youth are not forbidden from watching
TV and movies as slaves were forbidden from reading and writing; in fact, they may even be
encouraged to watch and imbibe such popular entertainment. But they are expected to be
consumers of mass culture rather than critical viewers. They are not expected to analyze the
messages and images of the mass media and to use their analyses to develop strategies of resistance.

Ty, the drug dealer's bodyguard, however, has used a TV show about the Great Pyramids
of Egypt to analyze the dynamics of the social structure that keeps black youth trapped. He
imagines that hungry and unwanted kids are the foundation of a pyramid built on "power and money
and greed" and cemented with "hate and fear and hopelessness," and he decides that the primary sin
of those close to the bottom is preying on others who are younger, weaker, or alone, "[w]ithout
friends" (62-63). As he considers the dynamics more closely, he also begins to question whether
the few for whose sins the race is being punished are really those black kids who make up the
foundation, as mainstream scripts suggest, or the white few at the top who profit from black
violence and corruption (235). He speculates that those at the bottom are simply "[k]ids playing TV
games for keeps" and directs his criticism at the powerful few who "wrote the scripts" (155).

Although Ty refuses to blame the hungry and unwanted children at the bottom, he has little hope at
the beginning of the novel that they will be able to resist those scripts, partly because he thinks that
they only watch cartoons instead of news stories that they, like he, could see through if they paid
attention (63).

The Friends, however, are quite literate, to the extent that at least one reviewer, Kimberly,
accuses them of thinking too much like adults (47). The younger boys also watch news programs
as well as cartoons and other shows and have learned something about the "reality" of the world.

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3 The objection uncannily echoes the attitudes of critics from earlier centuries who wished to
deny the authenticity of the work of writers like Douglass, Harriet Jacobs, Harriet Wilson, and others
because, those critics contended, the works were too literate.
They have learned, for example, that the world doesn't think young black boys in an urban ghetto are worth much. Gordon advises the youngest members of his group, the twins Ric and Rac, that few people care about them; in fact, alluding to news reports about saving whales and endangered species or about the fight for animal rights, he sneers, "'people like otters and little white rats better'n you'" (14-15). From watching the news, they have learned that national conflicts over power and territory are as prevalent and disturbing and as difficult to solve as their own.

Observing, for example, that nations in the Middle East have problems maintaining a "Balance of Power," they find little instruction in conflict-resolution from hearing about the behavior of adults in the "real" world (78).

The boys also recognize a difference between showtime and real time in the scripts that supposedly describe armed heroics. When one member, Curtis, is shot in the shoulder during the drive-by, the young twins, Ric and Rac, wish they could be shot in the arm where the scar is visible since being shot is supposed to mean they are "way past bad." But Gordon quickly reproaches them. Calling one "raisin-brain," he educates them against such a showtime attitude: "'Gettin shot more like to make you way past DEAD! Ever hear of somebody bein actual shot in the arm real-time? That ain't nuthin but TV dogshit, sucker!" (6). Lyon also recognizes the distinction between showtime and real time when he follows Danny and Ty to a meeting with Deek and considers how he can get Danny's attention without alerting Ty and Deek. He reflects that a TV "hero would creep up behind some unsuspecting dude, press the gun to his head, and whisper something showtime like 'Freeze, sucker!'" But Lyon knows the maneuver wouldn't work in real time because "the dude would likely give a yell." He also rejects another TV solution like knocking the dude out with the gun for just long enough to "do whatever heroics needed to be done," since knowing "how hard to hit them and exactly where" would take a lot of practice (132-133).

If literacy for Young frequently involves a positive embrace of enlightened and humanistic values available in the dominant literature, literacy for these boys more often involves a criticism of
the disenlightened and racist attitudes in the popular media. The boys know that what is presented as realism on TV is black kids being bad and ending up dead and that such "realism" is presented for the entertainment of the white audience. Gordon comments that the TV audiences "'like seein us fight. Hope we kill each other.'" Lyon agrees and remembers reading that the KKK "'liked to get us fightin so's they could watch and laugh over it.'" Such realism is something the Friends could live without. The young Curtis learns quickly, and concludes: "'Well, shit. Seem like we be pretty fuckin stupid to go puttin on showtime for them assholes!'" (21-22).

Their ability to recognize that somebody else is writing scripts for them poses the same kind of threat that Douglass's master Hugh Auld predicted if slaves learned to read: reading would make them "discontented and unhappy," "unmanageable," and "unfit" to be slaves—in other words, disobedient to their masters. That threat in Douglass's narrative arises not simply from reading books, but also from reading newspaper accounts of abolition. It is because of literacy's association with such disaffection and resistance that Douglass first began to see reading as "the pathway from slavery to freedom" (274-275, ch. 6).

In Fugitive Cultures, Giroux affirms the notion from cultural studies that media culture, including television and film, is a significant site of contemporary education. He then identifies media culture—in particular, the news media's coverage of youth violence and cinematic representations of violence—as "the central terrain on which the new racism has emerged" (58). The pedagogy at work in these media reinforces, on the one hand, the "popular perception that everyday black urban life and violent crime mutually define each other" and, on the other hand, a sense of "nihilism" among its youthful urban viewers (43, 56). He argues that "progressives and other cultural workers . . . can no longer sit back and allow [these] popular teaching machines to go unchecked" in their contribution to mean-spirited social policies that are enacted in the name of crime reform and family values (23, 30, 56). In particular, Giroux challenges them to become "educators" who "formulate ways in which a critical pedagogy might be employed to appropriate
the more radical aspects of children's culture" and who "prepare youth and others to think through representations of violence"--to understand these representations critically, in words he borrows from Ed Guerrero, as "'vehicles through which society's racial [sic], contradictions, injustices, and failed policies are mediated'" (33, 58). I want to suggest that Mowry writes like such an educator and that the "literacy" which his characters practice as they analyze and appropriate popular culture may enhance the ability of his young audiences to "read" media culture critically and even to "misread" its images when resistant readings are more conducive to freedom struggle.

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Where Clare Savage retrieved and revised the scripts about Nanny and the Maroons as a model for Jamaican freedom struggles, the Friends find models for their own struggles by rewriting the scripts about two groups in twentieth-century culture: one from the history of mainstream popular culture—the fictional "gang" of young children in the Bowery, known as the Little Rascals; and one from the history of black struggle—the militant "gang" founded in Oakland at the height of the Black Power movement, the Black Panthers. When the Friends make recourse to and reread these models, they might be accused of participating in a politics of nostalgia. And when they choose to appropriate the image of Buckwheat and the other Rascals, they might, to paraphrase Harry/Harriet from Cliff's novel, be derided for trying to take the master's nostalgia for their own.

The kind of politics which looks to the past, for example, informs the contemporary version of domesticity which seeks to return middle-class white women to the home and motherhood and poor unwed black mothers to the workplace, all in the name of family values. And, as Michael Eric Dyson observes in "We Never Were What We Used To Be," a similar black nostalgia which also "recreates as much as it recalls" is used to repudiate black youth as ethically depraved (Race Rules 111-119). Dyson argues that such nostalgia is "destructive" when it is used to browbeat black youth and when, because it separates the past from the present, it loses "sight of the resources for ethical engagement that are carried forward from the past into our own thinking, believing, hoping,
praying, and doing" (139). But, he suggests, nostalgia, and even romanticization, may be useful "to jump-start our flagging efforts in the present" (139). And, his argument implies, nostalgia may be valuable if it recovers "resources for ethical engagement" from the past. Nostalgia, then, is another discourse that may be mobilized for conservative or progressive ends. Nostalgic recreation, which is often used to advocate a conservative return to a world that never was, can also be used for a revolutionary struggle to create a world that is yet to be. In their nostalgic adaptation of the Little Rascals and the Black Panthers, the inhabitants of Mowry’s Oaktown strive for a more progressive outcome by renegotiating two kinds of stereotypes with which young black males have been associated—a sentimental image of amiable children who accept a subservient position in society and a fearsome image of violent criminals who constitute a menace to society. The combination serves to blur the distinction between the “folk” consciousness that has been romanticized in criticism of African-American culture and the “urban” consciousness that is ignored or feared. Paradoxically, their subversive renegotiation serves to reclaim and to combine two rights which these males have been denied—to be children and to engage in revolution.

If the first kind of youth is seen as preferable in mainstream mass culture, the second kind is seen as realistic. The dominant preference for black children who act like Buckwheat, a character drawn as a watermelon-eating caricature of black youth with an exaggerated accent and features, might suggest that adoption of the Little Rascals model plays into racist stereotypes that

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Dyson observes that the contemporary nostalgia which vilifies rap culture and yearns for a more respectable past ignores the history of popular culture in which jazz, for example, was associated with gin and sex and reviled as immoral (Race Rules 125-127). He analyzes several features of the rap aesthetic which might describe the method by which Way Past Cool nostalgically negotiates with past culture. Analysis of these features would extend the argument that the book is a rap novel because of its method as well as its language. For hip-hop features, such as "aesthetic loops," which rework and repeat fragments of existing songs in new musical contexts, and "sampling," which revives and reinvents what has been forgotten in past culture, reshape “what’s been neglected by removing it from the context . . . in which it originally came to life.” Dyson suggests that such “creative piracy,” which irreverently pairs the culturally sacred and profane, might be made more compelling if those who use its techniques were more aware of the historical tradition (120-124). Such awareness might distinguish the nostalgia of Mowry as author of this rap novel from the nostalgia of the characters within the novel.
characterized the tradition of minstrelsy in the early part of the twentieth century. But the implication is complicated by the fact that mainstream America in the 1990s excludes inner-city gangs from the definition of childhood that shows like the Little Rascals sought to enshrine. In the eyes of the dominant culture, it is illegitimate for members of inner-city gangs, who are assumed to be violent criminals, to affiliate themselves with a sentimental gang of amiable children. When the Friends transgress the color line to read white popular culture, they affirm, in the discourse of a growing approach to American culture, that “cultural exchange [takes place] between African-American and ‘mainstream’ expressive traditions” (Wonham 12-13). And when they re-use the model of the Little Rascals, even in a romanticized way, in a context that denies the humanity of black children, their appropriation may be subversive. That subversion continues the tradition of nineteenth-century slave narratives that claimed sentimental virtues of domesticity as signs of humanity and resistance.

Mowry insists on separating the notion of gangs from drugs and argues that "four kids on the corner," the Little Rascals, and the juveniles about whom he writes all belong to "good" gangs ("Goodbye, Cool World"). He also claims affiliation with the Little Rascals for himself: his own gang was named Buckwheat and he playfully describes his philanthropy as "Buckwheat does Mother Teresa" (MacRae 127). What reflects on Mowry and the Friends is less the original portrait of the Little Rascals, than what Mowry and the Friends get out of that affiliation. If, on the one hand, they recreate the Little Rascals in a way that attests to their own humanity, they also highlight, on the other hand, the ways in which the Little Rascals acted to protect their community. In the 1990s context of the urban ghetto, that protection can involve a significant degree of violence. As Mowry describes the Friends, they are "Little Rascals with Uzis" (MacRae 127).

The Friends revive both models, the Black Panthers as well as the Little Rascals, to inform their practice of caring community as well as their fight against local and systemic corruption. As will be shown more fully below, they contest the dominant perception of the Panthers as violent.
criminals, a perception promoted by the FBI, and retrieve the Panthers’ legacy of resistance against police violence, of community protection, and of care, which they demonstrated in such programs as providing free breakfast for children, free health clinics open to all, and free clothing for those who needed it.5

The historian Clayborne Carson, in an analysis that focuses primarily on the activities of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, but also refers to the Black Panthers, charges that "purposeful amnesia about recent Afro-American history has enabled many contemporary blacks to ignore the fact that they enjoy the benefits of sacrifices made by earlier generations" (301). In reviving and reconceiving the model of the Panthers, Mowry contributes to a renewed appreciation for the idealistic rebellions of the 1960s that is also evident in 1990s song lyrics and in the 1995 movie Panther, whose theme song is "Freedom." Reviewing the film directed by Mario and Melvin Van Peebles, Dyson notes that the numerous cameo appearances by black personalities indicate how "fashionable" the Panthers have become in black popular culture. And, in a mostly positive analysis of the way the movie exposes police violence and the FBI campaign to wipe out the group, Dyson concludes that the film is valuable for contrasting the "rebellion and solidarity" of

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5 See, for example, an ethnographic study of Panthers conducted over a two-year period which contests the erroneous descriptions put forth by journalists, commentators, and social scientists who lack any direct knowledge of the subject. While the authors focus primarily on the misconception of the Panthers as self-destructive or suicidal, they challenge most mainstream analyses of Panther behavior and commend the Panthers they observed for their hard work in projects such as the ones listed (Valentine 284). The October 1966 Black Panther Party Platform also shows evidence of their concern for "bread, housing, education, clothing, justice, and peace" (available from "The Sixties Project: Primary Documents Collection" at http://jefferson.village.virginia.edu/sixties/html-docs/primary/manifestos/panther-platform.html).

Historian Herbert Haines similarly concludes that the activities of the Panthers "were varied and, contrary to the image created by the press at the time, largely of a rather 'mild' nature: they established 'liberation schools' and breakfast programs for ghetto children, for example. [But] the activities which drew the most attention involved their militaristic posturing and their program of 'policing the police,' whom they viewed as an army of occupation" (56). One example of a 1967 press story that was published in the New York Times and that focuses graphically, at length, and almost exclusively on the violent threat posed by the Panthers is reprinted in a 1991 collection edited by August Meier et al, Black Protest in the Sixties (Stern).
the Panthers with the "gratuitous violence" of current "gang bangers who prey on the black community." (Between God and Gangsta Rap 116).

The boys in Mowry's 1990s gang, however, are, like this description of the Panthers, idealistic, rebellious, and committed to expanding solidarity. These inner-city youth associate both the Little Rascals and the Black Panthers with protection, care, resistance, and integration and see these activities as paths to freedom. The "transformative power of . . . urban consciousness," as depicted in Mowry's novel, is encapsulated in a brief rap that Lyon creates when he criticizes the mainstream perception of black youth: "'You ain't furry and cute, so's you way cool to shoot, be a whale or a seal, then you got some appeal'" (14). In the popular imagination, black youth are commonly associated with beasts of prey. The more accurate depiction, according to the novel, would see them as caged animals and endangered species. The social critique exemplified in Lyon's rap, however, moves the youth in Mowry's novel to claim the "appeal" of the Little Rascals and to embrace the revolutionary legacy of the Black Panthers. Their reading of contemporary social conditions serves two purposes of literacy that Hazel Carby identifies in the tradition of slave narratives—literacy is valuable as "a means of asserting humanity" and "as a means by which . . . characters recognize the necessity of revolution" ("Historical Novel" 138).

MODELING A HOMEY VERSION OF WARRIOR-CAREGIVING: BLENDING THE LITTLE RASCALS WITH THE BLACK PANTHERS

The significance that the Friends attach to the Little Rascals is first suggested when, returning to Gordon's house after the drive-by shooting, they become engrossed in watching one episode "with more interest than they usually showed for cartoons" even though Lyon has already seen and seems to remember every episode (73, 75). Their attitude is nostalgic. Reflecting on how much better it must have been to be a kid in the "'olden days,'" even if kids back then did have to "'ride the butt end of buses,'" Gordon concludes that the Rascals were "'a way cool'" gang because he likes how one black and one white boy, Buckwheat and Spanky, work together like brothers (77, 79). It may be cynicism about that kind of naivete that leads Deek to dismiss the Friends as "'just
another little Buckwheat gang” (224). If the Little Rascals scripts are naive, however, the
supposedly realistic, but showtimey scripts of the 1990s, as already discussed, are cynical and work
to keep youth trapped at the bottom of the pyramid. The boys’ reading of the Little Rascals, by
contrast, proves more effective for resisting the threat that Deek poses than he gives them credit
for.

Lyon, for example, reads the Little Rascals as both good and street smart. Agreeing with
Gordon, he posits, “‘That the way gangs oughta be, man, good, but not takin no shit off nobody
neither’” (77). The boys respect Spanky and his gang for being able to see through “slimy”
operators, like a scheming man who wants to seduce their favorite teacher, Miss Crabtree, into
marrying him (74–75). It is the scripts in which the Little Rascals end “by saving the day” that the
Friends try to emulate (79). They defeat a junkie who attempts to break into the apartment of an
elderly neighbor, a lady who, like Miss Crabtree, is nice and “way cool” (92–97). And they
eventually save the “‘little kids’” in their neighborhood, those even younger than the gang members,
from the drugs and money that Deek offers because they are able to “see through” his schemes.

When the Friends meet the Crew in the abandoned car wash, for example, Wes, the leader
of the Crew, begins to explain what Deek has been telling the Crew. But Gordon quickly stops the
explanation, suggesting that Deek’s plans are transparent: “‘Lemme guess,’” he interrupts cynically,
“‘Deek tellin ya it some big dudes wanna move our grounds. An he wantin to front a Uzi to work
for him’” (213). Gordon guesses correctly because Deek had approached the Friends with a similar
warning just before they watched that Little Rascals episode (70). The gangs conclude that Deek is
responsible for the drive-bys because he seemed to know about the attack on the Friends as, or even
before, the drive-by occurred. Ironically, Deek, who killed the youth he hired to execute the drive-
rys because they knew too much, is found out and eventually killed because the gangs figure he
“know[s] too much” about the drive-bys to be sincere about his seeming concern (223). When
Deek tries to tempt them into believing they can “be somebody” instead of just another “Buckwheat
gang,” they conclude that his enticements simply make for more problems. Bullets for the Uzis he offers are more than they can afford and taking more ground would require them to devote almost all of their time to gang activities. Wesley, the leader of the Crew, says he has also figured out that Deek is simply “shit-disturbin.” According to his perceptive analysis, Deek is “too puss to go messin with the big dogs, so he schemin on us” (224-225).

If the Friends’ concern for their community and the fight against Deek and the cops are associated with the model of the Little Rascals, Ty and Markita’s participation in Deek’s eventual downfall is associated with the model of the Black Panthers. And if the gang’s reading of the amiable Rascals revives their spirit of “saving the day,” their reading of the Panthers, whose focus on power is more commonly associated with violence, revives the sense in which community care was also included in their notion of power and the struggle for freedom.

Although the black power movement associated with the Panthers is mentioned only twice, in conversations between Deek and Ty, Mowry positions the two references immediately before and immediately following the chapter which describes the kids watching the Little Rascals. Readers can assume that the references to the Black Panthers are part of a single conversation which takes place while the kids are discussing the Little Rascals. Deek informs Ty that the two of them are supposed to meet a new kid who wants a job with Deek; they are supposed to meet at the Burger King where Markita works and Deek wonders whether Markita will be working then. When Ty predicts that she won’t, because child labor laws will prevent her working so many hours, even if she is as black as Ty himself is, Deek snickers: “It just too fuckin bad there ain’t no more Panthers around. You be a natural.” But, he advises, Ty would be a fool to try to revive their practice, since “Black pride an brotherhood be a long time dead, stupid, case you ain’t figured it out yet” (70-71). When the conversation continues and Ty argues that kids aren’t as stupid as Deek thinks and are not simply interested in being “baaad,” as Deek claims, but that they sometimes deal in drugs for “good” reasons like feeding and supporting themselves and their families, Deek advises

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him to "'get real.'" Once again Deek admonishes Ty for thinking too much like the Black Panthers: "'What your prob is, you born bout thirty years too late. Ain't no more Panthers, my man. Ain't nobody fightin to make nuthin better'" (101). Deek's comments suggest that, if black males are an endangered species, who die at younger and younger ages or are incarcerated in larger and larger numbers, then it may be because Black Panthers are an endangered species. History shows that the FBI waged a deliberate program of extinction against the Panthers and that the FBI program was abetted by the popular press. If the press and the larger community is now concerned with saving the whales and seals that they once hunted, the youth in Mowry's novel are more concerned to save the legacy of the Panthers and Bobby Seale.

The Friends are already fighting to make things better because they believe, like Lyon does, that "'being black is a major 'sponsibility," and that "nobody gonna be happy nowhere till everybody happy everywheres'" (74). And fighting to make something better is also what Ty and Markita take on, as a matter of responsibility, and by associating their defiance with the image of panthers.

After Deek murders the boys he hired to do the drive-bys, Markita comes upon Ty in an alley by her apartment; he is crying, thinking about shooting himself, and bleeding from a knife wound Danny gave him earlier in the day. She takes him to her apartment and tends his wound. As she cares for him, "her slim, supple body and graceful movements [make] him think of young panthers" (176). The care with which she has made her apartment into a refuge, keeping it clean, lemony, and feminine, and protecting herself and her two-year-old son from the world outside, also strike him as a measure of her defiance (174-175). In the context of this urban ghetto, in which so many are forced to live in run-down or even abandoned buildings and in which so many mothers cannot care for their children as they would like, her domestic activities can be seen as the defiant activities of a warrior and her mode of defiance, as Ty imagines it, can be understood as a
kind of warrior-caregiving. As Markita prepares to clean his wound, she also thinks that Ty looks like "a young panther," but one who is "caged and dying slow, and not caring any more to test the bars." When she tells him that the peroxide will hurt, however, she imagines that his face changes from that of a gentle boy to one that reminds her of African warrior masks (179). She imagines Ty in much the same way he imagines her, as simultaneously a gentle and fierce warrior.

The models of the Little Rascals and the Black Panthers are brought together in the structure of the novel when Lyon befriends Ty's brother Danny and the following action draws Ty into the world of the Friends. But the models already have much in common, as do Lyon and Ty. The models are already blended in the images associated with the two complementary heroes. Ty, for example, reminds Markita of "Buckwheat with a flattop" (165). Lyon's name, obviously, associates him with a powerful cat. Even though Lyon tells Danny that the "only real lions left be in cages," Danny believes there is "power" in his name, and Lyon's history suggests that Danny is right. His mother named him because he survived her abandoning him in a dumpster the night after he was born; she later explained that "only a lion" could "live through" that night as "cold as hell" (139). But Lyon, like Ty, thinks more about panthers than about the conventional king of the jungle. When Lyon and Gordon talk about the naiveté of the young twins, Ric and Rac, as they

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6 When Nina Baym criticized classic American novels for ignoring, excluding, and/or condemning women as opponents of freedom, she called those novels "Melodramas of Beset Manhood." Although Mowry's characters are often distant from women, because their mothers, for example, are working women, they are not "beset" by women. And they eventually include Markita, a teenage unwed mother, in their community. Not only does the novel avoid portraying her as a fallen woman, but it also includes her as an outlaw warrior-caregiver whose actions are vital to the gang's struggle against its enemies.

Including Markita as a "panther" also serves to acknowledge the fact that female Panthers, like Elaine Brown or Kathleen Cleaver, made important contributions to the movement. When the novel is read in the tradition of the slave narrative, moreover, this focus on a female warrior-caregiver in an essentially male narrative also revises the tradition of the male slave narrative in the direction begun by Douglass's 1854 and 1881 revisions to his 1845 Narrative. See, for example, Stephanie Smith's analysis of Douglass's revisions, which indicates that his portraits of women increasingly emphasized their agency and rebellion.
watch the Little Rascals, Lyon observes enigmatically: "'Tigers burn bright. But I think panthers brighter'" (74).

Gordon seems confused by the statement, asking "'Huh?'" When he then wonders, "That some kinda magic talk, man?" Lyon responds "'Naw'" and shrugs the question off. But his comment is worth remarking. For its allusions complicate the "magic" that Lyon so often talks about and places Lyon's ideas in a longstanding literary tradition.

His allusion is to Blake's poem "The Tyger," which is included in Blake's *Songs of Experience* and complements the poem "The Lamb" from his *Songs of Innocence.* The eyes of innocence see a lamb that is tended by its creator, who feeds and clothes it. The lamb is itself soft and tender and associated with its creator, who is also meek, mild, and like a little child. The tyger, by contrast, must stalk the forest for its living and is associated with fire and daring. The tyger inspires fear and terror rather than comfort and joy, and Blake's narrator wonders whether its creator smiles at seeing this creation. The voice of experience, however, is compelled to ask a question whose answer must be yes: "Did he who made the lamb make thee?" The "fearful symmetry" that describes the tyger in this song of experience may also characterize the symmetry that exists between the lamb and the tyger in the combined perspective of the *Songs of Innocence and Experience*.

The allusion to these poems by an African-American descendent of slaves should remind readers that the lamb was one of Britain's domesticated creatures while the tiger was one of the fierce, untamed creatures feared by the English who ventured to the coasts of India and Africa in Blake's time. Lyon's comment, that panthers are "brighter," suggests, on one level, that a black panther is even more fierce and dreadful than the tiger that both fascinated Blake's contemporaries.

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7 Mowry may already have been alluding to Blake when he used animal imagery to describe the boys, and when, like Blake who spelled "tyger" with a "y" rather than an "i," Mowry chose to spell Lyon's name with a "y" rather than an "i."
and inspired them with fear. If twentieth-century whites are less fearful of literal tigers, they are perhaps even more fearful of bright human Panthers who emerge from twentieth-century ghettos and indicate, on another level, that the Panther's strategy is also smarter.

The magic that Lyon espouses, however, stems not only from the realization that all creatures share the same creator but also from the recognition that the tender and the dreadful may coexist in the one creature. For the panthers, in Mowry's novel, are themselves little children and the quality that Lyon recognizes in them is tenderness. Arguing that even black dudes can be "gentle," he emphasizes the activity of caring when he tells Gordon that "Even a bad-ass ole panther take time out to be gentle to its cubs" (81).

In fact, the primary image associated with panthers in the novel is care, even though Markita doubts the connection between care and black power movements. She condemns Black Muslims who focus on revenge and worries that blacks who attain power won't "run the zoo" any better than the whites (180-181). But Mowry's appropriation of the Black Panther image redirects liberation struggle in a way that complements the strategy espoused by bell hooks in her recent essay called "Love as the Practice of Freedom." Hooks argues that the civil rights movement of the 1960s was a powerful move toward racial justice, even though its focus was limited to reform, "because it was profoundly rooted in a love ethic." When the Black Power movement which developed out of that civil rights struggle shifted its efforts toward revolution rather than reform, it simultaneously shifted its focus from love to power. Those shifts intensified sexism within black liberation struggles and equated freedom with "patriarchal manhood" and the willingness to use weapons of domination (Outlaw Culture 244-245). True freedom, hooks argues, must move beyond resistance to transformation, and the "weapons" needed for such transformation are compassion and insight (249-250).
Compassion and insight are precisely the weapons that Mowry's "Buckwheat Panthers" add to guns in their fight for an alternative future. For both Lyon and Ty independently, but simultaneously, begin to develop ideas about the value of love in chapters that alternate focus between the two. Where Lyon speaks the language of "heart," Ty speaks a complementary language of "warmth."

"WAY PAST COOL": HEART, WARMTH, AND REDEMPTIVE VIOLENCE

Mowry highlights the importance of heart in the first scene of the novel. During the driveby which Deek has arranged, Lyon's young friend Curtis is shot in the shoulder. As Lyon wipes the blood away, he suggests that the wound is not serious because it is "Nowhere near his heart. That be all what matter" (5). As the novel develops, it becomes clear that his meaning is not only literal, but also metaphorical. Physical heart and symbolic heart are equally vital.

The meaning of heart is first expanded when Gordon notices that his watch is no longer working and he acts perturbed. He eyes the watch several times, frowns as he studies it, and tries to whack it into starting. One of the young boys, Ric, sneers that Gordon can't expect anything better from a watch purchased "for two ninety-eight at K mart" (12). His twin, Rac, however, has begun to think in Lyon's terms. Having already advised Gordon to "check if it still tickin," he warns his brother Ric to shut up because the watch is "a heart thing." Rac reminds Ric that the watch was a birthday present from Gordon's mom, a gift "from the heart" (10, 12).

The boys prize love between family members, particularly the love of a mother for her child, and know that such love cannot be taken for granted. Lyon, for example, cares that his mom loves him even though she works "independently" and he had "been an unwelcome accident" (120). His belief that her love is stronger than that of many mothers in the neighborhood is at least

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8 If Mowry's use of the Black Panther model has more in common with the movement before it shifted focus from care and community involvement to power and violence, he also revises the practices associated even with that early form of the movement by making his gang less hierarchical and its focus on "rules" more flexible. His model of choice blends the Little Rascals and the Black Panthers.
partially confirmed when Deek indicates that he does not receive such love. In a conversation with Ty, Deek half concedes and half complains that "At least your folks wanted you" (36). Ty knows that his own mother's love is important to him. He goes home to see her, both "for dinner" and "for love." He also admires her for working even though welfare would pay more than her job and he accepts that she probably prays for him (31). But the mother who plays the most significant role in their lives now is Markita. A teenager with a two-year-old son, J'row, she is probably the age many of their own mothers were when they gave birth to the boys in the gang.

Even though Mowry focuses on the behavior and thoughts of the young boys, Markita also plays an important role as someone who chooses to act as a warrior-caregiver because she reflects on the responsibility of motherhood and the possibility of a freer future for the children of the community. She begins to prepare herself for action early in the novel, when she watches Ty, whom she doesn't yet know, attack a young boy, Danny, who has been sitting in Burger King. Before she discovers that Ty and Danny are brothers and that the fight she is witnessing is a family thing that is itself a kind of warrior-caregiving, she thinks about calling the cops. When a co-worker named Leroy holds her back, she tells him angrily that this kind of stuff always happens because "Nobody NEVER does nuthin!" (106). The first time she chooses to act is when she hears someone, who turns out to be Ty, crying in an alley near her apartment at midnight. She is frightened about stopping, because she thinks that anybody who could cry like that might be "past caring about himself [and] wouldn't be very concerned about others." But she remembers that the alley was once safe for carefree children who had played there and now was a place where worn-out children died. Deciding that blacks must take the responsibility for helping blacks, she enters the alley with her can of Mace drawn (162-163). She discovers Ty and finds herself responding to him the way a mother does to a child. She listens to his grief over the murders he witnessed and takes him to her apartment to dress his wounds. Her acts of courage and defiance prepare her to join the battle at the car wash when the opportunity arises the next night. Hearing gun shots and
observing that the cops who had just taken her Mace away had not called for backup when they entered the car wash, she has to decide whether to do something or run home and be comforted by her mother, with whom she and her son live. Her instincts tell her to be “cool,” which means to “stay away.” But she reflects that such coolness is a pitiful kind of protection, a pretense that one “didn’t give a shit.” Markita, however, must “give a shit.” She must care because she can’t promise her son J’row that everything will be all right when he’s frightened unless she does something to change the way things are (290-292). She snatches her Mace from the police car, rips out their radio, and runs into the car wash. She observes that the cops are on Deek’s side and sees the white one shoot at Danny and the other kids. She also sees Ty shoot Deek and decides to help. When the black cop bolts for the cruiser, she sprays him with mace, grabs his club, and attacks the white cop, who is finally killed by Lyon as he dies himself (295-297). Her last act of caregiving is more conventional, but it is still defiant and illegal. Sheltering Ty in her apartment, she calls in a doctor who has immigrated from South Africa to care for Ty’s gun wound; she then nurses Ty back to consciousness (303). In the context of battle, even these conventional tools of caregiving have been transformed into the tools of a warrior-caregiver.

Ty had already begun to speak his own language of the heart, whose operative word is “warm” rather than “cool,” when he first discovered that his little brother Danny wanted to work for Deek. As the oldest child in his family, Ty has long joined his mother in playing the role of caregiver. He received his early nickname from responding to his siblings’ requests to tie their shoes (186-187). He helps support them now with the money he makes as bodyguard to Deek (31). When Danny tries to work for Deek, however, Ty feels responsible and probably guilty for the example he has given his younger siblings. Furious and concerned, he struggles to keep Danny away from Deek and suggests that they spend the following day shopping for the family instead, explaining that he loves Danny. When Danny says that Ty’s speaking of love sounds “funny,” Ty responds: “Yeah. Well, maybe true stuff... stuff from your heart... sometime sound uncool”
For Ty, being "cool" begins to lose its street association with pride and courage. Instead it begins to symbolize a callous disregard for life. When Deek brutally murders the boys he hired to perform the drive-bys, for example, Ty seems to "freak" as he attempts to undo their deaths. After Deek subdues him, Deek wants to know if Ty is "cool" yet, if he is "chilled." Responding to the horror of Deek's action and to the connection between being cool and being trapped, Ty begins speaking of warmth as an alternative to cool. He recognizes that he has been "chilled," though not in the sense that Deek means, and thinks of himself as "the motherfuckin iceman, the iceberg."

Defiantly, he begins to ask himself, "What in hell was wrong with being black and warm?" (155). Street code had defined Deek's absence of horror and his total control as a sign of being "way past cool." Ty, however, wants to redefine "warmth," feelings based on concern for others, as the state of being way past cool. So when Markita later praises Danny for being "way cool," Ty challenges her use of the term, arguing that Danny is "a warm boy, right on the edge of goin cool" (169).

For Ty, being warm has something to do with figuring out the meaning of love, sex, family, masculine pride, and the connections among them. His reflections redirect the meaning of manhood, which also informed Frederick Douglass's notion of freedom, from its more common association with violence and fighting in the classic male slave narrative to an association with family responsibility and care.

Like Lyon, who once informed Gordon about the difficulty of "real lovin," as opposed to sex, Ty, during the night he spends with Markita, struggles to sort out the complicated meanings of love in his life (83, 186-189). Although Ty's and Markita's thoughts about their lovemaking are frequently romanticized and adolescent, the issues Ty raises for himself are serious and reflective. Before he met Markita, he thought that love was only "what you gave and got from your family" and that "[s]ex didn't seem to have much to do with it" (33). Now he begins to envision something that had seemed so mysterious to him before--how he might start a family to love. The feeling that he loves Markita also sets him thinking that "you [or he] could never be happy yourself when those
you loved were not" (188). As his thoughts on love shift between sex and caring and responsibility, he considers his love for Markita beside his love for his brother and his family in general. Although he worries about the possible conflict created by his love for Markita and his love for his family, he assumes the responsibility of trying to make choices that will be "the right ones" (189).

In order to understand which choices are right, he reflects on several models: a Vietnamese family who run a local neighborhood restaurant; his dead father, whose work as a scrap salvager showed Ty how to care for a family with dignity; and Leroy, a gentle student who works with Markita at Burger King. As he reflects, Ty considers the significance of puberty, or the difference between a man and a boy, at a literal and a metaphoric level (238-245). After the murders and his night with Markita, Ty uses a public telephone in a rib shop run by a Vietnamese family. Still thinking that any attempt to be cool is simply a trap, he concludes that blacks could take a lesson from this family who "seemed to work happily together the way Ty had always imagined a family should" (240). He remembers that "Markita had mentioned that in primitive societies a boy became a man when he could father other children" (243). But he begins to question the meaning of the word "father" and thus the quality that distinguishes a boy from a man. He decides that the ability to fuck and procreate is not sufficient to define a man or a father. Both manliness and fatherhood encompass a strong sense of responsibility for family. He has one example of responsible fathering in the memory of his own father. Remembering that helping his father while he salvaged scrap had made Ty feel "proud" at the end of the day, Ty decides that he wants to offer Danny the same experience and estimates that he can earn enough to buy an old flatbed truck in a month (144-146). He hasn't yet figured out how to detach this dream of honest labor and family responsibility from the trap of working with Deek, but he has begun to imagine another future.

As Ty develops his insights about care and responsibility, he is willing to include the larger black community in his indictment of those who keep children on the bottom of the pyramid. The incident during which he accuses them for their lack of compassion begins, not coincidentally, with
Ty thinking that his own heart is too tired to manage any sympathy for a kid who has been withholding money from Deek (262). But when Ty fights off the young boy's frightened attacks in a fog and breaks the boy's wrist, he hears not only the rumble of Deek's Trans-Am, but also what he thinks is the kid's heartbeat and, "from light-years away, . . . the faint, sweet singing of angels" (265). What he hears is the singing of a church choir, which reminds him of the storefront church that he attended with his mother when he was six. As he remembers a childish picture of a black Jesus, he thinks that there can be "no miracles in Oakland"; no one will die for this kid's sins except himself (265-266). But Ty is moved by the memory of his brother Danny, who had attacked him the day before, by the memory of lovemaking with Markita, and by the sound of the choir, whom he imagines as dark angels. Instead of kicking the boy as Deek urges, Ty gathers "him up and [slings] him over one shoulder" (269). Although he staggers under the weight, Ty carries him into the church and lays him on the altar. Then, pointing his gun at the people in whom, except for the little girls, he has seen no compassion, he admonishes them: "'HE the one dyin for your sin.'"

Ty empties his gun into the "heart of the picture" of Jesus and then preaches quietly and sadly that the churchgoers will have to redeem themselves not through Jesus but through the kids in the neighborhood. "'Save him, niggers,'" he warns. "'That the onliest way you save yourselves'" (271). Associating gang members with Christ's suffering as well as with his rage against hypocrisy in the temple, Mowry reverses the more usual conception of black youth as ethically depraved and presents them as figures of redemption. Churchgoers, by contrast, are presented as needing reminders of Christ's message of compassion and care, as they were in the classic slave narratives of the nineteenth century.

In an extended analysis of the role of "Christian violence" in maintaining the system of American slavery, SallyAnn Ferguson suggests that parish priests helped make slavery acceptable for churchgoing slavemasters by presenting the redemptive suffering of a divine child as the hope of the world (300). Ty's outrage simultaneously presents the children of the ghetto as Jesus-like
sufferers and berates the community for accepting such suffering instead of saving the children. In essence, he indicts the kind of Christian mentality, described by Ferguson, which relies on a kind of "child abuse," through which sins of the community are projected onto and exorcised through the sacrifice of children for their own salvation (300). If he presents the young boys as redemptive, it is not simply because they suffer and die for the sins of others, but because they try to do something to decrease that suffering. That "something" includes violent revolt guided by the wisdom of the heart and a concern for justice.

The redemption that comes from being "warm" or attending to the "heart" is split between the characters of Lyon and Ty, and is also shared with the kids of both gangs. Mowry's focus on the communal nature of the redemptive path toward freedom revises the pattern of classic slave narratives which more often focus on the efforts of an extraordinary individual, like Frederick Douglass. It also fits with Cornell West's suggestion that a "politics of conversion" should usher forth "humble freedom fighters" who come from "toiling everyday people" (31).

Lyon physically dies for the sins of the neighborhood and of the system during the battle on Friday. The novel suggests that Lyon was fated for such an end from the moment of his miraculous birth. Lyon voices this feeling when he tells Curtis that he sometimes thinks that he

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9 Although Douglass does attempt to make his case representative, his descriptions of his efforts toward freedom in his 1845 Narrative often lend themselves to the pattern of the self-made man. In part, his focus on his own actions may be related to his desire, as he describes it in chapter 11, to protect others who helped him and to keep that path of escape open to others. As I noted earlier, the revised versions of his autobiography, which have not been as well received critically, pay more attention to the value he places on companionship and community effort which he describes only briefly in the 1845 version. See also William Andrews' To Tell a Free Story for an analysis which argues that the aim of the 1855 revision, My Bondage and My Freedom, was to "divest him [Douglass] of singularity as a hero in order to endow him with more familiarity as a representative human being" (287).

10 Lyon's miraculous character, redemptive sacrifice, and prophetic vision, as well as his association with Blake's "Tyger," may also connect his portrait with the literary tradition of Beat poets as described by James de Jongh. When he looks at the role of Black Harlem in the literary imagination, de Jongh observes that Ginsburg and other beat poets associate Harlem and its suffering with visions of Blake. In particular, Ginsburg's poem, "The Lion for Real," in which the lion
really died that first night in the dumpster, but that somebody or something shadowy revived him for a purpose. He can almost see the figure in his dreams and explains it as a "collector," an ancient, mythical figure who collects the spirits of dead kids and who seems to have stuck "a whole sackful" of them in Lyon that night in the dumpster (200). Reflecting on this possibility, Lyon explains his sense of mission: "‘Times I get thinkin my life ain’t my own’" (198). The image of the collector and the story of Lyon’s birth suggest that his life is meant to represent all the kids who are not wanted and to establish some hope for their lives. That sense of mission is reinforced by Markita who sees Lyon following Danny and Ty and tells him that he looks as if he is on some kind of quest. When Lyon denies that anybody seeks truth or justice anymore, she quietly reaffirms her position, encouraging him to "‘Keep on seekin, little warrior’" (127). It is also Markita who introduces a paradox into the portrait of Lyon. Both Ty and an impersonal narrative voice imagine that Lyon is too "fragile," too "delicate" or too "fine" to "survive" in the world around him (60, 250). Lyon’s death might suggest that this perspective is correct. The simplicity of that perspective is challenged, however, when Deek, who seems "fully equipped" for the game of survival, is also killed (24). And as the common fate of drug dealers and their associates show, participating in that game rarely translates into long-term survival. With the portrait of Lyon, then, Mowry may be trying to redefine the basis of survival, which may be suggested by Markita’s thinking. Noting that Lyon is "so delicate-looking yet so totally self-sufficient," Markita reflects that Lyon is "like a prototype of something new or a reprogram of something very old that was better equipped to survive. Evolution in action. The shape of things to come" (162). Lyon’s death is redemptive, while Deek’s is not. Lyon may not survive personally, but his insistence on the power of love and trust, even in an evil world, does survive as the "shape of things to come" in the world Mowry begins to establish. Lyon’s approach is carried on, after his death, by Ty. Appropriately, Mowry symbolizes the "starved and ancient presence" of the Lord, contributes to a sense of his poetry as part of a tradition of magic prophecy (131-133).
portrays the second aspect of Christ’s redemption, his resurrection, in Ty, whose Christian name is Theodore—or gift of God.

After Ty confronts the congregation, he and Deek prepare for their meeting with the Crew and Ty finds "himself whispering a prayer that he wouldn't have to shoot any kids." He finds the thought "funny, sad, and frightening" (275-276). What he discovers at the car wash, however, in a reverse of positions, is his brother Danny, who is prepared to shoot Ty in order to save him.

Holding a gun to Ty’s chest, Danny whispers: “‘You gotta trust me, man! Listen! Last night, you say you love me so much you could kill me. I know what that mean now! An I love YOU that much, man! Believe, Please!’" (281). When Ty dismisses Danny’s faith as a joke, as senseless child logic, and prepares to warn Deek, Danny shoots him. Ty thinks that he is dying, or dead, and, in his confusion, he has another vision of black angels. This time, however, he doesn’t hear them as the voices of a choir, but sees them as "small, dark angels, like bare-chested boys" who climb over the fence with "expressions of vengeance" as they prepare to do battle (284). When the cops begin shooting at the little kids instead of Deek, Ty finally hears a voice like the one he heard earlier. Coming either from God, or from inside himself, the voice challenges: "‘You be sellin ALL your little brothers, fool!’" (290). The words, he thinks, are set free by Lyon’s magic. During the confusion in which he tries, unsuccessfully, to sort out magic, miracles, and ordinary reality, Ty kills Deek, Lyon draws the fire meant for Ty—dying even as he kills the cop who has been shooting at the kids, and the warrior angels who surround Ty return to figures of ordinary kids (293-297).

Mowry’s treatment, however, suggests that the battle has been far from ordinary. Or, more precisely, his treatment blurs the distinction between the ordinary and the miraculous, the profane and the sacred. His depiction alludes to and revises the "apocalyptic" visions of urban violence that characterize contemporary films about black youth in the mass media, visions that perpetuate the notion that most black males are caught up in mindless killing of their own.
Two reviews of the novel suggest that *Way Past Cool* is inferior to these movies which depict the "inferno" of the African-American ghetto, because, according to one, it is less "authentic" than those films ("Unhappy Days"). According to another, "ghettocentric" clichés diminish the power of a book that competes with the "brutal messages of rap and the hard-edged images of the recent boom in films about urban blacks" (George). The novelist Ishmael Reed, by contrast, argues that Mowry really understands the ghetto and the behavior of these kids and that his work is more "sincere and authentic" than the films of "those who are marketing black pathology for money" (163). Mowry, according to Reed, knows that publishers and potential filmmakers would like to market "an image of black males with which a racist society is comfortable," an image of violence in which black youth are depicted as "the number one menace to society" (162).

When Giroux analyzes the cinematic representations of violence, he argues, on the one hand, that the "documentary style of violence" in the black films in which Hollywood is willing to invest reinforces the equation of race and crime and the assumption that there are no complex or positive choices and, on the other hand, that the "appeal to gutsy realism" in the genre of "hyper-real violence" that pays homage to the pulp crime genre represents a "moral indifference coupled with cultural slumming"; both "legitimate rather than contest, by virtue of their documentary appeal to what is, the spreading acts of symbolic and real violence rooted in and shaped by a larger racist culture" (43-44, 65). Such realistic representations of violence "do not rupture or challenge automatically the dominant ideologies that justify or celebrate violence in real life" (78). He suggests that "symbolic" representations of violence, by contrast, can work pedagogically to reference a broader set of insights: whereas "an uncritical appeal to realism does not allow audiences to think imaginatively about ways to disrupt what have become conventional patterns of violence," symbolic depictions of violence offer "an ethical language with which to engage acts of humanity" (78). As an effort at the kind of critical pedagogy that Giroux encourages, Mowry's treatment of violence moves toward enabling his audience to "move between dominant and
oppositional appropriations of violence" and to distinguish between what Giroux calls the "violence of the spectacle and the representational violence that allows them to identify with the suffering of others, display empathy, and bring their own ethical commitments to bear" (64, 65).

Mowry's strategy in presenting this scene of violence, then, attempts to interfere in the way viewers respond to "showtimey" movies that feed a popular desire to see black children fighting and killing each other. In part, Mowry focuses as much or more on the thoughts, feelings, and motives of his characters during the battle as on the actual violence. He highlights the quality of care involved in an occasion of militant resistance and the radically redemptive nature of the conventionally "apocalyptic" scene. When Patrick Taylor discusses the role of violence in Afro-Caribbean liberation narrative, he suggests that the "quality" of violence is significant in liberation struggle. The depiction of violence must avoid the "cult of spontaneity" if violence is to be channeled in a way that does not reduce it to a matter of "endless struggle" (90). While Mowry avoids depicting spontaneous and mindless killing, he also avoids the messages of the mass media which, according to bell hooks, "teach us to see rage as useless" by showing black males "wreaking havoc upon the 'innocent'" (Killing Rage 18). While his vision presents violence as an appropriate response to injustice, it avoids glorifying that violence. For if rage is "not processed constructively," as hooks observes, it "can lead to pathological behavior" (26). Mowry's allegorical derealization of the violent encounters presented in the mass media, then, acknowledges the revolutionary dimensions of killing rage but also refocuses the perception of revolutionary hope away from violence per se to the care which motivates and may even replace that violence in his vision of the future.

Although Ty only thinks he has died when Danny shoots him in the shoulder and when he sees little kids who look like black angels, once he kills Deek and the battle ends, he does die symbolically. He surrenders his need to focus as the "blackness" takes him away; that blackness refers simultaneously to the fog which closes in on him and to the boys who carry him to Markita's
apartment (298). He awakes on Sunday, three days later, like Jesus on the original Easter morning (302). Ty is not only redeemed, but also assumes the role of redeemer. Although Lyon, his sacrifice, and the courage of the kids must receive much credit for Ty’s redemption, his own values and actions have prepared him for assuming Lyon’s role in the group.

His glimpses of other people who work honestly and peaceably have also provided him with visions of manliness at a symbolic level. Thus he reflects that the boy who washes dishes at the Vietnamese rib shop is “going somewhere” and is more on his way to manliness than Deek (243). Leroy, Markita’s friend, is also “going somewhere,” because he completes his high school education at night even though he works with Markita in Burger King. By the end of the novel Ty is making plans to follow Leroy’s example and to finish school, because he has already decided that it “took real balls” to choose “a life that didn’t hurt anybody” (204, 306). Mowry insists on challenging the image of manliness associated with the hard-edged images in the mass media. By being willing to associate nurturance, care, cooperation, and consideration for the needs of others with “manhood,” he repudiates the “equation of patriarchal manhood with freedom” that, according to bell hooks, marks too many of the messages offered by mass media to black youth (Killing Rage 73-76).

In the closing scenes, Ty is still a panther even though he gives up his gun and makes plans to continue his schooling and to earn money by salvaging scrap. Danny briefly worries that Ty will give up fighting when Ty says that he doesn’t know what he would do with his gun now. But Ty comforts Danny by explaining that he still intends to fight, only not with guns: “’there other ways to fight this shit, man,’” he explains, “’You can’t just go round shootin down every hungry kid dealin on the corners’” (305). Ty intends to remodel the practice of young kids in South Africa who are fighting for “Uhuru,” or justice. His desire to find another way is most probably informed by his own experience and by the memory that Danny also nearly joined the drug dealers. What his new way will not reject from the way of armed resistance, however, is cooperation among the kids.
who live in the neighborhood. They will continue to work as a gang even though the news condemns them and blames all the violence in the community on drugs and guns rather than corruption and injustice. Ty snorts that public attempts to bust up the gangs would be "'like tryin to bust up them Little Rascals'" (304).
Michelle Cliff and Jess Mowry both revive models of revolutions that “failed,” at least in the military sense. The First Maroon War ended in 1740 with Great Britain and the plantation slavocracy in a position of continued dominance in Jamaica. The war ended soon after Cudjoe, the leader of the Leeward Maroons, made peace with the British and was granted freedom in return for hunting down other Maroon rebels. But Clare Savage and the guerrillas in *No Telephone to Heaven* wage their struggle for freedom and justice in the name of Nanny, the leader of the Windward Maroons who were betrayed by Cudjoe and his followers. The 1859 rebellion which informs *Free Enterprise*, John Brown’s seizure of a federal arsenal at Harpers Ferry, with the help of five African-Americans and other rebels, failed to ignite a slave rebellion that would end slavery; instead, Brown was hanged for murder, treason, and insurrection. The Black Panthers whose memory Mowry revives in *Way Past Cool* were not able to rid African-American urban ghettos of police repression. Instead, concerted law enforcement efforts helped to destroy the Party through covert activities such as the use of informants, raids on Party property, murder of Party members, and numerous arrests of Party members on charges of assault, murder, inciting riots, and other conspiracies. Also subject to factional rivalries, the Panthers succumbed to a gradual demise by the end of the 1970s.

In many respects, the guerrilla action that concludes Cliff’s *No Telephone to Heaven* continues that tradition of “failure.” The freedom fighters are betrayed by a *quashee*; Clare and others are killed by government forces and the romanticized filming of Nanny and Cudjoe, which serves to keep the history of resistance unknown, continues unabated. While the Friends and the Crew in *Way Past Cool* win their skirmish with the drug dealer and the corrupt cops, killing Deek and one white cop in the process, and avoid arrest, their victory seems an isolated one that will
neither eliminate future threats to trap them in the cages of the drug culture nor eradicate the systemic power imbalances that trap them at the bottom of the pyramid that Ty describes. If that battle is not a failure, its success is limited.

And yet the conclusion of Mowry's novel is read as hopeful and the conclusion of Cliff's novel can be.\footnote{See Lima for a contrasting perspective on the ending, which suggests that the forces of capitalism and political oppression are so powerful that substantial change is unlikely or even that "social transformation [is] a tragic impossibility" (52). Lima's unequivocally pessimistic reading of \textit{No Telephone} is based partly on a teleological reading of the end, whose closure she attributes to the structure of the novel rather than to her reading, and partly on her belief that Cliff creates an ahistorical narrative that "removes the possibility of human agency" and therefore cannot operate as a "call to arms" (52). Although I agree with Lima that Cliff's "commitment to an emancipatory project cannot offer any guarantee that [her] narratives will indeed be liberatory," I disagree that Cliff deemphasizes the notion that people are agents of history, just as I disagree with Lima's assertion that Christopher is the true revolutionary in \textit{No Telephone} (42, 45, 52).} Macrae, for example, claims that \textit{Way Past Cool} ends "full of hope for the future, weakening [its] strong trajectory[...] that forecast[s] little hope" (97). And resistance, in Cliff's vision, is never futile even though it needs to be carried on. Her belief assumes that struggle is handed down from generation to generation to be carried on and suggests that struggle is itself part of the practice of freedom. In other words, revolution is not achieved, but handed down. It must be continually renewed since freedom, as well as care, is as much a practice as a condition. When they discuss \textit{No Telephone} in an interview, Cliff and Schwartz suggest that its ending can be read as a preface to further struggle—perhaps by Harry/Harriet, the "real revolutionary" whose death is uncertain, or by readers who are motivated to take up the struggle (602-603).

Cliff's models highlight the realistic chances of such a hopeful reading for the long term, since Maroon resistance in Jamaica resumed after Nanny's death and continued until 1834 when British slaves were finally emancipated, and the efforts of John Brown and Mary Ellen Pleasant at Harpers Ferry were followed by the Civil War or, as Cliff calls it, the last engagements in the African-American War for Independence, which resulted in emancipation for slaves in the United States in 1863. That same kind of hope for future revolution that continues past and current resistance may also motivate Mowry's recourse to the model of the Black Panthers and may define...
the kind of "optimism" that concludes the novels by both authors. That kind of vision is consistent with the tradition of slave narratives. As Hazel Carby observes in a discussion of Black Thunder by Arna Bontemps, "death, in a narrative of slave rebellion, offers a figure of future revolution" or of "change that has not come" by "representing the collective acts of a black community as signs for future collective acts of rebellion and liberation" ("Ideologies" 140).

Both Cliff and Mowry use images that symbolize this potential. Cliff herself suggests that the "ruination" of the land, as well as the freedom fighters whose bodies are burned into the land, might be seen, like the wilderness of the Maroons, as the fertile ground of continuing struggle (Caliban’s Daughter* 45-46, "Clare Savage* 265-266). Similarly, in Way Past Cool, Lyon observes that "seeds of young growing things" fight through "dead-looking dirt"; although he reflects that they continue to fight "no matter how much shit got dumped on them," another reading might suggest that they continue to fight because so much shit fertilizes their struggle (254, emphasis added). During a review of poetry, Michelle Cliff indirectly explains the way such fertile results might come from seemingly pessimistic conclusions when she observes that "Edouard Glissant speaks of the necessity that the writer engaged in a political struggle of imagination ‘introduce temporarily a form of despair which is not resignation. Exhausting this despair . . . means reopening the wound. . . . Therein does not lie pessimism, but the ultimate resource of whoever writes and wishes to fight on his [her] own terrain’" ("Poetry is a Way of Reaching Out" 29).

Telling the truth about injustice, repression, and even betrayal, even if the truth reopens wounds, is necessary for future liberation.

The way such telling moves revolution from failure to success, however, cannot be fully explained. Instead, for both authors, future hope is associated, to a significant degree, with a belief in "magic." That faith in magic connects their contemporary vision with the power of "conjure" that the historian John Blassingame identifies as a central force in promoting resistance by "preventing the slaves from identifying with the ideals of their masters" (45). That tradition may be especially important for reading Mowry’s narrative since, as Houston Baker observes, earlier critics
misread stories in Charles Chestnutt's collection, *The Conjure Woman*, as stories of "amiable, childlike creatures" because those critics could not understand the power of the black conjurer in the ideology of African-American resistance to slavery and a slave mentality (157-158). For Mowry’s hopeful vision depends not simply on continuing the kind of revolution initiated by the Black Panthers, but also on reconceiving the magic that inheres in his adaptation of the amiable Little Rascals.

**HEART MAGIC: CREATING RULES THAT FACILITATE TRUST**

In a communication with Cathi Dunn MacRae, Mowry says that thirteen is a "pivotal age" for ghetto children, because it is the age when they first see and must respond to "what is" (97). In *Way Past Cool*, Ty says something similar, but adds an element of magic to that phenomenon. When he tells Markita that his brother Danny is a "warm" boy, rather than a cool one, he explains that Danny is at the "magic" age when kids make lasting choices about their lives (169).

For Ty, that age is magical because he is skeptical about the possibility of choice for older boys, like himself, who have already become involved in drug dealing. Throughout much of the novel he alternates between dreaming, on the one hand, that he can get somewhere by leaving Deek, salvaging scrap like his father, and attending night school, and expecting, on the other hand, that it's too late for him to be saved. But he glimpses the possibility of another kind of magic in Lyon. As Deek pontificates about how stupid little black kids are and Ty reflects instead on "how loyal most of them were, like they’d finally found something to believe in," Ty keeps having a vision of Lyon, whom he knows only as "that strange slender boy in the shadows." Reflecting that he himself "didn't believe much more in magic than in God . . . at least he wasn't sure," he contrasts himself with Lyon, for "it was easy to see that that slim kid believed in something." Ty speculates that Lyon’s belief "probably had more to do with bones than the Bible" (98-101).

Although Lyon's belief, as well as the loyalty Ty notices among the boys, are not connected to "bones," they are connected to something Lyon and the boys call "heart magic." That magic consists in listening to, speaking from, and acting on the heart, all of which develop the
boys' sense of trust in themselves and in each other. But their faith in that magic, which Lyon prophecies will eliminate the need for guns some day in the future, needs to be developed and tested, in small as well as larger ways, before they can rely more often on its power.

Early in the novel, for example, the incidents of the morning drive-bys and their aftermath disillusion Gordon about the power of heart. So when the twins argue about the value of the broken watch that Gordon received as a "heart" thing from his mother, and Lyon is unable to fix the gang's similarly useless and rusty .22, Gordon flings his watch into a trash can and comments acerbically: "'Mmmm, s'prised you can't magic it fixed'" (12). At the moment, at least, Gordon believes that the magic of heart has little power to help him in ways that he really needs, like keeping them safe from attack.

But in their struggles against Deek and the cops that weekend, the heart magic that Lyon advocates is tested several times, especially in interactions between Lyon, Danny, and Ty, and is largely responsible for the boys' success. When Lyon follows Ty and his younger brother Danny to a meeting with Deek, for example, he initiates a series of life and death encounters in which Deek's three potential opponents must put trust to the test. When Lyon first approaches Danny that night, Danny fears that Lyon has come to kill both Deek and Ty. Desperate to protect his brother, Danny whips out his knife and holds it to Lyon's throat. Hoping for a way to avoid bloodshed and also to turn Danny away from his desire to work for Deek, Lyon sinks to his knees and offers his throat. Realizing that Lyon would not "'leave [him]self open like that by accident,'" Danny jerks his knife away (135-136). When Lyon explains that Danny's restraint comes from listening to his heart, Danny complains: "'All what you tellin me? Bout hearts an shit? Sound magic. Gotta be magic for cause I don't understand. Like churchy shit'" (138). Danny's comment, like the biblical allusions that Mowry will make during descriptions of the battle at the carwash, indicate that Lyon's belief does have something to do with the Bible, specifically the New Testament and the power of its radical message, and suggest that both require a faith that goes beyond understanding.
The next day, when the Friends and the Crew gather to decide how they will handle Deek, Danny must learn how to exercise that kind of faith and place the same kind of trust in Lyon. Danny secretly follows the gangs to an abandoned carwash and gets into a struggle with Turbo, a member of the Crew. Not only must he trust Lyon and withdraw his knife when the gang leaders call the boys off, but he must also follow the rules the gangs have established between themselves and offer his knife and his throat to Turbo because he has drawn Turbo’s blood in the fight (214-219). He is tested a second time when he must put not only his own life, but the life of a loved one, his brother Ty, on the line. When Danny hears the gangs debate the possibility of killing both Deek and Ty at the carwash and considers warning Ty, and thus destroying the boys’ chances for eliminating Deek, Danny must again trust Lyon who says that Deek must be stopped and that the boys will do all they can to save Ty. Lyon again tells Danny that he can make the best decision by listening to and speaking from the heart, when he advises Danny to “’See the words in your heart fore you let your mouth make em’” (226). Only trust offers them any chance to protect both the boys and Ty. Both Lyon and Danny are highly aware of the responsibility that they carry when they must operate on trust. As a frustrated Danny accuses, when Lyon says that one way Danny could save his brother Ty would be by killing Lyon and escaping to warn Ty and Deek of the planned ambush: “’It like you like puttin your stupid life in somebody’s hands . . . like you checkin to see if they know what it worth . . . now you go and do it again! Put it on ME! Like a magic curse!’” (260).

But Danny has learned to trust more than he did before meeting Lyon. He accepts the responsibility that goes with acting on trust and heart magic to such an extent that he chooses to place similar demands on Ty during the battle at the carwash. Ty must trust both Danny, who shoots Ty in the shoulder in order to prevent him from warning Deek, and the other kids whom Danny has decided to trust, when the kids ambush Deek that night at the carwash (282-297).2 Ty’s

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2 See Chapter 4 for a description of Ty’s response to the redemption offered by trust in the boys.
own conversion, as I suggested earlier, may be related to his independent reflections on love, whose magic may be symbolized in the power of a gift he received from his mother, a power that is revealed when Ty carries the young boy into the church. That gift is a medallion of St. Christopher carrying the Christ child, a medallion which Ty wears around his neck and which he fingers, suggestively, at the very moment when he feels a possible sympathy with Lyon but contrasts Lyon’s belief with his own skepticism. When Markita later notices that medallion, Ty dismisses it as a “silly ole thing” whose only significance lies in the fact that his mother gave it to him. But Markita challenges him, as she once challenged Lyon when he denied that he was on a quest, by explaining that St. Christopher was supposed to be lucky for travelers and for somebody else when she notices that St. Christopher is “‘carrying somethin on his shoulder’” (190). At the close of the novel, Ty acknowledges the symbolic value of what Danny once called that “churchy kind of shit” by giving Danny the medallion as a reminder of the magic to which they are all being initiated (307).

The trust that the young gangs learn to practice is a potentially powerful antidote to the poison that Deek represents because it forcefully rejects the basis on which Deek founds his oppression. Distrust lies at the heart of Deek’s complicity with a corrupt system and poisons any potential for sympathy among the residents of the ’hood. The extent of that distrust is highlighted when Ty objects to Deek’s murder of the outsiders he hired to perform the driveby shootings. When Ty suggests that there might have been another way to handle the situation, Deek counters: “‘Never trust nobody, man’” (158). But distrust, and the paranoia that can accompany it, keep the boys subject to Deek’s threats. Distrust restricts movement and inhibits collective action, and thus fortifies one of the black cages that residents create for themselves. Mowry’s focus on the necessity of trust in developing greater freedom aligns itself with the argument made by Cornell West that “every historic effort to forge a democratic project has been undermined by two fundamental realities: poverty and paranoia. The persistence of poverty generates levels of despair that deepen social conflict; the escalation of paranoia produces levels of distrust that reinforce cultural division” (155). In Mowry’s model, trust is necessary to combat the despair that stems from the persistence...
of poverty and oppression and to generate collective action against the forces that poison hope for change.

But trust is also a risky antidote. For trust in this context cannot be reserved for friends whose loyalty is relatively certain. Trust, as demonstrated in the examples between Lyon and Danny, must be extended to those who might have conflicting loyalties, in situations where "paranoia" is historically warranted. Trust is also a dangerous quality to cultivate because relatively powerful figures like Deek may seek to instill trust only so they can ultimately abuse it. Just before he kills the outsiders he hired to do the drive-by shootings, for example, Deek keeps them off guard by flattering them with his trust. Announcing, "I knewed I could trust you," he promises to give them a "bonus" (150). He similarly hopes to entrap the Crew by presenting them with an Uzi as a measure of his "good faith." When Ty appears to question his wisdom, Deek snickers that "Kids LIKE to be trusted" (143). Deek expects that the Crew will be beholden to him and will either hold the Friends in check or do them in. Trust is dangerous because the fear which might seem like paranoia elsewhere, the worry that everyone is an enemy, is too often reality in this neighborhood. It is even dangerous among those who, unlike Deek, are well-intentioned. When it seems as though the gangs will not be able to figure out a way to kill Deek without taking out Ty, his bodyguard, first, the gangs know that Danny might sabotage their efforts by trying to warn off his brother Ty or, failing that, that Danny would feel compelled to retaliate. He "would hunt them down and kill them one by one, or until he was killed himself." If self-protection would then require the gangs to kill Danny, Lyon, the one person in whom Danny placed most trust, would have to assume the responsibility of killing Danny since he was responsible for involving Danny with the Friends. When Lyon contemplates the possibility, even he despairs momentarily over the impotence of love and trust in an evil world and complains to his friend Curtis that "listenin to your goddamn heart be way past hazardous to your health round here," because the love he believed was good "don't work once you been down with what real!" (252-253).
So the focus on "heart" which Lyon advocates might seem like a fantastic way for the boys to free themselves from the cages that do or may confine them. Freedom struggle, as demonstrated historically, is always subject to the possibility of betrayal. But, as bell hooks notes, the fear that love, or trust based on acting from the heart, is naive keeps progressive political struggle from becoming transforming, liberatory movement. Following the philosophy of Martin Luther King, Jr., she argues that those who wish to avoid nihilistic despair and to know the joy of freedom must "choose love" (*Outlaw Culture* 246-248). She also suggests that "grappling with betrayal" can lead to a "kind of powerful love" and predicts, in a deliberately utopian gesture, that "any political movement that can effectively address these needs of the spirit in the context of liberation struggle will succeed" (50, 247).

What the youth in *Way Past Cool* must find is some "effective" way to turn fantasy to reality. Since the paranoia that treats everyone as an enemy is itself a cage, they must choose heart and trust if they are at least to bend, if not break, the bars of their cage. One way they help turn fantasy into reality, and create some safety for the practices of the heart that depend on trust, is by developing rules. In general, the members of one gang believe that members of another gang will honor rules that are mutually established. Because they trust that rules will be followed, they can extend the realm of trust by creating rules that facilitate even greater trust.

The kids have established rules that regulate gang interaction in order to prevent or contain conflict among themselves. When the Crew and the Friends both experience the drive-by shootings arranged by Deek, for example, the Crew send an "ambassador" to the Friends and schedule a meeting on neutral ground. The discussion proceeds according to prearranged rules: the group who called the meeting lays out the reason and the other group follows with its story. Discussion follows. The narrator notes that "[i]f an adult had been listening he would have probably figured the boys were just following a form learned in school," since the boys raised their hands to signal questions and were recognized by the gang leaders. But Mowry insists that "the ritual is ages older," even timeless. In part, he suggests that the boys are not naively adopting the forms of a
system that has been used to oppress them, but are following rules that have been valued by many cultures in many times. They have learned these rules the same way other groups have learned them, through experience, through success and failure. The fact that their rules are nearly universal also suggests that the matters at stake are neither trivial nor textbook matters, but the kind of matters that require serious negotiation. The boys are practicing the kind of diplomacy practiced by leaders of nations—in balance of power negotiations the boys have seen on TV, for example, between rival powers in the Middle East or even the United States and the Soviet Union. If their ritual encounters do not always ensure peace or progress, their use of such traditional methods suggests that their failure is not due to the rashness and disrespect for life commonly attributed to uneducated youth who join gangs, but is a failure commonly shared with the leaders of rival powers in the world of national politics and borders.

In fact, the boys realize that inflexible rules do not always produce desired results. So they differentiate their rules from the kinds of regulation that "the cops and the TV called laws" (123). For when rules or laws become "a system," Lyon reflects, "they stopped being justice" (252). That sentiment is shared by many characters. And Markita’s expression aligns that sentiment with the kind of social protest and critique that Charles Dickens highlighted in his nineteenth-century novels. When the cops take away Markita’s mace, her primary means of self-defense, because it is illegal, she cites Dickens, whose work she read in school, to conclude that any law which makes a crime of protecting herself must be an "ass": "If the law says that, " she remembers reading and mentally inserts ‘protection is a crime’ for ‘that,’ "then the law is an ass!" (160-161). Adult characters who have experienced oppressive regulations elsewhere also share their sentiments. The doctor who tends Ty’s wounds at the end of the novel has emigrated from South Africa; like the kids, he knows from experience that laws don’t always mean justice or define the right thing to do (303).

Because the gangs differentiate their rules from the law, the rules must make logical sense; they must also be applied with discretion and subject to change. As Lyon reflects when he breaks
the rules and decides not to shoot Ty when he sees Ty skating through Friends’ ground, "[t]he rules . . . let you use your brain and your heart to do the right thing" (123).

As the gangs interact and begin not only to use their heads, but also, as Lyon teaches, to listen to their hearts, their application of the rules evolves in the direction of trust. When Tunk, a member of the Crew, first enters their territory as an ambassador, for example, the Friends don’t simply receive him according to the rules, but share their beer and cigarettes with him and offer to escort him back to his territory. Tunk admires their willingness to "[o]ne up the rules even" and both sides offer information about the drive-by "for free" (84-89). As Lyon explains, giving information that the rules don’t require means they are talking with their hearts (91). On the night Lyon follows Danny and Ty to Deek’s “crib” [residence], in another example, Lyon explains to Danny that he can’t promise not to kill Ty when the gangs try to attack Deek. Since Ty might turn on the gang because he is covering Deek, Lyon can promise not to hurt Ty only if the gang finds a way to stop Deek without hurting Ty. There is now a danger that Danny, as described earlier, might put the gangs in jeopardy by warning his brother. Remembering that Danny earlier withdrew his knife from Lyon’s throat, Lyon says that he won’t harm Danny now, partly because, by rules, he owes Danny for his life, but more because he trusts Danny’s heart. Danny reciprocates the trust by releasing Lyon from the rule of protecting him in the future; he says that Lyon owes him nothing (140-141). Expanding their mutual trust, Lyon later persuades Gordon to grant Danny a total pass through their territory, with no strings attached (196). With developing trust, the basis of interaction shifts from rule-driven exchanges to freely given gifts. While rules have been used to foster trust, trust must eventually inform all rules and even take precedence over rules.

By the close of the novel, the gangs are able to coin new rules that embody a great degree of trust. When the gangs successfully eliminate Deek, they capture three Uzis. In order to avoid an imbalance of power between themselves, they each keep one and decide to hide the third in neutral ground (308). They trust that it will be available only for emergencies and will not be used against each other.
In all cases, the novel indicates, the gift of trust is a grave offering because it entails responsibility for the safety of others. When Tunk, the ambassador, speaks from the heart, offering information to the Friends, he places the Crew at risk. When he further decides to withhold from the Crew the information that the Friends have a second weapon, because that information might lead less trusting Crew members to shy away from cooperation, he takes uneasy responsibility for their lives (91). When Lyon trusts Danny at their first meeting, he takes responsibility for the Friends, and when Danny trusts Lyon, he takes responsibility for Ty.

Trust is not extended lightly or carelessly. An early scene in the novel nicely articulates the double meaning of care as concern for others and as caution. After the Friends, with Tunk’s help, attack a junkie who is breaking in to a neighbor’s apartment, another old neighbor thanks them and advises, “‘You boys be careful now.’” The chapter closes as Gordon repeats the advice to Lyon and Curtis who are preparing to escort Tunk home (97). The advice carries a double message in Mowry’s hands. If the boys are not to be careless, they must blend caution, or care for their own safety and responsibility for themselves, with trust and care for others.

ADAPTING THE POWER OF THE ABENG: RECLAIMING TOOLS OF OPPRESSION AS TOOLS OF LIBERATION

Magic is also one of the qualities associated with Nanny in Cliff’s vision of freedom struggle. The historian-narrator of Abeng emphasizes that Nanny was the “magician” of the revolution which “held out against the forces of the white men longer than any rebel troops.” According to popular legend, her magic powers included the ability to “catch a bullet between her buttocks and render the bullet harmless.” For the narrator, the magic of her oaths and amulets allowed her “to unite her people and to consecrate their battles” (14). For Cliff, Nanny originates and apotheosizes the most powerful aspects of the grandmother, of the old woman who is free: a warrior and leader, she is not only the source of knowledge, magic, and ancestors, but also of healing practices, food, and of "ashe, the-power-to-make-things-happen, as well as the source of the responsibility to mete justice" (“Caliban’s Daughter” 47; "Clare Savage" 267). When Cliff details
details these magical powers, she argues that the "extent to which you can believe in the powers of Nanny, that they are literal examples of her Africanness and strength," measures the extent of your freedom, "the extent to which you have decolonized your mind" ("Caliban's Daughter" 47).

Another character who shares many of Nanny's magical powers in Cliff's first novel is Mma Alli, an obeah-woman who practices many healing arts and helps slaves escape from the plantation of Clare's great-great-grandfather, Judge Savage. One special tool in her arsenal is an *abeng* that she keeps "oiled with coconut" and ready for use, suspended from a fishhook on the walls of her cabin. In one of the epigraphs to the novel, Cliff defines *abeng* as "an African word meaning conch shell." She then describes the dual use of this instrument in Jamaica's history of slavery and rebellion: "The blowing of the conch called the slaves to the canefields in the West Indies. The abeng had another use: it was the instrument used by the Maroon armies to pass their messages and reach one another." The *abeng* on Mma Alli's wall is ready to serve the slaves on the Savage plantation in their struggles against the Judge and other planters. Presumably that particular *abeng*, or conch shell, is destroyed in the fire that Judge Savage sets to all the cabins on the eve of emancipation. But the memory of the *abeng* remains as a magical symbol of all the tools that might be used by the masters as instruments of oppression but could also be used by the oppressed as instruments of resistance and liberation. The liberatory potential of the "rules" which the boys create and use democratically in *Way Past Cool*, for example, which contrast with the "law" that serves to confine them, might even be understood in terms of the power of the *abeng*.

The symbol of the *abeng* suggests that those engaged in freedom struggle may resist the master by using his own tools to subvert his intention. One instance in Cliff's novel *Free Enterprise*, for example, shows that Mary Ellen Pleasant's father uses a slave ship in precisely this way. A seafaring man, Captain Parsons owns a ship that had once been used in the slave trade and he continues to disguise it as "a guineaman, a ship fitted out for the trade." While he appears to be one of those rare dark men who had bought himself into the master's trade, however, he uses the ship to smuggle fugitives into runagate settlements from which rebels wage "the war of the flea"
long before the Civil War (108-110). Another instance, more closely related to traditional roles of
caregiving, shows that Mary Ellen Pleasant begins her own enterprise of helping fugitives escape
"by embodying Mammydom." Disguised as a "dignified, unobtrusive houseservant," she builds a
West Coast empire in which she takes "care of the guests in her hotels, washing their linens in her
laundries, satisfying them in her restaurants," and employing fugitives as an "impeccably outfitted
staff" who serve guests in expected silence before they set out for Canada (104-106).

If the power of the abeng were restricted to this kind of use, it might still be subject to the
objection, raised by many feminists who have expanded on Audre Lorde's famous warning in "The
Master’s Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master’s House": that it tends to leave the master’s house
intact. The premise behind this caution is that even subversive use of the master’s tools is limited
and often co-opted. Subversion is not revolution; it takes place within the master’s house, without
taking it down.

What many critics fail to recognize when they object to any recourse to tools used by the
masters, however, is that many of the tools used by the masters do not belong to the masters. Like
the abeng, they may have a history outside the master’s house. That history defines the abeng as
something more than, or other than, a subversive tool that is limited by the potential of subversion.
The fact that abeng is an African word for an African item means that the conch shell, as Gikandi
suggests, has a use outside the dialectic of master and slave, or displacement and resistance: in
Africa, the conch "may be an agent of sound, speech, and the inner experiences of self" (237, 251).
That tool may have been usurped and perverted by the master and used against Africans, but it has
a use outside the master’s house, not simply within or even in resistance to the master’s house. If
the function of the conch has been adjusted and transformed in New World politics, the symbolic
power of the abeng suggests, its other function may yet be reconceived and built upon.3

3 Because of this feature, the image of the abeng in Cliff’s fiction offers greater potential
for creating a different kind of freedom than does the image of the castle with which G tries to
secure a space of freedom for himself in Lamming’s first novel. For G’s castle uses the master’s
house as a kind of kumbla. As Rhonda Cobham describes this Caribbean symbol, taken from an
Whether a tool is assumed to belong to the master or known to have a history and use outside the master's house, the power of the abeng as a symbol implies that the way we use a tool and the purpose for which we use it may make a difference in whether or not we can construct a different house with it. This quality of the abeng is implicit even in Lorde’s original warning against attempts to use the master's tools to dismantle the master's house. Addressing mainly white, middle-class feminists at a Second Sex Conference in 1979, Lorde argued that, because racism and homophobia are inseparable from sexism in the master’s house, feminists who didn’t make common cause with poor, black, and lesbian women left that house intact. *Difference*, in her argument, is the tool which closely resembles an abeng. While the master uses difference to divide and conquer, feminists making common cause can use difference to define and empower. It is not difference per se that is the master's tool, but the vision of difference as a cause for separation and suspicion. And it is precisely the uncritical rejection of difference, as something to be avoided, rather than the creative use of difference for another purpose, that leaves the master's house intact (112).

In like manner, Lorde implies that nurturing is a similar tool. She claims that "it is only in the patriarchal model of nurturance that women ‘who attempt to emancipate themselves pay perhaps too high a price for the results.’" Maintaining that "the need and desire to nurture each other is not pathological but redemptive," she argues forcefully that feminists must acknowledge interdependency and create systems of shared support as the way to freedom (111). The suspicion and rejection of care, like the suspicion and rejection of difference, inhibit rather than promote the

Anancy story, the very success of a *kumbla* is its greatest liability. Referring to a protective disguise, the *kumbla* functions as a symbol of strategies used to ensure survival. But its protection is disfiguring (49). As Erna Brodber warns in the novel Cobham analyzes, "the trouble with the kumbla is the getting out of the kumbla... If you dwell too long in it, it makes you delicate. Makes you an albino: skin white but not by genes" (*Jane and Louisa* 130). The castle belongs to the master. When G copies or inverts the function of the master's house by hiding in the castle of his skin, in order to protect himself, he leaves the master’s house intact and locks himself within another. The *abeng*, by contrast, represents tools which were only assumed by masters and those who imitate them to belong to the master, but which did once and can still serve a different function.
ability to imagine freedom with community. And without community, as Lorde sees it, there is no freedom: "Without community there is no liberation, only the most vulnerable and temporary armistice between an individual and her oppression" (112).

Cliff’s fiction also suggests that the practices of care, which have been used by the master to confine female slaves and their emancipated descendants in domestic servitude, share in the history and liberatory power of the abeng. For the obeah, the magical healing and subversive arts practiced by the "one-breasted warrior woman," Mma Alli, "represented a tradition which was older than the one which had enslaved them" (*Abeng* 34). The notion that women’s healing powers may challenge rather than serve the wishes of the patriarchy can be observed even in patriarchal objections to such women’s work. As John Brenkman observes when he analyzes the mother/whore dichotomy with which psychoanalysis has refashioned male ambivalence about oedipal attraction to mothers, "women’s healing" was once considered a "hexing practice" associated with witchcraft and was considered a challenge to male dominance (174-175). If patriarchal prescriptions for care can be considered in terms of an attempt to domesticate such healing practices, more radical and political calls for care might be understood as an attempt to reclaim an earlier power.

Many practices in Cliff’s work which have a history and use outside the master’s house, including women’s passion, history making, and the act of storytelling itself, may embody the magical power of the abeng. Another has to do with the quality of romance that is embodied in the very concept of magic and the abeng, as well as in mainstream appropriations of resistance history.

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4 See Bill Puka for an argument which suggests, by contrast, that the effectiveness of the practices of care, even if they do not simply take up the master’s tool, might yet be limited to a kind of circumscribed opposition. According to his "care as liberation" hypothesis, the ethic of care, particularly as Gilligan portrays it, is associated with struggles for liberation. But it is best understood less as a liberating experience based on "insight into the validity of benevolent virtues and compassionate response," and more as a set of "coping strategies" for dealing with sexism or other forms of oppression. These "circumscribed moral coping skills" are, according to Puka, "tailored to gender-specific and oppressive contexts" and run the risk of "legitimizing subjugation" by "transforming victimization into virtue" (58-59, 62-64). Puka does not claim that the practice of care is necessarily limited to such coping strategies, but that appeals for a care-based morality must be mindful of oppositional uses that reinforce a conventional and oppressive system. The liberatory practice of care, or concern for and nurturance of others, must be used with care, or caution.
and with the power of such romance to develop sympathetic readers who might practice freedom
with care.\footnote{In an interview with Cliff, Meryl F. Schwartz identifies Clare Savage with the image of
the \textit{abeng}, noting that "Clare has the choice to become an instrument of oppressive or resistant
forces" (608). Françoise Lionnet notes that the conch shell is, in particular, an instrument of
communication, and that its distinguishing feature is that it can be used to pass different messages to
different receivers. She then suggests that language itself, especially its "noise" that can be
perceived either as interference or as another message, and also the performative rewriting of the
multicultural influences in the Caribbean function like the \textit{abeng} in Cliff's fiction (323, 339).
Either of these suggestions are consistent with my analysis of the \textit{abeng} and indicate that the image
has a wide-ranging structural significance in Cliff's writing.}

**Making it Real: Cinema Verité and the Future of Romance**

Jess Mowry, as I have already noted, has said that he writes his books for, as well as
about, the "black kids" who live in inner-city ghettos, especially the young males who are an
"endangered species." These youth are neglected by publishers, librarians, and educators who are
uncomfortable with such gritty material and who assume that these boys "are not supposed to be
able to read" (MacRae 96). And Ishmael Reed believes that Mowry has succeeded where educators
have not: "he has gotten those kids deemed 'incorrigible' . . . to read books, to become interested
in intellectual activity" (163). The gritty and idealized way he chooses to present his material, as
described in the previous chapter, plays a significant role in his ability to reach those "kids" and to
influence their willingness to free themselves from the cage of being "cool."

Michelle Cliff similarly believes that Caribbean people must engage in their own freedom
struggle, insisting that they "cannot depend on anybody to free them from their situation. They
have to get out of it themselves" ("Interview," Adisa 276). But her work also assumes that neither
the need nor the ability of some people to develop self-reliance absolves others of the obligation to
help. As I noted at the beginning of this chapter, Cliff suggests that the hope for carrying on the

\footnote{In an interview with Cliff, Meryl F. Schwartz identifies Clare Savage with the image of
the \textit{abeng}, noting that "Clare has the choice to become an instrument of oppressive or resistant
forces" (608). Françoise Lionnet notes that the conch shell is, in particular, an instrument of
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Either of these suggestions are consistent with my analysis of the \textit{abeng} and indicate that the image
has a wide-ranging structural significance in Cliff's writing.}

While Jeannette Charles notes simply that "De abeng . . . is a symbol of de oppression we
face and de fight we fought" (269), Lemuel Johnson implies that its opposing uses might be viewed
"as threat and as condition of possibility" (112). He suggests that history, menstrual blood, and
even the genealogy of new world consciousness or identity function as threat or promise in Cliff's
\textit{Abeng}. Picking up on Johnson's notion, Gikandi implies that "fragmentation," in terms of identity
and narrative form, may function like the \textit{abeng} since it may be defined as a threat or a condition of
possibility (234-237).
kinds of revolution she narrates in her novels lies partly with her readers, who are not simply or even primarily the Caribbean people, but include outsiders who often experience greater privilege.

Readers who follow the model that Clare Savage and Harry/Harriet adopt must be willing to forego a definition of freedom based on individual autonomy and separation and, as Schwartz observes, to form an "imagined community" by choosing alliance with those who are less privileged and by "acting on" the knowledge that their stories contain (305). Although Cliff may wish to stimulate her readers to abandon privilege and to engage in broad freedom struggle based on compassion, her novels suggest that the actions she encourages in her readers have less to do with armed rebellion and more to do with the remembrance of "tenderness" and "resistance," as Clare suggests (No Telephone 196). That concern for reader response may, as in Mowry's case, influence the way Cliff's novels depict their stories of resistance.

When Richard Yarborough discusses the work of Frederick Douglass, he offers one reason why slave narrators might downplay the depiction of slave violence in freedom struggle and have recourse to the conventions of sentimental romance in order to create sympathy and to mobilize readers to work actively in the cause of freedom. As he explains it, narratives which "make their heroic figures too independent, too aggressive," which imply that freedom can be attained through individual violence or complete self-reliance, "might permit white readers to evade acknowledging that they themselves must intervene in order to end the horrors of slavery" (174, 179). Such concerns may influence both Cliff and Mowry, whose novel, even though it is written for black youth, also works to create sympathy in and a need for response from a broader audience.

In order to create such response, both Cliff and Mowry must reeducate readers who may have relied on inadequate histories and mass entertainment for their perceptions of the conditions of oppression and also of the possibilities for resistance and change. Cliff, like Mowry, challenges some of those perceptions, in a way that mimics the power of the abeng, by making use of certain imaginative cinematic strategies and conventions. For if freedom and care depend on a better sense of reality, of "what is," they also depend on a stronger sense of imagination, of what might be.
On the one hand, Cliff writes precisely because she objects to the sort of history made and written by Empire, where the "sense of history [is] lost in romance." Imperial history remembers that Jamaica had been a slave society. But it emphasizes that England was the first country to free its slaves, simultaneously criminalizing and co-opting the history of slave rebellion. As history lessons mix slave rebels with pirates and convert lands claimed through revolution into gifts granted by conscientious Empire, the "politics of freedmen pale[s] besides the politics of commonwealth" (Abeng 30). The "extraordinary extent of ordinary people involved in a centuries’ long struggle" has been made "unimaginable" by official histories that have been successful at erasing stories of resistance or converting them into fantastic romances with little instructive value for current resistance (Cliff, "History as Fiction" 199). The way Cliff chooses, like the Caribbean writer from Puerto Rico whom she cites, Iris Zavala, to write about "the reciprocal basis of truth and liberty and the possibility of freedom" and compassion, is intended to counter such colonizing fantasies ("Caliban’s Daughter" 38).

Capitalist entertainment industries have similarly exchanged fantasy for reality. The development and tourist industries, for example, convert the horrific slave plantation into the exotic Paradise Plantation. Jamaica, as Harry/Harriet explains, is turned into a "stage set," where the past is reformed so that Americans who buy vacation homes, as well as other tourists, can enjoy a taste of the master’s past sans souci. The fantasy is so seductive that Jamaicans are also in danger of taking that master’s past as their own and of practicing their own freedom sans souci (No Telephone 121-127).

The British and American film industries similarly convert the history of Maroon resistance into a romantic story in which a strapping Cudjoe, leader of the Leeward Maroons, rescues an elegant Nanny, clad in leather britches and a silk shirt, when she is attacked by a monster. Even though Nanny was reputed to be a naked old woman who wore only a necklace made from the teeth of white men, and the historical Cudjoe was a tiny, humpbacked man who betrayed Nanny and the Windward Maroons to the English in exchange for the freedom of his own group of rebels, who
became known as the King’s Negroes, the director tellingly initiates the action by instructing his
crew to "make it real" (Abeng 20-22, No Telephone 206-207). These treatments which distort
history replace reality with fantasy, but nevertheless become "real" by having real effects in the
world, such as quashing the potential for revolution. The descendants of slaves have been colonized
to believe that Nanny offers no model for her descendants. When Clare Savage attempts to shoot
the wild boar in Abeng, for example, Zoe criticizes Clare for "living inside one dream," for
thinking she is "Maroon smaddy" (117). As the film-maker sees it, the islanders are "used to
selling themselves. I don’t think they know from revolution" (No Telephone 202). But he
conveniently ignores the fact that his filmic treatment of past revolutionaries helps to check such
 revolution.

Although Cliff objects to the fantasies with which the film industry replaces history, she
envies the "magic" by which television and movies can conjure the images they wish. Clare
Savage, for example, is "taken by the magic of television" in the U.S. and is saddened that Jamaica
does not have this sort of magic, this choice and control over man-made images (No Telephone 93).

Cliff does not reject "dreams" or fantasies of a Maroon-like struggle for freedom. If
history demonstrates that there is "NO TELEPHONE TO HEAVEN," "no voice to God," "no
miracles," and that they must "fight fire with fire," then, like the "fact" of the slave women who
refused to reproduce for their masters, "magic" will have to "mek it so" (No Telephone 15-20, 50,
93; Free Enterprise 193).

In part, that magic involves appropriating the power of romance, of imagining an alternate
reality, to convert the "real" into the "real." For "Women’s Work," which consists in building
images of knowledge and also in igniting the fuse of that knowledge, requires both a sense of rage,
against brutality and the colonizing fantasies that cover brutality over, and also a sense of romance
(Land of Look Behind 40-42). Because freedom depends on a sense of the possible, of what does
not yet exist, "imagination is the deepest need of freedom" ("Caliban’s Daughter" 38). Because
colonizers attempt to deprive the colonized of the ability to dream, or even deny that the colonized
have the capacity to dream, those who would fight back and liberate themselves must be able to
"construct a dream [that is] errant and unsettling" ("Virginia Woolf" 97, 102). Reality and dream
must inform each other.6

So Cliff, like Mowry, borrows a technique from the same film industry that has so
successfully depoliticized the history of resistance. Her freedom fighters use the techniques of
cinema verité, like wearing camouflage clothing and caps like their comrades in the ANC, to make
them feel like real freedom fighters. But, her narrator insists, what they felt they were was what
they were, in fact (7). As they model themselves on the Maroons, they become Maroons.

The dreams of Cliff and Mowry, which hope to convert the practice of freedom with care
from romantic vision to reality, may be utopian, fantasies of what does not yet exist, or exist only
in pieces. But they are fantasies that politicize the potential of care in the pursuit of freedom, and it
is precisely that utopian dimension that is vital to struggles for a more substantial, more widespread,
and more egalitarian freedom.

If film-makers can make their fantasies reel/real, and would-be rebels can make themselves
into real freedom fighters, and young black males in an Oakland ghetto can act like the Little
Rascals and the Black Panthers with whom they identify, then perhaps readers in a society with little
or no experience of freedom with care can take on the face of the compassionate freedom fighter
and practice such freedom by acting as if it were real. Confidence in that future can only be
developed with practice. While Raiskin concludes that the betrayer or quashee exposes the ambition
of Clare and Harry/Harriet as a "romantic dream, impossible at this time" ("With the Logic of a
Creole" 203), for example, Mowry shows that trust is possible, even in situations that might

6 This strategy has much in common with Kaja Silverman's project in The Threshold of the
Visible World. In her attempt to make love a respectable object of inquiry and to argue that love is
"as indispensable in the political domain as in the psychic realm," Silverman suggests that
"idealization is . . . a crucial political tool" (1, 2). Idealization, like romance, can be seen to
function like an abeng when she argues that feminists "have made a serious strategic mistake"
because they "left the existing system of ideals unchallenged" when they "argued against
idealization, that psychic activity at the heart of love, rather than imagining the new uses to which it
might be put" (2).
warrant paranoia, and that confidence in trust and the possibility of another future is developed on
the small scale, with daily practice. With these models, perhaps, an imaginative society can expose
the freedom practiced sans souci as a fantasy based on oppression and begin to make freedom
practiced with care into a daily reality.
PART THREE

RE-PLACING THE TERMS OF FREEDOM AND PROPERTY:
MOBILE HOMES, "WORLD"-TRAVELLING, AND CARE

Old Woman: Pa, tell me from yuh heart straight to my face why you want to buy this land. What it is at the bottom of yuh heart or Mr. Slime heart or any of them that make you want to own it...

Old Man: . . . 'Tis only right . . . . 'Tis the ambition o' every man to do that same said thing, an' he say it ain't only poor simple people like you an' me, but 'tis the way the big folk think too. They think it safe to own . . .

Old Woman: . . . You and the rest make yuh big preparation for today an' you never ever give a single thought 'bout what goin' happen tomorrow. An' you don't care, but it seem to me that what goin' happen tomorrow though it's in front, it got somethin' to do with what happen-in' today. . . . I don't care who want land or who take land, the nations or anybody else, I'd only like to ask all o' them put together what they goin' do with it . . . You can't carry it with you, Pa, can you?

Old Man: 'Tis as what I say to myself . . . . You can't carry it with you, an' 'tis that that frighten me. . . . You can't take anything with you, an' I ask myself why.

(Lamming, In the Castle of My Skin)

If you go to Antigua as a tourist, this is what you will see. If you come by aeroplane, you will land at the V. C. Bird International Airport. . . . As your plane descends to land, you might say, What a beautiful island Antigua is—more beautiful than any of the other islands you have seen, . . . they were much too green, much too lush with vegetation, which indicated to you, the tourist, that they got quite a bit of rainfall, and rain is the very thing that you, just now, do not want, for you are thinking of the hard and cold and dark and long days you spent working in North America (or, worse, Europe), earning some money so that you could stay in this place (Antigua) where the sun always shines and where the climate is deliciously hot and dry for the four to ten days you are going to be staying there; and since you are on your holiday, since you are a tourist, the thought of what it might be like for someone who had to live day in, day out in a place that suffers constantly from drought, and so has to watch carefully every drop of fresh water used . . . , must never cross your mind.

(Kincaid, A Small Place)
The ability to own property is often heralded as the "ground” of freedom. In his 1782 *Letters from an American Farmer*, for example, J. Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur associates freedom in America with "the bright idea of property, of exclusive right, of independence." Unlike European peasants, American farmers are free because property "has established all our rights; on it is founded our rank, our freedom, our power as citizens" (853; Letter II). In ‘Myne Owne Ground’: Race and Freedom on Virginia’s Eastern Shore, 1640-1676, historians Breen and Innes argue that only property could provide the "basis of genuine freedom" for blacks as well as whites in this early American society (5, 144). The difference between "free" blacks at the close of the seventeenth century—when the society was well on its way to constituting itself as a racialized free country—and "free" blacks in the middle of the century—when the possibility of a multiracial free society still existed—was property. Without property, the freedom of ex-slaves or former indentured servants was "hollow" and "desperately insecure" (5, 6). Citing the 1645 words of a black planter named Anthony Johnson—"‘Mr. Taylor and I have devided our Corne And I am very glad of it [for] now I know myne owne, hee finds fault with mee that I doe not worke, but now I know myne owne ground and I will worke when I please and play when I Please’"—they assert that the ability to have and to know one’s own ground is "the necessary condition of liberty" in the twentieth century as well as the seventeenth (6).

The association of property with freedom is symbolic as well as material. In his influential reading of seventeenth-century ideas on life, liberty, and property, for example, C. B. Macpherson translates the theory of property into the liberal-democratic theory of "possessive individualism." That theory is summarized as follows: "since the freedom, and therefore the humanity, of the individual depend on his freedom to enter into self-interested relations with other individuals, and since his ability to enter into such relations depends on his having exclusive control of (rights in) his own person and capacities, and since proprietorship is the generalized form of such exclusive control, the individual is essentially the proprietor of his own person and capacities" (263). Or, more succinctly, when freedom is a function of possession, individual freedom is understood as...
ownership of one’s person. But full proprietorship of one’s own person also requires “property in
things,” for “those without property are, Locke recognizes, dependent for their very livelihood on
those with property and are unable to alter their own circumstances” (231).

That American dream of full freedom which has become associated in popular mythology
with “owning your own home” and being “king of your castle,” or free from anyone else’s control,
is the kind of notion that G symbolically appropriates when he attempts to establish his freedom and
independence within “the castle of [his] skin.” But, as the debates about nineteenth-century
domesticity and twentieth-century ethic of care formulations demonstrate, the notion of home as a
location of freedom is often contested. For home is often a patriarchal space in which the
distribution of freedom is uneven, at best. And, as feminists Biddy Martin and Chandra Talpade
Mohanty explain in one of the early and influential pieces which question “What’s Home Got to Do
With It?,” home is a place we may have to leave, physically and metaphorically, in order to resist
the racism, sexism, and homophobia that too often reside there. Because home and property have
been implicated in colonial or imperial as well as patriarchal systems of oppression, contemporary
critiques sometimes argue that the possibility for critical consciousness, progressive change, and
greater freedom depends on a willingness to embrace an alternative value conceived as some form
of mobility. The postcolonial critic Edward Said suggests that “potentates” [this concept, in
translation, includes property owners who are kings of their castles] are motivated by power,
authority, and the maintenance of fixed positions, and he proposes that a “traveller” is a preferred
model for critical consciousness and the expansion of freedom. His ideal traveller owns none of the
territory he voyages in, but is “at home everywhere in it” (80). As the title of Said’s article—
“Identity, Authority, and Freedom”—indicates, his discussion of freedom focuses on the
development of freer identities. A similar focus is prominent in much theoretical discussion which
suggests that literal and metaphorical travel enhances the possibility of constructing more open,
flexible, fluid, and multiple identities in place of the single, fixed, and closed identities that are
encouraged by staying at home.
But almost as soon as theoretical discourse began to celebrate such notions as nomadism, for example, for contesting the structures of imperialism, others began to question the uncritical use of ahistorical and ungrounded metaphors of travel. When Christopher Miller, for example, examines *A Thousand Plateaus*, the work by Deleuze and Guattari that affirms nomad thought as an approach to more open and less oppressive identities and whose concepts of "becoming nomad" have been influential in discussions of mobility, he complains that their "project of nomadology," as the authors themselves acknowledge, has little to do with actual nomads. Their "intellectual nomadism," as Miller puts it, is "free-floating, prescriptive, virtual, and nonreferential, untroubled by the genealogy of its sources and not accountable to the conditions of" real nomads (10).

Countering that some real nomads are not free-thinkers but "great appropriators, slaveowners, and territorializers in their own ways," Miller accuses Deleuze and Guattari of "reinventing" the kind of "primitivism" that marked imperial structures of awareness because they "need Africa to be primitive . . . and nomadic in order to have a place to talk about instead of just an idea" (25, 31).

James Clifford, whose work foregrounds travel as a cultural practice and is similarly influential in theoretical discussions of mobility, argues for more comparative and historically grounded conceptions of travel that pay attention to everyday practices and to the differences and similarities, for example, between such kinds of movement as migration, diaspora, and pilgrimage. Clifford also distinguishes his approach from the kind of "postmodern primitivism" that he associates with generalized discussions of nomadism (113). In part, that distinction means that he calls for a reconception of home together with reconceptions of travel. Observing that the "natives" whom anthropologists have studied as "homebodies" also travel, he suggests that critics need to reconceive the specific dynamics of "dwelling and traveling: traveling-in-dwelling, dwelling-in-traveling." His insistence on possible negotiations between travel and home even in "native" culture

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1 The popularity of such approaches was demonstrated, for example, when *Yale French Studies* produced a special two-volume series on "Post/Colonial Conditions: Exiles, Migrations, and Nomadisms," edited by Lionnet and Scharffman, in which several of the articles use "nomadism" and related concepts as paradigms for revolutionary thought, identity, and behavior.
keeps him from inverting cosmopolitan distinctions between natives and travelers in order to
revalorize travel over home from the opposite location: "I’m not saying there are no locales or
homes, that everyone is—or should be—traveling, or cosmopolitan, or deterritorialized. This is not
nomadology" (108).

Even Caren Kaplan, who finds the concepts developed by Deleuze and Guattari valuable,
finds it necessary to criticize their ideas for glossing over real experience. She believes that their
utopian concept of "deterritorialization" is valuable for oppositional consciousness because it
recognizes that "defamiliarization enables imagination, even as it produces alienation" (*Deterritorializations* 188). But she finds more "cogent discussions of deterritorialization and
oppositional consciousness" in the work of feminist writers who acknowledge, as Deleuze and
Guattari do not, that "oppositional consciousness (with its benefits and costs) stems from the daily,
lived experience of oppression" (191, 192). Michelle Cliff’s work in the series of essays collected
in *Claiming an Identity They Taught Me to Despise* is key to Kaplan’s conclusions that "there is no
pure space of total deterritorialization" and that those who would avoid romanticization must "look
carefully at what [they] carry with" them (194). What she discovers in Cliff’s writing is a refined
notion of "reterritorialization" in which "location is based on contingency, history, and change" and
in which "settlement" takes place on a "terrain" that is neither fully public and collective nor private
and domestic, but liminal (196, 197). The movement toward home, or the concept of travelling in
order to make connections, is key to Kaplan’s theorization of progressive identity politics and the
search for new ways of being at home.

Kaplan is also concerned that contemporary criticism’s fascination with the concepts of
displacement so often refer to individualized, or elite, circumstances rather than the widespread and
diverse experiences of poor people who move in large numbers around the globe. Her attention to
writers like Cliff responds to the fact that "immigrants, refugees, exiles, nomads, and the homeless
... move in out of these discourses as metaphors, tropes, and symbols but rarely as historically
recognized producers of critical discourses themselves* (*Questions 2*).
Carole Boyce Davies is one critic who locates herself, her mother, and numbers of other Black women, especially Caribbean ones, in a series of migrations. She asserts that the "renegotiation of identities is fundamental to migration" and that such movement and renegotiation is fundamental to their desire for and practice of freedom (3). She finds that Black women's writing crosses boundaries and she values their "migratory subjectivites" as attempts to redefine identity "away from exclusion and marginality" (4). Bell hooks, by contrast, is another Black writer who has entered this discussion to contest playful evocations that make it "difficult to recognize an experience of travel that is not about play but an encounter with terror"—in particular, with "the terrorizing force of white supremacy" (Black Looks 44). And Jess Mowry enters the discussion when he criticizes romantic evocations of homelessness in his review of Rule of the Bone by Russell Banks. He contrasts that "Runaway Tale" with The Catcher in the Rye and Huckleberry Finn and asserts that the protagonists of the classic adventure tales, unlike the "homeless" hero of Banks's novel, were "warriors on walkabout" whose stories could inspire hope and attempted to teach youth how to be decent, responsible human beings. But he also questions the idealization of "homeless" youth as the path to maturity in all of these coming-of-age novels. Of the classic tales, he concludes: "the sad truth is that neither Huck nor Holden would survive twenty-four hours homeless in most American cities today" (826). And of Chappie, the hero of Banks's novel, he observes: "if this is supposed to represent accurately the life of a 'homeless kid,' I know a lot of real homeless kids who would give all their spare change to be in his place. Chappie is never actually hungry, cold, out on the street or in any particular prolonged discomfort or danger." And he concludes by implying that real homelessness is just as likely to foster undesirable as well as desirable values when he comments on the last piece of evidence that indicates that Chappie is not really homeless: "He never has to compromise his principles . . . even though we're not quite sure what those are" (828).²

² Just a few of the many other critics who work with, challenge, or revise the concepts developed by Deleuze and Guattari, Clifford, and other travel theorists include: Rafael
By paying attention to Black writers like hooks, Mowry, and others who also travel, by choice or necessity, or search for new ways of thinking about being home, I would also like to recognize these authors as producers of knowledge about home and travel. And I would suggest that theories of home and travel are so unsettled because, like the similarly unsettled value of freedom, the histories of home and travel have often been unsettling.

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As even this sketchy presentation of some theoretical approaches to the often bifurcated, but interconnected discourses of home and travel indicates, my analysis of the possible connections between “home,” “travel,” and the practice of freedom with care could take a number of directions. In Mowry’s fiction, for example, the Friends are nearly, but not quite “homeless.” They are necessarily concerned with what “territory” belongs to them and with their responsibility for protecting that space. Although they are also concerned with greater mobility, they reject unthinking expansion of their territory as a means to mobility. Deek tries to shame them into struggling for more ground, by arguing that taking more ground would give them power and respect—would make them into something more than “just another little Buckwheat gang.” But Gordon sees such expansion as enlarging the trap rather than enlarging the space of their movement: “tell me what that really get you, man? You gots more ground, mean you gotta cover it. An that take more dudes . . . dudes what you dint grow up with an don’t know. Then, more dudes an ground you got, more deals an shit you gotta do to keep em. Pretty soon you gots no fuckin time

Peréz-Torres, who proposes a concept of “migratory sensibility” that does not allow the term to remain metaphorical, but insists “upon the fact of deterritorialization as a historically grounded, painful, and often coerced dislocation” (“Nomads and Migrants” 173); Janet Wolff, who argues that the “metaphors” or “vocabularies” of travel in critical discourse are as gendered as the practices and ideologies of “actual” travel and that simple metaphors of unrestrained mobility are not conducive to engaged political activity (Resident Alien, “On the Road Again: Metaphors of Travel in Cultural Criticism”); Svetlana Boym, who combines concepts of home and migration in a notion of “diasporic intimacy that is not opposed to uprootedness and defamiliarization but constituted by it” (“Diasporic Intimacy” 499); and Rosi Braidotti, who argues that Deleuze and Guattari’s “nomadic epistemology” is more radical than romantic and traces her own “intellectual itinerary” as “a migrant who turned nomad” (Nomadic Subjects 1, 5).
for doin nuthin but gang stuff" (224). Instead, the Friends try to develop practices which include trust and rules that allow them greater freedom of movement within and between their territories. And because Mowry also criticizes "escape" as the practice of "success," Ty replaces these desires for physical mobility with a figurative conception of the connection between mobility, success, and freedom. He applies the vocabulary of "getting somewhere," for example, to such goals as getting an education or reviving his father’s trash hauling business.

Cliff’s writing, as I already indicated in my discussion of Kaplan’s theoretical work on deterritorialization and reterritorialization, has also provided critics with much material for analyses of home and travel and particularly of the connections between the two. While Clare Savage does return to her “homeland” after a series of exiles, her notion of home is radically changed by the time she returns. Home, as Schwartz argues, is not a place that Clare can “return to,” but a place that she must “create” with others in a “struggle to forge imagined communities of political allies” (294). And home is no longer something that “belongs” to her; the adult is embarrassed by the assumptions of possession that characterized the young Clare’s notions of home, property, and belonging. The alternative home that she creates as a space of revolutionary activity is both more public and more exposed.

In addition, Mowry, Cliff, and Lamming, as I already discussed in the previous chapters, all use and then contest the practice of freedom as escape from (which usually involves physical movement) rather than making connections with. In this last section, however, I will limit my analysis by focusing on the notion of “world-travelling” proposed by the feminist philosopher María Lugones and by returning to the work of Lamming and to the figure of the carefree tourist with which I began this study.

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Although the women in Natives choose to follow their husbands to the islands of San Cristobal, their attitude cautions against an uncritical embrace of mobility as the hope of the future. Although a “traveller” may contribute more to freedom than a “potentate,” as Said argues,
Lamming’s novel suggests that the two roles are not so simply opposed. The women’s attitude toward imperial enterprise, for example, demonstrates that the roles may be combined, for their husbands play the part of “travelling potentates.” The men’s movement is marked by conquest and slaughter; it dispossesses “natives” in order to occupy and control “virgin” territory. The future the women anticipate, by contrast, also offers an alternative to the mobility which Paul Gilroy analyzed as the continuing history and the creative ground of *The Black Atlantic*. Gilroy uses the chronotope of a ship in motion to contrast the enterprise of the Black Atlantic, on the one hand, an enterprise that sees “identity as a process of movement and mediation” and that seeks to “escape the restrictive bonds of ethnicity, [and] national identification,” with a European notion, on the other hand, that associates identity with roots and rootedness (4, 19). But Lamming’s novel shows that such attitudes about movement may belong as much to Prospero as to Caliban.

The actions of these men favor movement as escape, or going away from home, or even movement for its own sake. In their eagerness to inhabit the mobile home of the ship, the Lady complains, they lose “all sense of difference between the coming and the going. To come and to go: these were only names for the same activity” (342). The actions of the women, by contrast, emphasize a movement that is directed, in the words of a recent essay by Lamming, toward “Coming, Coming, Coming Home.” This kind of movement involves choice and commitment and is closely connected with their willingness to view others as natives of their person. For this movement toward home emphasizes belonging and settling—in other words, becoming native.

The kind of movement that the women favor when they welcome others as natives of their person is complemented by the notion of “world”-travelling that Lugones advocates. Lugones claims that the effort to recognize her mother, by “travelling” to her mother’s world, enables her to recognize others in their worlds. She advocates a practice of “world”-travelling as a partial basis for cross-cultural and cross-racial loving and a partial solution to relationships structured by domination. If such travel is to be effective in promoting relationships characterized by freedom rather than domination, a person must travel not with “arrogant perception,” as a conqueror,
imperialist, or agonist does, but with "loving perception" (391). This perception, as Lugones describes it, involves caring about other persons enough to respond to them on their own terms. Travelling to her mother's "world," for example, means being willing to see with her mother's eyes, to identify with her mother, and even to experience herself as a different person within her mother's world (394, 396). Lugones also suggests that a person will be inclined to "travel" to another's world only if he or she is willing to sacrifice some of the "ease" involved in being in his or her own world—in other words, some of the ease involved in being fully at home (397). In order for such practice to promote the intersubjectivity and reciprocal recognition that Benjamin and Brenkman describe in their revisions to classical psychoanalytic theory, the travel must also be mutual. When the possibility of loving perception is introduced into relationships among strangers, someone might be willing, as a traveller, to take Caliban's risk of welcome. It is this kind of "travel" that the Lady of the House practices in Natives when she identifies with the native women on the island of San Cristobal and sees herself, the Commandant, and the entire Kingdom from their eyes. Such loving perception can be seen as a practice of intersubjective experience through which, Benjamin similarly argues, the "act of knowing," and the act of being known which so frightens G, "can be felt as communion, not conquest" (192).

Lugones also argues that this kind of "world"-travelling should be undertaken with a spirit of playfulness. This playfulness is distinct from contest or competition, which encourage self-importance. Instead, this play emphasizes creativity, an openness to surprise, to change, to self-construction and reconstruction, and even to "being a fool." Rather than focusing on "competence," or mastery, it encourages "practice" (397, 400). Like Benjamin's, Lugones's proposal suggests a

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3 Davies is troubled by the language of "playfulness" in Lugones's theory because it conjures images of the "playful" tourists who want Caribbean folk, for example, to costume themselves in exaggerated folk-dress and "to step back into their fantasies and be photographed again" (24). I agree that the term may be implicated in this alternative, troubling history, but believe that the activity Lugones proposes is more consistent with the kind of "serious engagement based on mutual respect" that Davies wishes for than with the "tourism" that Davies objects to (24). I will develop this position more fully in Chapter 7.
way that travellers might approach the future promised in/as "natives of my person." By choosing deliberately to "inhabit" different selves in different worlds, partly or fully, briefly or at length, the traveller may come to understand his or her own and the other's "world" better, as well as the creative possibilities within both (396, 401).

If what G and the other boys in Lamming's first novel object to so forcefully is a certain, oppressive way of "being seen," what the notion of "world"-travelling seeks to encourage is a "way of seeing" that is more caring than oppressive. To a large extent, what I will be examining in the concluding chapters, which focus first on various "homes" in Lamming's *Castle* and next on Caribbean tourists, is how various ways of being at home or of travelling contribute to "ways of seeing," or epistemologies of freedom with or without care.4

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4 This way of talking about "world" travel connects this discussion with Silverman's project in *The Threshold of the Visible World*. For Silverman is also concerned with offering "an ethics of the field of vision" and learning "productive ways of seeing" (2, 5). Even as she challenges the notion of an unrestrictedly mobile subject, she insists, as I noted earlier, that love is "as indispensable in the political domain as in the psychic realm" and argues that "idealization" can be a crucial political tool for identification with bodies that have been and continue to be socially despised (2).
In the Caribbean, as in Lamming’s novels, the structures of the landscape and the architecture of houses are, as I observed in Part One, simultaneously material and metaphorical, because the topographic and psychic landscapes are connected. In an early study of Caribbean peasannies, for example, Sidney Mintz argues that the concrete, material character of the house and yard in rural areas are connected to the values, beliefs, and behavior that characterize peasant culture (231). One significant finding reveals that the design and use of the homestead express the way people relate to each other. Another shows that the yard is as important a part of the “home” as the house, and the word “yard,” which can refer to both house and yard, is “sometimes used to define one’s total span of activities” (247). The symbolic meanings that may only be implicit in these particular elements of “material culture” are passed down from one generation to another and also revised by continuities and changes in the structure of the houses and yards that they inhabit.

In Part One, I argued that G’s appropriation of the master’s “castle” may invert the colonial structures of awareness that are embodied in a plantation landscape based on a polarized structure of relations between master and slave, but it does not change them. In particular, G’s home in the castle of his skin is deeply connected with the notion of the home as an individual and private space, with the concept of freedom as self-ownership, and with the ideals of full autonomy and sovereignty that are attached to such ownership. That practice of freedom is marked by anxiety about relations with other people, by a focus on self-protection from intrusion, control, or betrayal, and by loneliness. I also suggested that the alternative bodily image that Lamming associates with the women in the title and concluding section of Natives of My Person reflects an emergent structure of feeling that is consistent with an alternative understanding of the ideals of autonomy and freedom in contemporary critiques of traditional psychanalytic theory.
intersubjective autonomy can lend itself to the practice of freedom as a way of being together, of belonging with rather than belonging to. By replacing the focus on ownership with a focus on reciprocal recognition, it also lends itself to the practice of freedom with care and response-ability.

In this chapter, I return to Lamming’s *In the Castle of My Skin* and look closely at some of the other landscapes and “homes” that are portrayed in that novel. In part, G retreats into a “castle” as a means of protecting himself from the threat that he associates with being seen, or known, and thus subject to invasion, control, or betrayal by others. By contrast, alternative structures which are associated with the village and the natural world, especially the beach, are more open and flexible; and they attempt to balance protection and the risk of welcoming others by encouraging a mutual practice of seeing and being seen. They offer ways for imagining the kind of liminal zone, or space between the worlds of the master and servant, that Jonas argues is necessary for creating new structures and new ways of relating to each other. Like G’s appropriation of the landlord’s castle and like the Commandant’s ship in *Natives*, these homes are sometimes mobile. But unlike G’s castle or the Commandant’s ship, they are not so exclusively focused on isolation and self-protection and they suggest that a different kind of travel between worlds may be possible. These alternative forms raise possibilities for imagining both “home” and “travel” in ways that might be more consistent with the kind of freedom advocated in theories that emphasize intersubjective relations and response-ability and thus with the “future” that Lamming anticipates through his vision of the women in *Natives*.

**CREATING BOUNDARIES THAT ENCOURAGE TRAVEL BETWEEN WORLDS**

*In the Castle of My Skin* simultaneously narrates the coming of age of both G and the village, as well as their uneven movement toward individual and collective freedom. While G’s story moves toward symbolic appropriation of the castle, the village story moves toward dispossession and loss of their small, unfortified homes. Even as the island moves closer to independence and sovereignty, the people of the village begin to lose what little they had under the colonial system.
The novel, however, does not simply reject the values with which the villagers structure their ideas of shelter and of the kind of relationships that their homes encourage or make possible, despite their inability to keep their homes. The villagers lose because others appropriate the questionable values of the Great House, not because their own values are undesirable.

If the worldview embodied in the Great House emphasizes suspicion and protection, the worldview that guides the villagers is one based on trust. When the villagers are anxious about the outcome of a strike, for example, they rely on their knowledge of the landlord and their faith in Slime, a villager who rose to power, to keep them from harm. Even though they waver for a moment, the narrative voice comments, "whatever they may have been ignorant of they understood the meaning of trust" (98). That trust is betrayed and the villagers have few resources for responding to the inconceivable situation of losing their right to the land on which their houses stand. That misplaced trust, however, is like Caliban's mistake of welcome, or the women's attempt to treat others as natives of their person, and it may afford a similar kind of creative blindness. Granted, trust that is misplaced in an opponent or an oppressive master cannot combat their abuse. And trust that is misplaced in weak, erring, or treacherous colleagues who also desire freedom and may betray you can defeat your efforts to secure emancipation from common oppressors. But suspicion and protection, by contrast, make free relations with others difficult or impossible. Even if trust cannot secure freedom, trust is still necessary for attempting to live in freedom. When relations with others are free relations, they will always be, to some extent, precarious.

The men in *Natives* and G in *Castle* practice freedom by breaking away, by separating themselves from those who oppress and betray them. The tribes in *Natives* practice freedom by welcoming strangers who might oppress or betray them. The women in *Natives*, like some of the villagers in *Castle*, practice freedom by continuing to choose relationships with others despite betrayal and broken promises. In effect, their response to the possibility of betrayal or oppression is an attempt to move beyond a master-slave, or victor-victim, dynamic to a freedom that is
masterless and slaveless. In the position of the less powerful, they refuse the choice of slavery or
death, of submission or separation, of connection with others or freedom.

Those polarized choices which the women reject, as I described earlier, continue to
structure the landscape of the plantation or the Great House and G’s attempt to secure his freedom
by symbolically appropriating the master’s castle. If the polarized basis which structures relations
between people does not change, if the opposition between sovereignty and bondage, or master and
slave, continues, the plantation, as Lamming suggests in another context, survives emancipation
(“Coming Home” 55). If G’s choice becomes the model for independence, the plantation will also
survive the villagers’ dispossession.

Jonas uncovers a similar message in Castle by reading the village landscape as an
alternative ideology of connection. She develops this reading by perceptively distinguishing G the
narrator, who has the perspective of an adult, from G the character, who has the experiences and
the insights of a boy. She concludes that the narrator counters the pessimism of the linear plot by
presenting evidence of and positive reflections on the alternative ideology that structures the village
landscape. Because he develops insight from his own experience of painful exile, the more mature
narrator “transforms the negativity of dispossession . . . into a positive ground of self-knowledge”
(64-67). Unfortunately, however, Jonas’s reading privileges dispossession and exile as the
experiences that allow people to recognize value in what they have lost or given up.

In a later fiction, Season of Adventure, Lamming directly warns the reader against the
exile’s attachment to his own privilege and alienation when Lamming inserts an “author’s note” into
the story (330-332). Paquet, reading Season against Castle, suggests that the author’s privilege and
alienation are “another version of G’s predicament” (76). So the author’s note can be read as an
implicit, and cautionary, comment on the exile lived in castle architecture. Neither the pleasure nor
the pain of exile and separation necessarily leads to greater knowledge of the self, the other, or the
relation between the two.
What gets neglected in Jonas's valuable analysis, I believe, is the alternative value that Lamming's work places on the willingness, and even the need, to live with risk and ambiguity. It may seem counterintuitive to look for that value in the structures of awareness that guide village life, since the village apparently represents a feudal society, but the novel illustrates well the extent to which the villagers accept risk even as they try to shelter themselves. The distinction between village architecture and castle architecture might be understood as the difference in the degree of protection and security that these kinds of home promise. While the villagers seek a degree of imperfect, but good enough shelter from inclement forces, like the wind and rain, in their homes, those who choose to fortify themselves in castles hope that walls will guarantee inviolable possession and ownership and will protect them from other people.

Legacies of other structures of awareness inform a village architecture of openness and public or semi-public spaces rather than enclosure and fully private space. The end of freedom represented in village architecture is not individual sovereignty and the protection from being seen and invaded, but a relationship between people that depends on the knowledge that comes with seeing and being seen. A key difference between village architecture and castle architecture, as I will argue more fully, is the extent to which they allow or even encourage an ability to respond to others.

Among the defining features that structure the architecture of the Great House or of castles are the walls which serve to exclude others and protect the self. It is true that the village, like the Great House, is defined by many boundaries. Just as the paradigmatic wall separates the Great House from the plantation, other walls enclose the schoolyard, and still others separate one set of

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1 Paquet, Kortenaar, and Ngugi, for example, read the novel as a collapse of feudal society and see at least some promise in that collapse, which results from the incapacity for independent action in feudal relations (Paquet 15, 25; Kortenaar 46-48; Ngugi 114-115, 125-126). In contrast to Kortenaar, for whom the villagers inhabit a stable, organic feudal society that functions even more as a prison than a kind of security, I read a degree of risk and openness in village relations. The fact that I consider the villagers more in relation to each other than in relation to the landlord and other authority may account for some of the shift in perspective.
villagers from another; roads separate some groups of villagers from others; and fences separate one yard from another. But it is not necessarily true that these boundaries replicate the structure of awareness that governs Great House relations. For the boundaries are less firm, even unstable, and subject to intrusion, dissolution, or blurring, by nature and by the people themselves.

To assume that the fences and walls in the village simply reproduce the function of the castle wall would ignore both the possibility that villagers have other experience of boundaries and also the process by which social groups, especially "marginal" or oppressed ones, revise and resist inherited forms, even as they recognize the power of those forms.\(^2\) The difference with which the villagers reproduce the boundaries of the castle becomes clear if we shift attention from the exegetical (how actors, like G and the boys, interpret the meaning of symbols) to the operational (what actors, like the villagers, do with symbols and how they relate to each other in the process).\(^3\) The way the villagers use partitions frequently defies the purposes of separation. They use the walls that enclose the school and separate it from the village, for example, as a platform. They crowd the walls in order to watch what happens inside and to consider among themselves what has

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\(^{2}\) Victor Turner's work in anthropology, for example, indicates that African societies, and perhaps societies in general, "are processes responsive to change"; even when forms survive, and undergo no radical change, they "survive through flux," i.e., as variations of the old forms (184). Much colonial and post-colonial criticism recognizes that marginal groups contest a dominant paradigm by repeating its forms with a difference. See, for example, Henry Louis Gates, Jr.'s notions of signifying and chiasmus, as strategies of repetition and reversal (The Signifying Monkey); Homi Bhabha's notions of mimicry, translation, negotiation, and (mis)appropriation in the enunciation of culture (The Location of Culture); or Jenny Sharpe's analysis of the "Figures of Colonial Resistance" as ambiguous figures that include recognition and refusal. Simon Gikandi, reading the work of C.L.R. James, Lamming, and Cliff, and other writers in Caribbean modernism, similarly argues that the colonized respond to the colonial order with anxiety; borrowing forms from European modernism as a point of entry, they contest the social meaning of those forms with a strategy that simultaneously reproduces and subverts them (Writing in Limbo).

\(^{3}\) Patrick Taylor partly recognizes this process in Castle when he notes that "the novel ends with a new spatial metaphor that is essentially a repetition with differences of the original colonial model" (192, emphasis added). What I am arguing, however, is that this repetition with a difference exists within the "original" model to which he refers, within the village that repeats the structure of the Great House with a difference during the colonial period.
and hasn’t changed (37). Partitions originally intended to secure privacy by concealing what is inside are used as places of social gathering. The people who crowd the walls, as well as the fences which separate their yards, become observers, who take in what they see in order to reflect collectively on the meaning of their lives. Walls once intended to impede vision and secure individual privacy are now used to aid vision and serve the pursuit of collective and reciprocal knowledge.

In the village, the need for knowledge and the need for community are at least as strong as, if not stronger than, the need for privacy. The villagers seek to know by looking, seeing, and comparing—one person or place or event with another, or past with present—and by exchanging such knowledge with each other. Villagers, especially the women and the children, repeatedly break the plane of the walls and fences that separate them in order to communicate with each other. Not only do they climb fences in order to gossip with their neighbors, they as readily lean out of their own windows, or through each other’s windows, to exchange information (11-19). Even when they remain physically in their homes, their voices can pass through and over the dividing barriers when the windows are open. On the night of the flood which opens the novel, for example, G’s mother begins to sing, and her voice raises until it becomes “a scattering peal of solicitude that soared across the night and into the neighbor’s house. And the answer came back louder, better organized and more communicative, so that another neighbor responded and yet another until the voices seemed to be gathered up by a single effort and the whole village shook with song” (11). The scene is notable for the extent to which these neighbors care for each other’s safety and encourage response rather than secrecy and a private experience of joy or suffering. Villagers live, by choice, simultaneously within and without their homes, privately and publicly, alone and together. Only in times of highest anxiety—when floodwaters at their height threaten to inundate their homes; or when they expect rioters to move from the town to the village—are their windows sealed.

The attitude of the mothers when the fence between their yards sways with the weight of spectators and crashes to the ground, making the two yards merge, contrasts sharply with G’s
attitude. G is humiliated when his shower takes place in public rather than private and exposes him to laughter, even though the showers of older boys also take place in public, communal baths. Unable to accept the self-deflating humor with which villagers characteristically treat each other, G feels that the "barricade which had once protected our private secrecies had surrendered" (16-18).

The mothers take the collapse and the "merger" of their yards casually. They accept it as they have other mergers, as when the "roads disintegrated, the limestone slid back and the houses advanced across their boundaries to meet those on the opposite side in an embrace of board and shingle and cactus fence" during a flood (10). They suspend judgment alike when a flood or their own actions level the distinctions between them. Bob's mother apologizes about the fence, but G's mother responds: "Don't worry, . . . it could have come down in the flood like so many others" (24).

Instead, the women use the collapse as an opportunity to gather under a cherry tree that spreads out over the fences. As they relax together, exchanging confidences, the fallen fence recedes from their minds. The narrator regards the women under the tree as three pieces in an unchanging pattern, as women whose identities merge into each other, unaffected by either difference or similarity. It might be more accurate, however, to consider the blurred boundaries between them as the future of the women in *Natives of My Person* as well as an opportunity for the intersubjectivity that Benjamin advocates. The collapse of a wall or a fence invites welcome.

The juxtaposition of the tree and the fences suggests that the yards, and the people who live within them, do not lose all boundaries when the fence collapses. For the tree symbolizes an alternative boundary that structures relationships, and thus the practice of freedom, differently than a fence or a castle wall does. The cherry tree, as the narrative describes it, "spread out over the

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4 See Chapter 2 for a detailed reading of the "future" that the women in *Natives* might promise and its connections with psychoanalytic theories of intersubjectivity.

5 Jonas also suggests that this juxtaposition is significant. But she reads the scene in which the fence collapses only from G's perspective, as an invasion of privacy that leaves G without protection and subjects him to a system of overseeing and violation in which the folk repeat the behavior of the landlord (60). The juxtaposition of the tree and the fence shows her only that "harmony, meaning and fecundity" now replace "deprivation and loss" (66). She does not read the
fences in all directions. The roots were in one yard, but its body bulged forth into another, and its branches struck out over three or four more." In its shade, the women sit "in a circle composed and relaxed." They collaborate, "shuffling episodes and exchanging the confidences that informed their life with meaning" (24-25). Thus the space under the tree allows the "attunement" that, according to Benjamin, is "created by shared feeling and discovery" (130).

The tree describes a kind of boundary that is difficult to articulate in terms of the human body, where skin is equivalent to a fence or a wall, and loss of boundary is seen as merger. Rather, it corroborates the kind of thinking with which Thomas Sebeok reflects on the semiotic self. Conceding that it is difficult to describe "where the 'inner' Self begins and the 'outer' Other begins," he asserts that "the boundary is, clearly, beyond the skin" (39). Though the tree is a natural boundary between the yards, its roots and branches, which extend from one yard to another, emphasize the joining as well as the separating aspects of a boundary. The tree is neither a symbol of separation nor integration, but both simultaneously. Since many of its roots stretch underground and can't be seen, it is difficult to know, precisely, where the boundary ends or, with any precision, just where the overlap between one identity and another exists. When a tree rather than a wall or a fence defines the boundary between persons, then relationships do not require that we destroy boundaries and freedom does not require that we erect stronger ones.

For personal space, the villagers rely not on barriers between their homes but on corners within them. They retreat to corners for moments, but not lives, of privacy. By substituting corners for the separation of walls, they afford themselves a kind of space that is more conducive to mutual recognition and freedom within relationships because corners provide the kind of separation that allows freedom with protection and openness to others. In Benjamin's words, it provides "a feeling of safety without confinement," since it "permits the important experience of being and tree itself as a kind of boundary nor the juxtaposition as a comment on G's attitude toward fences in the earlier scene.
playing *alone in the* unobtrusive but reassuring *presence of the other* (126-127, emphasis added).

The relaxation, creativity, and personal growth allowed in the solitude of the corner space complements the relaxation, creativity, and collective growth encouraged by the collaboration under the tree. Both become important spaces for "practicing" freedom creatively.

**ON CRABS AND A HOME YOU CAN CARRY WITH YOU**

Though the houses the villagers inhabit are small, they are valued highly. They provide both corners for privacy and windows through which villagers collaborate even when they remain inside. Despite poverty, almost every villager owns "the little hovel he live in." It is "the golden rule" in their village because, Mr. Foster claims, "'A man ain't a man till he can call the house he live in my own'" (240). But the old woman, Ma, values "good shelter" more than pride of ownership. "'I says let's have a good roof,'" she tells her husband Pa, "'an' make my heart happy'" (79). When she cautions Pa, religiously, against too strong an attachment to things of this earth, because "'you can't carry these things with you,'" Pa worries, perceptively as it turns out. It is precisely *that* that frightens him as he wonders why "you can't carry it with you" (87-88).

For their houses are "precariously adequate." "Raised jauntily on groundsels of limestone," and heaped together, they can be lifted off their foundations by floodwaters. They do not survive the move, but, as already noted, "meet ... in an embrace of board and shingle" (10). If the villagers should try to move a house, as the shoemaker does when the land is literally bought out from under him, everything would be lost in "a fall of wood and shingles" (299). There is nothing to move or restore since the house is reduced to a stack of "broken boards" (301). This precariousness is taken advantage of by the middle-classes who are profiting from growing independence and who dispossess the villagers in order to take their place on village land. The man who buys the land on which Mr. Foster's house sits, for example, "generously" offers to buy Foster's much-loved house together with the land in order to "'save you the trouble of having to carry a house on your back'" (239).
Foster’s indignant response emphasizes his attachment to and sense of responsibility for the house that gives him shelter over his head and a corner to rest his bones in. Recalling the time he tried to save his house during a flood, he lectures the buyer:

‘Once a house a mine move off this spot. ‘Twas a flood as we never ever before see, an’ like a good captain I won’t leave it till they force me to. I stay on the roof and sail down the river with it, and some laugh and some cry. ‘You can do what you please, but I tell you that to let you know what a house mean to some people in this corner of God’s earth.’”

Foster’s description allows his captaincy and the nature of his vessel to be read as an alternative to the Commandant’s attitude aboard the castle of his ship in *Natives*. In addition, Foster’s memory brings two losses together, so that the natural loss seems to foreshadow the loss caused by Foster’s fellow men. Juxtaposition seems to establish a correspondence between the flood and the sale of the land, but, like the juxtaposition of the cherry tree and the fence, it also highlights a difference.

After the flood, Foster could and did rebuild. His foundation remained and land was available. And it is possible that the floodwaters are, as the adults keep telling the inconsolable G, a kind of blessing. For the floods are a leveling force. When the roads which demarcate areas of mutual antipathy dissolve, and the houses on opposite sides embrace, the loss of their homes creates the possibility for the villagers to renegotiate boundaries, connections, and values. Because their houses are not permanent, the villagers have the opportunity to design their houses with different worldviews when they rebuild. The sale of the land, by contrast, reinforces the distance between people and denies the villagers the chance to rebuild.

The Fosters now challenge the concept of ownership with which the buyer removes Foster from the land. To the buyer, ownership reserves all rights to the owner. “It makes no difference” whether he owns a garage or a piece of land; he can rent either to someone who wishes to park his car or his house, and then legally demand the space back. Miss Foster argues that this land is not the sort “that can be for buy or sell,” because it is “‘land for we people to live on.’” Mr. Foster also disagrees with the buyer, arguing that a house cannot be moved anywhere the way a car can.
To understand the relationship of the land sale to the flood, it is useful to remember the
two reactions of the people who watched Foster sail down the river on his roof. While some simply
laughed, others "thought it was a revelation, a sort of first step to the second coming, and they just
went on shouting, 'Look, Noah on the Ark!'" (33). If the sale of the land is the second coming
which the flood revealed, it seems to have as much in common with the monster who "slouches
toward Bethlehem" in W. B. Yeats's poem, "The Second Coming," as with Christ's glorious return
as promised in the Book of Revelation. With the sale of the land, the laughter with which the
villagers renegotiate their relations and establish mutual recognition is replaced by a deadly serious
business, as Mr. Foster recognizes when the overseer confirms that the land is being sold: "If the
overseer said that the land was sold, the situation would have to be given a new meaning. It would
have lost its comic element. It would be true" (244). Freedom and respect would become as
serious for the villagers, and as unresponsive to playful practice, as they are for the colonial
landlord and the sovereign individual.

But this reading of the revelation introduced by the sight of Foster sailing his house, like
Noah on the Ark, is complicated by a second image that is also described as a "revelation" and a
"lucky experience," the sight of "two crabs in strange intercourse" (115). Significantly G comes
upon this "revelation" during the boys' day at the beach, when the boys' "confused" reflections on
"adult values," as Lamming says in an interview, "function as a critical comment on the adult
world" (Cited in Paquet 23). As the boys reflect on village experience, they develop innovative
alternatives for the way adults structure and understand their worlds. The transitional space of the
shore encourages creativity and playfulness in shaping endless worlds because, in Benjamin's
words, the seashore "forms a boundary and yet opens up into unbounded possibility" (127). G
watches the crabs throughout the day, and they become significant not simply because they raise
questions about sexuality and about separateness and togetherness, but also because the body in
which they move is "like a house on stilts" (146). Crabs carry their shelter with them, on their
backs.
Significantly, G first sees the crabs immediately after he watches some girls build sand castles while another girl blocks the water by lying with her back to the sea (115). This image suggests that castles are not all invulnerable; and those that are made of sand will be washed away not only by an annual flood, but by the daily tide. The fact that G appropriates the castle image after he watches the girls build sand castles, and after he and the boys demonstrate the imperfect security of the Great House by invading its walls, and after the landlord occupies his own castle like "a relic of another time," casts doubt on the effectiveness with which G can protect himself in the castle of his skin. This juxtaposition of the crabs and the sand castles allows the image of the crabs to comment on the other architectural and semi-architectural structures in the novel, and vice versa.

Three parts of the crab's body make it one of the most successful illustrations of survival on the island: its claws, its shell, and its eyes. Its claws give it the ability to attack and counter attack, to run and burrow quickly, and also to embrace in what G, who is so concerned to keep his world separate and hidden from others, can only understand as a terrible togetherness. Crabs are equally well suited to the sea and the dry sand, and also to that shifting territory in between, the wet sand into which the waves sink as they slide back to the sea. Only the crabs and a lone fisherman withstand the force of waves that explode in a dangerous intercourse of land and sea.

Because the movement of the crabs is interspersed with the boys' stories of cultures in conflict, their skills and adaptability become a resource for reflecting on the possibilities of difference and belonging in multiple, and even treacherous, worlds. The significance of the crabs' world for the stories the boys are trying to understand is highlighted, directly and indirectly, several times in the course of the day: for example, when fishermen's boats drift into the dangerous side of the sea, they drown and wash up on the shore days later, "blue-black," like the large blue-back crabs that are caught by the villagers when they wash into the village during heavy rains; when three crabs move up the beach, clawing at each other, in a movement that is ambiguously wrestling or intercourse, one disappears beneath the sand, much like Jon or Bambi, and leaves two to embrace or fight, like Susie and Jen or Bots and Bambina, the principal actors in those stories of
beset manhood, or cultures in conflict, that the boys try to understand; and when Bots and her undertaker try to steal Bambi’s coffin from Bambina, they "crawl like crabs quiet quiet" (117, 132-133, 140, 149).

The crabs, partly like G in the castle of his skin, are "locked away" and "hidden somewhere in their shells" (129, 146). But unlike G’s castle, their shells represent an architecture that allows them to balance exposure and withdrawal, risk and protection. Unlike G, they can embrace without coming out of their shell, which allows them protection and togetherness at once. In these respects, the house of the crabs is more like the homes of the villagers than like G’s castle. And what G does not witness on that day at the beach is the fact that each shell is a temporary shelter, abandoned and changed for another as the crab changes.⁶ These comparisons suggest that G develops some advantage over the villagers, chiefly in terms of mobility and the ability to move in different worlds, when he chooses to inhabit the castle of his skin. But he also ignores or misinterprets much of the value symbolized in the architecture of the village houses in which he was raised. His chances for practicing a new kind of freedom, a freedom that allows and encourages mutual recognition, commitment, and affectionate relationship, might be better served if he were to choose a more homely structure than the castle in order to imagine the shelter that his skin can afford.

The last significant feature of the crabs are their eyes, particularly their color and their movement. G thinks they are both "wonderful" and "puzzling" and describes them in detail:

We could find no colour for the eyes. They were so pretty. Not red or green, or bright yellow, or deep orange, or anything definite, but a wild, enchanting mixture of all these

⁶ When Michael Cooke compares Brodber’s Jane and Louisa with Lamming’s Castle, he argues that Brodber, unlike Lamming, is able "to take hardened custom and display it as a temporary shell" (35). Lamming, he argues, "gives us more custom," which is "what we collectively do and continue to do in a fairly thoughtless, self-encased way" (34, emphasis added). While Cooke’s analysis perceptively highlights the symbolism of the crab’s shell, he underestimates its role in Lamming’s work. The reason, I believe, is because he reads the novel exclusively as a record of "the male Caribbean story," a story that affirms the perspective of G, who considers the fall of a fence apocalyptic and who conceals himself in the castle of his skin (30-33).
colours. Crabs’ eyes were the most puzzling we could recall. They looked transparent in the light. When the crabs lifted them to half an inch above their backs, we tried to say what they were like. . . . The colour of the crabs’ eyes was like the colour of the light reflected from the moon through the [pint] glass [filled with water]. And the movement of the crabs’ eyes was as wonderful. They were lifted so that they seemed to see all around and in all directions at the same time. . . . and when they returned to the oblong cavity where they rested, the movement was effortless. It seemed the crabs had nothing to do with it. The eyes moved about at will and the crabs might have been hidden somewhere in the shells waiting to get a wire from the eyes about the surrounding weather. Crabs’ eyes seemed so much like a man’s hand . . . left to work following its own instructions . . . something outside of you. . . . You stare, and the hand seems to stare back, an independent object, making a message through its instruments, the fingers. The crabs’ eyes had that quality. They had something in common with the crab locked away in the shell, but they moved freely. (128-129, emphasis added)

Their eyes, which can "get a wire . . . [on] the surrounding weather," allow the crabs to move freely in an environment they do not own and which they share with other creatures. For that territory, unowned, shared, and comprised of constantly shifting ground, is, as G recognizes, their "domain" (150). Watchful for predictable and unpredictable threats in their environment, the crabs can choose when to withdraw and when to emerge, when to retreat and when to move freely forward, up and down the shore, above and below the sand, as needed.

Their life is not without risk, since they are pursued and often caught. They are caught more readily, however, when heavy storms wash them into the village than when they move in this unowned, changing terrain. Boy Blue, for example, considers himself a "master" crab catcher, whose "art [has] become a practiced routine." But when he tries to capture the crabs on this beach, simply for the thrill of capturing something, they elude his mastery. Their ability to respond to the unpredictable with their own unpredictability outwits the assurance and command with which Boy Blue pursues them. Because they exercise no great hurry in escaping, G imagines that they feel they are "unseen because their eyes were dropped level in the slot that contained them." G seems to project onto the crabs his own sense of invisibility as he retreats within the castle of his skin. The foolishness that G imputes to the crabs for this feeling offers G an opportunity he doesn’t take to reflect on his own way of hiding. But the crabs are not so foolish as G imagines, for they appear and disappear at will, and just as Boy Blue attempts to grab them, they
disappear. Boy Blue misses his grip, and the crabs are safe even as Boy Blue totters and sinks into
the wet sand that shifts sharply beneath him. When a wave wrenches him into the sea, it is Boy
Blue who must be "rescued," or "caught," by the only fisherman the boys have ever seen who can
cast his net on this side of the beach (150-151). Considering that the crabs are facile, adaptable,
and survive so well in this shifting world between the sea and the land, there is at least some irony
in the thought Pa once had that Mr. Slime might be a kind of Moses who had "saved" them from a
"plague" of crabs after the flood (77-78). As the story develops, it becomes apparent that Slime is
a greater threat to the villagers than the crabs are. And the villagers might learn more that is useful
to them from the way the crabs inhabit their territory than they do from Slime, the village boy who
becomes teacher, then entrepreneur, then politician, and lures them into betrayal and dispossession
by promising to make them "owners o' this land" (79).

PRACTICING BALANCE IN SHIFTING WORLDS

Lamming’s literary imagination structures a cross-commentary on the architectures and
domains of freedom both within and between his novels. Juxtapositions, serial developments, and
allegorical accretions allow alternative structures, landscapes, and modes of habitation to respond to
each other.7 The "meaning" derives neither from an individual, central character like G, nor from
an imagined collective unity, like "the village," which presumes another kind of centrality and
internal homogeneity, but from the heterogeneous activities and values of various characters and
groups in relation to each other. The tensions that emerge in these relationships constitute the
situation of freedom more as a "predicament," a complicated, perplexing condition within which we
continue to live our lives and practice our values creatively, than as a "problem" that can be solved

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7 For other critics who emphasize this cross-commentary in Lamming’s art, see Jonas,
Anancy in the Great House, and McDonald, "'Within the Orbit of Power.'" Jonas, for example,
aligns the art of the West Indian writer with that of a painter in one of Lamming’s last novels,
Season of Adventure. This art constitutes a kind of "bricolage" through which a "multiplicity of
signifiers . . . serve to correct and modify one another" (56-57). McDonald argues that the
allegorical method in Natives of My Person works by a process of "accretion" in which serial
elements of the text comment on and contradict each other (73-74).
finally and through some sort of mastery. The shifting territory within which freedom and care
must be practiced requires a sense of balance and suggests that the "domain" of freedom might be
better approached as the domain of the crab than the domain of the king.

Balance is crucial in the seaside domain of the crab and in all the liminal areas of the
island. In the area where the sea and the land regularly exchange places, the difference between the
successful fisherman and Boy Blue, the would-be crab catcher, is the fisherman's ability to restore
his balance when a large wave shifts the sand sharply beneath him (146). Bob's mother must try to
keep her balance when she climbs the fence to see what damage he has done to G's mother's
pumpkin vine, and must recover her balance after the fence collapses (17-18). And in a scene that
links the environment of G's early shower to that of the sea, G must renegotiate his balance when
the pebbles, loosened from the earth by the water of his shower, slip beneath his feet. When the
pebbles shift, he totters, as Boy Blue does when the waves shift the sand beneath him. But G
recovers when the pebbles rearrange themselves, because his "balance [is] perfect" (16). In an area
where different worlds meet, maintaining and restoring balance becomes a lifelong activity,
practiced in continually new environments.

A similar balance must be continually renegotiated between the people's twin legacies of
protection and risk, escape and welcome. The future of a freedom that is practiced with connection
to and care for others must hold solitude and relationship, mutuality and sovereignty, in a flexible
tension.

When the land and the sea, and even whole worlds, shift, the ability to start again becomes
an important component of dynamic balance. But that ability to respond to change and to
renegotiate is not synonymous with a practice of escape that insists on starting from scratch, on
"virgin" territory, i.e. territory that, in the masculine frame of reference, "belongs" to no man.
Since this territory, from the same perspective, is uninhabited, it is open to completely new
structures of habitation and relationship.
If the legacy of freedom as escape searches for territory that is unpossessed, or "creates" such territory through dispossession, however, that legacy has little tolerance for the risks associated with living on "unclaimed" land and welcoming others to share that world. Rather, the legacy of freedom as escape is subsequently practiced as a mode of settling down, or settling in. The emphasis on protection that informs both the escape and the subsequent structures of habitation seeks to establish freedom on a fixed terrain that is made "safe" through ownership and sovereignty. Thus, when Mr. Slime promises that his Friendly Society and Penny Bank will allow every villager to own the land his house is built on, Pa tries to persuade a skeptical Ma that parceling out the land in owned plots is like salvation or the promised land, because history demonstrates that ownership means safety:

"I ain't know exact, Ma, . . . [but] 'Tis only right he say that every man should own his own piece o' land at some time or other. 'Tis the ambition o' every man to do that same said thing, an' he say it ain't only poor simple people like you an' me, but 'tis the way the big folk think too. They think it safe to own too, an' then he give a sort o' inside history o' some o' the nations, how they all make it they business before anything else to own the land they live on or the land nearest to them. 'Tis a lucky thing when you got a man at the head who know what he talkin' 'bout that's why I sort o' put some trust in him. 'Cause 'tis education that's his steering-wheel . . . ." (87-88).

The novel demonstrates that "education" is indeed Slime's steering-wheel. He has learned to value the colonial structures of awareness and wants simply to take them over, not to change them. If Slime knows what he's talking about, it is less clear that Pa does. For the "safety" that comes with ownership is only available to some and not to others. Within Lamming's fiction, the freedom that comes with ownership and self-protection conflicts with caritas. The new owners inherit that colonial sense of "responsibility" that fulfills obligation without attention or care or a willingness to allow others to respond. When the head teacher buys Pa's land, for example, he arranges to send him away to the Alms House. The Alms House, the head teacher knows, is "a house of charity" that "had nothing to do with love or compassion." Rather, it "was a kind of appointed State burden. It was the unwelcome task of preventing old age, poverty and disease from spreading into the nuisance that was inevitable if certain people were left unattended" (252, emphases added). Like
the women in *Natives* who interfered with the men’s desire for freedom as escape, and the natives who interfered with the men’s desire for freedom as possession and control of their own sovereign territory. Pa and other villagers are simply gotten out of the way. The history of ownership and sovereignty is one based on exclusion and has difficulty accommodating a sense of welcome and relationship. With the change in ownership at the end of *Castle*, the terrors and betrayals of the colonial enterprise which sought to establish freedom on utopian ground are continued, in their own way, by the twentieth-century heirs who seek to secure freedom on their own promised land.

Lamming’s fiction insists that possession is based on a long history of dispossession.

Although Lamming hopes to inspire a practice of freedom and sovereignty in the West Indies, his novels also question the value placed on sovereignty and sovereign forms of freedom. Questioning that value is both necessary and risky. When Wilson Harris reflects on C.L.R. James’s analysis of the Haitian freedom struggles in the early nineteenth century, as Lamming also does, Harris notes that “Toussaint may well have been an agnostic as far as contemporary political faiths are concerned. He may well have had peculiar doubts about the assumption of sovereign status and power. And this was profound heresy even then, much more so now” (44). Toussaint arrived at his doubts because he struggled to reconcile the abstract value of freedom, or individual sovereignty, with the practical need for self-sacrifice and community-building. For Harris, it is precisely this willingness to allow other values to qualify the value of freedom that holds promise for a broader kind of freedom in the Caribbean.

Harris criticizes Lamming for over-elaborating individual character in his fiction and, implicitly, for overvaluing the freedom of the sovereign individual and the sovereign nation whose “rigid self-sufficiency [fails] to close the gap between [self] and others” (23–38). But a reading of *In the Castle of My Skin* together with *Natives of My Person* suggests that Lamming, as Harris desires, is “groping towards an alternative” conception of freedom and its possibilities (45). Even as G seems to embrace a form of freedom as rigid self-sufficiency, the dialogue within and across these novels dares to speak a heresy, to place sovereign freedom at risk and to grope towards a
freedom that takes up the legacy of welcome and response. In one of his most recent essays, "Coming, Coming, Coming Home," Lamming notes that both Haiti and Cuba, "pioneers in initiating the debate on liberation and sovereignty in the Caribbean," were "condemned to a state of war [and] isolated." Escape from bondage did not yield "recognition" between the former master and the former slave (54-55). Although the blame lies with the Europeans and the Euro-Americans who refuse that recognition, Lamming also suggests that the "strategy of privatisation," which refers directly to economic development, but indicts indirectly other notions of privacy and independence as development, is toxic (44-45). He concludes that a revolutionary freedom requires them to aspire to "a new kind of sovereignty" (58). He proposes that they pursue this freedom by entertaining, for example, "a concept of Nation that is not defined by specific territorial boundaries," a concept of community whose people are "scattered across a variety of latitudes within and beyond the archipelago" (45).

Lamming’s fiction suggests that the future he wishes the Caribbean to work towards must consider what degrees and what kinds of ownership, protection, sovereignty, and welcome are needed for "shelter" rather than "self-defense," and for the ability to "practice" freedom rather than to "master" it. The alternative search seems to be for a space and a mode of habitation, yet to be imagined, that encourages freedom and care, security and risk, a sense of home and a sense of welcome, an ability to settle in a world and an ability to travel among worlds. Without the ability to inhabit a new world, even if temporarily, "world"-travelling can promise a freedom that is nothing more than the kind of coming and going about which the Lady complains in Natives. The territory in which this movement toward freedom must take place can neither be fixed nor controlled, but like the tree near the fence or the sand near the shore, a space whose boundary is uncertain, shifting, and open to travellers from other worlds.
Having begun my project because of the unease caused by an advertisement that invited US residents to escape the slavery of their everyday lives by becoming carefree tourists in Jamaica, I would like to conclude my discussion of freedom, care, and travel by returning to the topic of tourists. For it is chiefly as tourists that world-travellers from imperial centers in North America as well as Europe meet with "natives" of the Caribbean islands and make the practice of freedom with or without care about those natives real. As the work of several Caribbean authors reveals, the attractions of vacationing in the Caribbean revive all too closely the attractions of the past, when plantation life separated masters from servants or slaves and made the freedom of the first dependent on the unfreedom of the second. The plantation, to borrow Lamming’s phrasing, has survived both emancipation and independence and continues in the domain of the tourist.

JAMAICA KINCAID: ON CAREFREE TRAVEL AND RUINED HOLIDAYS

Jamaica Kincaid has written a scathing indictment of carefree travellers in her passionate jeremiad, A Small Place. She begins by addressing all readers as actual or potential tourists, stating: "If you go to Antigua as a tourist, this is what you will see" (3). What these reader-tourists

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1 Davies suggests an alternative, but complementary link—between tourists and invaders. She argues that the US invasion of Grenada "was also blatantly a tourist trip" (26). She concludes that "if we are clear," among other things, "that tourist installations often destroy the environment and displace many people, that people are denied some of the most beautiful areas of their countries because of tourism, that the local people are constructed perpetually in positions of service, then the link between tourism and invasion is not farfetched" (26).

Caribbean diatribes against tourism and tourists should not be conflated with the kind of modernist critiques that heralded the expatriate, exile, or "real" traveller, for example, as superior to the tourist. For those travellers, as Caren Kaplan demonstrates in Questions of Travel, have much in common with tourists, despite their protestations to the contrary, and are also deeply implicated in modernity’s colonizing projects (see Kaplan’s chapter on "This Question of Moving: Modernist Exile/Postmodern Tourism"). Caribbean diatribes would not see such "real" travellers as superior to the "tourists" those travellers condemn.
will "see" is a beautiful landscape with blue skies. What they will be unwilling to "see" or think about is the fact that the infrequent rain which makes the island so attractive to tourists who want to vacation in the sun means that the natives suffer constantly from drought. Even the weather that makes the vacation so carefree for the tourist means that the daily life of the residents must be exceedingly careful; residents must "watch carefully every drop of fresh water used" (4).

Kincaid has little sympathy for readers who might choose to travel when staying at "home" suddenly becomes less than comfortable. A tourist "like you" is "a person at home in your own skin . . . in your own house . . . on your street . . . with your family, your relatives, your friends"—who suddenly feels as if you need to "get away" in order to feel "alive and inspired" and "free" (5, 15-16). You ignore the envy and frustration of natives who are "too poor to escape the reality of their lives" and turn their "banality and boredom into a source of pleasure for yourself" (19).

She is especially angry that one of the few institutions which the government maintains in good condition is the Hotel Training School which teaches these natives who can't escape to be good servants to tourists who refuse to have anything human or intimate to do with these servants (27, 55). For Kincaid recognizes that the celebration of this institution, and the fact that corrupt officials have given their country away, are connected to the people's continuing obsession with slavery and emancipation, which seem as if they are contemporary events (55).

And she suggests that otherwise nice, ordinary people become complicit in this degradation particularly when they go on vacation. For it is precisely their wish to escape their own cares, to be carefree, that keeps them from sympathizing with or even thinking about the cares of Antigua. Taking notice would probably "ruin your holiday" (9).

The conditions outside the tourist resorts may be deplorable, but the average, rather than the wealthy tourist probably couldn't vacation without the contrast. For it is precisely when the exchange rate makes local products and entertainments seem so cheap that ordinary tourists can feel even more free. But tourists can't entirely escape the conditions they would rather ignore. After
all, they might need to use the hospital at which no government officials will be treated (8).

Despite their efforts to seal themselves off from the realities, the terrible inequities of island life, the most carefree tourists sometimes "feel a little uneasy" (17).

And islanders who refuse to be good servants may sometimes make tourists very uneasy. When the "natives" protest poverty and corruption too forcefully, or socialist governments like Manley's in the Jamaica of the 1970s, come briefly into power, the tourists stop coming. For the really ugly tourist, such people are all that keep these islands from being paradise. When Jamaicans rebel against injustice, as Cliff observes in No Telephone, CBS News might report that Jamaica is about to explode, not because CBS is concerned with the suffering that might lead to such "incidents" but because "vacationers were endangered" and "tourism was suffering." Cliff presents the self-absorbed and careless response of a New York woman whose servant has family in Jamaica as if it were typical: "Well, I guess that's another place they've ruined for us" (18).

The attitude is reflected in a recent article in Town and Country magazine. Michael Thomas quotes what visitors heard from "an old Jamaican hand" (someone who vacations there regularly) some thirty-odd years ago and which they still repeat: "'there's nothing wrong with this island that couldn't be fixed by holding it underwater for ten minutes'" (108). The implication is that a flood would cleanse the island of the irritating and sometimes dangerous natives.

Thomas repeats the story only because he wants to persuade his readers that Jamaicans actually make vacationing in Jamaica more special than vacationing on other islands where travellers mainly experience the "local population . . . in their touristic or serving mode." Observing that "in Jamaica you can't escape Jamaicans," he concedes that some tourists find their personalities "overpowering," "threatening," and even "dangerous." But he insists that Jamaicans are "irresistible" because they "act like human beings": they are "diverse, lively, vexatious, noisy, beguiling, irritating" (105, 108). Kincaid may object to the prevalence of servant behavior in Antigua, but Thomas's dismissal of servants is more reproachable. Kincaid recognizes that a servile status is greatly, if not wholly, imposed on the "local population" by tourists who don't want
to recognize the full implications of a history of continuing oppression. The tourists she writes
about read books which explain that "the West got rich not from the free (free--in this case meaning
got-for-nothing) and then undervalued labour, for generations, of the people like [Kincaid] you see
walking around you in Antigua but from the ingenuity of shopkeepers in Sheffield . . .; and
[explain] what a great part the invention of the wristwatch played in it" (10). If such tourists get a
"slightly funny feeling . . . from time to time about exploitation, oppression, domination," they
deny their own responsibility because that funny feeling might "develop into full-fledged unease,
discomfort" and spoil their holiday (10). Thomas, like these tourists, seems to accept no
responsibility for the distinction he implicitly draws between servants and real "human beings."
And he also betrays his complicity in the objectionable attitudes that Caribbean authors condemn
tourists for in other ways.

The only "Jamaicans" he actually refers to before he describes them as "strongly
individuated people" are the "pillars of the local establishment" who own the "marvelous houses"
between the tourist resorts (145, 147). Among the attractions he highlights in this area that
bespeaks "class" and "style" is the "Great House high on the hill" (145).

The weather is especially notable for him, as it is for tourists to Antigua, because it has
only "obliged" him "to eat indoors" a few times since 1960 when he began vacationing there
annually. But he doesn't only ignore the consequences of weather for the local population, as
Kincaid insists that most tourists do. He uses this comment on the weather as an analogy for the
slight inconvenience that local disturbances might cause tourists. In all the years he has been
visiting Jamaica, "the number of troublesome incidents [he's] heard about . . . is less than the
number of times [he's] been obliged by weather to eat indoors" (108). Like the readers Kincaid
deplores, he ignores his own role in creating the conditions that may lead to such disturbances. He
acknowledges that "talented" Jamaicans are too "proud, . . . intelligent and educated" to "deserve"
the economic inequities that characterize life in Jamaica. And he is "sophisticated" enough to
comment, ironically, that real institutions have something to do with such undeserved "fate":

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Jamaicans deserve "better than the fate the gods of political economy—and the big American banks—have decreed for the island." But he ignores the possibility that not only such systemic injustices, but also the behavior of tourists themselves, tourists like him, might account for "the frustration that one senses simmering in this talented people" (108).

Like the tourists Kincaid describes, he is oblivious to the fact that natives might dislike tourists like him (18). For Thomas, the locals are simply not "threatening"; they might have been "dangerous" in the 1970s when the population "succumbed to the inflammatory promises of socialist Prime Minister Michael Manley, who didn't love tourists or foreigners," but they now "act like human beings" (105, 108). Thomas is much like the American film director in Cliff's *No Telephone*, who, however, doesn't even think the 1970s were very dangerous. Like Thomas, who tries to assuage the fears of potential vacationers, the American dismisses the fears of his British colleague, arguing that the locals are "not any real threat" (202). Where else, he explains, "could you find people demonstrating, burning tires, blocking roads, and then accepting tips from tourists to let them pass?" (202-203). As far as the director is concerned, Jamaicans are simply too willing to sell themselves and their country to carry out a real revolution.

Thomas similarly dismisses the fears of potential tourists who ignorantly act, in Cliff's terms, as if Jamaica were a "war zone" rather than a "sandbox" or a "stage set" (*No Telephone* 151). If he mentions that he is off to Jamaica, such uninformed Americans ask "'how is Jamaica these days?'" in a "tone people usually reserve for discussions of Sarajevo" (108). Thomas rejects the comparison. While he admits that "there have been uneasy times in the past," he contends that not only "regulars," but even the "new faces," especially Europeans, who arrive every day are now "quite at ease" (147; emphasis added).

Cliff might prefer that such tourists were less easy and more concerned. In one prose poem, for example, a narrator from the island responds to a male tourist who seems to have accepted an invitation to, in the words of the title, "Make It Your Own" (*Look Behind*). The tourist is pleasantly surprised because he "'had been warned'" that "'Jamaicans are arrogant,'" but "'No
one at [his] hotel seemed belligerent. Or angry’’ (81). He is pleased because the island is so "beautiful": "the sands—'so white'—and the sea 'at least five shades of blue.' / 'And [he]
understand[s] a reef keeps the sharks from the beaches. That's lucky'” (80). The narrator, who does not yet appear belligerent, or angry, "responds" silently: "Only for you, massa." For the white sands belong to the tourist hotels; "native beaches are stony black—volcanic." Native beaches have "underwater sinkholes" and are unprotected by reefs. Sharks do attack; the narrator has "seen the gray-skin sails circling, the sun lighting their passage through the waves” (80). It is only when his persistent obliviousness leads her to respond out loud that he complains, because he can't comprehend why, "'you seem to have gotten so hostile—all of a sudden’” (84). He arrogantly tries to explain that whites may simply be frightened by blacks, as in South Africa, for example, and that blacks should be willing to practice "'constructive engagement'” (83). The narrator is frustrated, however, because he is not frightened, and she tells him: "'I sometimes wish we had it in our power to terrify you. And that your terror would come from a righteous place, and not the usual source of your fear—whatever image you have projected onto us. I wish you were swearing about our power.'” But she is forced to acknowledge his power when she implies that her final wish is impossible: "'I wish we could destroy you without harming ourselves.'” What her sense of belligerent defeat admits, in part, is that Jamaica needs the "money" that he reminds her the tourists bring with them (84). The force of the poem, however, makes an appeal for a different kind of tourist, with a different kind of relationship to the country and the population.

As a final incentive to his readers, Thomas attempts to reinforce the harmless nature of this paradise for anyone who is "self-assured" and can "handle it" (145, 147). He observes that they can "snorkel out to visit the colony of harmless nurse sharks who live under our reef" (147; emphasis added). And he also refers to a new kind of tourist—he offers his readers the supposedly comforting news that "Prosperous Americans of color come here to commune with their African roots” (147). These African-American tourists may come to Jamaica for a different reason than he does, but the gist of his article implies that such "communion" is also an easy thing and that these
new tourists enjoy the same kind of easy relationship with the island that the white tourists like him
treasure. I would suggest that the tourists whom Thomas describes, including himself, are able to
travel so easily, not simply because they are self-confident, but because, as tourists, they refuse to
engage in the kind of "world"-travelling that Lugones advocates.2

JUNE JORDAN: UNEASY TRAVEL TO THE "WORLD" OF THE HOTEL DOMESTIC

The Black American writer June Jordan, by contrast, suggests that real communion is
never easy, nor should it be. She reports that her 1982 vacation in the Bahamas was decidedly
uneasy. Although she is West Indian, she lives and teaches in Brooklyn, and she shares, to a
certain extent, the desires of the kind of tourists whom Kincaid excoriates. For she also wants to
"rest" and she has chosen to stay at the British Colonial Hilton, in part, for reasons of safety: "I did
not want to be harassed by the middle-aged waiter," she writes, "or his nephew. I did not want to
be raped by anybody (white or Black) at all and I calculated that my safety as a Black woman alone
would best be assured by a multinational hotel corporation" (41). She is also on a limited budget.
The hotel is expensive and she needs to be careful about how much money she spends on local
souvenirs. But the kinds of things which Kincaid suggests "must never cross [the] mind" of tourists
who intend to preserve their sense of holiday at all costs, repeatedly enter Jordan's mind, and she
must deal with them, not by "handling" them in the self-confident manner that Thomas admires, but
by searching for a way to deal with their real, messy consequences.

Jordan's sense of dis-ease began with the ad for the hotel, which depicts a middle-aged
Black man in a tuxedo who, the photographed scene promises, "is so delighted to serve you he will
wade into the water to bring you Banana Daquiries while you float! More precisely, he will wade
into the water, fully clothed, oblivious to the ruin of his shoes, his trousers, his health, and he will
do it with a smile" (39). This ad insidiously suggests that tourists are welcome to be carefree and

2 The two reasons may be closely connected, however. For the self-assurance that Thomas
describes may also be associated with the kind of "arrogant perception" that Lugones criticizes as
the perspective of the conqueror who travels without engaging in "world"-travelling.
oblivious to any injustice because the people who serve them also seem carefree, unaware of any harm.

When Jordan participates in the "careless games" of tourists who "harmlessly" kill time by bargaining "down the price of handwoven goods" as much as they "dare," she realizes that she is one of a "weird succession of intruders" who, to use Cliff's terms, have made the island their own (40). If she risks "going broke on her first vacation afternoon" by paying too much, the women who "work their sense of beauty" into straw hats and bags "risk not eating" if she doesn't buy their goods. The institutions of tourism, she believes, make them "parties to a transaction designed to set [them] against each other" (41). Jordan recognizes that tourists, including her, continue the "colonial consequences" that make up the "history" of the Bahamas, as the brochure in her hotel room describes the invasions begun by Columbus and continued by Loyalists fleeing "the newly independent states" after the American Revolution, as well as by Confederates fleeing the Union after the War between the States (39-40). Concerns about race and class inequity intrude on her consciousness as she reflects on the contradictions between the "freedom" that this succession of intruders wants and enjoys and the life of humbling servitude that the Black population struggles to endure.

Such consciousness, however, does not remove the difficulties of real communion. Connections of or across race, or class, or gender are not "automatic" (46). Potential conflicts become apparent when Jordan thinks about the values that "Olive," the maid whose service Jordan is encouraged to "rate," and she might not share. If Jordan were to explain why she chose to stay at this neo-colonial hotel, she imagines that Olive would respond with an indignant question full of heterosexist and antifeminist assumptions: "and why in the first place you come down you without your husband?" When Jordan tries to imagine how she might answer, she affirms the value she places on her own freedom--she would probably try to talk about "my 'rights' and my 'freedom' and my 'desire' and a slew of other New World values" (41).
But Jordan is unwilling to simply accept the difficulties that their differences pose as indications of an irresolvable quandary. Rather, she attempts to “travel,” as Lugones suggests, to Olive’s “world.” When she does, she concludes that not only white histories, but Black histories, and women’s studies histories must begin to care more about women like Olive and to respect and value the practices of care. For the fault lies not only with the white “histories” like the one summarized with the hotel’s tips for travellers, but also with Black history courses, as well as Women’s Studies curricula that “exclude from their central consideration those people who neither killed nor conquered anyone as the means to new [and, I would emphasize, ‘free’] identity, those people who took care of every one of the people who wanted to become ‘a person,’ those people who still take care of the life at issue: the ones who wash and who feed and who teach and who diligently decorate straw hats and bags with all of their historically unrequired gentle love” (44-45).

Jordan is compelled to ask herself several times, in several ways, why Olive should care about her rights, her freedom, her desires, unless Jordan is willing to “do something, for real, about” Olive’s (41).

On her way back to Brooklyn, Jordan remembers an incident involving two female students who were active in separate liberation struggles. Cathy, an Irish student active in the campus IRA affiliate, had volunteered to help a stranger, Sokutu, a refugee from South African apartheid. Jordan thinks about the “connection” the two women made because Cathy helped to take care of the woman suffering from the battering rage of an alcoholic husband and became her friend. And Jordan concludes that what will make freedom real is not simply organized political activity but making connection real: "I felt how it was not who they were but what they both knew and what they were both preparing to do about what they know that was going to make them both free at last” (49).

PRACTICING FREEDOM WITH CARE: ANIMATING PRIVILEGE-COGNIZANT SCRIPTS

As I indicated earlier, the tourists whom Thomas describes refuse, by contrast with Jordan, to travel where they are ill at ease—in particular, they refuse to travel, in Lugones’s terms, to the
"worlds" of the caregivers who make their vacations so carefree. Alison Bailey, who also adopts Lugones's theory of "world" travel in an article on "Locating Traitorous Identities," works with some complementary terms that might be adapted to understand both the desire for and also the resistance to such carefree travelling. Bailey rearticulates some of the insights developed by the feminist epistemologist and philosopher of science, Sandra Harding, in her 1991 Whose Science? Whose Knowledge?: Thinking from Women's Lives, in order to refocus from Harding's discussion of traitorous identities or locations to her own discussion of traitorous performances. While Bailey focuses her discussion on the performance of or resistance to "whitely" behavior, her analysis may be applied to various kinds of privileged behavior, including privileged practices of freedom.

Tourists like Thomas might be said to enact "privilege-evasive" scripts—scripts "which might be said to have unreflective perspectives" on race, class, gender, or other sources of privilege (37). "The repeated animation" of such unreflective "whitely" scripts as "being nervous around people of color [or] avoiding eye contact with them," in Bailey's analysis, "reinscribes a racial order in which white lives, culture, and experiences are valued at the expense of the lives of persons of color" (36). Thomas and tourists like him, who animate the scripts of carefree travelling, reinscribe in many ways the scripts that constituted the ideal of freedom in terms of plantation living sans souci.

Traitors who would resist the assumptions of privilege, by contrast, must attempt to animate "privilege-cognizant" scripts.3 As Bailey describes it, the ability to become cognizant depends on the willingness to listen to, and to learn a new way of seeing from the perspective of, the kind of people whom Harding identifies as "outsiders within." The Black female domestic—in the plantation household or the upper-class white household, for example—provides Bailey with an

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3 These terms could also be used to describe the kinds of efforts that Clare Savage makes in Cliff's novels. Clare's return "home" to Jamaica as a young adult would then be understood as a result of "world"-travelling, of seeing herself, for example, through the eyes of her childhood friend, Zoe. I would suggest that Cliff's novels try to encourage such "world"-travelling in her readers also.
illustration of the kind of person who is excluded from the privileges of these patriarchal settings, but whose work of caring for the privileged allows her an insider’s view of the lives of the privileged inhabitants and an ability to recognize contradictions in their lives (28-29). Persons of privilege, however relative, can become cognizant by travelling to the “worlds” of such domestic caregivers. Traitors make a choice; they try to understand the price of privilege and search for ways to disrupt the constant reinscription of whitely or other privileged scripts (37). Becoming a traitor requires ongoing practice. Bailey asserts: “An occasional traitorous act does not a traitor make. Truly animating a privilege-cognizant white script requires that traitors cultivate a character from which traitorous practices flow” (38). In a sense, the traitorous person can never think of himself or herself as “free at last”; for freedom exists only in the practice.

It is precisely this kind of traitorous character that enables Jordan to attend to, and care about, the domestics in the tourist resort, the setting that more than any other revives the plantation—literally, in the restoration of Great Houses, for example, and symbolically, in the practice of freedom that depends on the servitude of others but refuses to worry or to be “overly” solicitous about the caregiver’s freedom. That traitorous predisposition encourages Jordan to search for another understanding of the freedom that she values so highly. In the process, she avoids changing place with the colonizer and concludes with a notion of freedom that involves the ongoing practice of care.

The focus on challenging and disrupting privileged scripts can give both “traitors” and “outsiders within” common cause or political interest, without suggesting that traitors should, or even could, change places with the less privileged. For these two kinds of “disloyal subjects” resist privileged scripts from different locations (33). The would-be traitor cannot really “inhabit,” but can only “travel” to the “world” of the less privileged, or the person who may be less free. This kind of practice does not necessarily foresee utopia, where everyone will become “free at last,” for the performance of traitorous scripts, as Bailey predicts, are not likely to be perfect (39). As the history of freedom struggle depicted by Lamming, Cliff, Mowry, and others also predicts,
privilege-cognizant traitors, like all others engaged in freedom struggle, run the risk of becoming the more common kind of traitor who betrays freedom struggle. But in the ongoing effort to develop a character conducive to radical politics and greater freedom, the would-be traitor would be willing, at least temporarily, to forego the "luxury of retreating to a safe [or, I would add, carefree] space" (40). And he or she would attempt instead to animate a script with an alternative value—a practice of freedom with care.
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VITA

Joanna Barszewska Marshall was born and raised in Massachusetts. Her academic career has spanned several disciplines—she has a bachelor of arts degree in liberal arts, with a concentration in chemistry from Regis College, in Massachusetts, and a master of arts degree in political science from Purdue University as well as a master of arts degree in English from Truman State University in Missouri—and she finds interdisciplinary approaches to literature especially congenial. Her current areas of special interest are postcolonial literatures and literatures of the Americas, as well as postcolonial and feminist theory. In May of 1999, she will receive the Doctor of Philosophy degree in English from Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge, Louisiana.
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Title of Dissertation: Practicing Freedom with Care: The Development of Warrior-Caregiving in Contemporary Literature from the Americas

Approved:

[Signatures]

Major Professor and Chairman
Dean of the Graduate School

EXAMINING COMMITTEE:

[Signatures]

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