NATION AND DIASPORA:
CARIBBEAN IDENTITIES AND COMMUNITY POLITICS
IN THE FICTION OF EARL LOVELACE

AN ABSTRACT
SUBMITTED ON THE SEVENTEENTH DAY OF APRIL 2015
TO THE DEPARTMENT OF LATIN AMERICAN STUDIES
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
OF THE SCHOOL OF LIBERAL ARTS
OF TULANE UNIVERSITY
FOR THE DEGREE
OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

BY
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ABSTRACT

Scholars have often viewed nation and diaspora as opposing concepts. Such a binary perception is not useful for the establishment of a harmonious nation where multi-diasporic groups are compelled to cohabit. This study attempts to reconcile nation and diaspora. Reading Earl Lovelace’s fiction, I argue that in ethnically diverse countries like Trinidad, migrant populations can maintain their specific diasporic identities and still come together as a nation. Trinidad is inhabited by diasporas and its various people should be seen as such. In this study, the main diasporas in Trinidad include Afro-Trinidadians, Indo-Trinidadians, and white Creoles. Other minor diasporic groups include the Chinese, the Lebanese, and Syrians. The diasporic conception of Trinidad, where the original natives are a small minority, helps to ward off any autochthonous, indigenous and tribal territorial claims that potentially disrupt the social fabric. I argue that the promotion of diasporic consciousness can be a sine qua non pathway towards the formation of a consolidated multi-ethnic island of Trinidad. In practical terms, this means that the different diasporas in Trinidad are likely to come together if they are allowed to revitalize homeland cultures as they contribute to the national space.

This study traces the evolution of Lovelace’s nationalist discourse, which progresses from a focus on the Afro-Caribbean male diaspora to an incorporation of other diasporas as well as women, as he imaginatively figures the future of the
Trinidadian nation. This shift underscores Lovelace’s growing self-consciousness about the imperative to negotiate and reconstruct ethnic and gender identities in order to create a diverse Trinidadian nation.
NATION AND DIASPORA: CARIBBEAN IDENTITIES AND COMMUNITY POLITICS IN THE FICTION OF EARL LOVELACE

A DISSERTATION

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my dissertation committee chair, Dr. Supriya Nair, Professor of English at Tulane University, for her meticulous guidance and tremendous support. I would also like to thank the other members of my dissertation committee, Dr. Felipe Smith in English and Dr. Jean G. Bidima in French. I appreciate their considerable contribution to the completion of this project. I am also grateful to Dr. James Huck, my academic advisor at the Stone Center for Latin American and Caribbean studies. His counsel and endless support facilitated my experience throughout my program. Special mention to Dr. Kenneth Harrow, Professor of English at Michigan State University, who first introduced me to Caribbean literature and inspired my love in this field of study. I must also thank Earl Lovelace and Dr. Funso Aiyejina for honoring me with their precious time, answering my questions patiently during our interviews.

I am indebted to my wife, Astou Gawane Bodian, for her affection and moral support, and for staying up with me during the innumerable nights I spent writing my dissertation. I also owe a lot to my family in Senegal for their love and constant support despite the long distance between us. I would like to name my mother, Khady Goudiaby, my brothers and sisters, my relatives, in particular my aunt Khady Touty Sonko and my grandfather Youssouph Goudiaby. Thank you very much for believing in me. Last, I would like to pay tribute to my late uncle who raised me, Saloum Goudiaby. This work is dedicated to him.
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INTRODUCTION

1. Framing Earl Lovelace in Twentieth-Century Caribbean Literature

Born in Toco, Trinidad, in 1935, Earl Lovelace is one of the most distinguished writers in Caribbean literature. His fiction includes six novels: While Gods are Falling (1965); The School Master (1968); The Dragon Can’t Dance (1979); The Wine of Astonishment (1982); Salt (1996); and Is Just a Movie (2011). His publications also include a short story collection, A Brief Conversion & Other Stories (1988), and a collection of plays, Jestina’s Calypso and Other Plays (1984). Lovelace has additionally written a good number of essays and articles, many of them collected in Growing in the Dark (2003), a volume edited by Funso Aiyejina. In his diverse work, Lovelace focuses on his island-nation, Trinidad, and the socio-political issues originating from British colonization, heightened by ethnic essentialism and electoral politics after independence. The Trinidad that Lovelace describes is in a state of dispossession and darkness, out of which it has to emerge as a nation. His fiction enacts the dichotomies of degradation and salvation. Salvation often comes through communal or individual struggle for selfhood repeatedly enacted in his narratives.

Lovelace’s fiction largely speaks through social realism. He focuses on his island and its social realities, inspired by historical events in the region, such as the Black Power Movement in Trinidad. Lovelace’s texts mirror the life of his fellow Trinidadians, with an emphasis on the challenges the lower classes face.
His fiction particularly demonstrates a concern for the oppressed and the destitute, though some critics have argued that he is more sympathetic to the African poor than to impoverished East Indians. Lovelace, however, insists that he has a concern for poverty across ethnic and gender lines. He emphasizes the African poor only to show that they have had a particularly bad deal. Wine, Dragon, and Salt represent lower-class Afro-Trinidadian protagonists struggling for the preservation of their dignity. For instance, Wine portrays Spiritual Baptist followers, mainly Afro-Trinidadian villagers, who resist the colonial attempt to suppress their religion. Aldrick in Dragon and Bango in Salt are lower-class Afro-Trinidadian protagonists who engage in resistance against the forces that keep down their community. Lovelace’s main protagonists primarily derive from second-class citizens, which makes him, like Frantz Fanon, emphasize that revolution and change often operate from below.

Lovelace belongs to the Anglophone nationalist Caribbean writers’ generation, which mainly flourished in the second half of the twentieth century. This group includes St. Lucian Derek Walcott, Trinidadians Samuel Selvon and V. S. Naipaul, Guyanese Wilson Harris and Barbadians Kamau Brathwaite and George Lamming. These writers have been given more critical attention than Lovelace. Walcott and Naipaul, in particular, have each won the Nobel Prize in literature. The popular critical reception of these writers does not only stem from the fact that they produced outstanding works, but also because they were more familiar to the Western metropolis. While Harris, Selvon, Walcott, Naipaul, Brathwaite, and Lamming have lived outside the Caribbean, principally in
England and in the United States, Lovelace has mostly stayed on his island. His relative isolation from the Western world can explain the fact that his literary work has not received as much attention from metropolitan critics. The lack of critical attention for Lovelace’s work can also be accounted for by the fact that his writing focuses solely on his island. The centrality of Trinidad not only orients his vision towards his immediate space, as recommended by the Créolité theorists, Patrick Chamoiseau, Raphaël Confiant, and Jean Bernabé, but also shows a commitment to write from his specific cultural experience, an idea that Toni Morrison has emphasized in the African American context. Yet, focusing on his island does not mean that Lovelace is not concerned about the outside world. He writes about Trinidad to address the Caribbean and the world. He shares Fanon’s concept of national consciousness, which defines an outward-looking rather than a narrow nationalism that connects with the other Caribbean nations and the world. As Fanon notes, “National consciousness, which is not nationalism, is the only thing that will give us an international dimension” (Wretched of the Earth 199). Like Lovelace, Chinua Achebe focuses on Nigeria to speak to the world. As Achebe states in an interview with BBC, “I am doomed to write about Nigeria. That is where my work is. What I want to say about the world, I can say in writing about Nigeria” (qtd. in Schwarz xi). Writers like Achebe (although he lived and worked in the United States) and William Faulkner focused on their regions and have gained recognition. Lovelace is one of the few Caribbean authors who writes locally and has achieved critical fame, although his works need to be more widely circulated.
Lovelace’s passionate attachment to his land, Trinidad, makes him a unique Caribbean writer. Residing in his homeland allows him to be in tune with the realities and conditions of the people he tries to represent, unlike most Caribbean writers who live overseas. Except for pursuing an M.A. degree in English and taking short-term teaching and residence creative writing residencies in U.S. universities, Lovelace has almost always lived in Trinidad. Explaining the reasons for his decision to remain on his island as a writer, Lovelace says, “I wanted to relate to my community; for the greatest disability writers suffer from when they live abroad [is that] they cease to live in the historical presentness of their country [and] so they become unrelated” (“Some Problems of the Creative Writer” 2). Lovelace lives, walks, eats, dances, and sings with the people he writes about in his fiction. This enables him to depict authoritatively his land and its people, their consciousness, and their language. Lovelace’s fiction demonstrates mastery of Standard English but also of Creole, the ordinary people’s language in Trinidad.

Another advantage of Lovelace’s proximity with his land and people is his immersion in folk culture, which he creatively uses in his fiction. Carnival, steelpan, stickfighting, and calypso thematically and aesthetically contribute to Lovelace's narratives. Carnival is represented in *Dragon, Salt* and *Is Just a Movie*. Even in novels where Carnival is not the subject, its larger cultural ethos provides the structure as in *While Gods* and informs the narrative voice as in *Wine*. *While Gods* starts on Easter Sunday and ends on Ash Wednesday, which coincides with the rejuvenation of the protagonist, Walter Castle. In *Wine*, Eva
assumes the role of a calypsonian or oral storyteller as she disseminates stories she hears from other characters. The calypsonian/storyteller also dominates the narrative voice in *Dragon, Salt, and Is Just a Movie*. Culture is also often used as a means to address social issues and tension, especially those involving interethnic relations. The potential of Carnival as an avenue for national unity is an essential trope in Lovelace’s fiction. Aiyejina argues that Lovelace believes in the creative and transformative power of culture (Personal interview). In his fiction, Lovelace uses various aspects of culture as a tool to analyze his society but also as a means to promote change.

An additional element that makes Lovelace stand out is that as a politically and socially committed writer, he sacrificed his job working for the Department of Agriculture in order to preserve his freedom of voice in his role as the spokesman of the ordinary people, the oppressed, and the dispossessed. As he reveals, “I was working with government and this immediately put an inhibition on my sense of freedom as a writer” (“Some Problems of the Creative Writer” 2). Following Lovelace, his wife Jean Lovelace resigned from her position as a teacher. Lovelace eventually moved to Matura where he built a house of his own with neither electricity nor telephone, and where he would welcome unexpected visits by major Caribbean writers like Walcott, Lamming, and Brathwaite. Lovelace’s daughter, Asha, speaks of how the family would get together at night, beat the drum, and tell stories (Personal interview). From then on, Lovelace focused on writing fiction, drama, and essays; he also worked for a newspaper as a writer for about ten to twelve hours a day, and his knowledge of local events is probably
influenced by his work as a newspaper reporter (“Some Problems of the Creative Writer,” 3). In all his work, Lovelace demonstrates a concern for the oppressed and the poor.

The Beacon writers’ group and Lovelace’s predecessors amongst the nationalist writers in the English Caribbean principally influenced Lovelace’s work. This does not mean that Lovelace does not draw material from literary authors outside the Caribbean. For instance, the shifts in narrative voices in his novels, most notably *Salt*, show an influence from William Faulkner, and make of Lovelace a “purposively modernist writer” (Schwarz xviii). Although one can see Western literary influences on Lovelace’s work, the Beacon group and the nationalist writers’ generation have most influenced Lovelace’s literary production. It is, therefore, important to read Lovelace in connection with these writers. He counters their ideas, conceptions, and visions, corroborates them, or pushes them to further dimensions.

The Beacon generation, which emerged in the 1920s, and which was mainly composed of the Trinidadian writers, Alfred H. Mendes, C. L. R. James, and Ralph de Boissière, developed the “barrack yard genre.” The yard represents the “communal living quarters” (Rosenberg 123) or the “cramped and squalid slum house” (Hodge 110) of the working class in Trinidad. The yard replicates the slave shacks, “huddled together and often arranged around a communal yard” (Morgan 6). The yard fiction represents an urban working class, which is predominantly Afro-Caribbean but includes Indo-Caribbean characters as well that range from porters, prostitutes, carter-men, and washerwomen to
domestic servants. Writers like Mendes dwelt and intermingled with the barracksyard people in order to provide a faithful reproduction of the language, atmosphere and incidents prevailing in the barracksyard (Carby 104). The Beacon writers produced yard fiction to deal with working-class communal and cultural life.

Through barracksyard fiction, the Beacon group developed a literary genre similar to Thomas H. MacDermot’s and Herbert G. de Lisser’s representations of the Jamaican working class. But while MacDermot and de Lisser deal with the middle-classes as well, the Beacon writers do not consider bourgeois status as appealing for their characters (Rosenberg 124). The barracksyard literary tradition enables the Beacon writers to transform common local injustices into “literary stereotypes” and then “recreate a recognizable social milieu” (Sander 69). This ideological orientation shows the influence of international movements on the Beacon generation, which was inspired by communism and the Harlem Renaissance. As Hazel Carby notes,

in Trinidad the fictional representation of 'the people' and the maturation of a socialist politics occurred together as writers translated their admiration for the Soviet experiment and the proletarian movement in North America into engagement with the specific conditions of the Caribbean and of colonialism. (103)

The Beacon group connected with these international movements to promote a proletarian literature, which, in Trotskian terms, should adopt a revolutionary approach. This revolutionary literature is meaningful when it aims to support
working-class struggles against the powers of exploitation (Trotsky 214). The Beacon writers used this revolutionary class perspective as a basis to criticize colonialism and racism. The Russian Revolution provided the frame through which the Beacon group envisioned the struggle to achieve both an autonomous culture and political independence (Carby 104). De Boissière’s novel Crown Jewel is an example of a revolutionary proletarian narrative that traces the 1930s’ labor riots in Trinidad. The workers’ struggle in the streets of Port of Spain, as portrayed in the novel, according to Robert Carr, marks the start of the termination of colonialism (111). The Beacon generation not only had an international appeal, but also aligned local yard fiction with an anti-colonial agenda. It therefore paved the way for the emergence of Caribbean nationalist literature, especially in Trinidad and other parts of the Anglophone Caribbean.

Following the Beacon writers, Lovelace reinstates the yard in his fiction, especially in his novel The Dragon Can’t Dance, which focuses predominantly on lower-class people. Many writers of the nationalist generation, such as Lamming, for example, share the Beacon group’s emphasis on ordinary people and the working class. When he writes about the middle class elite, he looks down upon them. His character Mr. Slime in In the Castle of My Skin, who is both a teacher and a unionist, becomes a failure and antihero as he betrays his people, selling away their land. Lovelace also portrays a Westernized or middle class elite but he does not, however, romanticize or demonize them. While he criticizes the educated class for their cynicism and self-interest through characters like Ivan
Morton in *Wine*, he also presents a more positive image of the intellectuals through Alford George’s political activism in *Salt*.

In addition to the Beacon group, Lovelace’s predecessors of the nationalist generation have been influential in his elaboration of ethnic relations. Selvon, Naipaul, and Lamming have been pioneers in putting Afro-Caribbean and Indo-Trinidadian together on the national stage. While Selvon initiated this tradition in his novel *A Brighter Sun* (1952), Lamming is one of the first Afro-Caribbean writers who provide Indo-Trinidadians with a space in his fiction, principally in *Of Age and Innocence* (1958). Following Selvon and Lamming, in 1959, Naipaul published *Miguel Street*, a short-story cycle that portrays Afro-Trinidadian and Indo-Trinidadian characters. These authors’ works demonstrate the distrust and conflict between Afro-Caribbeans and Indo-Caribbeans. Although Lovelace depicts the conflicts between these two ethnic groups, he goes further to include the politics of ethnic reconciliation, mainly in his later novels, *Dragon*, *Salt*, and *Is Just a Movie*. It is important to note that *Dragon* was written after *Wine*, though it was published first in 1979 (Lovelace, Personal interview).

Kenneth Ramchand argues that Lamming and Naipaul are among the few modern Caribbean writers who have ventured to give East Indians political significance in the Caribbean, but he maintains that it is where they stop that Lovelace begins (5).

Naipaul is one of the Caribbean writers of the nationalist generation who perhaps most influenced Lovelace, his compatriot. For instance, the notion of escape is an overarching trope in Lovelace’s and Naipaul’s works. They share an
affinity with the concern about the depressed social situation, which pushes people to escape, physically or psychologically. In *The Middle Passage*, Naipaul tells us that “The threat of failure, the need to escape: this was the prompting of the society I knew” (45). Lamming also depicts the need to emigrate from the Caribbean as a way to address social problems. However, while Naipaul and Lamming actually feature that type of option, as in their respective works *Miguel Street* and *In the Castle of My Skin*, Lovelace does not present it as an unavoidable way out of social issues. Instead, Lovelace celebrates stoicism and endurance as ways to face social problems (Langran 46). This leads to another fundamental difference between Naipaul and Lovelace in their conception of the individual’s relationship to the community. Naipaul essentially focuses on the individual’s severance from society, whereas Lovelace insists on the individual’s connection with society and the group. So, while Naipaul shuns collective values, asserting the individual’s need to escape, Lovelace affirms the necessity of identification to community and communal values. Lovelace’s writing, therefore, constitutes, as Phil Langran argues, “a writing back to Naipaul” (60). This shows that there is a deeper connection between Lovelace’s and Naipaul’s works, which needs further scrutiny.

The question of identity raises Lovelace’s connections with Brathwaite and Walcott. In his definition of Caribbean identity, Brathwaite insists on the revival of Africa and its culture as the basis for the foundation of Caribbean society. In his poetic production, he demonstrates a certain Afrocentrism as he envisages the future of the Caribbean. Brathwaite’s poetry volumes *Rights of Passage, Masks*
and *Islands*, also published as the trilogy *The Arrivants*, trace Africans’ journey from the motherland to the New World and their experience in this new space. The journey is an embrace and reclamation of African ancestry by the Afro-Caribbean subject in his quest for identity—Brathwaite is mainly concerned with the male. What emerges from Brathwaite’s trilogy is that the future potential of Caribbean people is only meaningful through the rediscovery of Africa. This gives his theory of Caribbean Creole identity an African orientation. For Brathwaite the African cultural elements should be the foundation of Creole culture in Caribbean society. This is understood through the poetic voice and cultural symbols in the last volume of *The Arrivants, Islands*.

Like Brathwaite, Lovelace finds it essential to recover African cultural identities in the conception of Caribbean society. The centrality of Africa in Lovelace’s reading and his vision of the evolution of Caribbean nations is apparent in his representation of the Baptist followers’ struggle to preserve their Baptist Spiritual religion in *Wine*, Afro-related cultural celebrations (Carnival, steelpan, calypso, and stickfighting) in *Dragon*, *Salt*, and *Is Just a Movie*, and the Black Power Movement, most significantly represented in *Is Just a Movie*. Though many of these celebrations and religious practices were inspired by European cultures, they have had a predominantly African character. However, while Brathwaite remains relatively unchanged regarding his Afrocentric vision of Caribbean society, Lovelace has made detours. In the course of his literary career, he has included other ethnic cultures in his imagination of Caribbean national identities. His incorporation of White Creole, East Indian, and Chinese
characters in his fiction expresses his inclusion of other ethnicities in his nationalist project. Lovelace’s pluri-dimensional discourse echoes Walcott’s conception of Caribbean identity. Walcott emphasizes a diverse and syncretic definition of Caribbean identity in his version of creolization. His essays, “The Muse of History” and “Antilles” demonstrate his engagement with the theorization of Creole Caribbean identity. Like Martinican Creolists Chamoiseau, Confiant, and Bernabé, Walcott does not view Caribbean identity as singularly African, European, or Asian but rather as the composite identity born from the contact of different civilizations. In his play *Dream on Monkey Mountain*, his protagonist Makak, who goes through identity crisis, eventually embraces his own mountain/island instead of returning to Africa. It is at this moment of revelation that he recovers his name: Félix Hobain. Though this name signifies his reclamation of his island, it is still a Western name, which shows a kind of orientation towards Europeanity in Walcott’s conception of Creole Caribbean identity. The difference with Lovelace is that Walcott does not so much consider Africa in his project of defining Caribbean identity. Lovelace therefore stands between Brathwaite and Walcott in that his conception of Caribbean society sees Africa as meaningful, but also incorporates other ethnic cultural identities.

In addition to the Beacon group and other male writers of the nationalist generation, Lovelace’s fiction also shares some of the concerns of Caribbean women writers, especially on issues related to gender. Lovelace’s fiction demonstrates aspects of hegemonic patriarchal writing as he emphasizes stronger masculine roles and symbols of masculinity. But he shares to some
extent Caribbean women writers’ concerns over women’s oppression and desire to promote women. Though Lovelace’s female characters occupy domestic roles, they also becomes agents, especially the younger generation of women who acquire education and professional responsibilities like Indo-Trinidadians Maya and Reena in *Salt*, and Afro-Trinidadian Dorlene in *Is Just a Movie*. His female characters also demonstrate a strong sense of political awareness. His generation of Caribbean female writers like Jean Rhys, Paule Marshall, Michelle Cliff, and other younger Caribbean female writers were committed to the task of promoting Caribbean women’s issues in their work. Many of these women writers concur that the Caribbean patriarchal system was influenced by Western colonialism. So they believed that women’s emancipation should also include the dismantling of racial and class factors that underpin the subjugation of women. Cliff’s *No Telephone to Heaven* and Marshall’s *Praisesong for the Widow* present female protagonists whose freedom and sense of fulfillment are sought through their reconnection with their roots, the African aspects of their Caribbean past. Rhys’s *Wide Sargasso Sea* historicizes Antoinette Cosway’s Jamaican connections and attacks Victorian domestic notions of white women, defined in contrast with non-white women. Black and Third-World women were often demonized, as in the example of Bertha Mason in Charlotte Brontë’s *Jane Eyre*. Rhys’ character Antoinette is renamed Bertha, and signifies upon Bertha Mason, the madwoman. But contrary to Brontë’s madwoman, Antoinette/Bertha is humanized and complicated. Though Lovelace does not reach the level of commitment of the above women writers in their literary endeavor to emancipate
Caribbean women, his fiction departs from patriarchal writing as it sets the basis for the renegotiation of gender relations and the restoration of Caribbean women’s historical roles across ethnic boundaries.

Critical works on Lovelace’s literary production include articles and essays mostly published in two main monographs. These include Bill Schwarz’s *Caribbean Literature after Independence: The Case of Lovelace* (2008); and Funso Aiyejina’s *A Place in the World: Essays and Tributes in Honour of Earl Lovelace* (2008). Schwarz’s volume displays the breadth of Lovelace’s work through essays that deal with subjectivity and history (Aaron Love); the cost of Lovelace’s rootedness in the Caribbean (Kate Quinn); the self and place (Bill Schwarz); the role and importance of masquerade and cultural performance (Nicole King); musical performance and political vision (Tina Ramnarine); ecology (Chris Campbell); Carnival and creolization (John Thieme); and nation and hybridity (Patricia Murray). Aiyejina’s volume includes essays that elaborate on issues such as the usage of Standard English and Creole language (Merle Hodge); Indo-Trinidadians and the warrior tradition (Vishnu Singh); imagining a new Caribbean (Gordon Rohlehr); writing about the island and speaking to the world (Jennifer Rahim); self-placement, cultural and historical representation (Sandra Pouchet Paquet); Afro-Caribbean religious beliefs (Louis Regis); and, Carnival aesthetics and Lovelace’s literary tradition (Funso Aiyejina). On the whole, these essays in Schwarz’s and Aiyejina’s books provide a critical examination of postcolonial issues related to nationalism, national identity, language, performative art, political autonomy, and the consequences of
colonialism. The reading the authors in both volumes make of Lovelace’s work demonstrates his profound concern and attachment to his place and his people who also inspire the content and style of his fiction.

In her published dissertation, *Creating a National Counternarrative*, Xenobia N. Barrow-Delgado maintains that Lovelace’s texts provide a counternarrative that contests the unreliable colonial accounts of Trinidadian society. Lovelace’s counternarrative, as Barrow-Delgado argues, is informed by the interconnectedness between Western and African reinvented religious ways like the Baptist spiritual practices. Her dissertation concludes that the establishment of a just nation necessitates creative resistance and the development of inter-subjective relations that preserve human dignity and respect. The creative resistance involves ordinary people whom Barrow-Delgado sees as both creators and warriors. The inter-subjective relationships entail the creation of a just nation in which all individuals retain their status as human subjects unlike those in slave societies. Barrow-Delgado’s insistence on the need to preserve one’s right to humanness expresses her perception of Lovelace, like some of the above critics, as a humanist.

However, none of the works on Lovelace mentioned above emphasizes the dialectic between nationalism and diaspora in Lovelace’s conception of nationalism and nation-building. Barrow-Delgado examines the inter-subjective relationships in the establishment of the Trinidadian nation, which set the basis of an inter-ethnic dialogue, but she does not approach them from a diasporic perspective. Supriya Nair’s article, “Diasporic Roots: Imagining a Nation in
Lovelace’s *Salt,* examines diasporic identities and the creation of a nation in the work of Lovelace. However, her essay focuses on one novel and does not offer an exhaustive study of Lovelace’s fiction. In my study, I intend to provide a relatively comprehensive examination of the relationship between diaspora and nation formation in the Caribbean, and Trinidad in particular, in the fiction of Lovelace.

2. Nation and Diaspora: Redefining Caribbean Nationalism

Because scholarship on Lovelace does not emphasize nationalism and diaspora, in this project, I intend to provide a relatively comprehensive and thorough examination of diaspora and nation formation in the fiction of Lovelace. The notion of diaspora in the Caribbean is often used to refer to Caribbean people overseas, particularly in the West. Many of the studies in Caribbean literature emphasize the metropolitan Caribbean diaspora in their examination of nation building. In his book, *Nationalism and Identity,* Stefano Harney provides a critical study of how the Caribbean diaspora imagines the creation of Caribbean nations. The issue is that scholars tend not to conceive of Caribbean people residing in the Caribbean as diasporas in their analyses of the literary imagination of the Caribbean nations. This “forgetting” of the diasporic contexts obscures the understanding of the dynamics of nation-building, especially in multi-diasporic islands like Trinidad. Diaspora is originally a Greek term, referring to “dispersal.” It was first used to describe the scattering of Jews in Europe (Patterson & Kelley 14). The term became popularized in the 1950s and 1960s, when it was used to make reference to the conditions of Africans dispersed in the
Americas during the Atlantic slave trade and later in Europe. The phrase “African Diaspora” emerged as an analytical concept that allowed scholars to address the black communities scattered across national territories as a result of transatlantic slavery (Patterson & Kelley 14). However, diaspora does not solely designate dispersed black communities; it also applies to other racial and ethnic communities relocated into foreign places, either voluntarily or forcefully. Asian communities like East Indians, Chinese, Syrians, and Lebanese in the Caribbean also constitute diasporas. Tiffany Patterson and Robin Kelley agree with William Safran regarding the characteristics defining diaspora. These include:

- dispersal from a homeland, often by violent forces,
- the making of a memory and a vision of that homeland,
- marginalization in the new location,
- a commitment to the maintenance/restoration of the homeland,
- and desire for return and a continuing relationship and identity with the homeland that shapes the consciousness and solidarity of the group. (Patterson & Kelly 14)

The above definitions authenticate most Caribbean people as diasporas. The groups that now mostly populate the Caribbean come from migratory movements, either voluntary or forced. In this Caribbean context, the term diaspora includes African, European, and Asian migrants as well as their descendants in the modern and contemporary times. In Trinidad, the main diasporas were historically constituted by white Europeans, East Indians, and Africans. These groups came to Trinidad in different ways: the white Europeans as slave masters, the Africans as slaves, and East Indians as indentured
workers. The Chinese, Syrian, and Lebanese groups also came to Trinidad as indentured workers or traders but represented smaller minorities. As diasporas, European, African, and Asian groups confronted, to various degrees, adaptation, suffering, and struggle for survival, but also attempted to maintain connections with their homelands through memory or cultural revival. In my study, I refer to Afro-Trinidadians, white Creoles, and Indo-Trinidadians to name the main historical diasporic groups in Trinidad. From the post-independence period until recent times, Afro-Trinidadians and Indo-Trinidadians are the two principal diasporas that confront each other in their negotiation of the Trinadian nation.

The notion of a nation has been varyingly conceived among scholars. Ernest Renan defines the nation as the aspiration to a collective life, which bond people in a community. As he says, it is “the desire to live together” in “solidarity” (19). Benedict Anderson provides another definition of the nation. He describes the nation as an imagined community. For Anderson, it is “an imagined political community…because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow members…and yet in the mind of each lives the image of their community” (6). Anderson gives a modern definition of the nation, which emphasizes the novel and the newspaper as tools that connect people. “These forms,” he argues, “provided the technical means for 're-presenting' the kind of imagined community that is the nation” (25). This conception of the nation is selective, since it does not consider those who cannot read. It also evades the idea of physical interaction in the elaboration of the nation. Unlike Anderson, Victor Turner views the nation in terms of human relations. He stresses the term
“communitas” to underscore the “essential and generic human bond, without which there could be no society” (97). It represents a moment that provokes a spontaneous stance of solidarity and unification among members of the community (132). Turner’s “communitas” entails “homogeneity and comradeship,” a concept that inspired Anderson’s notion of “deep horizontal comradeship.” According to Felipe Smith, Anderson owes his idea of “imagined communities” to Turner (18). However, contrary to Anderson, Turner’s “imagined communities” are defined in terms of social relations and human bonds. My perception of the nation in this study is more consistent with Turner’s description of the nation as “communitas.” Nationalism and the formation of Caribbean nations involve historical moments in which people had joined in struggles for survival, cultural adaptation, and establishment of communities. The experience of the diasporas in the Caribbean paralleled communal efforts to create communities. Expanding on diaspora, David Chariandy argues that in addressing these dislocations, we aspire…to better appreciate how historically disenfranchised peoples have developed inventive tactics for transforming even the most sinister experiences of dislocation into vibrant and revolutionary forms of political and cultural life. (par 1)

The historical diasporic experience implies that nationalism and nation building do not just concern a pre/post-independence political enterprise; they also include the early experience of the diasporas most connected to the plantation in their struggle to maintain their communities, cultures, and dignity. Some
historians even date Caribbean nationalism back to the early West Indians’ resistance to Spanish settlers’ oppression. This study is interested, however, in the later period of nationalism that involves Afro-Caribbean and Indo-Caribbean diasporas in modern and contemporary times.

Nationalism and nation-building are complex issues in the Caribbean, particularly in islands like Trinidad where there exist various diasporas holding on to their respective cultural identities. The construction of gender identities within and across ethnicities also complicates the process of nation-building. The question that needs to be asked here is not just about when a diaspora becomes a nation. The question to ask is how the multiple diasporas in Trinidad can come together and forge a consolidated nation. To answer this question is to pursue other questions: How can we reconcile nation/nation-state and diaspora? What approach to nationalism and nation-building needs to be adopted in a country where diasporic groups are compelled to live together? How does Lovelace conceive the becoming of the nation in the multi-diasporic island of Trinidad in his fiction?

Scholars have often viewed nation and diaspora as opposing dichotomies. In his discussion of postcolonial diasporas, Chariandy notes that these diasporas have been defined in an antagonistic relationship with nation (par 2). James Clifford also underlines the tension between diaspora and nation-state. As he says, “Diasporas are caught up with and defined against the norms of nation-states” (Clifford 307). The gap between nation and diaspora is often seen as a consequence of exclusive diasporic affiliations. Paul Gilroy believes that the
return to roots produces racial and ethnic absolutism, which excludes some groups in the national project. He argues that ethnic essentialism constitutes fascist politics, which defers the process of national becoming (“Tyrannies of Unanimism” 243). He further believes that the insistence on nationalist politics is likely to fuse nation and race and thus favor a nationalism of racial exclusiveness (“One Nation under a Groove” 27-28). Gilroy proposes the term Black Atlantic as a version of diaspora and as a means to eschew racial and ethnic absolutism (“There Ain’t No Black in the Union Jack” 155). Likewise, Fanon warns us that the ethnicization of the nation and the tribalization of the state in newly independent countries lead to “a regression which is terribly detrimental and prejudicial to the development of the nation and national unity” (97). The above scholars share a concern about the racialization or ethnicization of nationalism, which excludes others.

While one can agree with these scholars who express their skepticism regarding the attachment to one’s ancestral roots in the becoming of the nation, one should acknowledge that in Caribbean countries where identity construction is often carried out in reference with homeland culture, the maintenance of the diasporic consciousness also facilitates the consolidation of the nation. Diasporic consciousness underscores “the mode of naming, remembering, living, and feeling group identity modeled out of experiences, positionings, struggles, and imaginings of the past and the present, and at times the unfolding, unpredictable future” (Zeleza 33). In these terms, diasporic consciousness represents the cognitive endeavor of diasporas in promoting homeland cultural identity in the
new land. The diasporic consciousness is revitalized by memory and sentimental attachment to roots, as well as by cultural adaption throughout their experience in their host land. The preservation of the diasporic consciousness can be a necessary condition towards the creation of a united multi-ethnic island of Trinidad, not an obstacle to unity.

Percy Hintzen and Clifford share the argument that the maintenance of diasporic consciousness is a necessary factor of national unity in ethnically diverse countries. For Hintzen, "Diasporic consciousness is a necessary condition for accommodation in particular national spaces of those denied the right to national belonging, or those whose right to such were curtailed and compromised" (54). In his analysis of the relationships between Jews and Arabs in Palestine, Clifford argues that "If a viable political arrangement for sharing the land of Palestine finally emerges, Jews and Arabs will need to recover diasporist skills for maintaining difference in contact and accommodation" (326). Hintzen's and Clifford's arguments express the need to maintain diasporic consciousness as a means to create a national space through the promotion and accommodation of difference. In the Caribbean island of Trinidad where Indo-Trinidadians and Afro-Trinidadians, the two major diasporic groups, and the minority diasporas (the Chinese, the Syrian, and the Lebanese) uphold their cultural specificities, demanding that any of them abandon its specific cultural identity in the construction of the nation will only create more gaps, distances, and divisions between these groups. This differential sense of the nationalist project resonates with Viranjini Munasinghe’s vision of the Trinidadian nation as
a “Tossed Salad.” In her study of East Indians and cultural politics of identity in Trinidad, Munasinghe opposes “Tossed Salad” to “Callaloo,” dishes that are used as symbols of the Trinidadian nation. While “Callaloo” conceives of the nation and national politics as a melting pot, “Tossed Salad” represents an image of the nation where the politics of ethnicity accommodates individual cultural and identity differences without dissolving them. “Callaloo” does not fit my conception of the Trinidadian nationalist project, since it envisions the melting of the different ethnic cultural identities into the pot/nation. Like Munasinghe, I believe that the concept of “Tossed Salad” provides a more fulfilling imagination of the future of the Trinidadian nation, since it promotes diversity in the coming together of the ethnic groups as a nation. Similar to “Tossed Salad,” “pilau” is a national dish that symbolizes the unity of the Trinidadian nation. This dish is made of a mixture of sweetened rice, meat, and vegetables. For Harney, the national symbolism of ‘pilau’ is significant, because “the Chinese, Spanish, Africans and Indians all claim they brought the recipe to the island” (38). However, he argues that constructing the Trinidadian nation should go beyond just cooking of the “pilau.” It should incorporate the examination of “who cooks, who eats, and who does neither” (59). This view of nationalism includes all social segments – ethnic, class and gender categories – into the definition of Trinidadian national space.

Lovelace corroborates conceptions of “Tossed Salad” and “pilau” as symbols of the Trinidadian nation. His fiction provides a version of nationalism that emphasizes the attachment to ethnic identities in the national project. Lovelace’s nationalist discourse addresses the struggle for survival, cultural
retention and adaptation, electoral politics, and the competition for resource control among the main diasporic groups in Trinidad as they negotiate for a national space. The preservation of diasporic consciousness, in Lovelace’s formulation, contributes to the acknowledgement and concession of the dignity and humanity of the various diasporas in Trinidad, which is a precondition towards the consolidation of the Trinidadian national space.

In this study, I intend to follow Lovelace’s trajectory in his literary career. It is significant how Lovelace moves from an emphasis on the Afro-Caribbean diaspora to a focus on the different diasporas in Trinidad. His early novels, While Gods Are Falling, The Schoolmaster, and The Wine of Astonishment focus on Afro-Trinidadians whereas his later novels, The Dragon Can’t Dance, Salt, and Is Just a Movie, include Indo-Trinidadians, White Creoles, and Chino-Trinidadians. Lovelace’s narratives progress from Black nationalism to a multi-ethnic nationalism that incorporates all the diasporas or at least expresses a utopian hope in that possibility, although they do not always accomplish that goal. The evolution in Lovelace’s nationalist discourse stems from his awareness of the obstacles to nation-building, originating from an early Afro-centric nationalism in the Trinidadian political landscape (and in his own work) that excluded other diasporas. Henceforth, the dynamics in the relationships between the different ethnic groups will be emphasized in this study. In her published dissertation, Barrow-Delgado stresses the relations between European and African cultural elements to examine Lovelace’s national counternarrative. This approach overlooks the Asian and other cultural components. Lovelace’s later fiction is
mainly multi-dimensional regarding ethnic representation, although his idealism is sometimes questionable. Even in novels where he only emphasizes Indo-Trinidadian and Afro-Trinidadian characters, the European and other cultural elements are still present. Unlike Barrow-Delgado, I will include the European, African, and Asian cultural categories in order to offer a more comprehensive and persuasive analysis of Lovelace’s nationalist vision. Gender relations will also be elaborated in the context of national community.

The structure of this dissertation encompasses five chapters divided in two main parts. The first part, “On African Diaspora and Community Space,” focuses on the African diasporas, and represents the initial phase of Lovelace’s literary career. This part incorporates the first two chapters of my work. The first chapter, entitled “Masks of Resistance: Mimicry and Cultural Survival in Earl Lovelace’s *The Wine of Astonishment*,” examines the resistance to colonial cultural oppression, cultural adaptation, and retention and community survival. Here, I try to show how by mimicking Catholic and Anglican practices, the Bonasse villagers manage to safeguard the integrity of their community and Spiritual Baptist Church. Mimicry emerges as disguise, resistance or a process through which oppressed Afro-diasporic groups historically managed to preserve their communities and religious practices. The second chapter, “The Afro-Caribbean Family, Citizen Consciousness, and the Nation-State in *While Gods Are Falling*,” explores the emergence of the black political elite and locates the sense of individual responsibility as the driving force for uniting and uplifting a community. The family, as a domestic space, appears to be a metaphor through which
Lovelace criticizes middle-class political leadership in post-independence Trinidad and envisions the establishment of a harmonious national community.

The second part, “The Island and Its Diasporas: Identity Pluralism and the Creation of a National Space,” emphasizes Lovelace’s increasingly pluralist national discourse, representing many other diasporas. This constitutes the later phase of Lovelace’s literary career. The second part incorporates the last three chapters of this study. The third chapter, “Ethnic Essentialism, Cultural Performance, and the Formation of a Multi-Diasporic Nation in The Dragon Can’t Dance, Salt, and Is Just a Movie,” deals with ethnic essentialism, cultural performance, and the formation of a multi-diasporic nation. The chapter explores the past roots and continuing factors of dissension between Afro-Trinidadians and Indo-Trinidadians, and the resorbing of national fragmentation through cultural performance. The fourth chapter, “History, Narration, and National Reconciliation,” emphasizes two points: recovering history and reclaiming the national space, and using multiple voices as a re-narrativization of Caribbean history and process of ethical reparation. The multiple voices express the histories of the different ethnicities in Trinidad, a narrative style that underscores the imperative to provide a multi-ethnic account of national history. This multi-vocal re-narrativization of history has an ethical aspect of remembrance as reparation for the centuries of enslavement that is a part of the Afro-Trinidadian legacy, which Lovelace views as a precondition for national unity. The fifth chapter, “Gender, Ethnicity, and a New National Vision,” looks at the marginalization and empowerment of Caribbean women. The chapter discusses
the necessity to transcend Caribbean hegemonic masculinities and gender differences within and across ethnic borders as a means to redefine Caribbean identities and consolidate the multi-ethnic Trinidadian nation.

Though this study focuses on Lovelace, I will read his work in conversation with those of the nationalist Anglophone Caribbean writers such as Naipaul, Selvon, Lamming, Brathwaite, Derek Walcott, as well as with women writers like Cliff, Kincaid, and Danticat. Lovelace stands as a bridge between his fellow writers of the nationalist generation and the later generation of Anglophone Caribbean writers, including some of the names mentioned above. In his writing, Lovelace demonstrates concerns and ideologies of the nationalist generation. However, he supersedes some of their ideologies in a revolutionary fashion, providing an imagination of his nation that goes beyond his time. His view of history, ethnicity, gender, and nationalism is a statement of an inclusive nationalist discourse that upholds all the histories of Trinidad, ethnic groups, and gender categories. Lovelace’s work influenced younger Caribbean writers like Lawrence Scott in his treatment of cultural hybridity and the incorporation of African histories as a healing process. Lovelace’s attention to women across ethnic borders contributes to the redefinition of national identities, which earlier and later Caribbean women writers develop to further dimensions and in greater detail than Lovelace.

Writers in French and Spanish Caribbean literatures will be referenced as well. These writers include Cubans Alejo Carpentier, Nicolás Guillén, Lydia Cabrera, Emilio Ballagas; Dominican Manuel del Cabral; Puerto Rican Luis Palés
Matos; Martinicans Aimé Césaire, Édouard Glissant, and Patrick Chamoiseau, Haitians Jacques Roumain, and Jean Price-Mars; French Guianese Léon-Gontran Damas; and Guadeloupean Maryse Condé. This approach is significant because of the deep connections between the three literatures that compose mainstream Caribbean literature: English, French, and Spanish Caribbean literatures. These connections are meaningful due to the relatively similar types of colonial oppression that the English, French, and Spanish Caribbean islands underwent, and the ways in which they responded to this oppression. The Caribbean literatures that emerged out of this ordeal demonstrate similarities as well as differences. The similarities are seen in the issues and struggles that they developed. The differences involve the linguistic and cultural elements through which they represent Caribbean experience and resistance against colonial domination, and define Caribbean identity. The connections are also significant due to the fact that Trinidad has had different European influences. Trinidad was historically occupied by the Spanish, the French, and the English, successively. This confluence of various European cultures in Trinidad is relevant in Lovelace’s novels. It is therefore essential to read Lovelace in relation to French and Spanish Caribbean writers. This study will resort to an eclectic approach that incorporates literary, nationalist, diaspora, postcolonial, socio-historical, socio-political, cultural, gender, and feminist theories.

Lovelace’s view of nationalism and nation building characterizes the complexity of his nationalist discourse, which grippingly reveals contradictions. The paradoxes demonstrate the ambivalences of an author who writes from a
limbo situation, to borrow Simon Gikandi’s notion of “writing in limbo”: Lovelace writes from the perspective of an Afro-Caribbean male author who tries to provide a utopian representation of Trinidad as a nation, including other ethnic groups as well as other gender categories. Though he intends to inscribe an inclusive nationalist discourse, he is sometimes caught up by his identity as an Afro-Trinidadian and male writer who seems to emphasize more ordinary Afro-Caribbean and male characters. The ambivalences and intricacy of Lovelace’s nationalist discourse should not be blindly conceived as weaknesses in themselves. They rather make Lovelace an interesting writer to read, a writer whose complex work engages the critical reader, which also shows that his literary production deserves more critical attention and investigation. This study argues that despite his limbo position, Lovelace is able to address different audiences, including Afro-Caribbeans, and other Asian diasporas in the Caribbean, as well as African Americans, Europeans, Africans, and other Third World people, both men and women. Lovelace’s diverse nationalist discourse calls for the interdisciplinary approach of this study, which draws from theories across disciplines in order to locate this writer in his context.
PART I: ON AFRICAN DIASPORA AND COMMUNITY SPACE
CHAPTER ONE

MASKS OF RESISTANCE: MIMICRY AND CULTURAL SURVIVAL IN THE WINE OF ASTONISHMENT

[The] patterns of disguising ideological insubordination are somewhat analogous to the patterns by which... peasants and slaves have disguised their efforts to thwart material appropriation of their labor, their production, and their property: for example, poaching, foot-dragging, pilfering, dissimulation, flight. Together, these forms of insubordination might suitably be called the infrapolitics of the powerless. (Scott xiii)

In the above epigraph, James Scott elucidates some of the ways the oppressed respond to domination. These infrapolitics, as he terms it, constitute significant ways out of ideological subordination. This chapter examines the resistance to colonial cultural oppression, cultural adaptation and retention, and community survival through such infrapolitics in Earl Lovelace’s *The Wine of Astonishment*, a novel published in 1983. Set in rural Trinidad during the American occupation and World War II, the novel narrates the story of the villagers of Bonasse who struggle to preserve their Spiritual Baptist religion after its ban by the colonial government in 1917. *Wine* demonstrates resistance to cultural imperialism, and humanizes a people whose dignity is negated. The tactics adopted by the community of Bonasse against colonial oppression range from marronage to mimicry of Catholic and Anglican religious ways. Lovelace suggests that mimicry, as a part of infrapolitics, enables the survival of ancestral cultures among diasporic groups in the Caribbean.
I argue that, in Wine, the Bonasse community’s mimicry or accommodation to colonial ways is neither self-defeat nor is it a mere acceptance of dominant ideology. It is rather a mode of resistance, or a process through which oppressed Afro-diasporic groups like the Bonasse villagers are able to maintain their Spiritual Baptist Church and preserve their community by accommodating themselves to Anglican and Catholic ways. Mimicry appears then, to be a mask of resistance, which underscores what Scott describes as “hidden transcripts,” a tactic of disguise in the “infrapolitics” that the weaker groups use against domination. Mimicry does not only provide an adequate tactic of resistance to colonial cultural repression, but it also represents a metaphor of cultural adaptation and contributes to the making of modern Creole culture in the New World, and Trinidad in particular.

Scholars have different views of mimicry. Some conceive of it as a form of passive consent. Lord Macaulay believed that mimicry constituted a medium through which Great Britain could produce consenting colonial subjects. The production of a colonized imitative class, as he suggested, would create consenting subjects that would facilitate British imperial expansionism. V. S. Naipaul, from a different view, describes mimicry in The Middle Passage and Mimic Men as uncreative. For him Caribbean people are uncreative because they are mimic men. Unlike Naipaul, Derek Walcott maintains that mimicry has a creative, critical potential. It is through mimicry that various cultural forms, such as Carnival and calypso have emerged. According to Walcott, these cultural forms emanate from imitation and become invention (“The Caribbean” 261). (He,
however, has occasionally expressed dismissive views of calypso. French scholar René Girard conceives of mimicry as a form of violence. In his article “Mimesis and Violence,” he notes that “Violence is generated by this process [mimicry]; or rather, violence is the process itself when two or more partners try to prevent one another from appropriating the object they all desire through physical or other means” (9). Girard is suggesting here that violence is generated through the process of mimesis as individuals desire the same object and confront one another to own it.

In this study, I equate mimicry with resistance as theorized by Scott and other scholars. Scott speaks of mimicry as a bearer of hidden transcripts and infrapolitics of the powerless, essentially functioning as camouflage. Cultural critics like Homi Bhabha view mimicry also as camouflage and defense. Bhabha sees defense in mimicry “exactly like the technique of camouflage practiced in human warfare” (85). Jacques Lacan develops a theory of psychic mimicry as defense. He gives evidence of his theory, making analogies with “the biological defenses of insects (moths with the coloration of wasps for instance)” (qtd. in Moore-Gilbert 133). Likewise, Walcott believes mimicry is not just as “an act of imagination, but also camouflage,” and therefore represents a “design both as defense and lure” (“The Caribbean” 262). In order to grasp the idea of mimicry as resistance in Lovelace’s early novel, it is essential to begin with the mechanisms of colonial oppression in Wine.
1. Ideological and Violent Colonial Oppression

*Wine* demonstrates that the colonial repression of the Spiritual Baptist religion was an attempt to suppress African spiritual elements that Christianity condemned as evil and barbaric. The Spiritual Baptist religion, which the black community of Bonasse practices, is a syncretic religion born from the contact between European and African religions during the era of plantation slavery. It mainly incorporates European and African spiritual aspects that exist in a dialectical relationship, that is to say, a “mutually interdependent relationship between the African centered and European based religions…an engaging relationship between traditions of faith” (Reid-Salmon 60-61). The African characteristics of the Spiritual Baptist religion consist of singing hymns, shouting, ringing bells, clapping hands, voluntary conversion to the Baptist religion by the followers after having dreams and visions and, most importantly, spirit possession. The element of spirit possession remains essential, because it is the medium through which the Bonasse villagers, as a diasporic group, are able to link themselves to a distant, even imaginary, Africa. As Bee, the Baptist priest, asserts, "the church is Africa in us, black in us..." (133).

The Christian aspects in the Spiritual Baptist religion include the belief in Jehovah and Jesus, the reading of the Bible and holding services in a church. Africans incorporated some of the aspects of Christianity because these aspects were compatible with African belief systems. Rhoda Reddock argues that the capacity of Afro-Caribbean religions to acculturate and interculturate facilitated the incorporation of “aspects of other belief systems which were in concert with
theirs whether these were forcibly introduced like Christianity or more subconsciously incorporated as with aspects of Hinduism” (74). As in Christianity, in their spiritual ethos, Africans believe in the existence of a supreme God, the creator of the universe, although they worship other lesser gods or deities. Also, Africans see the stories in the Bible as representative of their experience as victims. In Wine, Bee and his community in Bonasse associate their situation as victims with the plight of Jesus and the Jews of Egypt. But it was ultimately the Afro-related elements of the Spiritual Baptist religion that the colonial power sought to suppress.

Lovelace perceives the suppression of Afro-Caribbean religious practices as an attempt to dehumanize and deculturize Afro-Caribbean people through ideological and repressive colonial apparatuses. Louis Althusser, the French Marxist thinker of the twentieth century, lists religion, the church and the school as among the ideological apparatuses that the state uses to control its subjects. Althusser calls them the Ideological State Apparatuses (ISAs). He believes that hegemonic ideology, which is the consciousness of the dominant class, is best maintained by the ISAs through the process of what he calls “interpellation” (1491). Like Althusser, Antonio Gramsci, the Italian Marxist, believed that the ISA operated through the maintenance of hegemony, involving not just external forces but the willing or manufactured acceptance of dominant ideology. For Gramsci, power and domination can be achieved through the intervention of educational, religious, social and political institutions (“Hegemony” 673). However, Althusser suggests that the state also uses physical violence to
subjugate people. The Repressive State Apparatuses (RSAs), such as the law, police, the military, and so on serve to strengthen and maintain the power of the state against its subjects (1487). He was to later revise any strict distinction between the forces of the RSA and the violence of the ISA. Both the ISAs and RSAs are prevalent as modes of colonial subjection in Wine.

The Western school and the Catholic Church represent the ISAs that the colonial power uses to subjugate the villagers of Bonasse. Both the school and the Catholic Church teach the villagers that the services of the Baptist church are barbaric and uncivilized. Lovelace himself admits having undergone such propaganda. In “Black Community Building,” he emphasizes that “[w]e were being told that Black people were ugly and retarded, that we were of no value, that we had produced neither civilization nor scholars nor great men” (Lovelace 155). In Wine the Western school and Church instill in the mind of the children that joining the Anglican or Catholic Church and following their rituals remain not only a way to attain civilization, but also a guaranteed pathway to Heaven. Eva, Bee’s wife and the narrator of the novel, presents Lovelace’s critique:

All of a sudden they start to teach in their schools and in their church that we [black people] uncivilized and barbarous. They start telling the little children all kinda lies to scare them away from us – Spiritual Baptist bad, Spiritual Baptist stupid, Spiritual Baptist does deal with the devil, Spiritual Baptist ain’t going to heaven. (33)

In the eyes of the colonizer, as Bridget Brereton suggests, the attempt to do away with supposed primitivism constitutes the struggle of civilization against
savagery, from which victory should emerge with the erasure or taming of barbarism (qtd. in Gibbons 76). In an interview with Funso Aiyejina, a distinguished scholar and critic of Lovelace’s work, Lovelace asserts that the colonial project of civilization goes along with propaganda about the creation of darkness where light exists (Self Portraits 6). Through such oppositions and the demonization of non-Western ways, colonial authorities justified the Western civilizing mission. Albert Memmi corroborates this idea, as he believes that the construction of the colonized as a lesser being allows a justification of the economic extortion of colonies. Memmi observes that for the colonizer, the colonized needs protection. In other words, the colonizer labels the colonized as weak, lazy, irresponsible, and decides that it was to his benefit that he should be governed through a “protectorat” (“protectorate”) (The Colonizer and the Colonized 82). This ideology of benevolence, however, largely served the interests of the colonizer and disguised the brute violence of the colonial enterprise.

Consequently, colonial brainwashing remained a cause of alienation among the colonized elite. The effects of the colonial politics of denigration and deculturation of the colonized are almost inevitable. Memmi reminds us that “[w]illfully created and spread by the colonizer, this mythical and degrading portrait ends up by being accepted and lived with to a certain extent by the colonized” (87). Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o refers to colonial education as a “cultural bomb” that “annihilate[s] a people’s belief in their names, in their languages, in their unity, in their capacities and ultimately in themselves” (3). Frantz Fanon
asserts that in order for the colonized subject to enter and assimilate the culture of the oppressor, "he had had to assimilate...the way in which the colonialist bourgeoisie thinks" (Wretched 13).

Ivan Morton is the prototype of the alienated colonized subject in Wine. His alienation causes him to be in contradiction to and in conflict with his community. Morton upholds the principle of freedom of worship, but he is concerned about the fact that the villagers “should still be in the dark ages in these modern times” when they “could settle down and be civilized” (Lovelace, Wine 13). He later claims that “[w]e can’t change our colour... but we can change our attitude. We can’t be white but we can act white” (13). Morton’s statement describes the category of the educated colonized subjects that Lord Macaulay theorizes in the context of colonial India as a class of intermediary people, Indian in physical appearance and origin, but European in mentality and attitude. In his “Minute on Indian Education,” Macaulay argues that “we must at present do our best to form a class who may be interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern; a class of persons, Indian in blood and colour, but British in taste, in opinions, in morals, and in intellect” (130). Fanon uses the phrase “black skin, white masks” as the title of his book to characterize the black elites in Africa or in the diaspora who are black in color but European” in taste, in opinions... and in intellect.” W.E.B. Dubois, from a different standpoint, frames this identity as “double consciousness” in The Souls of Black Folk.

Moreover, Ivan’s view constitutes a debasement of African traditions, which, according to Rawle Gibbons, enacts difference not just between white and
black but also between black Caribbean people and the lighter-skinned Creoles. As Gibbons asserts, “Creoles had Christ; Africans worship the devil. Creoles had access to civilization; Africans were damned in their savagery” (76). In addition to the demonization of the Spiritual Baptist Church, the colonial authorities compelled the Spiritual Baptists to convert to Catholicism or Anglicanism by denying them educational and job opportunities. For instance, Ivan cannot win a college exhibition despite his intelligence, solely because he is a Baptist. It is by turning Catholic that he manages to get a job as a teacher. The young people are also told that they would have jobs if they converted to Christianity (Wine 33). In Dragon, Philo’s mother compels him to join the Catholic Church “not because Catholic was his religion, but because he would need every help he could get in the world” (225). The denial and promise of opportunities to the Baptists had serious material consequences, which strengthened colonial ideology developed through the Western school and Church.

Besides the ideological colonial apparatuses, the colonial system attempted to control and suppress Spiritual Baptist practices through violent repression and punishment. The police and the law epitomize the colonial repressive system. In Wine, the police, under the lead of the ruthless Corporal Prince, strictly see to it that the Prohibition Ordinance against the Spiritual Baptists is observed. Offenders are beaten and imprisoned by Corporal Prince and his men. As Eva describes, the Corporal is:

Tall, stocky as a gru-gru tree, this policeman show no sympathy or respect or mercy for people black like he. He was the law. The
whiteman send him to do a job, and he do it like a tank or a tractor or an elephant gone mad, bowling over and uprooting and smashing without human compassion or reasoning; and where a policeman mighta hesitate to smash up church his father and grandfather worship in, Prince had no sense of danger or remembrance or love or fear. (36)

Corporal reminds the reader of the figure of the overseer in Caribbean literature. The ruthlessness that characterizes Corporal Prince in Wine is seen in the figure of the overseer in George Lamming’s In the Castle of My Skin and of Baboo in Of Age and Innocence, who Sandra Pouchet Paquet argues, is another version of the overseer in Castle (55). Corporal Lestrade, the mulatto prison keeper, in Walcott’s Dream on Monkey Mountain also epitomizes the oppressive overseer.

Often, the violent character of the overseer does not just stem from an intention to enforce laws, but also from a will to exert authority and foster respect from the masses that resent such authority. The overseers in Castle and Of Age have the duty of protecting the landlord’s property and securing their own privilege against the interests of their villagers. It is through perpetrating violence and adopting aggressive and authoritative attitudes that the overseers seek to gain respect from their people. In Castle, for instance, as the narrator describes it:

They [the overseers] were fierce, aggressive and strict…The overseers carried bunches of keys strung on wire which they chimed continually, partly to warn the villagers of their approach,
and partly to satisfy themselves with the feel of authority. This seemed necessary since the average villager showed little respect for the overseer unless threatened or actually bullied. (26)

In *Dream*, Corporal Lestrade represents the repressive agency in charge of the enforcement of the white man’s law. Addressing Souris, he admits that “I am the instrument of the law, Souris. I got the white man work to do” (279). His violent verbal attack on the prisoners, Makak, Tiger and Souris, and the resentment he harbors against them are not only manifestations of his desire to exercise authority, but also a castigation of the thing he hates in himself, which is the black part of his identity. As Corporal confesses to Makak in the second scene of Part II, “I jeered thee because I hated half of myself, my eclipse” (299). Fanon believes that the association of black skin with impurity by the mainstream colonial culture foregrounds the factors of black people’s self-loathing (Appiah ix). The black prisoners therefore remind Corporal of his own “impurity”. Thus his oppression of the prisoners is an attempt to control his anxiety born from his hatred of his African heritage. The denial of Afro-Caribbean people’s dignity goes along with the process of colonization through ideology and violent oppression, which inevitably results in resistance from the oppressed.

2. **Violent Resistance and “Infrapolitics”**

The denigration and repression of the Spiritual Baptist Church practices engender a determination from the followers to resist and preserve their religious beliefs. *Wine* narrates different ways in which the Baptist followers endeavor to
retain their religion. Following the example of Maroon slaves, they resort to escape. After the colonial government passes the Prohibition Ordinance they decide to start again and establish their church on a remote hill. This indicates that marronage remains a recurrent concept of coping with colonial cultural repression among the community of Bonasse. As Eva explains, “[w]e moved again. We run.” She continues, “[s]o now the church we have is on the edge of the village, high up on a steep hill, far up in a wilderness place, a little mud hut hiding behind a row of half-dead mango trees” (34). The establishment of the church in the vicinity of the village underscores an attempt by the Baptist followers to escape persecution and worship their religion in freedom, away from the colonial authorities. The hill into which the Black community has fled is reproduced as one of the topographic elements that once served as a refuge for Maroon communities.

However, marronage does not seem to provide a definitive way out of the colonial repression of the Spiritual Baptist practices. The sporadic flights do not yield a permanent freedom of worship. Reacting to Brother Oswald’s suggestion that they should run again, Bolo, the stickfighter, replies: “You ain’t tired of running…You ain’t tired?” (Lovelace, Wine 47). Bolo’s argument points out the limits to his community’s constant escapes. His challenge underscores a questioning of the effectiveness of marronage in the Caribbean. Although Kamau Brathwaite and Édouard Glissant celebrate marronage in their literary works, other Caribbean writers view it as an inadequate response to oppression and national conflict.
Lovelace’s work also celebrates people who lived in slave communities, faced the hardships of their diasporic experience and contributed to the making of the West Indies. In Salt, for instance, Lovelace lays emphasis on characters like Bango, his grandfa ther Jojo, and Alford George, not on those who flew back to the motherland like Guinea John, Bango’s first African ancestor, or those who migrated overseas in search of better living conditions. Guinea John’s mythic return to Africa and the inability of Guinea John’s children to fly back to the motherland invokes, as Jennifer Rahim suggests, both “the symbolic closing of the door of literal and nostalgic return to the Old World” and the responsibility of Guinea John’s descendants “to take up, with confidence, the ‘heavy load’ of shaping ‘their future…in the islands’” (8).

Marronage was not a common phenomenon in Trinidad unlike other Caribbean islands such as Jamaica. Slavery, having been introduced late in Trinidad, lasted only fifty years, so marronage did not have the same historical context there. More importantly, the development of the Spiritual Baptist religion in the context of urbanization, community, and national space makes marronage irrelevant. The urban environment is not propitious for marronage unlike the mountainous regions of Jamaica. Also, the negotiation of a national space entails the coming together of all forces, and not their separation. In an interview, Lovelace insists that:

Here are the people, servicing in this community. This is not like people running away up in the hills that they did during the period of
enslavement. These are people who are servicing in a community. These are people working in town, or wherever you want. Running away did not seem to me an option. (Personal interview)

Lovelace does not necessarily reject maroonage as a response to oppression at all times, in all spaces, and in all situations. He simply believes that the conditions that justified maroonage in the time of enslavement are not relevant to this context of the evolution of the Spiritual Baptist Church. In Dragon, the prologue implies, as Kenneth Ramchand argues, that this form of resistance served a specific role during the enslavement of Africans and the period preceding universal suffrage. It is now an out-of-date survival tradition, a “pass-key” that is just half-remembered (Ramchand, “Calling all Dragons” 317).

Similarly, maroonage is critiqued in several Caribbean novels and historical accounts. In Texaco Patrick Chamoiseau rejects it as an appropriate means of problem solving, especially in the context of nation building. He underlines the absence of Maroons in times of national consolidation. As Chamoiseau asserts, “Maroons live but had no shadows. They seemed to have deserted this earthly world” (Texaco 49). Silvio Torres-Saillant contends in An Intellectual History of the Caribbean that however noble and praiseworthy the legacy of runaway slaves is, it is also one of complicity with colonial authorities. Maroon chiefs like, Guarocuya, also known as Enriquillo, and Cudjoe “allied with the colonial power to capture insurgent or runaway slaves” (Torres-Saillant 34).

Historian Franklin Knight notes that the formal treaties that the Maroons signed with the plantation owners fortified the slave system. These treaties prevented or
limited the possibilities for other enslaved Africans to escape and achieve freedom (Knight 96). In *I, Tituba, Black Witch of Salem*, Maryse Condé criticizes the Maroons’ self-preservation and inclination to violence. She unveils the negative side of the Maroons when she writes, “They’re just a bunch of ungrateful wretches who leave their mothers and brothers in slavery while they themselves live a life of freedom” (*Tituba*, 152). Like Knight, Condé disapproves of the “unspoken agreements” between maroon slaves and the white masters, which guarantee the runaway slaves their freedom while they should report any attempt to escape by the enslaved (de Souza 270). Christopher, the Maroon chief in *Tituba*, looks out for his own interests and exploits the women, instead of raiding plantations to liberate the enslaved (234). The different narratives above attack marronage for its legacy of betrayal, as well as its irrelevance in the contemporary Caribbean as a means to cope with social issues.

Clearly, Lovelace does not claim escape or marronage as a long-term practical solution or means to preserve Afro-Caribbean cultural practices amidst colonial repression. The option that Lovelace offers is twofold, which is the central point that *Wine* is making. On the one hand, he presents the possibility of violent revolt. And on the other, he proposes mimicry or accommodation to the orthodoxy. As Lovelace points out, “in *The Wine of Astonishment* there’re two points of views … one is the view of rebellion or resistance, or confrontation. And the other one is the view of acquiescing, even temporarily” (Personal interview).

However, although he believes that both approaches are valid, in this novel he favors mimicry over violent resistance in this context of colonial
repression, as seen in the subplot revolving around Bolo. The majority of the community of Bonasse does not opt for physical confrontation against the authorities. Yet, Bolo, the stickfighter, refuses to bow down to colonial power. He does not see any other way of facing the colonial authorities than fighting back against the repressive apparatus. He thinks the only way to liberate the church is to kill Corporal Prince. Neither marronage nor what he sees as passivity appeals to Bolo. He belongs to the category of warriors, in Lovelace’s fiction, who find meaning in turning to violence as a way of coping with their problems. Bolo’s prototype is Fisheye in The Dragon. Both characters’ warrior tendencies bring them to act destructively against their own communities. Sonnyboy is a badjohn prototype in Is Just a Movie but unlike Bolo and Fisheye, Sonnyboy evolves, and grows out of this confinement of warriorhood.

Bolo expresses warriorhood through the culture of stickfighting, which originated from disputes over jobs in squatter settlements where employment opportunities were scarce. The struggle over access to the rarely available resources and jobs in these squatter settlements resulted in “the rise of calinda/stickfighting street gangs, formed to defend turfs. Each such band had a lead singer/chantwell whose duty … was to harangue the stickfighters into action, to sustain the courage of his champion, and to pour scorn on the rival group or champion” (Rohlehr 52). As part of the celebration of Carnival, stickfighting became a representation of manhood and warriorhood, as Lovelace depicts it in both Wine and Dragon.
By invoking the tradition of stickfighting in Wine through the character of Bolo, Lovelace demonstrates both the promises and risks of vernacular cultures. Bolo is the champion of stickfighting in the community of Bonasse. He valiantly represents his community in stickfighting, which gives him a sense of belonging, dignity, and humanity. As Eva narrates,

Bolo was a special man; not only to us, women, to everybody. If you have a house to build or a dead to bury, you could call him to lend a hand, and though he’s a man who fears nobody, he knows how to laugh, and if you down to cheer you up, and he could feel sorry. (21)

Bolo sees stickfighting not so much for the battle as for its performance, as a space for self-affirmation and an invitation to acknowledge that he and his destitute community exist (21-22). Stickfighting emerges, then, as an art form that not only gives a sense of meaning to the individual, but also contributes to the survival and recognition of the whole community. With the outbreak of World War II, the arrival of the Americans in Bonasse, and the ban of the Baptist Church practices, along with restrictions on Carnival and stickfighting, Bolo’s life takes a dramatic turn.

The ban of Carnival and of stickfighting contests signals the end of the stickfighter as a hero. The Yankees become the new heroes, drawing the attention of young men and women, who start ignoring Bolo. The sense of significance and belonging that he has enjoyed as a warrior dissipates. From then on, Bolo develops a sense of anger, frustration, and inclination towards
violence, even against his own community (104-06). Like Fisheye in _Dragon_, Bolo looks for any opportunity to get into fights. He drinks and refuses to pay, expecting to be challenged into a fight. The hero-stickfighter becomes a badjohn, exerting “a full terror in the village” (Wine 102). Similarly in _Is Just a Movie_, Sonnyboy, growing into manhood and feeling resentment at the world, goes “to fetes in the RC school, daring the girls to refuse to dance with him, waiting for a fella to oppose him and so provide the confrontation he was inviting” (54-55).

As a warrior, Bolo despises what he considers his community’s passive response to colonial repression. He cannot understand and does not accept his community’s subordination to the will of the established authority, disguising or changing their traditional ways of celebrating the Baptist spiritual religion. As Eva narrates:

> Bolo stand up there, his lower jaw dropping out his face, his eyes disbelieving, his head turning to look at Bee, at me, at all of us as if he can’t believe that after all these years this is where we is. He stand up there in the church, in the midst of our hymn singing, with amazement and heartbreak in his face…when I look back for him he wasn’t there, was gone. He would never come back to our church again. (17)

Eva’s description clearly expresses Bolo’s strong opposition to his community’s accommodation to the religious orthodoxy. He is a warrior, and believes that only direct confrontation can liberate the Spiritual Baptist church. However, his determination to fight eventually makes him a tragic figure. His battle with
Corporal Prince leads to his imprisonment. After his release from prison, Bolo is disillusioned both by the authorities’ refusal to grant him land and his rejection by his community. His disappointment reinforces his anger, and causes him to increase his tendency toward violence. Marjorie Thorpe notes in her introduction to *Wine* that:

> the suffering which Lovelace’s heroes endure becomes the prelude to creative action, the Bolos are seduced into a posture of violent confrontation, directing their rage not only against a hostile establishment, but also against the very people they desire to save.

(xiii)

Bolo represents, in fact, a threat to both the orthodoxy and the survival of the community of Bonasse and the Baptist church. On the one hand, Bolo’s resistance constitutes a risk to established colonial order. On the other hand, it can cause his own destruction, the destruction of the community, and that of the church, as the police physically attack the villagers to maintain order. Rebellious attitudes of an individual can be a factor of destruction for a community in the colonial West Indies. As Lovelace declares, “They [Lovelace’s parents] were telling us: behave yourself, calm yourself, be very quiet – because they understood that that was the only way for us to survive” (“Balack Community Building” 154). Violent insubordination and defiance are a risk to both the individual and the community.

Bolo’s inclination to violence ineluctably brings him misfortune. In an attempt to take revenge on his own people, he kidnap...
and is eventually killed as the police try to rescue the young women. By turning against his community, Bolo becomes a false hero like Fisheye. The problem with Bolo is that he refuses to accommodate himself to the new conditions, that is to say, finding a form of resistance that is less harmful to his commitment to preserving traditions. Aiyejina asserts that Bolo enters into conflict with his own self and his community, because he “was not historical; he was locked in a time warp” (Personal interview). Bolo’s interpretation of his culture in fact is not in conformity with the new reality. Bolo mirrors a type of warrior figure in African fiction. Aiyejina sees a parallel between Bolo and Okonkwo, Chinua Achebe’s protagonist in Things Fall Apart. Aiyejina observes that, like Bolo, Okonkwo is unable to detach himself from his primeval conception of his culture. Okonkwo lives in a society, which, by custom, kills twins, and he is supportive of that. Only his friend questions this practice, asking why they would want to kill twins, and what crime they have committed. Okonkwo’s friend calls for an interrogation of their culture in order to “see,” as Aiyejina claims, “what we need to take forward and what we need to abandon” (Personal interview). The narrator of Dragon evokes the need to go beyond the culture of fighting, as he reflects on Fisheye’s violent attitude. The narrator underlines other possibilities of entering into relation with reality and society as he notes, “maybe he [Fisheye] liked too much fight. Maybe life, real life, was not just fighting. Maybe you had to have brains, you had to have brains, you had to have a manifesto and a programme; you had to go to college” (66-67). The representation of the figure of the stickfighter in Wine expresses Lovelace’s ambivalence towards popular cultural traditions. Although
he admires these vernacular cultures, Lovelace does not romanticize them. He believes in the humanizing and uplifting potential of popular cultures, but he also remains conscious of their destructive capacities.

In opposition to violent resistance, the mimicry of colonial cultural practices as infrapolitics in *Wine* appears to be a pragmatic response against the orthodoxy. Far from surrendering itself, the community of Bonasse, under the leadership of the priest Bee, opts to imitate the Anglican and Catholic ways as a masked resistance, a means to ward off the brutal reprisals and to maintain its Spiritual Baptist Church. The Bonasse villagers’ acquiescence and passivity contrast Bolo’s choice of violent confrontation. Faced with the reprisals of the colonial repressive apparatus, Bee and his community decide to comply with the ways of worship the colonial authorities have decreed. Through his sermon, Bee’s encourages his brethren to mimic the Anglican and Catholic worship styles. He pleads that:

if a man compel you to walk one mile with him, go two; if he ask for your cloak, give him your coat too. We going to do what they want us to do. We going to try it their way. They want us to not ring the bell, we not going to ring the bell. They want us to be Anglican and Catholic, we going to be like Catholic and Anglican. We going to sing how they want us to sing, we going to pray quiet just as they pray. We are going to worship like them. The war can’t go on forever. (47)
Bee calls on his community to mimic, and pretend to follow the Catholic and Anglican methods of worship until the war ends, which will hopefully bring the repeal of the Prohibition Ordinance.

It is a misreading of Lovelace’s novel, however, to consider that the villagers’ decision to mimic or accommodate Christianity as a complete acceptance of colonial ways, or resignation and defeat. This is far from being an acceptance of hegemony or from representing a form of false consciousness. Memmi, developing on the Marxist view of hegemony, observes that “It is common knowledge that the ideology of a governing class is adopted in large measure by the governed classes… By agreeing to this ideology, the dominated classes practically confirm the role assigned to them” (*The Colonizer and the Colonized* 88). Lovelace’s representation of mimicry in *Wine*, however, functions as a mode of resistance. The Bonasse villagers’ adoption of the ways of the religious orthodoxy in *Wine* characterizes what Scott calls “infrapolitics of the powerless,” that is to say “patterns of disguising ideological insubordination,” which “are somewhat analogous to the patterns by which… peasants and slaves have disguised their efforts to thwart material appropriation of their labor, their production, and their property” (Scott xiii). Through mimicry, the subordinate groups reproduce “public transcripts” to divert the eye of the oppressor and dissimulate their dissent. For Scott, there are “hidden transcripts” beyond the enactment of the public transcripts, which some scholars fail to see when they read passive obedience into those who do not openly revolt. As Scott argues, “[e]very subordinate group creates, out of its ordeal, a ‘hidden transcript’ that
represents a critique of power spoken behind the back of the dominant" (xii). So, in his speech, Bee only encourages his followers to pretend that they worship in the ways of the colonizers. It is clear, then, that the villagers' mimicry of the Anglican and Catholic ways is not simply out of blind belief in those ways. Rather, it stands for a means to escape the ruthlessness of the police, maintain the Baptist Church with its Africanized rituals rather than have it destroyed, and safeguard the integrity of community of Bonasse. In this sense, mimicry represents a means of resistance and survival. Another vivid instance of mimicry as infrapolitics is seen in Bee’s suggestion that they should stage agricultural meetings to deceive the gaze of the police after establishing their church on the hill. Bee declares that they should “have a look-out to watch for the police so if they creep up on us and we don’t have time to run we could pretend that we keeping agricultural meeting” (Wine 34-35). The supposed agricultural meetings stand for an active deception, which is meant to dissimulate the actual Spiritual Baptist services.

What is specific in Scott’s theory of hidden transcripts is his focus on linguistic patterns. Scott tries to provide proof of how subordinate groups resist through the development of "a veiled discourse of dignity and self-assertion within the public transcript" (137). He believes the speech acts incorporate an "ideology resistance [that] is disguised, muted and veiled for safety’s sake" (137). While Scott emphasizes linguistic patterns in his study, he provides a peripheral space to the treatment of cultural performance as hidden transcripts. In the context of the Caribbean, however, where the diasporic experience involved
cultural adaptation and survival of ancestral cultures, hidden transcripts are often embedded in performance. Carnival and religious practices like the Spiritual Baptist services, Vodoun, and other Afro-Caribbean religious practices, are examples of performances that are sites where the oppressed resort to mimicry as bearers of hidden transcripts. Historians have documented how, for instance, slaves who practiced Vodoun would mimic Catholic ways of worshipping saints to escape their masters' oppression. In the public space they worship the Catholic saints, while in reality they have in mind their own gods. This process evokes "syncretism by correspondence," or as Leslie Desmangles names it, "symbiosis by identity" (Qtd. in Fernández Olmos and Paravisini-Gebert 4). As Margarite Fernández Olmos and Lizabeth Paravisini-Gebert explain, symbiosis by identity is the development "through which an African deity and a Catholic saint became one on the basis of mythical or symbolic similarities" (4). Symbiosis by identity resulted from the imposition of Christianity upon the African slaves, and the latter's will to perpetuate their religious beliefs. Aiyejina argues that because Africans in the Caribbean were forced to practice Christianity, they reinterpreted that religion, and infused it with the African spirit and ethos. He observes that:

one of the things we have to understand is that Africans walking into a Catholic church, especially Africans of my part of the world, the southwestern part of Nigeria, the images the we see of the saints automatically they will interpret them from the prism of the Orisha tradition. So they see St. George … and they think of Ogun as the god of war, and so on. So, that is a kind of mindset that they
would have taken into anything they do. And that is what African people have done all over the world, in everything they have come in contact with. (Personal interview)

The *cannes brûlées* (cane burning harvest celebrations) were also moments whereby Africans recreated their dances and practiced their traditional rituals (Arneaud 7). Also called *Canboulay*, the *cannes brûlées* emerged during slavery, and celebrated the extinguishing of the cane burning flames. Africans gradually transformed this seasonal ritual into a festival that included carrying lighted flambeaux, ribald dancing and masking. In *Wine*, drawing from such subversion, Lovelace captures the art of religious performance to demonstrate mimicry as a way of resistance, cultural retention, and community survival.

Cultural retention and community survival entail the preservation of life and cultural forms. In this respect, mimicry operates as a protective measure. In Lovelace’s novel it functions to ward off colonial violence, dissimulating the villagers’ intention to perpetuate their religion in order to safeguard the integrity of their church and community. By mimicking the Anglican and Catholic ways, Bee and his followers intend to preserve the Baptist Church and their community, which can only be possible if they control the anger and violent insurgency of followers like Bolo and prevent colonial retaliation. As sociolinguists and social psychologists suggest, mimicry functions as “masking one’s feelings” and “controlling what would be natural impulse to rage, insult, and anger and the violence that such feelings prompt” (Scott 37). It is therefore important to underline that mimicry would not by itself cause the Prohibition Ordinance to be
lifted. Mimicry allows the church and the community to live until the day comes when colonial authorities lift the ban of the Spiritual Baptist practices. Bee recommends that his people just pretend to follow the colonizer’s ways, and put their own man on the Council to negotiate the repeal of the Prohibition Ordinance, or just wait until the war ends, when the colonial authorities will be compelled to lift the ban.

The repeal of the ordinance is indeed negotiated and obtained at the political level. Morton, the teacher and the Bonasse community’s Council representative, contributes to the revocation of the ban, allowing the villagers to recover their freedom of worship in the wake of World War II. Once a lackey of the orthodoxy and a representative of the alienated class of the educated people, Morton paradoxically emerges as the savior. His transformation suggests that, although Lovelace critiques the educated people for their alienation from the culture of the masses, he is still sees them as factors of change. Lovelace’s belief in the intellectual as a vector of changes is seen in the Bonasse villagers’ valuing of education and hope in the educated man. Indeed, the educated man replaces the warrior/stickfighter as the heroic figure with the development of Western education in the Caribbean and the rise of an educated, black class. As Knight argues, Western education constituted a medium through which black and colored people achieved social mobility (284). The attitude of the community of Bonasse towards Morton remains indicative of the villagers’ hope for Western education, since they see him as potential hero and savior. His popularity within his community is described in several instances, suggesting that everything
Western, including education, is not simplistically rejected. For instance, Morton ousts Bolo and wins the heart of Eulalie because of his education. Also, the community cherishes Morton, and everyone addresses him as their son in his early days of school. Moreover, it is Morton that the community has elected as a Council representative at the expense of his illiterate contenders. That is why when Morton initially betrays his people, they share the responsibilities for the consequences. Thorpe claims in her introduction to Wine that “since most members of the community approve the rapid social and material advancement that attends Morton’s election to the island legislature, Lovelace suggests that the whole society stands implicated in this false system of values” (xi-xii). However, Morton redeems himself by finally fighting on behalf of the people who have always believed in him.

Lovelace upholds lower classes and ordinary people, but he occasionally situates agents of social change in the lower-middle class intellectuals in his novels. These are often portrayed as teachers. Such is the case of Ivan Morton in Wine as indicated above; the schoolmaster in Schoolmaster; and Alford George in Salt. In Lamming’s Castle, such a character echoes Mr. Slime, the teacher and unionist, who, like the schoolmaster, ultimately is a traitor. Other characters that hold political leadership, as professionals outside the educational realm in Lovelace’s fiction, represent Walter, the bureaucrat, in While Gods Are Falling, and the lawyer of the Nine, a group of rebellious Afro-Trinidadians in Dragon. Lovelace is aware of the fundamental albeit complicated role of
educated men in the development of Caribbean nations. As he observes in an unti
titled typescript, published on March 10, 1968:

We are learning also that the day for nation saving prescriptions from an individual or a small group of individuals is fast fading, and that in the end the solution to the country’s problems lies in the hands of an educated and an aware citizenry who are fearlessly prepared to promote the well being of the [masses] before all else.

(2)

The educated intellectuals assume political roles in Lovelace’s fiction. But they are mainly from the lower middle-class and Lovelace does not seem to incorporate the upper echelon of intellectuals in his agenda of social transformation, except the Prime Minister whose image remains overarching, specifically in his later novels.

The characteristics of the Prime Minister often resonate with the figure of Eric Williams, the historian and first Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago. But the Prime Minister in the work of Lovelace also represents all other Prime Ministers of Trinidad and Tobago, either African or Indian (Lovelace, Personal interview). Lovelace claims that he does not emphasize the upper class of intellectuals, because those people are not usually involved with the people or community he is dealing with. He does not see them bringing about change for the latter. In *The Wretched of the Earth*, Fanon describes the self-serving native intellectuals in postcolonial countries as bourgeois intellectuals who imitate the colonialist bourgeois elite in their manners and thinking, as well as in their looting
of national resources (12). Lovelace seems to agree here with this sense of colonial mimicry and does not identify with this type of bourgeois elite, somewhat idealizing the mimicry of lower classes as a form of resistance. Kenneth Ramchand believes that Lovelace calls upon the minor bureaucracy to lead, because “the ‘bigger’ people – the government ministers and representatives, the clerisy, and the wealthy business community – have failed to do so” (17). Gramsci labels these educated men who connect with their people as organic intellectuals. He opposes the organic intellectuals to the traditional intellectuals, who not only occupy high political and social positions, but also separate themselves from the common people. For Gramsci the organic intellectuals help the working class and the masses to organize and develop an organic attachment, which defines their relations beyond solely bureaucratic dimensions (Prison Notebooks II 173-74). Lovelace finds the organic intellectuals among the lower and lower-middle class of intellectuals who, as political agents, are involved with the common people. These intellectuals represent teachers and bureaucrats whom Lovelace describes as ordinary people (Personal interview).

However, although Lovelace presents the lower-middle-class intellectuals as the actors that bring the project of change into completion, the masses constitute the main catalyst of change. He believes that the real factors of revolution reside in the common people who are the initiators of revolution. The people who hold political leadership can only foster transformation and progress, because they are the ones that are appointed to that position. Fanon develops a similar point in The Wretched of the Earth, arguing that the masses, specifically
the peasants, possess a potential for revolt, but it is the intellectuals that should take advantage of their revolts to achieve national liberation (70-71). Yet, unlike Fanon, Lovelace suggests that the change the intellectuals bring in is not fundamental. In “Liberation and Reclamation of Self,” Lovelace argues that change does not come from the leaders. They cannot bring change unless the people desire it, mobilize their forces and stand for it (pars. 1-2). In Salt, Bango, the peasant, initiates protest through his carnivalesque march, and is joined by Alford, the teacher. In this respect, Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o argues that the intellectuals lead the revolt against colonialism, because they are equipped with the ability to articulate the grievances and the demands of the people (Homecoming 118). Likewise, in Lovelace’s conception, the lower-middle-class intellectuals help to bring change in the community, but their contribution is minimal. The lower masses constitute the driving force of change.

Often, the categories of leaders that Lovelace depicts do not just attempt to help their people, but they also take advantage of their position to exploit them. Their political roles often serve as means of their social ascension. Morton climbs the social ladder as he relies on his people to get elected to the Council. He is the prototype of the Caribbean political leader that conceives of politics as a way to gain individual privileges. Thorpe believes that “Lovelace’s exposé of Morton’s political chicanery includes an understanding of the particular circumstances which have encouraged many West Indian politicians to engage in political activity merely as a means of securing upward social mobility” (xi). This paradigm is relevant to Ngũgĩ’s work. Like Fanon, he often characterizes the intellectuals
as agents who can also betray their people as we see in Lamming’s Mr. Slime as well.

Morton’s social ascension is not just material, but it is also psychological. That psychological ascension comes after a rejection of his black identity and an adoption of Western values. On becoming a council representative, Morton deserts his father’s house to live in the old mansion of the Richardsons, the white colonialist family. This echoes Fanon’s argument that the colonized dreamed of taking the colonizers’ positions and privileges. As Fanon wrote, “the colonized man is an envious man…there is not one colonized subject who at least once a day does not dream of taking the place of the colonialist” (*Wretched* 5).

Additionally, not only does Morton speak Standard English, but he also rejects the so-called evil practice of the Spiritual Baptist religion, abandons the dark-skinned Eulalie, and marries the lighter-skinned girl who speaks Standard English. This union is pertinent to the process of “lactification” (“whitening”) that Fanon sees in interracial marriages. In *Black Skin, White Masks*, Fanon controversially argues that interracial marriages are avenues through which the black man and black woman aspire to whiteness, civilization, and acceptance in white society. Memmi makes a similar claim when he describes the attitude of the alienated colonized subject: “His habits, clothing, food, architecture are closely copied, even if inappropriate. A mixed marriage is the extreme expression of this audacious leap” (121). Likewise, the schoolmaster in *The Schoolmaster* enriches himself on the backs of the people of Kumaca, which he also tries to help set on the path of progress and modernization. He epitomizes the alienated
black elite, and reminds us of Macaulay’s class of interpreters as being Indian in color but Western in mind and manners. A conversation between Father Vincent, the priest, and Benn, the transporter, speaks to the schoolmaster’s state of alienation. To Father Vincent’s statement, “[b]ut this schoolmaster is your own. Your own people,” Benn replies

He is black, yes. But not my own people. Priest, he is closer to your people. I think he is your people. He learned in your schools, and he wears the clothes the way you wear them, and he talks the way you talk, and his thinking is that of your people. He is yours, priest.

He is not mine. (78)

Both Ivan and the schoolmaster represent alienated colonial subjects, mimicking Western values as theorized by Lord Macaulay and claimed by Naipaul. Their attitudes underscore that the political evolution of educated men in postcolonial nations is not always progressive or radical.

The schoolmaster is both beneficial and detrimental to the community of Kumaka. He provides the villagers with teaching services, and counsels them on administrative matters like the construction of the road from Valencia that will open up the village to the world and foster progress. But he rapes Christiana, daughter of Paulaine Dandrade, an elder and member of the village council, and purchases a white horse with the community’s money. Like the schoolmaster, Mr. Slime in Lamming’s Castle, though he defends the workers’ rights he also acquires property at the expense of the people he is supposed to defend. Slime betrays his cause and the hope of the villagers, buying the land from Mr.
Creighton, the white landlord, and selling it to speculators and investors, throwing these villagers in a state of homelessness. Caribbean literature, through the works of Lovelace, Lamming, Walcott, and others, provides the figure of the alienated educated man as a political agent who not only represents a force of hope and change, but also carries a destructive potential like the stickfighter that he replaces.

Against this figure of the corrupt politician, Lovelace characterizes lower-middle class educated men as a more fulfilling type of political agent in his novels. Although these characters may present defects, they are also involved with their people, sincerely supporting their cause and helping them with their existential needs. This corroborates Michel de Certeau’s argument in *The Practice of Everyday Life* that everybody cannot be corrupt in society. De Certeau believes that wherever there are techniques of domination, one can find tactics that constitute strategies of doing away with the system of oppression. Walter Castle in *Gods* and Alford George in *Salt* constitute two examples of the kind of fulfilling agents that Lovelace describes. Both Walter and Alford initially express an intention to escape and free themselves from the hardships that their respective communities live in. Walter lives in Webber Street in the midst of Laventille, Port of Spain. His community lives in social decay, accentuated by poverty and crime. Finding this situation unfulfilling, Walter decides to leave the town to establish himself in the countryside. As for Alford, he feels a sense of dispossession. The house he lives in is his father’s, not his. He believes his
society does not have anything to offer him and that the only way out of this situation is to migrate overseas.

Both Walter and Alford eventually realize that they should stay and help their communities deal with their problems. Walter gets involved with his community, helping to liberate Mrs. Wall’s son, Rubben, falsely imprisoned for murder. Additionally, Walter summons a big meeting, in order to gather his urban community to discuss and face the ills that plague the community. Likewise, Alford becomes aware of the necessity to remain on his island and help with the issues his community confronts. He wages a struggle to change the school system that jeopardizes the education of the children in his community and gets involved in politics with the PNM to represent his people. However, after a few missteps as a politician, he reconciles with his people, taking initiatives to give land to black peasants as compensation for the historical wrongs that have been done to them. This act causes his dismissal from his position as a minister. Though he is given the honor to lead the march at the end of the novel, Alford joins the march, and stands side by side with Bango, the peasant. If Ivan abandons his people, and uses them initially for his own interest, Walter and Alford recognize the need to reconnect with their people. Some of Lovelace’s characters who become political agents often disconnect with their people temporarily and reconnect with their people in the end.

This ambivalent representation of Lovelace’s characters like Ivan Morton underscores the literary technique of the mock-heroic in the West Indian novel. This is a narrative style by which not just Lovelace, but Naipaul and Samuel
Selvon also create potential heroes and then deflate them. These writers, as Victor Chang argues, “must simultaneously create and question their own emerging heroes and the values for which they stand” (94). Caribbean fiction seeks to make the distinction, as Thorpe asserts, “between those false heroes whom the society esteems, and the true hero-figures whom the novelist seeks to celebrate” (“In Search of the West Indian Hero” 90). The elements of the mock-heroic are quite relevant in Naipaul’s and Selvon’s novels. In Miguel Street, for instance, Naipaul represents Bogart as a Hollywood-style heroic figure: “Bogart became the Bogart of the films...he became a cowboy on the RUPUNUNI, smuggled things...” (13). However, when he is found guilty of bigamy, his ambitions collapse, and he becomes a nonentity (94-95). Man Man, a character depicted in Lovelace’s Dragon as Taffy, evokes the “Mock Heroic.” His attempt to embody heroism and sacrifice is superimposed by his explosive cry as he is being stoned by the community: “What the hell you people think you doing? Look, get me down from this thing quick, let me down quick, and I go settle with that son of bitch who pelt a stone at me” (Miguel Street 44). This is a burlesque situation of incongruity, which provokes laughter. In Selvon’s Moses Ascending, Moses manifests signs of the mock-heroic as he lacks full control over his adopted culture. As Chang notes, Moses’s use of “bombastic style,” also mixed with Creole, underscores the “pastiche culture” in which he lives (95). Additionally, Moses’s pretention that he speaks as well as Shakespeare and Wordsworth, also echoed by Naipaul in his characters in Miguel Street, is countered by the blunders that he makes at times, which makes him appear
foolish (Chang 96). The Moses in Moses Ascending is in contradiction with the Moses in Selvon’s The Lonely Londoners. In the latter novel, Moses eventually appears a real hero as he undergoes suffering, and truly represents his people. As the narrator describes: “Sometimes, listening to them, he look in each face, and he feel a great compassion for every one of them, as if he live each of their lives, one by one, and all the strain and stress come to rest on his shoulders” (123). The “Mock-Heroic” style in Caribbean fiction functions as a reassessment of myths or accounts of a heroic past. South African writer J. M. Coetzee emphasizes that narratives should develop a critical conception of myths, but not reinforce them (4). Caribbean writers similarly seek to produce narratives, which sometimes elevate myths, but also question where they are weak. Ivan Morton and Bolo in Wine like the schoolmaster in Schoolmaster demonstrate aspects of the mock-heroic. They initially emerge as heroes but they become mock-heroes when they turn their backs on their people.

While the mock-hero in Wine is seen in the educated man and the stickfighter/warrior, heroism is located in the idealized oppressed villagers of Bonasse who use mimicry as a form of passive resistance against colonial oppression. In Lovelace’s novel, mimicry appears to be a tactic of resistance and cultural survival that emanates from the inability of the powerless to wage open revolt against colonial oppression and brute power. The compliance to the will of the powerful, in Wine, remains indicative of Lovelace’s ideology that where violent revolution is self-destructive, non-violent resistance should prevail. Brother Oswald clearly expresses this view when he claims:
I don’t mean that they not brave. The men have to think more than their bravery. They have to think about the church and how it going to live. They have to think about our children who we want to see grow big. Because once you start against the police, you have to continue. (38)

As Scott argues, oppression inspires hidden transcripts that benefit the oppressed, especially when it is impossible to carry out violent resistance (86). Susan Gal, expanding on Scott’s argument, states that “[it] is thus often in the interest of the subordinate to maintain their differential public transcript, even though they do not believe it, especially if open rebellion is seen as a practical impossibility. The weak are most likely to resist in devious ways, without any open confrontation” (410). While Selwyn Ryan agrees with the Caribbean radicals’ claims of violent struggle based on Fanon’s advocacy of open resistance against colonialism, his book Race and Nationalism in Trinidad, especially Part Four, argues that “revolutionary violence in the Caribbean context is neither a meaningful nor desirable alternative” (8). For him, the Algerian struggle for independence that Fanon emphasizes does not provides any reason for hope, and the local and international contexts that favored the success of the Cuban revolution are not likely to happen again (8). Lovelace likewise maintains that “African culture was always on the run. It had to operate underground, quietly and to survive at all had to see all sorts of camouflages” (“Creole Culture” 6). He believes that the early inhabitants of the Americas would have survived as nations and civilizations if they had not turned to violent resistance. As he
asserts, the Aztecs, Incas, North American Indians, and the Caribs might have been still alive, “had they not chosen to fight ferociously,” and had not chosen “to commit suicide rather than be held captive” (“Black Community Building” 153). The extinction of the Amerindians cannot, however, be solely justified by their resistance or suicides. They also died en masse out of their inability to withstand the diseases that were introduced by the Europeans. The essential thing to grasp here is not that Lovelace is against resistance as such but he values the survival of the Caribbean people over reckless, self-destructive violence. As he argues in “Creating Communities,”

If one is to pay tribute to our fathers under slavery and colonialism, to me, it would not be that they fought or that they were humiliated, but that they survived, when all around them, indigenous peoples were being exterminated – in the Caribbean, in Central America, in South America, in North America. (115)

The survival of Caribbean people is not just about heroic revolts but has also been obtained through seemingly unheroic modes of resistance and even accommodation and adaptation.

Unlike Lovelace, Fanon advocates violent resistance as a means to put an end to colonialism and establish a national culture. Yet, in saying so, Fanon does not reject all non-violent opposition to oppression. He is in fact suggesting that the passive ways of struggle, in the past, are inadequate during the struggle against Western colonialism. As Fanon argues:

[w]hen a people undertakes an armed struggle or even a political
struggle against a relentless colonialism, the significance of traditions changes. All that has made up the technique of passive resistance in the past may, during this phase, be radically condemned…This is why the intellectual often runs the risk of being out of date. (Wretched 209)

In the above passage, Fanon makes a critique of the intellectuals of Négritude, who are only concerned about nostalgically recovering an idealized past without engaging an armed struggle for their people. He perceives the role of the black intellectual as not just singing about the past, but also to be involved in armed struggle for the liberation of his people. For him, a national culture cannot exist under colonization. That is why, as Fanon asserts, “to fight for national culture means in the first place to fight for liberation of the nation, that material keystone which makes the building of a possible culture” (Wretched 210). Memmi corroborates Fanon’s argument that only violent resistance can eradicate colonialism. He emphasizes that “Far from being surprised at the revolts of colonized peoples, we should be, on the contrary, surprised that they are not more frequent and violent…revolt is the only way out of the colonial situation” (127). Memmi’s argument characterizes non-violent means of resistance as irrelevant in the face of colonialism. Both Fanon and Memmi conceive of colonialism as a form of heightened violence, and only a similar violence can do away with it. This emphasis on violent revolt as resistance to oppression does not, however, appeal to Lovelace, especially in contexts when such open resistance causes destruction on the side of the oppressed.
3. Mimicry and Creole Culture

Mimicry as a process of adaptation and cultural retention has contributed to the establishment of a Creole culture in the Caribbean. Creole culture emanates from the adaptation of different cultural elements that have come into relation during the plantation system. The intermixture between cultures in the adaptation process differentiates Creoleness from Americanness. The Créolité theorists Creoleness Patrick Chamoiseau, Raphaël Confiant, and Jean Bernabé clearly draw that contrast. As they view it, Americanization or Americanness “describes the progressive adaptation, and with no real interaction with other cultures, of western populations in a world they baptized new” (Chamoiseau et al. 282). Creoleness includes Americanness, but goes beyond it. Firstly, it incorporates “the adaptation of Europeans, Africans, and Asians to the new world.” And secondly, it involves “the cultural transformation of these peoples within the same space, resulting in a mixed culture called Creole” (Chamoiseau et al., 283). If Chamoiseau, Confiant and Bernabé praise Creoleness, Glissant and Brathwaite propose Creolization as a process of cultural hybridity.

Analyzing Creolization in Caribbean society, Brathwaite suggests that it encompasses both “acculturation” and “interculturation.” Creolization includes acculturation as a “process of absorption of one culture by another,” and interculturation, as a “process of intermixture and enrichment” (Contradictory Omens 11). In her study of Brathwaite, Ravindra Jain structures acculturation and interculturation as dichotomies. The former entails imitation of Anglo-Saxon cultural forms as a result of colonial politics of domination; the latter involves a
process of creative cultural interrelation (154). Both processes existed concomitantly. However, acculturation or Afro-Saxonism dominated as the cultural dynamic; interculturation developed secretively, and was mostly associated with the lower classes. Elucidating Jain’s elaboration of Brathwaite’s conception of Creolization, Rhoda Reddock argues that he views acculturation as a force grounded on mimicking and favoring Anglo-Saxon values, and sees interculturation as an indigenous and creative cultural dynamic (67). If acculturation is the cause of loss, interculturation is the factor of enrichment. Where there was loss there was always enrichment in the historical encounter of the world cultures in the Caribbean. But contrary to Brathwaite, Lovelace often contends that “experiences of loss have come to obscure for us the fact that loss has often meant a corresponding gain” (“Caribbean Folk Culture” 25).

Acculturation and interculturation should not therefore be looked at as mere opposite forces; rather they form two cultural paradigms that define the process of Creolization.

Mimicry as a means of cultural adaptation and retention entails a process of loss and enrichment in Wine. The loss relates firstly to the denaturalization of the traditional way of celebrating the Spiritual Baptist services, which strips off the essence of the Spiritual Baptist practices, and causes the desertion by some members of the congregation. Eva expresses this in the following lines:

the more we go on with this type of service, this praying and quiet singing, and not ringing the bell or catching the Spirit, the more we realize that we ain’t solving the problem. All we was doing
was taking away the ceremonies natural to our worship. All we was doing was watering down the beauty and appeal of our church. And what was we becoming? What was we becoming?

More and more people was going away – not that you could blame them – for people don’t stay in a religion because is a fashion, but because it offer their spirit something. (48-49)

This joyless and quiet service differs from the typical Spiritual Baptist celebration when the congregation enters into ecstasy. In one instance, the narrator tells us how lively the service is with the singing, dancing, hand clapping, and spirit possession. As she says,

heads was bobbing and hands was clapping and the church was rocking and the church was jumping, the church was shaking and humming… /It come, the Spirit. And I clapping my hands and singing. And it catch Bee up and spin him round and bow him down and it hold him up and walk him down from the pulpit. And he take the bell and ring it to the East and he ring it to the West, and to the North he ring it to the South, Jeesus! (61)

Lastly, the loss involves the inability to have spirit possession after the repeal of the Prohibition Ordinance. It is a painful loss since it constitutes a rupture of the connection between the Spiritual Baptist followers and West African traditions. Spirit possession gives a sense of identity to the Afro-diasporic population in the New World. Kortright Davis believes that the African soul is not only
the spiritual matrix, the source of meaning and worth for all that energizes African existence,” but it also “makes the case for the continuity and connections between Africa and the Caribbean which are reconfigured and modified to forge a contextual expression of faith. (Qtd. in Reid-Salmon 70)

Spirit possession in Afro-Caribbean religions therefore provides a sense of purpose and constitutes a means of endurance and survival, which contradicts the Marxist view that religion is “the opiate of the masses,” or a mechanism of “diverting people’s attention from the social inequities of society” and “legitimizing the status quo” (Macionis and Plummer 507). Bee understands the gravity in the loss of spirit possession, and believes they “shoulda never stop worshipping in the true Baptist way” (Wine 145). But Eva persuades him that his decision to comply with the rules of colonial religious celebration is sound because it has allowed the Baptist Church and the community to live. Eva claims that:

[It] is because you care, Bee. [It] is because you didn’t want to take the chance to make them stamp us out altogether. Is because you wanted us to survive, to be here today.

Look at us, Bee, now we could baptize open anywhere in the island and sing and ring the bell and sprinkle water from the bowl of flowers. The spirit will come back. We here, we and the children.

(145)

The loss of spirit possession was painful for the villagers, but their religion survived. The retention of the Spiritual Baptist Church and the survival of the
community mattered more for Bee and Eva and Lovelace. As Lovelace contends, there is no point if they just fight and are destroyed (Personal interview).

If spirit possession is lost in religious practices, Lovelace finds in Afro-Caribbean music the potential to recover it. Eva captures those moments of spirit possession through musical performance in the end of the novel: “I listening to the music; for the music that those boys plays playing on the steelband have in it the same Spirit that we miss in our church: the same spirit; and listening to them, my heart swell and it is like resurrection morning” (146). Torres-Saillant views steelband music as an “unbeatable opportunity,” which allowes the villagers to derive a shared joy after the destruction of the Spirit of the Baptist Church (49). In Is Just a Movie, Aunt Magenta is able to feel the spirit that she used to experience during the services of the Baptist Church. On hearing the steelband music, she exclaims, “Wait this is me.” In the music, Aunt Magenta “could hear the Shouters’ hymns and she could hear the call of she spirit, and hear her own voice preaching and feel a calm sense of belonging to a big big world” (248-49). Both Eva’s and Aunt Magenta’s experiences with steelband music underscore the historical moment when the Afro-Caribbean people invented steel pan after the ban on the African drum. That is “the period during which the colonised fashioned new forms to take the place of what was banned and to find new locations” (Lovelace, “Colonialism and the Arts” 2). Music, like religion, remains a cultural element that serves as a medium of self-identification and self-fulfillment among the Afro-diasporic population in the Caribbean.
If the Baptist followers have lost aspects of their original religion, they have also been enriched by other religions. The enrichment mainly entails the incorporation of Christian religious beliefs as described earlier. Aspects of Christianity supplemented Afro-Caribbean religions. The predominant presence of Christian traits in the Baptist church came from the not always unwilling accommodation of Christianity, which resulted from the ban on African religious practices in the Caribbean. The ban on African religions happened at a time when Christianity was the main avenue through which African slaves could recover their spiritual ethos. Some of the elements of Christianity that were accommodated were eventually adopted as parts of the new World religions. In Haitian Vodoun, for instance, they worship loas alongside Catholic saints. In the Spiritual Baptist Church they also believe in Jesus, Moses and Jehovah.

Mimicry constitutes a mode of resisting the orthodoxy and makes it possible for the Bonasse villagers to retain their Spiritual Baptist religion and safeguard the integrity of their community. A key point in Lovelace’s philosophy and political ideology defines survival as trumping violent resistance. The essence of Lovelace’s vision is that survival should be achieved no matter what the means. Lovelace is of course aware that violent revolt can be an adequate way of confronting power as in the case of the Haitian Revolution. The community of Bonasse is also aware of the possibility of open rebellion as an option. Wine underscores that both the option of passive resistance and that of physical struggle linger in the psychology of the Bonasse villagers. Bee’s argument that they should not have stopped the real worship of the Baptist faith
after the loss of spirit possession in the wake of the repeal of the Prohibition Ordinance denotes the situation of psychological limbo in which the villagers have been living. But the survival of the villagers and their religion is paramount, and that is achieved through non-violent resistance. Lovelace believes that “Those who had to endure this journey [Middle Passage] were the one who made it possible for us to be present. And being present, we can now change things” (Personal interview). Lovelace’s point is that the Africans who survived and endured the Atlantic slave trade are the foundation of the existence and evolution of many Caribbean people.

Lovelace’s focus on the Spiritual Baptist Church followers’ experience is variously motivated. First, he intends to pay tribute and give visibility to the lower-class people who struggle to reclaim their dignity. In his interview with Aiyejina, Lovelace acknowledges his fascination for ordinary people--uneducated people--whose action remains underground and unsupported by the intellectual elite (Self Portraits 4-5). Additionally, the Baptist story in Wine demonstrates Lovelace’s opinion that it is through culture that Caribbean people have mostly resisted. He emphasizes in a typescript that:

In our history there have been literally more battles fought over arts than there have been about land. The camboulay riots, the Hosein riots, the numerous steelband riots, carnival and calypso prohibitions as well as the outlawing of the beating of African drum, of dancing Bongo and of the Spiritual Baptist religion are instances which indicate firstly, the tremendous importance of the arts to the
people of our nation. ("The Creative Arts" 1)

Another point is that the Baptist religion seems to be the most encompassing and inclusive religious practice among Afro-related spiritual beliefs. The Baptist church incorporates the East Indian diasporic group. Reddock observes that:

In 1960 Simpson found that in Trinidad “Quite a number of East Indians have joined Spiritual Baptist groups, but relatively few have become Shangoist.” In spite of this he found that of the 63 ‘powers’ identified, two of these, Baba Mahabil were described as East Indian powers. One Chinese power Wong Ka was also identified. ("Contestations over Culture" 75)

The Baptists' struggle might then speak to a national cause, not just an Afrocentric one. Also, the retention of African religious facets in the Spiritual Baptist church refutes the idea that “Africans were stripped culturally naked by enslavement and colonialism” (Lovelace, “Introduction to Moko Jumbies” 13).

Finally, Lovelace seems to suggest that adapted religious practices like the Spiritual Baptist Church are more fulfilling and more likely to survive in a Caribbean context of colonial cultural repression. According to Pearl E. Springer, the Baptist Church underscores an “attempt for practitioners to find self-realisation within a Christianity where racism was and is endemic” (99). Most of these cultural artifacts, as Donna Hayles emphasizes, “became creolized in the Caribbean, as the process of Creolization was necessary to ensure the survival and continuity of African cultures in the Caribbean” (i). Caribbean culture, then,
had to encompass a composite nature, or creoleness, which mimicry and other survival dynamics helped to achieve.

In the context of post-colonial Caribbean literature, Creolization does not just express a process of cultural adaptation and retention, but it also represents a quest for counter-European cultural models. It is in this sense that Brathwaite proposes the term Creolism, which alludes to “subtle and multiform orientations from or towards ancestral origins” ("Caribbean Man" 204). The limitation in Brathwaite’s theory is that it advocates the centrality of African ancestral roots in the making of Caribbean identity, overlooking the other multiple identities. In Wine, Lovelace enacts mimicry as a process of creolization. His creolization expresses both a site of acculturation and interculturation, from which modern Caribbean cultural practices have developed, and as a space of covert resistance against colonial cultural domination. In promoting the practices of the Baptist church, Lovelace elevates the Afro-Caribbean religious symbols ill represented for so long by colonial discourse and he seems to believe in their survival regardless of them going underground or being repressed. Like Brathwaite, Lovelace initially puts forward an Afro-oriented vision of creolization in Wine as his narrative focuses on reconnections to African roots. It is not until his later works that Lovelace foregrounds other ethnic groups in the making of Caribbean nationhood.
CHAPTER TWO
THE AFRO-CARIBBEAN FAMILY, CITIZEN CONSCIOUSNESS AND THE NATION-STATE IN *WHILE GODS ARE FALLING*

In his study *The Myth of the Negro Past*, socio-anthropologist Melville J. Herskovits demonstrates that Africans established communities in the West Indies and retained some of their traditions. However, African communities lacked cohesion and organization mainly due to slavery. For the sake of their own security and wellbeing, the community of the white masters fervently negated the development African communities. In his essay, “Creating Communities,” Earl Lovelace writes that “African communities in the West Indies, from the outset, had to contend with the European slave owner and settler community whose sacred mission was to break them up for the European’s own physical safety and psychological satisfaction” (111). Afro-Caribbean people today inherit these historically shaky community structures. Early narratives among Afro-Caribbean writers have emphasized the tribulations in the establishment of contemporary Afro-Caribbean communities. Lovelace’s fiction is not an exception. This chapter examines the portrayal of an Afro-Caribbean community and its significance in Lovelace’s first novel, *While Gods Are Falling*. The novel explores the interconnected relationship between the individual, the family, the community and the nation-state. I argue that Lovelace’s focus on the Afro-Trinidadian family and community expresses the reality of the Trinidadian
political landscape, and emphasizes the paramount necessity of the individual’s sense of responsibility in his community that I call citizen consciousness. I argue that the fragmentation of diaspora has to come together into a nation, although here it is still a black community focus. The analysis will address the representation of the Afro-Caribbean family as a national political allegory before examining the significance of the individual’s responsibility and participation in the community.

1. The Afro-Caribbean Family as National Political Allegory

In his article, “Kinship and Family Dynamics in Laventille,” Godfrey St. Bernard argues that “in contemporary Trinidad and Tobago, the family is increasingly becoming the focus of discourse that is relevant to national social policy” (245). As a contribution to the scholarship on family in Caribbean literary criticism, my analysis here essentially explores the ways in which Lovelace looks at the family as representative of the nation-state in the context of pre- and post-independence Trinidad. The analysis also demonstrates how, through the portrayal of Afro-Caribbean people, Lovelace illustrates the emergence and evolution of the People’s National Movement (PNM) and the implications of black political leadership in Trinidad and the Caribbean in general.

Aristotle and Hegel share the same principle that the family is the foundational structure of the “state” or “polis.” In Politics, Aristotle views the state as “a community of well-being in families and aggregation of families for the sake of perfect and self-sufficing life” (119). For Hegel, “the family is the first basis of
the state” (154). Aristotle, however, differs from Hegel in that he views the family in its reproductive and nutritional function. This aspect of the family echoes the condition of women in Aristotle’s Greece. As Ellen Wood argues, the situation of the Athenian woman “was undoubtedly shaped by the peculiar balance of her functions in the peasant household, the subordination of her continuing role as producer to her roles as a reproducer of citizens, and above all as conserver of family property” (120). Aristotle emphasizes the role of the family in producing citizens, which ensures the continuity of the state. He also views that friendship is established on the basis of family relationships and connections. As he asserts, “there arise in cities family connections, brotherhoods, common sacrifices, amusements which draw men together. But these are created by friendship, for to choose to live together is friendship” (74-75). This indicates that friendship was sought outside the family, in the community space. Michel Foucault makes a similar point as he affirms that “for the households of the ancient era, in which concepts of love and friendship were found externally from the family, the public pursuit of love generally occurred in the community” (106).

Unlike Aristotle, Hegel characterizes the nature of the family as a unit bound by love. As he asserts, “in modern times, the subjective point of departure, i.e., being in love, is thought to be the only thing of consequence. In this it is taken for granted that each one must wait till his hour has struck, and that he can bestow his love upon one and only one individual” (Hegel 141). In making this statement, Hegel is saying that the modern family is established through the value of individual love. For Hegel, affection in the modern household establishes
the essential nature of the State. As Douglas Jarvis views it, “the nuclear family and its hypersexualized nature becomes the embryonic seed for the political affirmation of a united people bonded by modern rationality” (452). For Jarvis, the erotic and human love in the household guarantees the potential for humanity. Hegel’s emphasis on love in the family was therefore an effort to preserve civility in a modern period when such a value was being subverted.

Jarvis significantly articulates the distinction between the Aristotelian and Hegelian conceptions of the family in “The Family as the Foundation of Political Rule in Western Philosophy.” He declares,

For Aristotle, it is in the kingly rule of the household that the property-based distinction of citizenship is set for the aristocratically philosophical rule of his ideal Polis. For Hegel, it is in the erotic and sentimental love affirmed through caring affection within the modern nuclear family that the dialectical framework for the individualized freedom of civil society, and the rational unity of a final congregational “spirit” in the State, finds its foundation. (441)

In making this comparison, Jarvis shows us that although Aristotle and Hegel differ in the way they characterize the nature of the family, both view the family as the moral and legal platform that structures the political conception of citizenship. Both philosophers share the vision of the family as the political end of the state. However, the difference between them lies in the fact that Aristotle focuses on the reproductive nature of the family, whereas Hegel emphasizes heterosexuality and human affection as the foundation of the family and kinship.
Hegel does not refute the reproductive role of the family, but he does not conceive it as a “natural necessity” as Aristotle does. These conceptions of the family inform Lovelace’s articulation of the family in his novels. Lovelace nevertheless goes beyond Aristotle’s and Hegel’s characterizations of the family as his representation of the Afro-Caribbean family takes into reference the peculiar context of the Caribbean, and more specifically the Afro-Caribbean community in Trinidad.

Lovelace’s fiction portrays both the traditional and modern types of family amongst the Afro-Trinidadian community. The traditional Afro-Caribbean family, which is modeled from the traditional African family, characterizes a patriarchal household, with an emphasis on its reproductive function. In While Gods and in The Schoolmaster, Lovelace presents dominant family heads. Walter Castle’s father in While Gods embodies the figure of the father who not only provides for the family needs, but also controls the mother, resorting to violence when angry. The dominance of the father figure is paralleled by the figure of the submissive mother. Walter’s mother in While Gods and Pedro’s mother in Schoolmaster are characterized by their passiveness before the will of their husbands. Here Lovelace seems to go against the stereotype of the strong black mother since his depiction of the Afro-Caribbean woman in the household echoes the position of the Indo-Caribbean woman in the traditional family, as I will emphasize in Chapter Five. Such a figure is seen in the character of Manick’s mother in Is Just a Movie and Dolly, Pariag’s wife in Dragon. Samuel Selvon also portrays this type of docile woman figure through the character of Urmilla, Tiger’s wife in A
"Brighter Sun." The marriages between Pariag and Dolly and between Tiger and Urmilla are considered traditional, although both couples later live in the modern Creole world, because they were basically founded on parental arrangement and custom. Tiger rebels against his traditions due to the fact that they compel him to marry a girl that he not only does not love, but whom he does not even know. These types of traditional family are not built on the foundation of individual love but rather on compromise and social convention. Another characteristic of the traditional family is that the woman functions more as child bearer, a reproducer of heirs and citizens, and caretaker instead of lover. Expressing his need for a wife in *Schoolmaster*, Dardain says, “I really want a woman in this place bad. Can’t invite people in place like this. I don’t have even time to sweep” (146). Dardain’s statement implies the woman’s use as a housekeeper rather than as a loving companion. The reproductive function of the traditional family is characteristic in the large number of children that the woman bears. In *While Gods*, for instance, Walter is born in a family of nine people. Apart from his father and mother, Walter has three brothers, Andrew, Boysie, and Chris, and three sisters, Ruth, Carmen, and Carol. In *Schoolmaster*, Pedro belongs to a family of ten. He lives with his parents and younger brother, Robert. Pedro has three brothers and three sisters. The foundation of the traditional family is based on the position of the father as a dominant figure and the function of the mother as a reproducer of not only citizens, but also heirs.

Unlike the traditional family, the modern family that Lovelace portrays is primarily built on principles of love. Yet, he does not dismiss the reproductive
function in the modern family. Lovelace emphasizes feelings and sentiments as the foundational basis of the modern family. In *Schoolmaster*, the relationship between Pedro Assivero and Christiana Dandrade mirrors the ways in which the modern family is established. Both are in love and envision living as husband and wife. This is a characteristic of the modern family, which differs from the traditional family where marriages are arranged and sometimes imposed upon children. For Hegel, as Jarvis argues, “the rationality of modern life is realized in the construction of nuclear families established by consented marriage. This new turn in sexual morality adheres to the spiritual need for affection among individuals living within the modern condition and its assertion of subjective existence” (451). The forced marriages are more prevalent in societies where women are considered second-class citizens. As Hegel further notes, “amongst nations where women are held in slight esteem, parents arrange the marriage of their children, without ever consulting them. The children submit, because the particularity of feeling as yet makes no claim at all. The maiden is simply to have a husband, the man a wife” (141). As part of the marital process, Pedro has to write to Christiana’s father, Dandrade, to ask for his consent and blessing. This shows that although individual choice of partner is paramount in the modern family, parental consent is quite important in the Caribbean and many other parts of the world. In *While Gods*, Walter and Stephanie, his wife, constitute the prototype of the Afro-Caribbean modern family. As a married couple, both promote affection, communication, and mutual support. Unlike the docile and silent woman depicted in some of Lovelace’s other novels, Stephanie takes
initiates and advises Walter about taking responsibility for himself and his community. The character Stephanie signals the emergence of the modern Afro-Caribbean woman who takes a leadership role within the family, somewhat differently from the female-headed household, and deconstructs the notion of the hyper masculine male head in the household.

The notion of family in Lovelace’s fiction goes beyond the Western conception of the nuclear family and includes relatives in the extended family. David Schneider draws the difference between “family” and “the family” or “my family.” Schneider notes that “‘family’ can only mean all of one’s relatives, but ‘my family’ or ‘the family’ means a unit which contains a husband and wife and their child or children, all of whom are kinds of relatives” (30). “The immediate family” is another term that Schneider uses to describe the exclusive notion of the family. In the context of North America as Schneider underlines it, the term is used to limit the inclusive scope of family to the very close members (30). In Lovelace’s conception there is no clear distinction between “family” and “my family.” His description of the family not only encompasses the most immediate relatives, but also echoes the remote relatives, as well as the different community members. The place of uncles and aunts in the community and the bond between the members of different families magnify this sense of extended family as the whole family. Uncles and aunts hold an essential position in the extended family. They participate in the upbringing and inculcation of traditional values on the youngsters. Uncle Bango, in Salt, is the one who initiates his nephew, Travey, in the art of storytelling. In Africa, where this sense of extended family originated,
nephews used to inherit from their uncles, specifically among the Serer ethnic group in Senegal. In the Indo-Trinidadian family, the uncle occupies a similar central place. In Dragon, when Pariag leaves the countryside to live with the Afro-Creoles, it is his uncle who undertakes the task of leading him back to his family. Pariag’s uncle emphasizes the notion of the extended family as the family when he says to him: “and why you don’t want to work for me? Your father work for me, and your brothers too. I don’t rob them. I try to help my family” (146). The Indian concept of the family goes beyond the nuclear family and includes various relatives, seen in more negative fashion in V.S. Naipaul’s A House for Mr Biswas. The solidarity between the different community members also expresses community and family bonds. In While Gods, Lester’s aunt’s provision of food to Walter after the death of his father, Walter’s help to bring Mrs. Wall’s son out of prison, Mrs. Wall’s rescue of Stephanie from the hooligans, and Mrs. Wall’s support when Stephanie was having a baby are all indicative of a type of community as well as family solidarity.

Aunts often function as the custodians of religious customs, and transmit these customs to the current and future generations. These women are usually given the name of “mother,” which underscores the extended family relation between not only relatives, but also families within the community. In Salt, Mother Ethel is an example. As a Shango priestess, she is in charge of baptizing parents as well as children. Mother Ethel’s invitation to Alford’s mother, Maybell, to get baptized is a call for her to join her home or nation. Mother Ethel’s view of the extension of the family into a nation is similar to Hegel’s. He identifies two phases
of the family extension in the principle of a nation. One is the expansion of the family into a nation composed of members from a “common natural origin.” And the other is the assembling of separated families by a higher force, or voluntary cooperation as a way to achieve satisfaction of their common desires and needs (154). Addressing Maybell, Mother Ethel says: “you and Dixon living up there on that hill for yourself alone, thinking about nobody but yourself and your children…And you don’t know you must baptize? Nobody ain’t tell you you must come home to your nation?” (Salt 22). When Mother Ethel holds Maybelle, the latter has a “feeling of homecoming, of being found, being rescued” (Salt 22). In The Wine of Astonishment, Eva represents this type of mother figure in the Spiritual Baptist religion. Funso Aïyejina views the Spiritual Baptist church as a communal space. He argues that the original churches in Afro-Caribbean religions were constituted by small families, units composed of people who trusted each other. The family character of the churches was a way to practice rituals in privacy and ward off the police reprisals and harassment (Aïyejina, Personal interview). The sense of solidarity between the members of the Spiritual Baptist Church not only designates a family space, but it also symbolizes the nation. As Lovelace writes,

the lost souls scattered in every religion in Babylon was coming to a church that is their own, where after the service finish the brethren could discuss together how the corn growing, how the children doing, for what price cocoa selling, and the men could know which brother they should lend a hand to the coming week, and the
sisters could find out who sick from the congregation so we could
go and sit with her a little and help her out with the cooking for her
children or the washing or the ironing. And it was nice at last to
have a place to be together. (Wine 32-33)

Both the Shango and the Spiritual Baptist communities are representative of a
family and nation, which contests the notion of the nuclear family as the family or
home par excellence.

In addition to this broader conception of the family, Lovelace reveals the
shaky structures of this type of family. His novels portray the fragmentation and
dismemberment of the Afro-Trinididian family. In the studies of the Afro-
Trinididian family, scholars still have to ascertain whether the dislocation of the
family is typical of the lower or middle-class segments of the Afro-Trinididian
community. Looking at kinship and family dynamics in Laventille, St. Bernard
argues that there is no empirical proof that the family dysfunctions are akin to
lower-class families or are a phenomenon across class limits (245). The
disintegration of the Afro-Trinididian family is in fact a result of a number of
historical factors. Lovelace’s examination of the lower-class Afro-Trinididian
family establishes a connection between poverty and family disintegration.
Family and kinship values might be related to the life experience among the
depressed working classes in Trinidad, which, according to St. Bernard, shows
some aspects of a culture of poverty, although he does not see a direct
connection. Additionally, Lovelace views Afro-Caribbean family dysfunction as
partly resulting from fatherly irresponsibility in the Afro-Trinididian community. In
Caribbean gender studies, this irresponsibility is accounted for by the fact that men’s family roles as fathers and conjugal partners limit their functions to financial support and infrequent discipline, which allots men a peripheral place in the family circle (Barritteau 331). Christine Barrow argues that “the significant male family roles are those of co-resident conjugal partner and father, and that, as such, Caribbean men are ‘irresponsible’” (343). Afro-Caribbean men, however, seek to restore their limited family responsibilities by extensively being involved in the larger community. Peter Wilson concurs that Afro-Caribbean men’s contribution in the family beyond their roles as disciplinarians and providers is marginal. He also argues that they rehabilitate their social status through their extensive participation in their communities. They mainly are involved, however, in activities like “hustling, smuggling, gambling, sports, music and love-making,” which consequently undermine some of the values and rules of the total societal system (Wilson 75-76). Wilson implies that the Afro-Caribbean men’s involvement in these activities prevents them from fully assuming their social responsibilities in family roles.

Similarly, Lovelace conceives of men’s keen involvement in masculinist types of activities as some of the main factors that keep them from assuming family responsibilities. As Aiyejina says in “Novelypso,” “One major source of conflict, both in this story and in Lovelace’s fiction in general, is the male desire to engage in such activities as stickfighting at the expense of family responsibilities and demands” (105). In While Gods, Walter’s father indulges in drinking and womanizing, which costs him thirty-five acres of cocoa land. Pap, as
they call him, disintegrates his family unit as he takes its members from their own land to other places where they rent in the countryside. The values that bond the family fade away as Pap can hardly provide for his children or even control them. The situation worsens when Pap has an accident and becomes crippled. He totally loses control over his family and accuses his wife, Lizabeth, of not doing anything to keep the children at home. Blaming Lizabeth, Pap says, “I’m a cripple. A blasted cripple!’ Lizabeth, you watch these children get on. The boys go out, come in all hours. And now, Carmen. What kind of family I have now? What kind of woman is this? Why don’t you tell something? You know all this goin’ on, you do nothing to stop it and you don’t tell me a damn thing” (While Gods 39). Eventually, their daughters Carmen and Ruth become pregnant. The younger members of the family do not have a space in the family where they can express their problems. As a young boy, Walter had issues at school, but did not have anybody he could confide in. As the narrator says,

He was very lonely that time, and there was no one to whom he could take his troubles. There was no one that would understand – not even Boysie, because that time Boysie had his own business to cope with; and Ruth wasn’t at home, and he didn’t like to talk to Pap about those things, and talking to Ma or to Andrew was out of the question. (While Gods 50)

This dysfunction of the family resonates with the loss of family values and remains an important factor of delinquency and other forms of social evils. In the quarters of Laventille, as St. Bernard notes,
it is believed that the family has lost its traditional virtues and also lies at the root of the various “social pathologies” that manifest in the form of poverty, crime, substance abuse and addiction, disrespect for the elderly, union dissolution, absentee parenthood, poor scholastic performance, unfavourable life chances and overall moral decay. (St. Bernard 245)

Lovelace views fraternal conflict, home desertion, parental absenteeism, crime, and violence as an aftermath of the deterioration of the family foundation. He conceives of these social issues as not just individual, but indicative of a failure of collective responsibility. The system fails to guarantee a viable environment for the heads of households to accumulate property and support their families. Lovelace expresses this point in *While Gods* through Pap who signs a contract that eventually turns out to be disadvantageous to him, because “it involved too much work and the owner got the profit” (35). Pap is forced to give up the contract and move the family elsewhere. Pap gets depressed, indulges in drinking and “whoring,” and gives up his fatherly responsibilities. In *Schoolmaster*, Francis Assivero loses most of his land through debt payment to Dardain the shopkeeper. When Francis’s cocoa crop turned out bad, and his cocks lost the fights in the gayelle in the neighboring town of Valencia, he would ask money from Dardain and bet more heavily. Dardain takes advantage of Assivero’s illiteracy to record more debt than he was supposed to do. As the narrator says, “when Dardain put something in the book, it was put, and he [Assivero] didn’t know what it was. And he didn’t ask to see the book because he
was not overkeen to make an ass of himself knowing fully well that he cannot read” (*Schoolmaster* 141). Francis sinks into drinking in order to forget the money he loses from gambling on cocks and the tiny amount of land that was left. Six of his children, boys and girls, leave his house and go on with their own lives. Both Pap's and Francis' experiences underscore the intrusion of the monetary system with its negative effects on the working class in the Caribbean and Trinidad in particular. This system impoverished the lower classes, which contributed to the degradation of family structures in Trinidad and other parts of the Caribbean.

The fragility of the Afro-Caribbean family structures is inherited from slavery when the African slaves did not own anything and lost their sense of family, and after emancipation when colonial structures made it difficult for newly freed African slaves to have access to land and establish communities. The slave system denied fatherhood and family to the enslaved African men. The child at birth inherits the mother’s status (Beckles, “Black Masculinity” 230). Colonial structures excluded enslaved African men from paternity and served as a means to prevent the children of these slaves from acting “as a legal party in any form of judicial contest” (“Enslaved Black Women in the Caribbean” 148). This is a major cause of men’s crisis during slavery, which consequently provokes disequilibrium within the families. Linden Lewis argues that “men do not experience crisis in a social vacuum…. If Caribbean men are in crisis then women, children and families, along with other institutions within civil society, must of necessity also be in crisis” (“Caribbean Masculinity at the Fin de Siècle” 252). The inability of enslaved African slaves to perform parental roles constituted the historical factors
of paternal irresponsibility and destabilization of the Afro-Caribbean family. Unlike African slaves, Indian indentured workers were allowed to keep their strong sense of family. Their families were not scattered and dismantled like those of the African slaves. In *Salt*, Moon, Pariag’s ancestor, and other Indian indentured workers are given land after the term of the indenture period, and are able to found families and a cohesive community. Additionally, the Indians’ economic conservatism helped them to develop stronger families ties and solidarity on alien soil. Indo-Trinidadians today inherit relatively solid family bonds that were more or less maintained during indenture in the Caribbean. In *Dragon*, Pariag’s uncle’s hiring of his father and brothers to work on his plantation expresses a sense of Indian extended family bonds and solidarity. Fatherly irresponsibility, alongside poverty, constitutes by contrast one of the factors of the alleged dysfunction in Afro-Caribbean families.

The different personality traits of family members, which prompt misunderstandings and confrontations, also constitute a cause of the dislocation of Afro-Caribbean family structures. Hegel argues that “the ethical or social dismemberment of the family occurs when the children have grown to be free personalities” (150). The social environment and civic community shape the individual personality traits and alienate family members from each other. As Hegel further views it, “the civic community tears the individual out of the family bonds, makes its members strangers to one another, and recognizes them as independent persons...Thus the individual has become the son of the civic community, which makes claims upon him, at the same time as he has rights to it
(186). For Hegel, the civic society-- through the educational system-- substitutes the family in the education of its members and makes them appear different individuals by transforming their attitudes and ways of thinking. The frictions between family members often occur because of different opinions shaped by their different level of education. In While Gods, the quarrels between Walter and his elder brother Andrew emanate from their lack of understanding of each other and the difference in their conception of a brotherly relationship. Walter as an educated person does not agree with the way in which Andrew, his illiterate brother, approaches their relationship. The education Walter acquires determines his modern vision of brotherly relationship not through domination, but rather as support, mutual understanding, and acceptance of each other’s differences. Andrew acts more like the traditional, dominant father figure, especially after the death of their father when he had to take care of the upbringing of Walter. The quest for freedom and definition of his individual identity causes Walter to desert his family. Current educational and career goals encourage individualism and equality in the modern family structure.

In addition to the civic community, the social environment alienates individuals and draws them away from their families. As Lovelace shows it in While Gods, street gatherings, organizations or gangs attract young people in destitute places like Laventille. These young people in the streets or “tesses” as they are called, are initiated in acts of vandalism, robbery, and crime. The term “tesses,” whose singular form is “tess,” comes from “test” in Standard English, and represents a Trinidadian slang term that emerged in the 1950s. It designates
a “manly approbation for and solidarity” among men who are particularly known for their ability to strive and live (Hodge 186). The “tesses” have an alienated sense of family. Home does not have a conventional meaning for them any longer. Their involvement in anti-social acts determines a desire for a sense of self that they don't feel they can have at home. One of the key moments in While Gods consists of the murder of a man by “tesses.” Mrs. Walls’s son, Rubben, is involved with them and is falsely accused of having committed the murder. This incident is central to the movement of the novel, as we will see later, because it is the moment when Walter opens up his mind and decides to do something to rescue the boy and his community. The murder indicates the prevalence of criminality that is associated with the youngsters who frequent the streets.

Besides delinquency and criminality, migration to the metropolis is another phenomenon that severs people from their family. The lack of opportunities, the loss of sense of meaning, and the belief in Europe and the United States of America as meccas prompt migratory movements among young Caribbean people. Although migration offers economic opportunities, it also fragments Afro-Caribbean families. After Walter’s father’s death in While Gods, his brother Boysie leaves their family and goes to England. His younger brother, Chris, later attempts to migrate to England. The term “stowaway,” describing Chris’s migration, expresses an attempt to escape an imminent danger on his own island. Chris tries to run away with four other young men. The young Afro-Caribbean people’s inclination to leave the archipelago for the metropolis denotes their disillusionment and lack of hope in their families and community.
In contrast to Afro-Caribbean people, in Trinidad (as compared to, say, Guyana), Indo-Caribbean people are not as prone to migration. Their economic viability and solidity of family structures do not provide any good reason for them to desert their families and go abroad in search of self-fulfillment. The Indo-Trinidadians who migrate abroad are motivated by a desire to acquire higher education and pursue a fulfilling professional career. In Wine, Rumsumir, an Indian doctor who runs against Ivan Morton for the Council representative has been educated in England (137). In Biswas, the son of Mr. Biswas moves to England on a scholarship to further his studies (51-52). The internal Indo-Caribbean migratory movements, from rural to urban areas are an endeavor undertaken by a number of Indo-Caribbean people who are fed up with rural plantation life, and who want to acquire education, or be part of the bigger Creole world. Pariag’s move to the city in Dragon, and Tiger’s exodus to the Creole world in A Brighter Sun depict this type of internal migration. Yet, Lovelace shows us in Dragon that although Indo-Caribbean people leave the countryside to the city, they keep their family bonds. This is demonstrated by Pariag’s short home visit in the countryside in order to reenergize himself after dwelling in the city. Unlike Pariag, Tiger’s migration to the city is not only motivated by a desire to acquire education, but also expresses an intention to break away from Indian family culture in the plantation, which compelled him to marry a girl he did not know nor love. Selvon’s novel elucidates the idea that though Indo-Caribbean people are keen on family ties, there are those whose ambition of social ascension in the city and desire to escape the confining character of Indian
culture bring them to cut off family bonds. The difference between Lovelace and Selvon in their treatment of the Indo-Trinidadian migration to the city can be understood by the fact that Selvon is from a middle-class Indo-Trinidadian family, and writes from the perspective of his social class. Lovelace advocates the imperative for the ethnic groups to reconnect with their cultural identities as they contribute to the national space.

Lovelace’s portrayal of the Afro-Caribbean family and its dysfunction represents the political landscape after independence in Trinidad. More than just making an observation of the dismemberment of the Afro-Caribbean family, Lovelace traces the emergence of the People’s National Movement (PNM) and the failures of its leaders. Laventille is the cradle of the PNM. As Selwyn Ryan argues in “Party Politics and Laventille,” “Laventille has always been considered the political heartland of the People’s National Movement (PNM), its core “garrison” constituency, par excellence” (153). The arrival of the PNM in Laventille symbolizes the creation of the new Trinidadian nation (Aiyejina, Personal interview). Also, Walter’s activism in conscientizing families and the community to the necessity of dealing with the social issues that plague young people replicates the PNM’s leaders’ action of bringing political awareness to people. The political education of the people was a significant point in the PNM’s constitution (Williams, History of the People of Trinidad 243; Inward Hunger 149). The public space where Walter summons the general meeting towards the end of the novel is drawn from Woodbrook Square where the PNM’s leaders held meetings of political education.
Additionally, the fatherly irresponsibility and absenteeism is a metaphorical representation of black political leaders’ neglect of their own people. In \textit{While Gods} and \textit{Salt}, Lovelace shows how the political leaders woo the people and feign interest in their concerns when they seek their votes. After being elected the politicians disappear and ignore the needs of the very people who put them in power. The case of Laventille in \textit{While Gods} dramatically characterizes the PNM leaders’ neglect of the black lower-class communities who ironically show a stronger attachment to the party. Although Laventille provides the PNM with the best electoral score, its economic and social conditions have not improved. Poverty, crime, and illiteracy sink Laventille in a state of social depression and prompt many to leave the place. Walter’s guilt over his young brother’s attempt to escape overseas expresses the political neglect that provokes the loss of hope and impels migration among young people in Trinidad. After the death of their father, Andrew becomes the father figure of the family. In a conversation with Andrew, Walter observes that

\begin{quote}
  it’s our fault…We didn’t give him a thing. We just lived by our lives, for ourselves. We gave him [Chris] nothing…At least we could have given him guidance. We could have guided him…We gave him nutten, so he had to run away. He didn’t feel wanted, so he had to strike out on his own. (\textit{While Gods} 221-22)
\end{quote}

Walter’s statement highlights the Trinidadian political class’s cynicism and lack of regard to its constituency, which Makandal Daaga, the representative of the PNM in Laventille has decried and viewed as the source of the problems that the black
community faces. For Daaga, the place and its people are not to be blamed for the depression. The social problems in Laventille are rather a result of “a continued pattern of neglect over the past 40 years” (Selwyn, “Party Politics and Laventille” 157-58). This general sense of disappointment in the PNM political class later weakened the party and caused its first loss in the elections of 1986. The vulnerability of the party was heightened by its neglect of Laventille (Selwyn, “Party Politics and Laventille” 164). The fatherly irresponsibility parallels the political neglect by a largely male leadership, which engenders social and community disharmony in Laventille, Trinidad, and the Caribbean in general.

Additionally, Lovelace’s inscription of family dynamics in his fiction points out the dictatorial tendency of black political leadership in Trinidad and the Caribbean. The dominant father-husband figure mirrors the authoritarian power of the state and ruling party in so-called democratic republics. In his study of family dynamics in ancient Greece, Aristotle underlines the despotic relationship the husband had with both his slaves and household. As Jarvis writes in his examination of Aristotle’s Politics,

for the Athenian husband, alongside the authoritarian relationship that he had with his slaves in household management … the husband-king also had a despotic relationship with his children as master, coalesced with a paternal superiority over his wife. (447)

The term husband-king equates the husband with the ruling figure of the “polis.” The political function of the husband as an authoritarian figure contradicts the nonpolitical function of the wife as a queen characterized by her silence. While
Pap and Francis assume relatively dominant roles in the household, their wives singularize themselves by their silence as mentioned above. However, unlike the all-powerful husband-king in ancient Greece, Pap and Francis manifest signs of weak authoritarian figures in the Caribbean, postslavery. Their false authority is seen in the way they dissipate the household property through gambling.

In depicting the authoritarian husband, Lovelace is making reference to the inadequacy of despotic Caribbean political leadership. He suggests that Caribbean political leaders resort to dictatorship not only to satisfy their greed for money and power, but also to conceal the incapacity to deal with internal issues. This idea echoes Fanon’s argument in *The Wretched of the Earth* that the national bourgeoisie establishes dictatorship to mask its inability to manage home politics and nation building. He adds that while dictatorship strengthens bourgeois political power, it sinks the nation into a deep economic and social depression (110-11). Both Lovelace and Fanon perceive the rise of dictators in postcolonial republics as occurring out of the destruction of the people they are supposed to govern. The schoolmaster in Lovelace’s *Schoolmaster* is a symbolic representation of Caribbean self-serving and authoritarian political leaders. He siphons the property of the people of Kumaca, whom he is supposed to help, rapes a young woman, and attempts to use his power to marry her. As he threatens Dardain, “you will speak…about the road that I have caused to be built, and of my loneliness. And for the children I teach at the school. And you will say that if I do not have the girl for wife, I cannot continue in Kumaca, that I must leave” (*Schoolmaster* 139). If these models of Caribbean dictator figures are
implicitly represented in Lovelace’s fiction, they are explicitly portrayed in narratives on the Caribbean as in the examples of Eugene O’Neill’s *The Emperor Jones*, Alejo Carpentier’s *The Kingdom of this World*, Aimé Césaire’s *The Tragedy of King Christophe*, Walcott’s *Henry Christophe*, Junot Díaz’s *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*, and Graham Greene’s *The Comedians*. These narratives are inspired from true histories of Caribbean dictators: O’Neill, Carpentier, Césaire, and Walcott narrate the terror of king Henry Christophe during post-emancipation Haiti, Díaz represents the oppressive Dominican dictator Trujillo, and Greene portrays the tyrannical Duvalier regime under Francois Duvalier and the ruthless paramilitary “Tonton Macoute.”

Another aspect of dictatorship that Lovelace caricatures through family relations in his fiction constitutes the autocratic, monolithic, and self-centered type of political leadership. The strained brotherly relations between Walter and his elder brother Andrew after the death of their father in *While Gods* metaphorically expresses both the one-party supremacy and one-man dominant party in postcolonial Trinidad and other islands of the Caribbean. As the elder brother and guardian, Andrew tends to impose his will on Walter. His attitude toward Walter lacks understanding, compromise, and tolerance. Andrew’s domineering ways are shown in a conversation between him and Walter. When Walter comes in wet from the rain Andrew addresses him in an authoritarian voice, which starts this tense verbal exchange:
'I don't see you studying. Like you don't realize what's happening. Boysie gone to England, Pa dead, and everything on my shoulders now. Like you don't realize.'

'I want to go and change my clothes, Andrew, he said.

'I'm talking to you, boy!'

'Andrew I'm wet and it's cold. I want to go and change my clothes.'

'Now look, boy! Don't get rude with me.'

But, Andrew –'

'Wet or not wet, cold or no cold, you'll stand and listen.'

'Well, I'm goin’ to change my clothes.’ (While Gods 57)

One of the reasons why Walter does not get along with his brother is his belief that Andrew pays for his school fees “grudgingly, like a man who gives charity, then expects the beggar to fall on his knees and kiss his feet in thanks” (While Gods 57). Through the character of Andrew, Lovelace signals the shift from family to state in the rampant self-centered and monolithic political management of the People’s National Movement (PNM) leader, Prime Minister Eric Williams. Williams was himself aware of the criticisms that the PNM “is a totalitarian party ruled by one man” (Inward Hunger 155). Selwyn characterizes political parties like the PNM in post-independent Trinidad as “conglomerations of individuals around a certain man,’ with no programme that was collectively thought out and drafted” (Selwyn, Race and Nationalism 118). In his introduction to While Gods,
Dillon Brown argues that it is possible to perceive, in the characterization of Andrew, Lovelace’s warnings on the direction of the political leadership in Trinidad under Eric Williams, a leadership that was increasingly displaying signs of an intemperate deafness to other opinions, and a ‘hero’s’ disposition towards a supposedly adulatory ‘crowd.’ (14)

*While Gods* signals the defects of the top-down and authoritarian political leadership in the Caribbean, which, according to Brown, characterize “the failure to involve the people other than as ethnic vote-banks” (10). The lack of inclusion of the masses in the political project and the self-centered party management remain determining factors in the failure of national politics as well as the growth of social inequality and instability in Trinidad and the Caribbean.

Lovelace advocates the reconstruction of the family structures as not only a way to strengthen national community, but also as a means to lay out the democratic political principles upon which a prosperous and harmonious nation rests. In *While Gods*, Andrew learns from his mistakes and acknowledges the necessity to rebuild the family. He sees the family as the space where the individual can find a sense of belonging and meaning. As Andrew says to Walter, we have to rebuild the family. Specially for Chris and Carol…when a man doesn’t belong, when he has to fight alone, achievements don’t mean a thing…alone, man don’t feel good. People need people. A man needs a family, something to belong to. (164)
By demonstrating the rapprochement between the two brothers, Lovelace makes the political claim that parties should reconcile with their constituencies and heed their preoccupations. Later Andrew apologizes to Walter for being too tough on him and blindly clinging to his own ideas. Andrew confides to Walter that “you don’t change people, you change yourself. I learned a lot. I was pretty hard on you long time, eh?” (164). Andrew’s metamorphosis is a statement of the need to reconsider political management and establish more democratic institutions, which constitute the gauge of a more unified and harmonious nation-state. Lovelace does not, however, only address the political institutions as a way to discover mechanisms of dissolving social tensions and consolidating national community. The individual responsibility of the citizen in the affairs of his community also matters.

2. The Citizen and Society: Internalizing Responsibility, Participation, and Freedom

Defining the citizen, Aristotle makes reference to theory and practice. In theory, legal rights determine a citizen (Aristotle 100). For instance, in ancient Greece, women, alien residents, and slaves were not considered citizens since they did not benefit from all the rights that the state conferred to free male citizens. The exclusion of these groups also meant that property and social freedom were essential elements that characterized a citizen. A citizen in theory is therefore an individual “who has the power to take part in the deliberative judicial administration of any state” (Aristotle 102). In practice, however, a citizen is determined by parental affiliation. Aristotle insists that “in practice a citizen is
defined to be one of whose both parents are citizens; others insist on going further back; say to two or three or more grandparents” (102). However, Aristotle sees the definition of the citizen in theory as being more meaningful. He believes that it is not birth that truly identifies the citizen, but rather the legal and administrative function that the individual occupies. As he specifies, “he who holds judicial or legislative office fulfills our definition of a citizen” (103). Michael Ignatieff corroborates Aristotle’s conception of the citizen, asserting that “if citizenship comes with great responsibility then only those who can fulfill the responsibilities should be citizens” (38-39). The good citizen in the view of Aristotle should therefore be the one who knows “how to govern like a freeman, and how to obey like a freeman” (Qtd in McKeon 1182). The ability to govern and obedience are virtues of the good citizen.

Modern discourses and conceptions of citizenship replicate Aristotle’s conception of the citizen. For Quintin Kidd, “citizenship describes membership in a common society and individual political and social benefits that membership brings” (37). In the crafting of the new American nation, suffrage was restricted to adult men who owned property (Keyssar 5). This suffrage restriction recalls Aristotle’s conception of the virtues of citizenship that were found in freeholders (Williams 3). The slaves in America were therefore excluded from citizenship. In colonial Trinidad, lower-class people, like the villagers of Bonasse, were disqualified as voters since the right to vote required possession of land and property, which they did not have (Wine 47). They were able to vote when colonial power lifted ownership of land and property as the condition to vote at
the end of World War II and the departure of the American troops from Trinidad (Wine 79). In modern democracies suffrage not only represents a key defining aspect of citizenship, but also a virtue of the good citizen. In Civic Participation in America, Kidd reports that on election day, the voters put on “I voted” stickers to let others know that they not only did their civic duty, but that they were also good citizens (40). The concept of citizenship and good citizen has been built around property ownership, class status, social freedom, judicial and administrative responsibilities, and suffrage.

In the fiction of Lovelace, the notion of citizen implicates more than these criteria that reinforce class segregation and exclude some people. In the context of the Caribbean, birth and suffrage are manifest elements that characterize the citizen. Lovelace, however, sees suffrage as a lure that the political class uses to access power and later forget the people who have voted for them. Ryan corroborates in Race and Nationalism that in Trinidad “parties were creations that appeared around election time only to fade into oblivion on the morrow of the election” (118). In Wine, Eva underscores this sort of cynicism and disrespect with which the political classes treat their people. Expanding on Bee’s statement about Ivan Morton’s betrayal of his community, and his strategies to win back the votes of his people, Eva says

You mean he can’t give us at least the benefit of having a little sense to see that the sudden rush to fix roads, this sudden rush to answer applications for land, this sudden rush to put up programmes to give a man a job for a week or two is just a trick for
the election? ... Not even respect?...You mean he lose all shame for himself too so that he come now with all this tomfoolery to face people as if we is fools, puppets to swing, hands to clap and fingers to write X on a ballot to give a vote to him?" (135)

This passage indicates Eva’s consciousness of the politicians’ tricks in showing interest in the villagers only when elections come around, and when their votes are sought. For the politicians, the villagers are given worth only as a means to access political power through electoral politics. This shows us that Lovelace does not regard suffrage as a real indication of citizenship, since it designates that people are only citizens during elections.

The idea of birth as a characteristic of citizenship is equally complicated in the post-independence Caribbean. Entering citizenship through birth entailed a gender construction that divided women and men as classes. The first post-independence constitutions – Jamaica and Trinidad in 1962, Guyana and Barbados in 1966, and the Bahamas in 1973 – gave men rights that were denied to women. In households, only men could hand down citizenship to their foreign spouses and children who were not born into the jurisdiction. This law had an exception for unmarried women who bore children outside the jurisdiction: they had the right to pass on citizenship to their children. This shows us that the basis of the constitution was the patriarchal family, and the father, the conventional head of household, represented the model of the citizen. The women and children therefore depended on men to achieve civil rights and assume their roles in civil society (Robinson 235). These Caribbean constitutions thus
revealed contradictions in so far as the denial of women as a paradigm of citizenship was countered by a constitutional text that guaranteed citizenship across gender. In each Caribbean country’s constitution, all individuals are born free, and with equal rights irrespective of any gender category (Senior 3). Tracy Robinson rebuts the idea that the constitutional guarantee of rights is conclusive of citizenship. As she argues,

> notwithstanding the gender neutrality of many citizenship laws in the Caribbean and the language of equality implied in Caribbean constitutions, men remain the paradigm of a citizen and, in significant measure, women are included as citizens through their relationship to men. (232)

It is not until the 1970s that constitutional reforms took place, changing the biased language of the earlier constitutions into a more gender-neutral language in the conception of citizenship. The new constitutions conferred equal rights to men and women, specifically the rights to pass on citizenship to their husbands and children. The example of the Republic of Guyana is worth taking into consideration. Its constitution, in 1980, guarantees women civil and political rights, as well as fundamental social and economic rights (Robinson 235). Thus, in the reformed constitutions in the late twentieth-century Caribbean, tremendous efforts have been made to incorporate women as national citizens.

Writing in 1962 when *While Gods* was published, Lovelace provides a conception of citizenship that transcends notions of birth and civil rights. His vision of citizenship is emphasized in his later novels. For Lovelace, citizenship
necessitates will, acceptance and desire of belonging to the community or nation as well as awareness of both one’s rights and duties. It is in this sense that the poster-invite for the meeting that Walter has summoned addresses the people of Webber Street as citizens. As the poster-invite reads: “Citizens of Webber Street, you are invited to attend a meeting tonight at the Webber Street school. Come and hear and discuss the problems of your area” (While Gods 245). The good citizen is therefore not only the one who takes advantage of his right, but rather the one who is also conscious of his duties or responsibilities towards himself and his community and who, in turn, internalizes them. Citizenship crisis occurs, then, when individuals in a society externalize responsibility. Internalizing responsibility means taking on responsibilities, whereas externalizing responsibility signifies avoiding them. Drawing the contrast between these two concepts, David Schmidtz says, “responsibility is externalized when the people regard the cleanup as someone else’s problem…In contrast, responsibility is internalized when agents take responsibility: for their welfare, for their futures, for the consequences of their actions” (8). I argue that Lovelace’s portrayal of the lack of citizen consciousness among Afro-Trinidadian communities expresses a major obstacle to the growth of the Trinidadian nation and Caribbean nations in general. Lovelace therefore advocates the restoration of citizen consciousness through the internalization of responsibility not only as a way to reestablish citizenship, but also as a means to promote communal harmony and welfare in Trinidad and the Caribbean.
The long history of slavery and colonialism contributed to the disruption and dislocation of Caribbean nations. Although Lovelace acknowledges these historical structural factors of the current economic and social systems in these nations, he also identifies endogenous factors of such problems. Caribbean political and religious leaders played a big part in the tribulations of their own island-nations. As Lovelace writes in *While Gods*, “in this city, in this island, the gods are falling and there is nothing for the young people to look up to – nothing for anyone to look up to. The leading citizens are wrapped in their self-centredness, and life is the extension of the individual’s personality” (229). These lines emphasize the responsibility of the higher-ranking social and political structures in the degradation of the social environment. Yet, Lovelace believes that the individuals, the citizens, have their share in the degradation of their community space. People’s unwillingness to take responsibility and deal with the issues faced by their community worsens social disharmony. Brown believes that Lovelace’s advocacy for solidarity is complicated by his “acute awareness of both the historically grounded structural forces working against social cohesion in the Caribbean, as well as the majority of people’s willful reluctance to counteract these forces in their everyday lives” (6).

*While Gods* characterizes two major movements. The first movement inscribes externalization of responsibility. In the opening passages of the novel, Lovelace introduces a city in a state of decay. Poverty, disorder, crime, and helplessness prevail on Webber Street in Laventille. As the narrator says, “it is not only poverty. It is disorder; it is crime…it is as if there is a special, narrow
meaning to life, as if life has no significance beyond the primary struggles for a bed to sleep in... it is as all Gods have fallen..." (22). This sense of social lethargy and illness sicken Walter Castle. He tells Stephanie, “I tell you I fed up with everything around me. I’m damn well sick... I hate this stinkin’ world and these rotten people” (31). Additionally, Walter is disappointed at not getting a promotion at his job despite his hard work (27). This situation of discontent about his people and his place prompts his desire to run away to the countryside. Addressing Mr. Cross, an elderly man and neighbor, Walter says “it’s like nothing is nothing... Like – I mean – like there is no meaning to anything... And, Mr Cross, the trouble is a man like me can’t do anything about it. Only one thing – run. Pack up and leave the place. Leave it to the hooligans” (25). Here, Walter expresses resignation and unwillingness to deal with the problems facing his community. In Salt, Alford George’s intention to flee overseas is motivated by the same social imperfections that dishearten Walter. Both While Gods and Salt express Lovelace’s awareness, like Naipaul’s in Miguel Street, that the harsh social realities in Caribbean society push people to migrate, either internationally or internally. Migration can sometimes occur in the mind as a form of psychological exile or mental withdrawal from one’s group or community, as in the case with Aldrick in Dragon.

The issue with Walter, like Alford, is that he is unconscious of the fact that the hardships that his people undergo are a part of his responsibility. In imagining a return to the pastoral countryside, Walter, as the narrator says, “must have been blind not to have seen that there is no other way but to fight in the world as
it is, with the people as they are, with the resources at his disposal” (135). Walter externalizes responsibility, as he believes that it is up to the police to deal with crime by severely punishing offenders. Lester attacks Walters’ belief, asserting that the blame should not be put on either the police or the hooligans. For Lester, they “all share in blame” (181). Mr. Cross criticizes the people’s lack of solidarity and selflessness, which emphasizes their inclination to individuality as Lester also views it. Walter’s externalization of responsibility is associated with a quest for freedom, which, he believes, can only be achieved away from his urban community and its social constraints.

The externalization of responsibility comes up in much of Lovelace’s fiction, although in various manifestations. In Schoolmaster, Lovelace presents a situation of conflict around the establishment of a school for the village of Kumaca. The establishment of the school emanates from the intention of the villagers to embrace modernity and be part of the bigger world but the project of the school eventually divides the community. On one side stand most of the villagers who are in favor of the school. On the other side, however, is Consantine Patron who questions the idea of building the school. Consantine, like the priest, Father Vincent, foresees the danger of constructing the school. His fears concern the risks of neglecting agriculture—the source of sustenance—along with concerns over the identity of the schoolmaster, location, cost of construction, salary of the schoolmaster, and the risk of desertion to cities by young people who would acquire education (Schoolmaster 30). The narrator explains Consantine’s rejection of the school project by his fear that he, as the
man whom the villagers seek help from in reading and writing, would lose the respect they have for him (29). Consantine is described to have been the one of the leading figures in the management of the community’s affairs and he fears losing his leadership.

Since the establishment of the school and the coming of the schoolmaster, however, Consantine withdraws from any responsibility concerning the affairs of the village. For the narrator, Consantine’s withdrawal is motivated by his jealousy over the growing popularity of the schoolmaster whom he sees as a rival. Consantine justifies his intention not to take responsibility for the affairs of Kumaca by arguing that “sometimes it is good for someone to remain on the outside and watch how things are going. Such a person will see many things you cannot see on the inside” (107). In his introduction to Schoolmaster, Kenneth Ramchand states that Consantine “withdraws in order to resist those evil forces that would destroy a man” (12). Consantine’s new attitude towards his people echoes Bolo’s self-exclusion from the religious activities of the Baptist community in Bonasse in Wine. Bolo stands aside from his people because of the change in the way they celebrate the Spiritual Baptist religion and their adoption of the Western religious ways. Consantine, like Bolo and unlike the transformed Walter, externalizes responsibility as a mode of resistance against colonial forces that represent potential destruction to the harmony of his community. Consantine’s withdrawal, however, has negative outcomes. He has watched the schoolmaster dramatically affect Kumaca. The latter enriches himself from the people’s property. On top of that he impregnates Christiana, Paulaine Dandrade’s
daughter. Consantine is the one who could have prevented the misfortunes that have befallen his community. For Benn, the carrier, “Patron was the one who could have been of great assistance, but he chose to stand by and look on” (185). In deciding not to take responsibility in his community’s affairs, Consantine shares responsibility for the troubles that his village endures.

In *Dragon*, Lovelace provides another significant instance of externalizing responsibility. Through the character of Aldrick, the protagonist, the narrative shows the dangers of blind internalization of traditions. Aldrick lives in a yard-house in the destitute quarter of Laventille, “the Hill,” as it is named in the novel. He is referred to as the dragon, the character that he performs during Carnival. The issue with Aldrick is that his entire life revolves around his performance as a dragon. He does not work. He is not married. He only finds a sense of meaning in making his costume and playing the dragon, which represents an imaginary space of escape to him. In other words, Aldrick does not take any responsibility for himself or for his community. Aldrick’s externalization of responsibility is dramatized in two cases. Firstly, he rejects the love of Sylvia on grounds that he is a poor man, and cannot take responsibility. Replying to Sylvia’s suggestion that he should take a wife, Aldrick says: “I can’t afford a woman… No chair, a little bed in a little room. A woman wants things. I ain’t have nothing here except my dragon costume to put on for Carnival” (32). Sylvia is the one, in fact, who has brought Aldrick to “face questions that he had inoculated himself against by not working nowhere, by not being too deeply concerned about anything except his dragon costume that he prepared for his masquerade on Carnival day” (31).
Aldrick’s non-work and non-possession ethic remains a refuge against social responsibility. Like Consantine and Bolo, Aldrick’s reluctance to take part in active life is tantamount to resistance against the continuous structures of enslavement and colonialism. Aldrick does not embrace Pariag, the Indo-Trinidian male character as his own folk, nor does he defend him although Aldrick does not agree with the harsh way with which the people of Yard treat the Indo-Trinidadian. Aldrick’s failure to take responsibility in welcoming and supporting Pariag pushes the latter away. Aldrick’s inability to internalize responsibility here can be understood as a sort of silent accusation of the Indo-Trinidadians’ supposed historical contribution to the difficulties of Afro-Trinidadians. But ultimately resistance cannot be sustained as refusal and accusation for Lovelace but has to involve active participation.

If Lovelace situates the factors of social dysfunctions in Trinidad in the people’s externalization of responsibility, he also believes that it is by internalizing responsibility that these problems will be overcome. While the first part of *While Gods* emphasizes the externalization of responsibility, the second part of the novel involves a sort of resurrection, rebirth, and metamorphosis through which characters come to internalize responsibility. Walter who initially avoided taking responsibility regarding the ailments that his community suffers, and who intended to escape, after a sudden transformation decides to take action and help his community. A few factors contribute to the change. Mr. Cross, Lester, and Stephanie convincingly advise him that initiatives needed to be taken to address the difficulties of the community. Stephanie brings to his attention that
as a husband, father, and member of the community, he has to confront reality rather than escape it. To take responsibility, therefore, as Schmidtz conceives it, is “to accept a cluster of challenges: to plan your future, to deal with your own mistakes as best you can, to deal with other people’s mistakes as best you can, to make the best of your good luck, and your bad luck as well” (10). One of the most dramatic incidents that awaken Walter’s consciousness to the reality that he can no longer run away from his responsibilities is his visit to Mrs. Wall’s son, Rubben, in prison. Rubben was wrongfully accused of murder and imprisoned. When Walter visits him, something strikes him and makes him see things in a new light. He realizes that he is partly at fault for what is happening in his community. As Walter says, “I had no idea that I would either be in this, or want to be in this, but I went to see one of the boys in prison, and I thought I was in some way responsible for what happened, not to that boy alone, but to all the boys in this area, because I have never done anything to assist them” (226).

Walter seeks a new relationship with his community space. As he reckons, “this land is mine and the people here are mine, and the things that are done in this city – I am also responsible for them. I am one with the land and I am one with the people” (135). Walter expresses here his growing sense of responsibility and belonging to his community.

The first initiative that Walter takes is finding a lawyer to help liberate Rubben from prison. He enjoins his fellow community members in raising funds to pay for the lawyer. As Mrs. Roach concurs, “with respect to the lawyer for the boys, I think the idea is a good one and I support it because this endeavor will
bring us closer as a community” (239). Her viewpoint echoes the spontaneity of “human interrelatedness,” which characterizes “communitas,” a concept borrowed from Victor Turner. In *Ritual Process*, he defines “communitas” as an extemporaneous moment of solidarity and unification among members of the community (132). The spontaneity with which Walter and his community together set forth to help the boys underscores this type of “communitas.”

Walter’s conversion is a powerful political statement that reconsiders the notion of the good citizen. *While Gods* thus emerges as a reflection on the rapport between the citizens, the political structure, and society in the postcolonial Caribbean. From the novel’s denouement, it is essential to comprehend that the good citizen is the one who does not expect much from the state, but the one who takes responsibility and does good for himself and his society. This moral dimension of Lovelace’s novel is summarized by Mr. Woodley, the secretary of the Party Group, who makes the following statement: “How do we make a good citizen? The good citizen is responsible. Responsible both to himself and to society” (239). In *Dragon*, after his conversion, Aldrick expresses the need for the individual to internalize responsibility for himself and the community. For Aldrick, "each man - Pariag included - had the responsibility for his own living, had the responsibility for the world he lived in, and to claim himself and to grow and to grow" (204). In *Schoolmaster*, Dandrade’s address to his son, Manuel, resonates with this sense of citizen consciousness. As Dandrade says, "you have to care about things, Manuel-boy. You have to care to improve yourself not only for you but for the place you live in. A man does not
carry the world with him” (51). This concern for the welfare of the community is the common link between citizens according to Aristotle. As he views it, “one citizen differs from another, but the salvation of the community is the common business for all. This community is the state; the virtue of the citizen must therefore be relative to the constitution of which he is a member” (Aristotle 106). In the fiction of Lovelace, the good citizen takes initiatives for himself, as well as for the wellbeing of his community.

The numerous statements on the need to take individual responsibility and participation in the affairs of the community in *While Gods* determine the centrality of citizen consciousness as a way to rethink and revise the individual’s relationship to himself or herself, the government, and society. Political leaders should view the political parties as spaces where political education should aim at reinforcing individuals’ awareness of their responsibilities towards themselves and their government. Theorizing the goals of his party, the People National Movement (PNM), Williams says,

> Every step taken by the party must be a step calculated not only to do something in the interest of the people or for the good of the people, but rather designed to get the people to do things for themselves and to think for themselves… (“The Case of Party Politics in Trinidad” 13)

The above statement demonstrates that although Lovelace is skeptical about Trinidadian political leadership, he presents the PM in a good light.
The PM’s vision of the role of parties in producing conscious citizens is replicated by a member of Party of National Importance (PNI), which symbolizes Williams’s People’s National Movement (PNM) in *While Gods*. In a party meeting, the member declares

> it is not enough for us to say that we have been supporters of this government; now, we must approach our civic duties with greater sense of responsibility and a greater sense of dedication. Now, we must be prepared to make every effort to assist the central government in its programme of development. (122)

The member of the PNI is saying here that support to the government should not just be in words or suffrage, it should rather be in actions, assisting the government’s politics of boosting development. This incentive echoes former U.S. President John Kennedy’s famous statement that encouraged his fellow American citizens not think about what their government can do for them, but rather think of what they can do to benefit their nation. One may, therefore, think that President Kennedy inspired Lovelace since *While Gods* was published in 1962, the same year that President Kennedy delivered his speech. Additionally, Lovelace almost explicitly quotes President Kennedy through the voice of Mr. Cross who comments that “we think of what the community can do for us and not what we can do for the community. And this has been our downfall in this area, and perhaps the downfall of many other areas here and abroad” (237). Mr. Cross’s observation constitutes a universal statement of the need of citizen consciousness as a gateway towards societal development. It also shows that,
although Lovelace writes about the Afro-Caribbean community in this novel, he also addresses Trinidad, the Caribbean, and the world.

In his essay, “Why I Chose The Express,” Lovelace emphasizes the individual’s self-dependence when he claims, “we must solve our own problems and provide for our own welfare. No one else has the ability or the willingness to do it for us” (61). Supporting the community is also self-assistance, because as Lovelace views it, “in helping to build the community, you help yourself to stay alive and you assist your own existence and make possible your own living” (“Black Community Building” 157). This internalization of responsibility enables the people to take power back from the authorities. In Dragon, Aldrick provides this understanding as he asserts, “we is people with responsibility for we own self. As long as we appeal to others, to the authorities, they will do whatever they want. We have to act for we” (189). Schmidt corroborates these moral incentives, arguing that “people are better off thinking of their welfare as their own responsibility rather than as the government’s responsibility. They are better off living…in communities where people take responsibility for their own welfare” (5). The meeting that Walter holds at the end of the While Gods shows how people at Webber Street carry out in action their internalization of responsibility.

In While Gods, Walter goes from individual commitment to inclusion of the community members as a mode of coping with social problems. This indicates, on the one hand, that individual responsibility is key in Lovelace’s view. Carolyn Cooper believes that Lovelace privileges the personal politics of individual responsibility (95-96). It is true that in portraying Walter’s individual
metamorphosis and his personal initiatives in internalizing responsibility, the
novel suggests that the major change occurs at an individual level before
reaching a wider community level. On the other hand, however, individual
commitment, in Lovelace’s point of view, is only meaningful and effective if it
leads to the inclusion of other people in the group. Hegel similarly argues that it is
only through the individual’s association with others that his goals can be
achieved. As he says, “every one is an end to himself; all others are for him
nothing. And yet without coming into relation with others he cannot realize his
ends. Hence to each particular person others are a means to the attainment of
his end” (Hegel 154). The need to include people is central in While Gods. Lester
claims that “unless others are involved, a man’s contribution isn’t worth much. So
the thing, the God, whatever it is, must cater for the exercise of individuality as
well as the participation of other human beings” (192). Mr. Cross emphasizes this
vision as he asserts that “the real object is to set in motion a force of community
consciousness and community participation which in time will solve, if not all, at
least the majority of our ills” (While Gods 238). Mr. Sears also focuses on the
need to include people as a form of participation and a truly democratic platform
on which the community welfare rests. Advising Walter, he says,

    right now you are participating. That is good. That is the only way a
community spirit can be brought out. And if you can get the people
of this area to contribute, that in itself would be a form of
participation. And participation I think is the fundamental pillar upon
which to build a strong nation. (218)
Like Walter, Bango, in *Salt,*--who initially carries out his annual march individually as a protest against the structures of oppression--eventually includes people, men and women who march side by side in the procession at the end of the novel. From this standpoint, Lovelace provides an inclusive approach of conceiving the future of Trinidad and the Caribbean.

In providing this narrative of conversion, acceptance of responsibility and participation, Lovelace is making the statement that self-fulfillment and freedom are not attained outside of the community, but rather within the community. Lovelace clearly expresses this vision when he declares:

> It is only in the context of community that people have their being, that people can be free. I am not sure that a man alone can be free. In fact, I am pretty sure that a man alone cannot be free. And it seems to me that it is in the area of community that we must live…When we begin to think of living, we must begin to think of the community, for community is the framework in which people grow and have being. Community is the area which provides people physical and psychological protection. (“Black Community Building” 155)

Nigel Bolland similarly suggests that the concept of freedom held by most ex-slaves in the British Caribbean (as elsewhere in the Americas) was not necessarily Western individualism or personal autonomy. Family and community goals were frequently given priority over individual advancement, or perhaps the distinction was simply irrelevant (Bolland 140-43). Walter’s early intention to
externalize responsibility and escape is an ineffective effort to achieve freedom, which is countered by his ultimate decision to get involved with his community and take action. This gradual awareness of the need to contribute to the community stems from Walter's acknowledgement that “independence can never be truly absolute, that he will only be able to make sense of himself individually by seeing himself as part of something communal” (Brown 12). Lovelace's conception of freedom counters the European sense of freedom, which emphasizes individualism. In most societies in the Caribbean and Africa, freedom is characterized by the individual’s attachment to his family, clan, tribe, ethnic group or community. By showing allegiance to the group the individual enjoys safety, support, and affection from the other members of the group. In Caribbean societies where people have gone through historical mechanisms of oppression, and still undergo an underground sort of colonialism under the leadership of their own political elite, the group remains an essential platform where people’s problems can be supported and resolved. It is therefore essential to emphasize in this chapter that the interconnectedness between the individual’s responsibility to society and society’s responsibility to the individual guarantees both the fulfillment of the individual and the welfare of society. In view of this, While Gods, although not Lovelace’s best-written novel, is a significant contribution to the revelation of the difficulties people face in post-independent Trinidad as well as in the Caribbean.
PART II: THE ISLAND AND ITS DIASPORAS: INDENTITY PLURALISM AND THE CREATION OF A NATIONAL SPACE
CHAPTER THREE

ETHNIC ESSENTIALISM, CULTURAL PERFORMANCE, AND THE FORMATION OF A MULTI-DIASPORIC NATION IN THE DRAGON CAN’T DANCE, SALT AND IS JUST A MOVIE

John C. Chasteen argues in his introduction to Beyond Imagined Communities that in Latin America, “states preceded nations…. they long remained ‘states in search of nationhood’” (xviii). Chasteen’s statement underscores that the nation is still not a reality among independent Third World countries. This postcolonial situation of anxiety about failed states and fragmented nationalism prompts continuing discourses of nation-building and nationalism. Tim Brennan notes that “from the late 1940s, with a Europe weakened by war and decolonization in full swing, the empowering image for Third World intellectuals has been the nation” (1). In the postcolonial context of the Caribbean, nationalist intellectuals predominantly produce national allegories, in Jamesonian terms, focusing on the imagining of the Caribbean nation. In multi-ethnic and multi-diasporic islands, like Trinidad and Guyana, the poetics of nationalism appear much more complex and defy unitary theories of nationalism. Stefano Harney insists that “The complexity of nationalist discourse in multicultural, multiracial Third World and New World nations like Trinidad and Tobago will challenge the flexibility of the best of these theories” (Nationalism and Identity 6). Earl Lovelace’s novels, The Dragon Can’t Dance, Salt, and Is Just a Movie express a complex discourse of nationalism that parodies
mainstream narratives and theories of nationalism. The novels examine the intricacy of the relations among the different ethnic groups in Trinidad and their negotiation of a national space. This chapter discusses Lovelace’s portrayal of the factors of ethnic dissension, which impede the consolidation of the Trinidadian nation. Identifying the foundation of the ethnic divisions in Trinidad remains an imperative without which the efforts at building a stronger Trinidadian nation will be unsuccessful. I also examine the dynamics of resolving the fragmentation of the Trinidadian nation in these three novels by Lovelace.

Theories of nationalism can be divided into two trends. On the one hand, there is the group of theorists like Benedict Anderson, Eric Hobsbawm, Tom Nairn, and Ernest Gellner who link nationalism with modernization. On the other hand, Victor Turner, Anthony D. Smith, and William Douglas belong to the group of theorists who read nationalism along with traditions, culture, and primordialism. The latter group’s conception of nationalism informs Lovelace’s nationalist discourse. Lovelace envisions the Trinidadian nation more in reference to cultural art forms rather than politics and economics. I argue that Lovelace’s narratives locate the basis of ethnic division in the nature of slavery and the indenture system, which reinforced the historical negation of Afro-Trinidadians’ humanity and access to land and property. In contrast, this colonial politics allowed the Indo-Trinidadians who came in as indentured servants rather than as slaves to aspire to economic prosperity though it also affected their humanity to a lesser extent. Lovelace, therefore, sees the terrain of culture as the
space where the humanity of both Afro-Trinidadians and Indo-Trinidadians can be restored and their tensions contained.

1. Afro-Caribbeans vs Indo-Caribbeans: The Roots of Ethnic Dissension

It is a common view among scholars that ethnic tensions between Afro-Trinidadians and Indo-Trinidadians impede the establishment of a stronger Trinidadian nation. Yet, there is a lack of true understanding of the foundation of the tensions between these diasporic groups, without which efforts at building a united Trinidadian national community will hardly be productive. Colonial discourse views the tensions between Afro-Trinidadians and Indo-Trinidadians as a result of the rejection of each other’s identity, with an incorporation of the ideals of Western identity. For instance, James Froude ties the distrust between these groups to their desire to become white. In his book, *The English in the West Indies*, Froude claims that “The two races are more absolutely apart than the white and the black. The Asiatic insists the more on his superiority in the fear perhaps that if he did not the white might forget it’ (76). V.S. Naipaul’s view of the relationships between Afro-Trinidadians and Indo-Trinidadians replicates Froude’s argument. In his book, *The Middle Passage*, he declares:

It is sufficient to state that the antipathy exists. The Negro has a deep contempt, as has been said, for all that is not white; his values are the values of white imperialism at its most bigoted. The Indian despises the Negro for not being an Indian; he has, in addition, taken over all the prejudices against the Negro and with the convert’s zeal regards as Negro everyone who has any tincture of
Negro blood…. Like monkeys pleading for evolution, each claiming to be whiter than the other, Indians appeal to the unacknowledged white audience to see how much they despise one another. They despise one another by reference to the whites. (80)

These colonial and contemporary discourses silence or understate the historical foundations of the ethnic dissension in the island of Trinidad. Other scholars refute the dehistoricization and naturalization of Afro- and Indo-Trinidadian relationships. Rhoda Reddock analyzes the foundation of the ethnic divisions in Trinidad and identifies four major points: Afro-Trinidadians’ assimilation of Western values and rejection of both African and Indian indigenous values; depression of wages due to Indian “scab labour;” “transference of cultural memory” (both Africans’ and Indians’ attachment to their cultural practices); and “rules of hierarchy and status” among Indians (the Indians’ cultivation of caste values) (“Contestation Over Culture” 67-68). In this respect, Shalini Puri claims that “both colonial ‘divide and rule’ policies and the lowering of sugar wages that resulted from the increased supply of labour exacerbated race relations between these two poorest segments of Trinidadian society” (172). Puri’s attempt to locate the Afro- and Indo-Trinidadian tensions in colonial “divide and rule” policies is a salutary initiative to historicizing the roots of these tensions. Khafra Kambon goes further and suggests that “colonial policy created and aggravated racial division in Trinidad and Tobago” (“Black Power in Trinidad & Tobago” 235-36). I argue that the nature of the indenture system in Trinidad remains the basis of the ethnic divisions as developed in Lovelace’s narrative. The indenture system did not only
divide the Afro-Trinidadians and Indo-Trinidadians, but it also negated humanity in the former group and conceded it to the latter through the development of stereotypes and politics of favoritism in land grants, which fuels ethnic tensions in Trinidad. Although the tensions are pervasive at economic and cultural levels, they are more visible in party politics and political leadership. This study will analyze the roots of ethnic tensions, as well as the main sites where these tensions manifest themselves in *Dragon*, *Salt*, and *Is Just a Movie*.

**Colonial “Divide and Rule”**

To understand the basis of the ethnic conflicts in Trinidad, it is important to consider the motives, implementation of the indenture system, and its effects on both the Afro-Trinidadians and Indo-Trinidadians. Indentured labor was introduced in Trinidad after Emancipation, from 1845 to 1924. The British colonialists’ decision to bring in indentured workers from India characterizes the perception of newly liberated African slaves who were demanding fair wages as a threat. Emancipation forced the colonialists to redefine their relationship with the ex-slaves, which not only meant promotion of the latter’s livelihood as waged workers and as humans, but it also represented a possibility for the freed slaves to take over the plantation due to their larger numbers and stronger physical features. Lovelace writes that

> The decision by Britain to bring the Indians was motivated not only by the consideration to find labor for the sugar estates but [to bring] to the island an alien population in sufficient numbers to offset the
large African population the British had to deal with after emancipation. ("The Indian and the Creole Culture" 2)

The Indian indentured workers were a cheap alternative to the increasing price of African labor, and more importantly they were used as a means to weaken the labor power of former African slaves.

It is therefore not surprising that the British colonialists sought to divide Africans and Indians. The recommendation of the governor of Trinidad, Ralph Woodford, on October 1814, not only shows that indentureship was being thought of even before Emancipation, but it also underscores the colonial intention to divide African ex-slaves and the Indian workers. As Woodford wrote:

> The cultivators on Hindostan are known to be peaceful. An extensive introduction of that class of people accustomed to live on the produce of their own labour only, and totally withdrawn from African connections or feelings, would probably be the best experiment for the population of this island where the king has power of enacting the laws and regulations he may think fit for their protection and support where the soil is grateful and probably corresponds much with that of their own country. (Qtd. in Lovelace, “The Indian and the Creole Culture” 2)

Lovelace contends that the British colonialists sought to control Africans from the beginning, as the latter constituted a risk to the physical and psychological wellbeing of the white planters. In his essay, “Creating Communities,” Lovelace emphasizes that
African communities in the West Indies, from the outset, had to contend with the slave owner and settler community whose sacred mission was to break them up for the European’s own physical safety and psychological satisfaction.

We must understand the slave owner community had very good practical reasons for wanting to do so. The African was a man fighting for his life, physical and psychological. An African community was death to the European. He had to break it up. His physical safety demanded it. In most cases the slaves outnumbered the European community five to one, and contrary to some history, the slave was far from docile. (112-13)

With the introduction of Indian indentured laborers, the white colonialists desired to maintain a system of exploitation that would preserve their interests. In *Is Just a Movie*, the speech that Manick first prepares to deliver during the meeting of the Hard Wuck Party expresses the latent intention of the indenture system to preserve the status quo. As Manick claims, Indians were “brought into the plantation country, not to change the society but to keep it from changing.... Africans were set adrift” (162-63). That new system of colonial exploitation could only prosper if the newly liberated African slaves and the imported Indian workers were set apart.

In *Dragon* and *Is Just a Movie*, Lovelace does not explicitly portray the arrival of indenture or Indians in Trinidad, but it is represented symbolically in both novels. In *Dragon*, the arrival of Pariag, the Indian, and his wife at the Yard
speaks to the arrival of Indians in Trinidad. Pariag’s subsequent economic growth, contrasting the state of dispossession of the Afro-Trinidadians, like Aldrick, underscores the coming of East Indian immigrants to Trinidad and their endeavor to acquire economic prosperity. In *Is Just a Movie*, Manick’s father’s arrival in the Settlement can be read as a symbolic representation of Indian immigration to Trinidad. His family’s isolation resonates with the early Indian immigrants’ separation from the free African slaves. Describing Manick’s father, the narrator says:

From that location, he would edge himself into the consciousness of the Settlement, not so much as our neighbour, as a man living in our neighbourhood, doing nothing to change his status of stranger beyond his mumbled good evening to my aunt Magenta…a lonely man whose heart and homeland was somewhere else, showing no interest in nothing Cascadu had to offer and offering nothing himself. (Lovelace 151)

It is, in fact, in *Salt* where Lovelace most explicitly dramatizes the arrival of Indians, their encounter with the ex-African slaves, and the colonial “divide and rule.” Lovelace’s representation of the encounter between Jojo, Bango’s great grandfather, and Indian indentured immigrants is very telling of the advent of indentureship. Jojo is astonished with the sudden arrival of the Indians at the compound of the Carabons, the white Creoles, and initiates the following conversation with Faustin:
‘Hey!’ he said to Faustin. ‘Where that band of oily-looking people come from?’

‘India,’ Faustin said.

‘What they doing here?’

‘They come to work here,’ Faustin said. ‘That is the answer to your claim for compensation.’ (Salt 185)

Jojo, then, engages in a dialogue with Feroze, the Indian:

‘Hey,’ Jojo called out, ‘what is you doing? You don’t see people living here? How you could come in here just so and don’t tell nobody nothing.’

.... ‘This land is my own.’

‘Your own?’

‘Is because of my contract. I not going back to India.’

‘What happen?’ the Indian ask him. ‘You working here?’

‘Yes, I working here,’ Jojo answered.

‘You working here and you don’t know what a contract is?’ [the Indian replied]. (Salt 185)

This incident expresses the roots of dissatisfaction and frustration among the newly liberated African slaves against the Indian immigrants. The Africans felt wronged as they were liberated to nothing while the newly arrived Indians got land, were given the jobs on the plantation, and, for many, were given money for passage back to India. Jojo became more resolute than ever about reclaiming justice, but he was aware that such an endeavor would create animosity between
the Indians and the former slaves. As the narrator observes, ‘it was clear to him that the Colony’s treatment of the Indians had given him an even greater claim to reparation, but what was worrying, was his feeling that he had made an enemy of Feroze and the rest of Indian people” (186-87). In directing his anger to Feroze and Indians, Jojo failed to see that the colonial scheme was in fact responsible for all the resentment. He believes, as the narrator says, that Indians “come and take over the work and prevent the Governor from dealing with the petition, now, here one of them squatting the government land” (185). Feroze’s response to Jojo expresses the Indians’ innocence on that matter: “May be is because you from around here….They don’t have to pay you passage for you. I from India. I am from across the sea. They have to pay plenty money for me to travel” (185). Faustin, addressing Jojo, claims that ‘Is not their [the Indians] fault’ (186). In saying so, Faustin implies that the colonial authorities were responsible for grievances and wrongs that the emancipated African slaves underwent. Indians were not therefore the ones to be blamed for the ex-slaves’ misfortune.

Lovelace’s portrayal of the encounter between Jojo and Feroze unveils the colonial mechanisms of ethnic division in Trinidad. It is by denying humanity to the Africans and conceding it to the Indians that the colonial power planted the seeds of distrust and anger between the African and Indian Diasporas in Trinidad. Denying Africans total freedom, land, and fulfilling wages, in contrast to bringing Indians as workers bound by a contract, but giving them wages and paying them for a passage back to India, represents colonial policies of the dehumanization of Africans and favoring East Indians. The colonial law that
allowed indentured Indian workers to access land contributed to the emergence of a stronger Indian peasantry. As Puri notes, “the colonial government’s brief policy of granting land and credit in place of a return passage to India led to a lasting perception of Indians as an affluent group” (72). In fact, one out of six Indian workers went back to India, which explains the degree to which the indenture system in Trinidad was flexible and advantageous to the Indians. The flexibility of the indenture system in Trinidad, as it is called, guaranteed its success. Unlike in Trinidad, the indenture system failed in Cuba and Puerto Rico due to its attempt to replicate the slave system. The various concessions in Trinidad that differentiated slavery from indenture therefore allowed the British colonialists to gain the loyalty of Indians against the Africans in Trinidad. As a result, however, anger and misunderstandings arose and became exacerbated between the Africans and Indians.

The British colonialists implemented location separation between the Indian indentured workers and the freed Africans. It is, in fact, “in their interest for these two groups not to be together, not to see each other as allies” (Lovelace, Personal interview). Colonial law therefore compelled Indians to remain in their estates where they lived as indentured workers. This policy attempted to prevent Indians from mingling with Africans outside of work. Indians resided in the countryside, St. Madeline, Caroni, Naparima, etc., whereas Africans mainly lived in towns (Lovelace, “The Indian and the Creole Culture” 2-3). In Lovelace’s novels as well as Trinidadian fiction in general, the representation of life in towns involves more Africans and fewer Indians. This underscores the presence of a
small number of Indians in urban areas in post-Emancipation and post-independence periods. In Lovelace’s *Dragon*, V.S. Naipaul’s *Miguel Street*, and Samuel Selvon’s *A Brighter Sun*, for instance, the narration portrays a few Indian characters, trying to integrate into a creolizing urban society. These Indian characters mainly move from the countryside to settle in towns. Their movement from the South or East of Trinidad to Port of Spain also symbolizes a movement from rural to urban sites. This type of exodus shows that some of the Indians desired to flee the plantation life and be part of the bigger Creole world. The Indian immigrants who mainly stayed in the countryside did so because they had access to land and could accumulate wealth through cultivation although some of them were also trapped in service, had no education and were afraid of unfamiliar urban contexts. Unlike Indian immigrants, African slaves could not evolve in the country due to the difficulties in getting land for cultivation. The towns therefore provided them with opportunities and more freedom. Plantation work reminded ex-African slaves of the old times of slavery, which renders the accusation that East Indians took over their jobs suspect. So, their desertion of the countryside can also be understood as an intention to completely do away with bondage. The predominance of Indian immigrants in the countryside and the majority of freed African slaves in towns does not just characterize the degree to which the colonial authorities physically separated both groups, but also the desire of emancipated slaves to flee the plantation.

The geographical separation between the African ex-slaves and Indian indentured laborers constituted the most overt type of colonial “divide and rule”
policies. However, it is the cultural and motivational separation that created most
tensions and divisions between the groups. At the motivational level, the
indenture system allowed the Indian worker to aspire to economic prosperity. The
Indians’ opportunity to acquire land and wages motivated their propensity to
wealth accumulation. On the other hand, the indenture system prevented the
liberated African slaves from obtaining total freedom, and therefore undermined
their economic viability. Where the Indians worked for economic growth, Africans
struggled for total liberation. Emancipation benefitted the white Creoles and the
Indian workers at the expense of Africans. In his essay “Welcoming Each Other,”
Lovelace contends that

Emancipation itself did not seek to cultivate a new set of relations
between the Africans who had been enslaved and the colonisers,
nor did it explore any new ways for the economic system to be run.
It maintained the same plantation system. Indians replaced Africans
on the plantations, and whatever benefits, if we can call them that,
that could have gone to labour, were reaped by the Indians. The
planters were compensated for their loss of labour of the previously
enslaved Africans. Africans were simply set at liberty, without
apology or compensation, and pushed outside the organising
system of the plantation. (167-68)

The Africans’ lack of motivation in economic growth stems from the colonial will
to maintain the status quo at the end of slavery. The colonialist policies made it
hard for Africans to acquire land. In order to get land from Carabon, Jojo
had to have cash to pay. Jojo didn’t have money…. Perhaps [he] should apply to the government for other lands. Of course, Jojo knew that that was no solution to the matter and that in any event he didn’t have the money to purchase and the land laws made it impossible for him to join with other people because the policy was to sell no less than eighty acres of land and that to a single buyer.”

(Salt 183)

While Carabon refuses to sell land to African laborers, working in plots of land less than forty acres, he sells Moon a five-acre plot of land. This instance evokes the enactment the 1783 Cedula, a law that was implemented by the Spanish to deny Africans access to land. The 1783 Cedula meant that

Roman Catholic colonists of either sex had the right to 32 acres of land with 16 acres for every captive worker he brought into the country, while black and coloured colonists were given 16 acres each, with additional 16 acres for each slave. (Rohlehr 22)

The indenture system implemented quite similar policies to prevent Africans from getting land. As Selwyn Ryan asserts “the colonial authorities [during the plantation system regime] quite calculatingly made it difficult for land to be obtained in quantities under 600 acres and kept the price of land artificially high.” Colonial power undermined the emergence of a “dynamic black peasantry” (“The Struggle for Black Power” 31). The politics of preventing economic opportunity for Africans continue in contemporary times. In Lovelace’s *The Wine of Astonishment*, Mr. Buntin owns a shop and wants to transform it into a grocery
like Chin, the Chinese man. He asks for a loan at the bank, but he is denied for the sole reason that he is a second-class black man. Mr. Buntin “couldn’t get a loan from the bank,” says the narrator, “because as you know they don’t lend out their money to black people. Portuguese, Syrian, Chinese, okay, but black people is a different story” (*Wine* 6). Lovelace’s term “black people” often refers to poor black people.

It is not surprising that poor black people pursue fewer tendencies to employment and material growth, even if resistance to oppression and a quest for dignity motivate them. In *Dragon*, the Afro-Trinidadian inhabitants of the Yard accommodate poverty as a way of life and resistance to the mechanisms of re-enslavement. In contrast, the Indians, Pariag and Dolly, his wife, find fulfillment in material accumulation. When Pariag arrives at the Yard, he finds Afro-Trinidadian people in poverty, which they accept as a form of opposition to a continuous history of colonial oppression. Anyone who therefore wishes to belong in that space should abide by that code, according to people of the Yard. Aldrick, the protagonist, is the character that embodies this tradition of dispossession most. The Indians have a different approach to life. They must work in order to live. This economic motivation is a legacy from their indentured immigrant ancestors. Pariag’s economic endeavor contradicts Aldrick’s resistance through idleness and reluctance to work. Due to their different motivations, the Yard isolates Pariag and rejects his friendship.

In *Salt*, Jojo has to struggle for full liberation on the eve of Emancipation. The situation of apprenticeship, which granted him partial freedom, did not permit
him to focus on capital building, unlike the Indians who came to Trinidad as bonded immigrant workers, not slaves. In an interview with Leonard Raphael, Lovelace asserts that “the African's principal preoccupation in the Caribbean has been the preoccupation with freedom; because the existence in the Caribbean was one of un-freedom” (11). Bango, Jojo’s grandson, has inherited that struggle for humanity. The marches that he organizes express the ongoing quest of lower class Afro-Trinidadians for total emancipation. At a political meeting, Alford George declares that “Bango is a victim of this deliberate plan set down from the beginning to prevent people working their way out of enslavement” (Sal 106).

Bango is the prototype of poor peasants who oppose the continuing mechanism of colonial oppression. In colonial countries it the peasantry that provided resistance against oppression, because, as Frantz Fanon said, “it has nothing to lose and everything to gain” (23). The black people who have had success, unlike Bango, are those who accommodate to European norms. Here, unlike the earlier chapter on mimicry, accommodation is viewed as a negative thing and resistance positive. As Lovelace critically observes, “conform to the status quo, which was European, if you want to ‘succeed.’ Accept the European form of religion, dress, culture” (“Creating Communities” 114). In making this statement, Lovelace argues that the policies of negating Africans’ success aim at suppressing their African identity, their dignity, and therefore their humanity. The condition of success for the Africans is tantamount to negating their own selves. Lovelace makes this statement clearer as he asserts:
The efforts after emancipation was to reduce him [the African] to a slave worker, without culture, a black baboon, and it was this he protested against. He would possess nothing. He wouldn’t work, he wouldn’t. He would in his religion look to the miracle of his humanity, and it was to his humanity that he addresses his expression of his being, and the reality of his freedom. (“The Indian and the Creole Culture” 5)

In suppressing the cultures of Africans, the British colonialists stripped them of their humanity. Culture gives individuals a sense of being, dignity and humanity. When Africans were denied their humanity through the suppression of their culture, it was through culture that they sought to recover it. Religion became an avenue whereby they could have a sense of themselves as humans. In Wine, the struggle of the Baptist followers to maintain their religion was also attempt to preserve their humanity. Chapter One demonstrates Lovelace’s advocacy of mimicry as a means through which African spiritual influences would survive and give strength to the people.

The Indian immigrant and former African slaves had to have different motivations. Both groups’ rapport with the colonial power determines their response to their worldly conditions. For their own interest, the British colonialists favored East Indian indentured immigrants with land grants. At the same time, they laid the foundations of undermining the growth of a productive African peasantry. The efforts of suppressing the economic development of Africans represent an endeavor to dehumanize the Africans and hence prevent the
existence of Africans as a community. While Indentured Indians were working as plantation laborers to earn a living, though in difficult conditions, former enslaved Africans were struggling to recover their freedom. For Lovelace, these different motivations also prompt Indians and Africans to see each other as aliens.

At the cultural level, the separation first took the form of stereotype development through colonial discourse, but has also been replicated by contemporary narratives. Colonialist historian James Anthony Froude drew oppositions between African ex-slaves and Indian immigrants. He referred to the Africans as negroes and lazy men, and the Indians as coolies and hard working men (67). Puri mentions these stereotypes in *Caribbean Postcolonial*: “the thriftless African/the thrifty Indian; the lazy African/the hard-working Indian; the childlike African unable to control his sexual appetites/the calculating and ascetic Indian” (173). These stereotypical descriptions negatively characterize the African while providing a relatively positive representation of Indians. The Africans are conceived of as lesser beings, whereas Indians are conceded a sense of dignity and worth. Unfortunately the two groups internalized these stereotypes, which influence the way they view each other. For Rhoda Reddock, the Indians define themselves as hard workers in opposition to Africans (67). The language of everyday life resonates with the stereotypes borrowed from the colonizers. In an interview, Gordon Rohlehr notes that

The presence of both Africans and Indians on occasions such as Diwali and wedding feasts has often been recuperated into the language of stereotype. Obligatory feedings by Indians of black
neighbors, beggars, and the poor are compatible with Indian stereotypes of Creoles as gluttons and freeloaders, or notions of Africans as tricksters who outsmart Indians by crashing their parties, as well as with African resentment at Indian wealth and exclusivism, which interpret the feedings as acts of religious obligation. (Qtd. in Puri 182)

It is not farfetched, then, to argue that the Indians and Africans see each other through the lens of the Europeans. And since the Europeans have wanted them apart, the images that they projected compelled Africans and Indians to see each other as mutually incompatible.

The most dramatic division at the cultural level lay in the white colonialists' suppression of African culture, while Indian workers could maintain many of their cultural institutions. African culture went through colonial politics of suppression since the arrival of Africans in the Caribbean and throughout the pre-independence period. In Trinidad Afro-Caribbean religious practices like the Baptist Church, obeah and Shango and African cultural artifacts like the drum were banned by colonial law. In 1917, for instance, the Prohibition Ordinance forbade the worship of the Baptist Spiritual religion as Lovelace demonstrates in Wine. Contrary to Africans, the Indians were authorized by colonial policy to practice their cultures. As Lovelace states, “the Indians had by law been allowed to practice their religion, had their priests, and were encouraged to cultivate their culture” (“The Indian and The Creole Culture” 3). Ryan similarly argues that, “Unlike the Negroes, the Indians had come as indentured freemen, and some
attempt was made to ensure that their treatment was humane and that their traditional institutions were not destroyed as they had been with the Africans” (Race and Nationalism 20). Diwali and Hosay were festivals that were celebrated and remained unchanged in Trinidad. Indeed, the fact that the colonial authorities allow Indo-Trinidadians and Europeans to perform their cultures while they ban Afro-Trinidadians from representing their own cultures intrigues Bee in Wine. As Eva narrates, “Bee say that he can’t understand how in this country with so many different people, where they have religions for Hindu and Moslem and Anglican and Catholic, how it could be a crime for black people to worship as Spiritual Baptist” (Lovelace 73). Lovelace is correct when he argues that African cultures were repressed during slavery and post-emancipation periods. He does not, however, underline that East Indian cultures and traditions were also looked down upon, though to a lesser degree. Early East Indian immigrants were not officially allowed to marry by Hindu rites, were not allowed cremation, were denied education if they did not convert to Christianity, and had to agitate for such rights. The Hosay festival, as it will be emphasized later, was controlled by the colonial order which determined who should take part in it and what streets the processions should pass by.

In The Caribbean Postcolonial, Puri argues that “conceding to the Indians the right to celebrate their festival was part of a larger policy of denying their rights and claims to Trinidad” (176). For Puri, colonial policy authorized East Indians to celebrate their festivals, though sometimes controlled, in order to create the “subordinate segregation” of East Indians who would become
subordinate foreigners rather than subordinate assimilated people like Afro-Trinidadians. Indeed, this colonial policy intended to widen the gap between Indians and Africans. Allowing the Indians to celebrate their cultures was also an acknowledgement of their individuality and humanity. Such colonial policies conceded to Indians their rights to exist as a community, since culture constitutes the foundation of the establishment of communities. Negating African cultures therefore amounted to rejecting their individuality, humanity, and right to establish a community. This is not to argue that the indenture system did not undermine the humanity of Indian workers. George Lamming’s *Of Age and Innocence* expresses the colonial oppression of Indian workers. Singh is an example of the Indian indentured laborers who underwent suffering on the plantations. This suffering explains his exhibition of “feelings of bitterness” and “hatred” (Odhiambo 127), and also motivates his involvement with the struggle against colonialism.

Colonial policy also separated Africans and Indians by preventing Africans from taking part in Indian festivals. The ordinance that regulated the Hosay festival in 1884 was part of colonial policies of segregating Indians and Africans in cultural celebrations. The provisions of the ordinance indeed denied Africans’ participation in Hosay festival: the parade was not allowed to go through Port of Spain and San Fernando. The immigrants who did not work in plantations had to have permission to take part in the event, and they were not allowed to bring their tazias and sticks and torches were prohibited during the celebration. But in the final analysis, immigrants and their offspring were conceded the right to
participate (Puri 176; Singh 80-81). Immigrants, according to colonial law, were people who came to Trinidad after emancipation like Indians, Syrians, Chinese, and Lebanese. The freed African slaves were not considered immigrants. By not allowing non-immigrants to participate in Hosay, the law excluded Africans from the celebration and put them in a limbo where they were neither natives nor immigrants. This festival, in fact, represented an opportunity for Afro-Trinidadians to engage in spirituality after the ban of the celebration of their religions.

The Hosay celebration provided a space for creolization among Indians and Africans. Yet, “These [colonial] measures,” argues Puri, “deliberately arrested the emerging hybridization of black and Indian cultural practices and retarded the emergent “nationalization” of Hosay” (176). Puri further insists that “both allowing the festival prior to 1884 and enforcing the ordinance regulating it from 1884 were policies designated to limit Indian access to a public national space and identity” (Caribbean Postcolonial 176). The Caribbean novels that represent Hosay often exclude the Afro-Trinidadians’ participation in the celebration. The exclusion of Afro-Trinidadians from Hosay, as Puri views it, paradoxically excludes Indo-Trinidadians from the national space. In his novel The Jumbie Bird, Ismith Khan represents Hosay without any mention of African involvement in the celebration. Khan’s narrative expresses a “testimony to the success of (post)colonial historiography in severing the emergent ties between blacks and Indians and erasing their hybridized histories” (Puri 181-82). The limitation of African participation in Indian cultural celebrations was also meant to ward off any collaboration between Indian immigrants and former African slaves
against the colonialists. Kelvin Singh, repeating the colonial newspapers’ opinion, states that “If...the roughs who infest our towns can join their strength to that of the coolies, the danger will be increased tenfold” (77-78). Thus, the colonial “divide and rule” policies sought to separate Africans and Indians for the interest and security of the colonizers. However, they planted the seeds of tensions between Africans and Indians, which are seen in the cultural realm, but are more visible in political leadership and electoral politics from post-independence to the present in Trinidad as both major ethnic groups negotiate a national space.

**The Creole Culture and the African-Indian Dilemma**

In the introduction to his monumental work, *The Development of Creole Society in Jamaica*, Barbadian historian and poet Kamau Brathwaite states that the “‘creole culture’ was part of a wider New World or American culture complex, itself a result of European settlement and exploitation of a new environment” (xiii). Lovelace, though admitting that the roots of Creole culture are located in the plantation system, argues that it actually “started with the slavery abolition when former slaves given their freedom streamed into the free society” (“The Origins of the Creole Society Culture” 1). Creole culture was largely an urban phenomenon and the Indians being isolated in the countryside did not share this culture until later. Africans, as the major group, and other minorities like white people, Syrians, and Chinese all took part in the development of Creole society since they mostly lived in towns. Though Africans outnumbered the other ethnic groups, they did not initially dominate Creole culture. Lovelace identifies two main reasons why the Africans did not dominate Creole culture in the early days
of the development of the Creole society. One is that they did not control the
economy and political system. The second is that the cultural institutions in which
Africans took part extolled the values of Europeans and validated their
superiority. Carnival, which is the embodiment of Creole culture in Trinidad, did
not initially go against the colonial order. It was not until the Africans used the
Carnival as a mode of protest and reclamation of their individuality that they
could really appropriate it.

Lovelace’s novels represent his view that both the Afro-Trinidadians’ and
Indo-Trinidadians’ perceptions of and attitudes toward Creole culture undermine
the formation of national culture. The Africans generally see Creole culture as
theirs, and seek the absorption of Indians into that mainstream culture. Indians,
on the other hand, do not see themselves in the culture, and tend to isolate
themselves into their own cultural realm. Lovelace’s *Dragon* portrays the Indians’
encounter with Creole culture, and their attempt to integrate into Creole society.
Samuel Selvon’s *A Brighter Sun*, published in 1952, also narrates that encounter.
The novel revolves around a young newly married Indian couple, Tiger and
Urmilla, who move from the Indian sugar-field settlement in Chaguanas to live in
a town-like village, Barataria, about four miles from Port of Spain. Like Tiger and
Urmilla, Pariag and Dolly, a young Indian couple in *Dragon*, leave the countryside
in the South of Trinidad and settle in Laventille, a poor suburb in Port of Spain.
Both couples’ moves from their rural settlement are motivated by a desire to
escape the sugar cane industry, “the most ubiquitous existential symbol of the
racial history of the Caribbean” (Salick 19). V.S. Naipaul’s protagonist Mr. Biswas
in *A House of Mr. Biswas*, shares Pariag’s and Tiger’s sense of cultural imprisonment. Like Pariag and Tiger, Mr. Biswas seeks to escape the limiting and imprisoning character of his Indian clan and the legacy of the plantation (Ramchand 12). The Creole world appeared attractive to these Indians. The plantation life limited opportunities that the Creole world offers. Business and education were one of the elements that attracted Indians to the Creole society. Lovelace’s and Selvon’s portrayal of young Indian couples shows that the young Indians constituted the category of the Indian community who mainly sought to integrate into the Creole world.

Lovelace’s and Selvon’s choice of young Indian characters as protagonists expresses the idea that the younger generation constitute the symbol of rebellion and contestation against traditions and customs in comparison with the older generation. The young Indian couples’ moves, therefore, underscore an attempt to escape from the confinement of the Indian cultural space, and engage with the bigger world in the cities. Pariag “wanted to be a man, to join the world, be part of a bigger something in a bigger somewhere, to stretch out, extend himself, be a man among people” (*Dragon* 147). The journey to the bigger Creole world becomes a quest for experience, adulthood, and maturity. Yet, while Pariag’s quest focuses on attaining selfhood and acceptance of his humanity (*Dragon* 78), Tiger desires to achieve economic autonomy, as he specifies it to Urmilla in the opening pages of *A Brighter Sun* (12).
Selvon’s novel reflects African and Indian tensions, but it is in Lovelace’s *Dragon* where they are more dramatically represented. The Afro-Trinidadian couple in *A Brighter Sun*, Joe and Rita, approach Tiger and Urmilla with racial stereotypes as a result of the couples’ different background and upbringing (Salick 19). Yet, Tiger and Urmilla overlook these stereotypes. The couples eventually become friends due to the effort of the wives, Rita and Urmilla. In *Dragon*, Pariag and his wife face more severe obstacles of integration into the Creole society. If Joe and Rita eventually accept Tiger and Urmilla, the community of the Hill rejects Pariag and Dolly throughout the novel notwithstanding their desire to integrate. The Indians’ reaction to the hostility of the black Creole community widens the gap between the African and Indian ethnic groups. Both groups approach each other with stereotypes passed over generations from colonial times. The nicknames that they call Pariag express his state as an outsider: “Boya,” “Bottles,” “Colts,” “Channa Boy” and “Crazy Indian.” “This character’s name, Pariag,” argues John Thieme, “suggests ‘pariah’ and this is the role he is forced to occupy” (151). The main issue that Pariag confronts is the desire of the Creole society to absorb him. They want him to come to them. They want him to cease to be an Indian, to do away with his Indian diasporic consciousness and melt within the mainstream black Creole culture. Kenneth Ramchand reminds us that “one cannot ignore a cultural heritage, however vaguely felt; and it is not possible for a descendant of Indians to stop looking like an Indian” (3). Pariag negotiates his way into the Creole space from the point of view of his culture. His attempt to cling to his Indian identity echoes the Indo-
Trinidadian men and women who, although they “do not subscribe to the Hindu faith, or blindly follow the path of ethnic politics,” as Patricia Mohammed argues, “are reluctant to relinquish the source of their cultural strength” (610). The example of Tiger in Selvon’s Sun, however, shows us that there are Indo-Trinidadians who do not seek reconnection with India, especially the younger generation among the Indo-Trinidadian middle class. Gordon K. Lewis notes that the loyalty to India shifted to their new home as generations passed, and old ancestral memories receded (243). The issue between Pariag and the Afro-Creole people is that he does not want to forsake his culture, whereas the Creole people want him to strip off his Indianness and endorse the Afro-Creole culture as a condition to integrate the Creole space. Both sides manifest a kind of parochialism, which reinforces their separation.

The Indo-Trinidadians’ reluctance to be involved in the Creole cultural events due to their lack of knowledge of the events and the rigidity of their cultural institutions emphasizes their status as outsiders in the Creole society. In Dragon, Pariag faces difficulties integrating into Creole society because he does not have the superficial, stereotyped qualities of an Afro-Trinidadian Creole and cannot act like one. As he says, “I ain’t have no huge muscles, and I don’t sound tough, and I ain’t tough, and I can’t fight, and don’t know how to play steelband or sing calypso, and I don’t know much about Carnival” (Dragon 91). Pariag’s stereotypes of black people indicates his alienation from diverse Creole cultures, which, according to him, does not represent his Indianness. This feeling of estrangement keeps Pariag from joining in black Creole cultural celebrations. In
Salt, Pariag’s Indian counterpart, Sonan Lochan, experiences such a sentiment of exclusion from Creole cultural celebrations. As a young boy, Sonan does not join the march organized by Bango, the Afro-Trinidadian peasant. Not only does Sonan feel excluded, but he also does not believe he has a place in it. Watching the march, Sonan saw “something powerful and rhythmic and grand from which he and his brothers were excluded…. It never occurred to him that there was a place for him in the march, or that even if there were his father would allow him to join it” (Salt 104). Sonan’s reflection in this passage shows how the younger Indian generation copes with the sense of exclusion from black Creole culture as well as the rigidity of the Indian cultural institution, embodied by the older Indian generation that opposes openness to other cultures.

In Is Just a Movie Manick’s father incarnates the inflexibility of the Indian cultural institutions. His isolation of his family indicates an intention to prevent them from being involved with perceived outsiders. Like Sonan, Manick as a young boy lives the dilemma of desiring to enter the world of the Creoles and facing the barriers from the Indian community against such integration. Manick “had looked on in bewilderment, not sure how he should relate to us, uncertain that he had his father’s permission to enter our world, feeling himself in a limbo place with no guidance how to move” (Is just a Movie 155). In Dragon, Pariag’s uncle represents the Indian social structures that work to preserve Indian separation from the Creole world. When Pariag returns to his Indian community in the South for a short visit, his uncle attempts to convince him that his place is not in the Creole world but with his Indian family, community, and agricultural
production. Pariag’s uncle criticizes his choice to move as he says, “is so you want to live, among Creole people, like cat and dog, and forget your family. You have family, boy… And why you don’t want to work for me? Your father work for me, and your brothers too. I don’t rob them. I try to help my family” (Dragon 146). The clannishness of the Indian cultural and community structures therefore contributes to Indians’ isolation and rejection from the Creole society.

While Salt and Is Just a Movie highlight issues of Indo-Trinidadians’ integration into Creole culture, Dragon extensively expresses the Indians’ exclusion from the Creole society through the character of Pariag. A few instances dramatize the Creole community’s rejection of Pariag in Dragon. Often, Pariag goes by Mr. Alphonso’s shoemaker shop, stops and looks at Aldrick, Philo, Popie, and Guy, but nobody invites him to join them (Dragon 87). During Carnival, when people at the Yard get ready for masquerade, prepare costumes, go to listen to calypsonians and steelband music, “They never one day, not one of them say, ‘Boya’, or ‘Channa Boya’… they never said, ‘Channa Boy, come and go,’ or, ‘We going so and so place, come with us’” (Dragon 87). On meeting Aldrick, one day, Pariag addresses him: “I name is Pariag…I live right there. I does see you all the time, but, we never talk” (Dragon 75). On Christmas day, a band goes house-to-house, playing music. The band does not go to Pariag and Dolly. Pariag believed the musicians would come to them last because they had recently come to the Yard but they never do. As the narrator describes:

Pariag waited there, he and Dolly, he, with a pressed shirt on, and she with her hair combed down and tied in plaits. They waited, with
the ice melting in the bowl, and the roti and the curried mango getting cold. The band never came. They never came. (Lovelace 90)

This rejection conversely expresses the hostility and resistance to Indians’ integration into Creole society, while the Indians seem eager to be part of it. The rejection of Pariag underscores Afro-Trinidadians' historical stereotypical conception of Indo-Trinidadians as outsiders. Pariag’s struggle is, therefore, how to be part Creole society; how to be accepted; how to lift the veil to see and be seen.

Introducing the concept of the “veil” in *Dragon*, Ramchand asserts that:

> In any given social situation there are veils shrouding the individual, giving him a sense of identity with others like himself and ensuring some degree of privacy. They include things like racial identity, religion, social status, material possessions and educational qualifications, to cite the most common of them, as well as more idiosyncratic forms of self-presentation. Some of the veils may be deliberately and elaborately put in place, while others are simply there without the wearer's conscious connivance. Sometimes, the veil exists more in the eye of the beholder than anywhere else. But the veil which can protect can also smother or pen in, and what gives a sense of identity to a group can exclude others, and make it difficult for them to see the individual. ("An Approach to Earl Lovelace" 7-8)
In making this statement, Ramchand is suggesting that some “veils” are unavoidable. Communities cannot establish themselves without a sense of identity—either individual or collective—and the veil provides such an identity. The veil protects, but it can have a negative effect on the beholder as well as on the veiled subject. The veil can become a mask when it perpetually prevents the veiled subject from being seen. When the veil is turned into a mask, it becomes a means of exclusion. Lovelace is aware of the necessity of the veil as it provides identity to the individual and community, but he is also conscious that the veil can be used as a means to exclude the other, specifically when it becomes a perpetual mask. The issue, then, between the Afro-Trinidadians and Pariag is that they are not willing to “look behind the veils of the other, and…be seen behind the veils” (Ramchand 8). The people of the Yard refuse to see Pariag even as Pariag refuses to see them.

Pariag’s internalization of the gender and racial stereotypes that conceive of Indians as effeminate and back people as hyper-masculine emphasizes his belief that he is not man enough to be accepted by the community of the Hill. Pariag is not able to see his Afro-Trinidadian fellows either. Answering Fisheye’s question, “How you passing me so straight today, man?” Pariag says “I…I didn’t see you…I really didn’t see you.” Fisheye retaliates, saying “You mean I so black you can’t even see me in the day?” (Dragon 95). Pariag’s inability to see Fisheye underscores the racial stereotypical conception of black color as inferior and therefore invisible. If Pariag believes that he is not seen because he is not a real Creole, Fisheye, the prototype of Afro-Trinidadians, assumes that the Indian
cannot see him because of his black skin. These are stereotypical conceptions that underline the veils, which have been established since the indenture system, and that prevent the African and Indian ethnic groups from accepting each other.

Pariag’s ardent desire to be seen prompts him to seek visibility through material objects. This attitude underpins the Indians’ approach to their human conditions. By purchasing a bicycle, therefore, Pariag intends to gain status and acceptance among the people of the Yard. However, instead of the expected results, Pariag’s new bicycle arouses more contempt and hostility from the people of the Yard. Pariag is not, in fact, aware that his purchase constitutes a trespassing of the code of non-possession that rules the life of the members of the Yard. Pariag is astonished at the reaction of Miss Olive and Miss Cleothilda who almost accuse him of wanting to kill the children for touching his bike. As the narrator says:

Pariag stood shocked before this accusation and condemnation. He looked around to see whether he had brought anything else with his bicycle, something which would bring forth such severity from the Yard. He shook his head. He didn’t know. He stood there looking at the bicycle, wondering what he had done, what law had he broken.

(Dragon 97-98)

Pariag’s bike purchase has not just broken the code of non-possession, but it has also put him in the position of a traitor, thus strengthening his status as an outsider. Miss Cleothilda, the mulatto female character, stereotypically labels the Indians as unworthy of trust. As she says, “That’s why I never trust them….”
too sly and secretive. You could never know what going on with them. Turn, just turn your head, and they knife you in the back” (Dragon 103). The hostile reaction of the people of the Yard against Pariag expresses a fear of economic rivalry and one-upsmanship that his bike comes to symbolize for them.

Paradoxically, it is Aldrick, the character who embodies the spirit of non-possession, who not only exposes their fear, but also challenges their attitudes. By pressuring Aldrick to put Pariag out of the Yard, the people intend to protect themselves from the supposedly Indian ethos of possession. Yet, not all the people of the Yard believe in that cause. Guy, the renter and representative of the colonial order, and Miss Cleothildad, the mulatto woman, mean to protect their own interest by attacking Pariag for his bike purchase. Aldrick reveals their true intention as he protests in a conversation with Philo, the calypsonian:

Let the Indian buy his bike. Guy and Cleothilda ain’t fooling me. The Indian is a threat to them, he ain’t no threat to me… Guy and Cleothilda trying to protect what they own…I know they don’t own Trinidad and Tobago, but the little they have they frighten the Indian come and give them competition. That must threaten them….The rest of us ain’t threatening them at all. All we think about is to play the dragon. All we thinking about is to show this city, this island, this world, that we is people, not because we own anything, not because we have things, but because we is. We are because we is. (Dragon 110-11)
Aldrick’s outburst underlines that material gain is not a preoccupation for him. His acceptance and accommodation of poverty is a way of asserting his humanity. Pariag’s bike is therefore not a threat to Aldrick. The threat is to Guy and Miss Cleothilda, who embody the historical mechanisms that sought to maintain the middle class status quo, trying to keep the black poor in their poverty and prevent Indians from integrating into Creole society. Guy and Miss Cleothilda, as representatives of the Afro-Creole middle-class, do not desire to share their privileges with the Indians, whom they perceive as a threat to their dominance. Being unconscious of this reality, Pariag takes it out on all the people in the Yard including Aldrick. Perhaps, Aldrick’s guilt is that he “had not lifted any finger to give the Yard any justice” (Dragon 135), and had not extended his hand to Pariag.

Pariag’s disillusionment and grievance for being totally rejected by the Creole community of the Yard, expressed in the destruction of his bike, provokes his self-reclusion and new sense of attachment to his Indianness. His isolation is both physical and psychological: physical, because he makes a trip back to his Indian community in New Lands to revitalize himself (Dragon 144-46), and psychological, because he mentally reconnects himself with his Indian identity by listening to Indian programs on the radio and watching Indian films. A film he and Dolly watch brings them memories of Indian culture and prompts their family visit to New Lands. As the narrator says, “the picture left them feeling very alone, for, for a moment it had plunged them into the fantastic and colorful world of India, bringing about in Pariag a longing for family, for home, for New Lands” (143).
Pariag’s reconnection with his Indian culture expresses two essential points. One is that Pariag intends to integrate into Creole society but retain his cultural heritage. In other words, he negotiates the national space while preserving his Indianness. Pariag clearly expresses his vision as he claims, “we didn’t have to melt into one. I woulda be me for my own self. A beginning. A self to go in the world with, with something in my hand to give. We didn’t have to melt into one. They woulda see me” (*Dragon* 210). The sense of Creolization that Billiram, the young Indian who works with Pariag selling bottles, has, does not appeal to Pariag. That is a mimic creolization, which Pariag forsakes (Ramchand 12). “Balliram liked to pretend he was a Creole,” the narrator says, “but he, Pariag, was not a Creole, and he didn’t intend to play one. But he wanted them to see him” (*Dragon* 91-92). In Selvon’s *A Brighter Sun*, Tiger, unlike Pariag, seeks to enter the Creole world by rejecting his Indianness. At the end of the novel, Tiger confesses to Urmilla that he will not go back to Chaguanas. Ramchand argues that “if the novel implies anything at all it implies that the Indian should simply forget his Indianness and be absorbed in the Trinidad character” (3). The second point is that Pariag’s reclusion expresses the kind of cultural parochialism that prevails among the different ethnic groups in Trinidad. In *Is Just a Movie*, Lovelace asserts that “everyone [is] in their own culture, their own music, their own worship, with less and less to share, nobody responsible to nobody” (264). In portraying the divisions between Pariag and the Afro-Creole people of the Yard, Lovelace shows how ethnic difference can run the risk of cultural parochialism and undermine the development of Trinidadian national culture.
**Political Leadership, Electoral Politics and Ethnic Division**

While culture remains a site where ethnic divisions are subtly and sometimes deviously maintained, they are more blatant and overt at the political level. The separation between ethnic groups is marked when it comes to political leadership, party, and electoral politics. Funso Aiyegina argues that the major ingredient for division is the political landscape, because it is when it comes to voting or making political decisions that people “begin to return to their tribes, and operate from the premises of their tribe” (Personal interview). It is essential to understand that the roots of these divisions are historical. The Afro-Trinidadians were involved in politics earlier than the Indo-Trinidadians. Because they were not allowed to evolve as people with a sense of dignity and humanity in the New World, the emancipated Africans sought to assert themselves through political power. Adult Franchise provided them with that opportunity. It gave Afro-Trinidadians hope that political control would help them to overcome their economic, social, and cultural problems, given that they constituted the largest population at that time (Lovelace, “Best Village: Two Reviews” 15). Instead, such a struggle remained grounded on “a moral claim based on historical precedence and, ironically by the degree of assimilation to the cultural values of the departed colonial power” (Premdas 89). The Indo-Trinidadians’ response to the Afro-Trinidadians’ political initiatives and the political movements they created was tainted with mistrust, which originated from the ethnic divisions generated by colonial policy (Kambon 235-236). The Afro-Trinidadians’ claim over political leadership and their leadership management style fostered Indo-Trinidadians’
suspicions about the intention of such a leadership. Consequently, Indo-Trinidadians gradually became convinced that only Indian political leadership could truly take charge of the concerns of Indo-Trinidadians. These incentives inform the aggravating factors of ethnic disson in the political realm, which Lovelace captures in his fiction.

The Black Power Movement is a site where Lovelace portrays divisions between Afro-Trinidadians and Indo-Trinidadians as they compete for political leadership, specifically in Is Just a Movie. The Black Power Movement emerged around 1970 in Trinidad. It is important here to understand the concept of “black” in order to grasp the meaning of the movement. In North America the term refers primarily to people of African descent. Whereas in Trinidad and in England earlier, the word “black” could have a political connotation, which means “non-white,” and is more specifically associated with “African and Indian,” although Black Power admittedly had a black African emphasis and some activists even attacked businesses of other ethnic groups perceived as racist and exploitative of black people. However, some of the banners that the demonstrators carried during the Black Power revolution were marked by “INDIANS AND AFRICANS UNITE NOW,” which expresses that the “cry for unity was a cry for Black unity” (Kambon 235) as in non-white unity. This is the meaning of the cry Fisheye addressed Pariag: “Power to you, brother!” (Dragon 147). However, the problem with the Black Power Movement was about how Afro-Trinidadians conveyed the message of unity, and how Indo-Trinidadians responded to it.
Lovelace’s novels express the ineffectiveness of the Black Power Movement as emanating from the inability of the Afro-Trinidadians and Indo-Trinidadians to truly join forces in the movement’s struggle for justice and equality. The lack of solidarity between the African and Indian ethnic groups in the evolution of the Black Power Movement is partly due to both Afro-Trinidadians’ feeling of entitlement to take leading political roles and the overarching representation of images of Africa by the Afro-revolutionaries. In *Is Just a Movie*, Lovelace traces the origins of the Black Power Movement as an initiative from Afro-Trinidadians and not the nation at large. In Cascadu, for instance, the movement emerges through the activism of Clayton Blondell, an Afro-Trinidadian who arrives in Cascadu, dressed in African fashion, and starts to advocate the need for Afro-Trinidadians to reclaim and elevate African traditions, cultures and beliefs, and to demand political power. The portrayal of the evolution of the Black Power Movement emphasizes the involvement of three Afro-Trinidadians: Sonnyboy, Kingkala, and Franklyn. Mannick is the only Indian who is involved with this revolutionary group. In *Dragon*, the group of Nine, who symbolize the Black Power insurgency, is represented only by Afro-Trinidadians, Aldrick, Fisheye, and others. Pariag, the Indian, is not a participant but a spectator. In *Salt*, Bango, the Afro-Trinidadian peasant, initiates and perpetuates a march, which also constitutes a demand for Black Power in its ethics of material reparation. The representation of Afro-Trinidadians as the initiators and the major participants in the events pertaining to this particular reclamation of
justice and human dignity shows that Afro-Trinidadians dominated the Black Power Movement regardless of claims of including other non-white ethnicities.

The Afro-Trinidadians’ dominance is not just in numerical terms, but also in the major roles they have played. Is Just a Movie expresses this point. In the night preceding the Black Power demonstration, some placards are distributed among the activists. The placards, which signify struggle and sacrifice, are given to Afro-Trinidadians. Franklyn takes the placard marked “Power to the People.” Evrol chooses the one marked “Change is Nothing to Fear;” Beresford gets “After Four Hundred Years;” Marvin selects “Nobody Will Tell You Who You Are;” and Ibo gives the placard marked “Africans and Indians Unite” to Manick, the Indo-Trinidadian (Is Just a Movie 160). As part of the Black Power demonstration, Manick and his Afro-Trinidadian fellows had to carry three flags: the red flag, which is the flag of struggle and blood, the black flag for the land, the place, and the people, and the green flag representing peace. Manick wants to carry the red flag, but he is prevented from doing so, because the flag represents a symbol of black struggle (161-62). Manick eventually splits from the movement as a result of this exclusion. This episode expresses the Afro-Caribbean people’s belief that because their forefathers led the struggle for liberation in the Caribbean, they are entitled to assume the leading roles in contemporary times.

Though Lovelace criticizes this view, he is also aware that one needs to acknowledge the significant black role in Caribbean history. This ambivalence is expressed when the narrator says, “he [Manick] is the only Indian here, how could we allow him to carry the red flag, the principal symbol of the Black
struggle. And how could he, knowing the situation, want to carry the red flag?” (161-62). But then, the narrator adds:

if he [Manick] was one of the fellars, one of us, if we were in this together, how come he wasn’t allowed to carry the red flag? And if he couldn’t carry the flag what was his position in this demonstration? Why should he be in this at all? Was he there to support us? Or was he there as a separate revolutionary in his own right? What did he want? What was his position? (162)

A parallel instance in Salt is the choice of Bango as the one who should welcome the constituency to celebrate the creation of the new party, encompassing Afro-Trinidadians, Indo-Trinidadians, and white Creoles. It is Dr. Kennos, the uncle of Sonan, the Indo-Trinidadian protagonist, who strategizes the choice of Bango as the one to do the welcoming. As Dr. Kennos proposes, the white Creoles cannot do the welcoming, because of their history of oppression and victimization through enslavement, indenture, and colonialism. Likewise, the Indo-Trinidadians cannot welcome the constituency because they are the most “recent arrivals” in Trinidad. Dr. Kennos explains that the Afro-Trinidadians are those “who faced the brutality and the promise, who had the task of responding to the reality of a landscape new to them,” and “whose struggle against enslavement set down the cornerstone of the new society that is to be constructed” (102). In Dragon, Aldrick, the prototype of Bango, is the one that the people of the Yard have chosen to deal with Pariag, the Indo-Trinidadian.
The above instances exemplify the complexity inherent in Lovelace’s fiction. Lovelace emphasizes the need for ethnic unity in national struggles. Yet, Indo-Trinidadians are given specific limited roles in his novels. One would then venture to argue that Lovelace favors Afro-Trinidadians over Indo-Trinidadians. Such an observation, however, misrepresents Lovelace’s vision regarding ethnic relations in Trinidad. Lovelace is in fact suggesting that the nature of the relations between Afro-Trinidadians and Indo-Trinidadians should take into account the socio-historical evolution of the space and its people. When the Indians came they found Africans already in the process of reclaiming their dignity and seeking national space. For Lovelace, it is should be from this point where the Indians must as “latecomers” enter national struggles, not to take second place, but to recognize the earlier efforts and sacrifice that the Africans made in the Caribbean rather than perceiving them as rivals.

However, the prevalence of African symbols and images expresses the domination of Afro-Trinidadian leadership in the evolution of the Black Power Movement. In Is Just a Movie, Clayton’s call for the reclamation of Afro-Trinidadians as African people and celebration of festivals proper to Trinidadians of African descent emphasizes African cultural symbols like “the sphinx, the pharaohs, the pyramids, the kings and queen of Egypt, its sculptures” (181). In Salt, the performance of the Mau Mau drummers and the extravagant robes of the revolutionaries’ contribute to the reclamation of Africanness (113). The incorporation of African cultures underscores the idea that culture is a means by which Africans have led struggles in the Caribbean. In contrast to Afro-
Trinidadians, Indo-Trinidadians do not tie militancy with cultural revival for two reasons. Firstly, Indo-Trinidadians do not have a legacy of struggle mainly associated with cultural survival, unlike Afro-Trinidadians. Secondly, the conservative authorities who are in charge of the preservation of the Indian cultural institutions like Hinduism and Islam are generally not involved with national struggles (Kambon 234). The inscription of African cultures in the reclamation of Black Power also implies a necessity to develop a new attitude toward cultural traditions. Lovelace believes that Afro-Trinidadians must forge their culture themselves, drawing from Africa, because “European culture does not admit black people, because there are no black saints in European culture, no black heroes, its values and standards of beauty do not accommodate the black man” (“Creating Communities” 116). Scholars differently appreciate this revival of African culture. Eric Williams welcomes the promotion of Africa and Africanness, although he is against the Black Power Movement (Ryan, Race and Nationalism 369). Selwyn Ryan believes that claiming Africanness is “intellectually constructive,” and “psychologically legitimate.” Yet, he argues that, “it has its possible dangers if it is overplayed, if it seeks to impose the very apartheid of which it has been victim of in the past, and if it seeks to dominate and denigrate other cultures which have contributed to Trinidad and Tobago” (Race and Nationalism 370).

Lovelace upholds the revival of African cultural artifacts, but he denounces the fact that the cultures that emerged in the Caribbean were being ignored. As the narrator of Is Just a Movie says, “[h]ow could I question Africa. How could I
deny Africa as dream of potency to people who had been robbed of Africa? ...
But it was strange that now when at last we had the opportunity to claim Africa we want to do so at the expense of all we had created here in the Caribbean” (181). Jennifer Rahim argues that although Lovelace gives importance to ancestral values, he is more concerned with “the opportunity of coming together in new relationships, away from the often stifling traditions and narrowness of the ‘Old world’ in this site of the ‘new’” (1). Like Lovelace, Cuban intellectual Antonio Benítez Rojo believes, as Torres-Saillant argues, that “the emphasis should be on the new cultural forms that emerge as a result of intra-Caribbean interactions and the rapport of the region’s people with the rest of the world” (49). Unlike uncritical advocates of African cultural revival, Derek Walcott disclaims any rigid ancestral identification. Writing on his essay “The Muse of History,” Rahim argues that Walcott, for instance, defiantly announces his rejection of “ethnic ancestry for faith in elemental man” (Walcott 40), in order to escape the trap of purist, stagnant identity claims, and to focus on the possibilities of a new “mixed” cultural space (Rahim 17). The dominant African imagery in the Black Power Movement thus remains a source of confusion and unease among Indians, one of the factors that prevent them from being fully involved with the movement.

The divisions between Afro- and Indo-Trinidadians reach their paroxysm in party and electoral politics. After universal suffrage, party politics was dominated by Afro-Trinidadians. With the growth of the Indian population and its control over the economy, Afro-Trinidadians were forced not only to address Indo-Trinidadians’ preoccupations, but also to share political power. There have been
efforts to put Afro-Trinidadians and Indo-Trinidadians together to form multiethnic parties. In 1956, Williams called for Afro-Indian unity. He had taken initiatives “to create a party that would cut across the vertical and horizontal interests of the society” (Ryan, *Race and Nationalism* 112). In 1966, C.L.R. James advocated the union between African urban workers and Indian peasants as the basis of the formation of his Workers and Farmers party (Lovelace, “The East Indian in the Creole Culture” para 1). However, political collaboration between Afro-Trinidadians and Indo-Trinidadians was made difficult due to ethnic preferences, which resulted in the formation of ethnic parties. In Lovelace’s novels, ethnic divisions arise from the political leaders’ desires to represent the values and cause of their ethnic group. In *Salt*, the People’s Unity Movement is the prototype of Trinidadian political parties in that it attempted to involve Afro-Trinidadians and Indo-Trinidadians in the management of the political landscape. The Hard Wuck Party in *Is Just a Movie* is a duplicate of the People’s Unity Movement in *Salt*. These multi-ethnic parties are born after the Afro-Trinidadian dominated party’s and the Indo-Trinidadian party’s inability to resorb ethnic discrepancies and overcome tribalism.

However, the multi-ethnic parties in Lovelace’s novels fail to function and reach their objectives due to their leaders’ inconsistency in pursuing their goals and the pressure from their respective ethnic constituency to see their concerns given prominence. Afro and Indo-Trinidadian national politics informs the kind of general ethnic essentialism which Paul Gilroy disavows in Britain (“One Nation” 24). The People’s Unity Movement disintegrates when Alford leaves and joins the
pro-Afro-Trinidadian party—-the National Party—-that echoes Prime Minister Williams’ People’s National Movement (PNM). Alford’s return to his African fold is seen by Sonan as a betrayal, and prompts his allegiance to the pro-Indian party, the Democratic Party (Salt 232). The Hard Wuck Party in Is Just a Movie fails because it does not fulfill its promises. Manick, the Hard Wuck Party’s representative at the County Council in Cunariro, inspires a sense of disillusionment, as he is unable to go beyond his stated goal to serve all ethnic groups. Manick does not address the specific concerns of the people, predominantly Afro-Trinidadians. In a party meeting, Manick is not able to move people, not because of what he is saying, but because of what he is silencing. Manick does not in fact make reference to people’s ethnic origin as he desires to deliver an impartial speech (Is Just a Movie 171). Later on, Sonnyboy’s disappointment at the pompous intellectuals of the Hard Wuck Party puts an end to his involvement with the party. Sonnyboy confessed to Kingkala that he “was bigger and more real than these highfalutin intellectual people” (Is Just a Movie 172). This instance shows that political tensions also arise among people of different classes in the same ethnic group.

The complexity with Lovelace’s treatment of party politics is that political tensions happen not just from differences between ethnic groups, but also from divisions within the same ethnic group. People’s dissatisfaction with the political leaders who want to serve beyond the interests of their own ethnic groups also creates tensions. In Salt, the Indo-Trinidadians are displeased with Sonan for trying to advocate racial harmony, while not heeding the grievances of his Indo-
Trinidadian community. Sonan, in fact, “did not express the grievances of Indian people, nor uphold their religion and their family values and their exemplary conduct in civic affairs and their untiring economic efforts that had brought prosperity to the country” (233). Indian parties in Trinidad are often tied to community, religious, and cultural values (Lovelace, “reating Communities” 115). Sonan’s initial desire to supersede ethnic differences is dropped due to the pressure from the Indian masses, conscious of their potential to bring their own party to power (Nair, Diasporic Roots 274). Michael Carabon is opposed to his younger brother, Adolphe Carabon, being involved with Africans and Indians in their newly created party, the People’s Unity Movement. Michael warns Adolphe that he is wasting his time with the party. Michael advises Adolphe to go to the Senate where he has a seat as a French Creole, in order to represent the interests of the Creole elite (Salt 207). In Is Just a Movie, Manick’s involvement with the Hard Wuck Party is not seen as beneficial to Indo-Trinidadians. Doon, an Indo-Trinidadian doctor and lawyer, believes that only putting an Indian Prime Minister in office can make Indo-Trinidadians feel confident and have a sense of belonging to the nation. He therefore invites Manick to join the pro-Indian Democratic Party to elect Mr. Bissoon as Prime Minister (Is Just a Movie 168). Ethnic preferences negatively impact the formation and growth of multi-ethnic parties.

Lovelace stands apart in that he provides a human characterization of political tensions among ethnic groups. No matter how exacerbated these tensions are, they do not turn into disastrous situations. Unlike Lovelace, George
Lamming and V.S. Naipaul represent ethnic political conflict with serious confrontations and outcomes. In Naipaul’s *Mimic Men*, the multi-racial party collapses, because its leaders lack an understanding of each other beyond the realm of school. “Brown and Ralph Singh,” as Ramchand notes, “have in common only the private hemisphere of school in their boyhoods at Isabella Imperial” (4). More importantly, the multi-racial party in *Mimic Men*, like the Unity People’s Movement in *Salt* and the Hard Wuck Party in *Is Just a Movie*, disintegrated for not living up to its expectations, but it eventually leads the country into civil war, unlike in Lovelace’s work. In Lamming’s *Of Age and Innocence*, the multi-racial party breaks up due to the different ethnic groups’ inability to negotiate their differences, resulting in suspicions among these groups. The party ends after the assassination of Isaac Shephard, an Afro-Trinidadian militant of the party. Baboo, an Indo-Trinidadian kills Shephard, so that Singh, a fellow Indo-Trinidadian, could lead the alliance. Baboo reveals the motive of his crime when he vows to Singh: “Was only for you, Singh, was only for you I do it...from infancy I dream to see someone like myself, some Indian with your achievement rule San Cristobal. My only mistake was to wish it for you Singh, was only for you I do what I do” (Age 384). The civil war in *Mimic Men* and Shephard’s murder in *Of Age and Innocence* are dramatic outcomes of political tensions, which Lovelace does not incorporate in his fiction. Lovelace’s concern for the humanity of his people, both Afro-Trinidadians and Indo-Trinidadians, is expressed in his envisioning of the consolidation of ethnic communities through culture.
2. Resolving National Fragmentation Through Performative Art

Nationalist discourses have focused on politics and economy as avenues through which a multi-ethnic Trinidadian nation can be forged. Eric Williams was the principal proponent of the ideology that sought to form the Trinidadian nation by strengthening the economic and political apparatus. He believed that the achievement of a nation does not just require a people, but it also necessitates the attainment of an independent economy (Inward Hunger 13-14). National coalitions, for him, can be mobilized through economy and politics (Economic Problems 34-35). Likewise, Franklin Knight asserts that a cohesive nationalism must be built on a solid economic foundation and political structures (304). Some Caribbean radicals advocate “a faster rate of economic growth and a more equitable distribution of social products” as the only way to contain group tensions (Ryan, Race and Nationalism 11). These approaches to nation-building have limits for two main reasons. First, they do not incorporate the definition of nation in Ernest Renan’s terms as “the desire to live together” in “solidarity” (19). Second, they do not tackle the historical foundation of the fragmentation of the Trinidadian national space as I elaborated in the first section of this chapter. The European nations were built on economic expansion after they became more cohesive. The New World, due to its history and peculiar context, requires a different approach to consolidate nations. Trinidad went through colonial oppression, colonially manufactured ethnic divisions and human denigration. It therefore necessitates an approach that heeds the foundation of ethnic tensions,
which will keep the nation apart. Lovelace suggests culture as a means to resolve the fragmentation of the national space. He does not discard the political and economic thesis of nation building, but he emphasizes culture as a means for resolving ethnic tension in so far as the humanity of the people, both Afro-Trinidadian and Indo-Trinidadian, was affected. Lovelace conceives of the cultural space as having the potential of bringing the Trinidadian nation together only if it is inscribed in a political agenda. The cultural space that Lovelace advocates is Carnival, which explains the centrality of Carnival and its components, calypso and steelband, in his fiction.

French immigrants introduced the tradition of Carnival in Trinidad at the end of the eighteenth century. They organized “masked balls” in celebration of “Lenten carnival.” The Afro-Trinidadian carnival took shape when slaves became involved in that celebration and blended the culture of the plantation owners with African cultural artifacts and traditions. Africans were initially prevented from participating in Carnival. They entered the celebration for the first time in the wake of Emancipation in 1834, and have since then “transformed it into something that is now totally open, vital and colourful, pouring into it their songs (calypsos), their dances, their music (steelband), utilising it for protest, ridicule of the authorities and for affirmation of self” (Lovelace, “Caribbean Folk Culture” 28). It was around 1883 when Carnival truly became a street festival held in majority by the Afro-Creole working classes (Rosenberg 130). Calypso and steelband music are cultural forms that are performed during Carnival. Calypso draws its origins from West African cultural traditions and other ethnic cultural
elements. It is a type of music that is performed during stick-fighting contests and masquerades during Carnival season but also in daily popular culture. Calypso also serves as a factor of unification of each band (Rosenberg 130), and a medium of nation building and group integration, as David Trotman suggests (Qtd. in Premdas 96). The attempt to elevate these cultural forms by Lovelace and by black middle-class intellectuals is part of the definition of national unity. For Brathwaite, Carnival and calypso are cultural forms that, although inspired by Western tradition, are recreated on Caribbean soil (Munasinghe 678). They are thus representative of Caribbean nationhood.

Carnival appears in almost all of Lovelace’s novels in overtly or covertly expressed forms. As Nicole King argues, in the fiction of Lovelace, “whether or not the story is ‘about’ Carnival, the rhythms and performance traditions of Carnival are woven into his narratives” (113). Carnival celebration is a focus in Dragon and Is Just a Movie. In Salt, Bango’s march has echoes of a of Carnival parade. In While Gods are Falling, Carnival’s time frame provides the structure of the novel. The novel starts on Easter Sunday and ends on Ash Wednesday. Out of twelve stories in Lovelace’s A Brief Conversion and Other Stories, six deal with Carnival and issues that are connected to Carnival: “A Brief Conversion,” “The Midnight Robber,” “The Coward,” “The Fire Eater’s Return,” “Fleur,” and “The Fire Eater’s Journey.”

Calypso, a component of Carnival, is frequently represented in Lovelace’s narratives. The narrator of his novels, as Funso Aiyejina often argues, is a calypsonian, a “chantwell” (“Unmasking the Chantwell Narrator” 1). Additionally,
Lovelace’s “tales share calypso’s grassroots loyalties and origins, as well as its subject” (King 113). The voice of the calypsonian as the narrator often controls the structure of Lovelace’s novels as in the example of Dragon. Aiyejina argues that “the voice of the calypsonian is actually the unidentified voice presiding over the novel in the same way that the voice of the calypsonian presides over carnival” (“Unmasking the Chantwell Narrator” 2). Lovelace crafts this novel as “the movement of a calypso” (“Rhythm and Meaning” 94). In Salt, the story unfolds through the voice of the apprentice storyteller, Travey, the nephew of storyteller Bango. Travey is not named in Salt but as Aiyejina points out in his introduction to Growing in the Dark, the name is revealed in A Brief Conversion, a collection of short stories. Most of Travey’s stories in Salt are recollections of stories told by Bango (Aiyejina, “Finding the Darkness in Which to Grow” xvii). In Is Just a Movie, King Kala, the “griot,” is the narrative voice. In Is Just a Movie for the first time, the primary narrator claims to be a calypsonian. In the opening page of the novel, King Kala declares: “I am a true-true kaisonian [calypsonian]” (3). I would add Eva, the narrator of Wine, as a calypsonian voice. She plays the function of the calypsonian as a reporter or disseminator of information. Like Travey, Eva narrates the events that involve men’s spheres, like the gayelle and bars, mostly from her husband, Bee, so she is not quite a dominant female voice.

Some of Lovelace’s novels invoke calypso lines. For instance, the phrase “nine against one is a murder” is a line from a calypso that is reproduced in Wine.

When Bolo butts Corporal Prince in a fight, nine policemen attack him. As Eva
narrates, “the nine policemen was on Bolo with their baton swinging” (70). Bolo is eventually murdered by the police later in the novel.

Steelband is also represented as a musical form that has the ability to uplift people. In *Wine*, when the Baptist followers lost spirit possession, it is recovered through steelband music at the end of the novel. In *Dragon*, during Carnival celebration, the students would stop at the steelband tents because they were attracted to the music. Carnival, in Trinidad, is an Afro-Trinidadian cultural celebration that Lovelace suggests as being the platform where ethnic divisions can be contained though it enacts more Afro-Trinidadian cultural specificities than others.

Lovelace’s emphasis on Carnival as a means to strengthen the Trinidadian national space is often misinterpreted, however, as privileging African culture. Munasinghe claims that the multicultural nationalist narrative of Trinidad may in fact implicitly and symbolically function to alienate some groups (676). Lovelace does not mean that African culture is superior to other cultures. Nor does he negate other cultural celebrations as national symbols. Hosay festival, for instance, is a national celebration in the sense that it constitutes a Trinidadian cross-cultural expression. Islam being a bond between Afro-Trinidadians and Indo-Trinidadians, Hosay becomes a platform where these diasporic groups can come together in shared cultural celebration (Puri 77; Cowley 83-84). Also, Indian culture might have had some influence on Carnival. Steelband, the Trinidadian musical form, is reported to have been inspired from the “tassa,” an Indian drum type, in the 1930s (Reddock 72). Describing the evolution of
steelpan, Peter Mason states that, “the rhythmic element of Carnival first made itself in the shape of African drums, which took to the streets after emancipation and were supplemented by Indian tassas shortly after the arrival of indentured labourers from the sub-continent” (57). Trinidadian cultural activist Noor Kumar Mahabir, highlighting the similarities between the tassa and the older steelband, said in 1984:

the shells of the Indian bass drums used to be made from biscuit drums (as were the early steelband)….[the] tassa drums are heated to stretch the skins and raise their pitches, and the drums in the ensemble are suspended around the neck and played with two sticks as steelbands still are doing. (Qtd. in Steumple 57)

In addition to steelpan, calypso has a composite nature. Though it took form from the West African derision and praise chants, it had British, Irish, and Amerindian influences (Mason 21). The multicultural character of calypso explains the various theories on its etymology. According to theories, the term calypso may have originated from the French patois word *carrousseaux*, which means drinking party, from *caliso*, a Spanish word for topical song, from Carib term *carieto*, referring to a joyous song performed after work, and most probably from *kaiso*, an West African Hausa term for ‘bravo’ chanted even today in calypso tents (Mason 21).

Trinidadian Carnival has European roots, is developed by Africans, and incorporates traces of Indian culture. The European, African, and Indian influences on Carnival make this celebration the most encompassing Trinidadian
national cultural symbol. In Trinidad as in Brazil, contrary to Europe and North America, “Carnival dominates the national consciousness and occupies the time, the work, and imagination of many people for much of the year” (Schechner 5-6). In Salt, Indo-Trinidadian Dr Kennos argues that “Carnival must be claimed by all of us, just as we must all claim all that has been created in our presence” (92). He “find[s] the idea of Carnival, its indigenous character, its embracing fellowship, its sense of celebration of art, of life, of creativity, worthy to be given the kind of appreciation reserved for religion” (92). Thus, in emphasizing Carnival as a platform for resorbing national fragmentation, Lovelace is indeed saying that Caribbean and Trinidadian society and national culture must be created through the social and cultural forms and festivals that emerged in the New World. Africans made these achievements in their confrontation with the New World landscape. Before the Indians came, African people already started to forge the platform of a national cultural space through their resistance and struggle to assert their humanity. As Lovelace has argued:

> It is the Africans who had led the groundwork of a Caribbean culture – those Africans who struggled against enslavement and continued their struggle against colonialism, and the reason that they did so was that they had to. They had no choice but to become Caribbean and address the Caribbean landscape and reality. No other group had to. The Europeans did not have to. Whether, in the Caribbean, as adventurers or plantation owners or indentured servants themselves, Europeans retained their kings, their
parliament, their pope and bishops, their architecture, their laws, their form of clothing, their games. They retained their culture.

The Indians also were tied to their culture because in this new land where they were strangers, it gave them a sense of being. They had their pundits and Divali and Hosay and their weddings and teeluck and had no reason to want to change them. ("The Ongoing Value" 34-35)

At the same time, Lovelace believes, like Brathwaite, that Africans were the ones who most influenced Caribbean culture, and were compelled to do so. They adapted to the situation of the New World, making use of their sense of creativity. It is in this context that Africans entered Carnival, gave it an African ethos, and made it their own. As Louis Regis points out, “Carnival belongs to the Creole space, that common space, into which the African has poured his creative energy” (80). For Lovelace, the denial of a legitimate ethnic space to Africans provoked their investment in that Creole space ("Calypso and the Bacchanal Connection" 8). Lovelace’s emphasis on Carnival therefore represents a call for recognition of the efforts the Africans made in confronting the Caribbean landscape, and an elevation of this cultural celebration as the biggest platform for national unity. This ambivalence defines Lovelace’s nationalist discourse, which calls for national unity but seems to sympathize more with Afro-Trinidadians, specifically the lower-class Afro-Trinidadians. The seeming contradictions that characterize Lovelace’s vision of national unity provoke criticisms among scholars.
Lovelace provides an ambivalent depiction of Carnival in his novels. On the one hand, Lovelace sees Carnival as having the potential for national unity. In *Dragon*, the divisions among classes and ethnicities are temporarily suspended during Carnival. The antagonist ethnic and class groups gather together as one in the celebration of Carnival. For instance, the sometimes quarreling conflicting members of the Hill magnify their unity during Carnival under a common slogan: “All o’ we is one.” The community encompasses members of different ethnicities: Aldrick, Philo, Miss Olive and her daughter, Sylvia, represent the Afro-Caribbeans; Pariag, the East Indian; and Miss Cleothilda, the mulatta woman. Even Miss Cleothilda, the mulatta woman, who for the rest of the year shows hostility and indifference to the people of the *yard*, becomes friendly to them when Carnival comes around. She would loudly claim, “Bachanal! Trinidad! All o’ we is one…Miss Olive, we is all one people. No matter what they say, all o’ we is one” (*Dragon* 19). Male characters who could not usually approach her, like Philo, were able to dance with her during Carnival. The celebration of Carnival becomes a moment, in Bakhtinan terms, when people disregarded their social positions and hierarchies to relate to one another as equal. Describing Carnival, Bakhtin says, “it marked the suspension of all hierarchical rank, privileges, norms, and prohibition” (10). For Richard Schechner, Carnival enacts “the most-of-the-time-forbidden,” which occurs between three categories: “the permitted,” “the perpetrated,” and “the reinstated” (5). Carnival is a season when freedom, licentiousness, and spontaneity are celebrated.
The reversal of hierarchies, as Bakhtin views it, also characterizes Carnival. However, Trinidadian Carnival, which inspires Lovelace, contradicts Bakhtin’s model of hierarchical reversals. In Trinidad, “Carnival is fiercely competitive and hierarchical” (Schechner 7). Color and class determine the competition for Carnival Queens and Miss Carnival pageants. In Dragon, for instance, Miss Carnival is always white, followed by mulattas. The black woman comes in third as Miss Ebony. Yet, Lovelace is aware that reversed roles can foster an understanding between the different ethnic groups. In his plans to organize a band for Carnival celebration in Salt, Alford George suggests that for Trinidadian people to understand one another, “Africans were to be conquistadores, the Buccaneers, the pirates; Europeans were to be African warriors; Indians were to be Amerindians; and Chinese and Syrians were to be enslaved on sugar plantations” (90). Unlike many scholars, Lovelace avoids the binary representation of the patterns of reversal. The reversed roles, if they occur in Lovelace’s Carnival, express a complex realm of cultural interrelation, which encourages each group to identify with another for the purpose of mutual understanding.

On the other hand, although Lovelace believes in Carnival as a platform where the national fragmentation can be mended, he is also conscious of its limits. Lovelace often portrays Carnival as waste and futility when it fails to promote change and foster a sense of solidarity. This relative pessimism regarding Carnival is mostly expressed in Dragon and Salt. The commodification and commercialization of Carnival strip away its function as “the feast of
becoming, change and renewal” (Bakhtin 10). In Trinidad, Carnival became a commodity and a capital business when it was nationalized by the Afro-Caribbean political elite in the end of 1950s, and with the introduction of sponsors and prize winning, backed up by Argos, a newspaper, edited by an Afro-Chinese Trinidadian, George Aldrich Lee Lum, and also by Portuguese Trinidadians, Chinese businesses, French Creoles, and a German family (Rosenberg 131). In Dragon, when the white bands and the sponsors enter Carnival, the celebration loses its sense of self-fulfillment, and becomes an affair of the middle class. The new type of Carnival disillusions Aldrick, the dragon, and his destitute community who only find a sense of meaning during this cultural celebration. Aldrick eventually leaves Carnival, an episode that echoes the disappearance of ole mas or traditional characters like Midnight Robber, Dame Lorraine and White Faced Minstrels, jab jabs, and jab molassie from the celebration, starting from the 1940s when the middle-class recolonized the celebration (Schechner 5; Mason 112). Aldrick’s companions feel excluded from the event, as they are unable to purchase costumes. In Is Just a Movie, Sonnyboy leaves Carnival due to its expensive character. He claims that, “the Blackman had to stop this Carnival mentality. The Blackman had to leave Carnival for those who could afford it and see about his family” (Is Just a Movie 182). The wasteful aspect of Carnival is one of the main factors that keep away Indo-Trinidadians, like Pariag, from the celebration. As the narrator declares, “real Carnival was a city thing, a creole thing. Nobody in the country had all that money to throw away on a costume; though, and this was his secret that he [Pariag] had never told anybody” (Dragon
The capitalist orientation of Carnival excludes rather than includes all the forces and energies of the nation.

The government’s and the oligarchy’s manipulations of Carnival additionally undermine its revolutionary potential. Carnival is indeed used as a mechanism to maintain established order. Bakhtin corroborates this idea as he argues that “Carnival celebrated temporary liberation from prevailing truth and from established order” (10. My emphasis). Following the example of Bakhtin, Schechner argues that Carnival “plays out democratic illusions, giving temporary relief from the authority” (3). Feasts like Carnival used to have a revolutionary and social regulation function. As Glissant says, the original function of feasts is to guarantee the equilibrium of Caribbean society. Additionally, Keith Nurse argues that Carnival “was born out of the struggle of marginalized peoples to shape a cultural identity through resistance, liberation and catharsis” (Qtd. in Premdas 94). However, festivals have lost their revolutionary character and become consumerist, manipulated by the political power. The collective festivals have become a medium through which the state maintains established order. Carnival is transformed into parades, managed by official authorities’ suggestions and imposition (Glissant 490-91). With the introduction of capitalism and government regulations, Carnival loses its essence as “a site of contestation between the subaltern and the elite,” or as Peter Koningbruggen describes it, “a combination of festival, ritual, and rebellion” (Qtd. in Rosenberg 130). The political authorities’s appropriation of Carnival undermines its contesting and
revolutionary potential and helps them to maintain power and hold control over their constituencies.

In *Dragon*, Aldrick, after years of involvement in Carnival as a dragon, eventually becomes aware that the government encourages Carnival, because it constitutes a fake expression of power with no potential for change. As he says, “all we could do is to threaten power, to show off power we have but don’t know how to organize, how to use.” As the narrator comments, “their efforts at rebellion was just a dragon dance” (*Dragon* 186). Nair conceives such an enactment of Carnival as inconsequential. She believes that “all the characters seem to be playacting at an endless carnival, and here neither the performance nor the carnivalesque has liberating potential but tends to collapse like a pricked balloon after an evening of gaiety” (*Diasporic Roots* 275). As a result of an unyielding Carnival tradition, the creolizing yard eventually disintegrates instead of consolidating itself. Miss Cleothilda’s call for unity constitutes a lure that is meant to maintain her supposed superiority over the residents of the Hill. According to Thieme, “Miss Cleothilda’s articulation of the ‘All o’ we is one’ seems self-serving” (149). Carnival is for Cleothilda “an opportunity to proclaim a hypocritical “all ah we is one” while exploiting class and colour and flaunting her ascriptive position as the undisputed queen of her supposed equals” (Regis 80). As a mulatta, she self-styles herself as a queen, keeps her distance from the people of the Hill, and only appears in Carnival with a friendly attitude, shouting this slogan of unity in the people’s Creole.
In *Salt*, Lovelace caricatures the carnivalesque, and indicates its ultimate failure to cease ethnic tensions and unite the different ethnic groups. According to Nair, this depiction of the carnivalesque constitutes a parody of Creolization or hybridity, which consists in costuming and play-acting (*Diasporic Roots* 276), expressed, for example, in the narrator’s description of Alford’s burlesque costuming. During his protest, fasting, and sitting at the ministry of education, Alford George dresses in clothes that express the identity of the different ethnic groups. He would appear “dressed in white, wearing variously, the loose cotton wrap of the Indian, the dhoti, the loose cotton gown of the shouters, Nehru jackets and baggy trousers and baggy shirts and different styles of cloth caps and head wraps” (*Salt* 81). Additionally, Bango’s annual march does not inspire more than the outfitting of the schoolboys in the different ethnic groups’ clothing styles. His carnivalesque march tries enacts the syncretism between African, European, and Asian cultural identities. Bango certainly intends to express the unity of all races present on the Caribbean soil through the different uniforms he has the children wear: “the Indian in dhoti and turban; the European in Scottish kilt; the Chinese [in] a big Cantonese hat and two false plaits of long hair; and the African [with] a grass skirt on, beads around his neck and a spear in his head” (*Salt* 46). Bango’s project of national unity does not, however, go beyond ethnic costuming. Consequently, no change ensues from his march, and the authorities are indifferent to his claims.

It is true that Lovelace has a sense of pessimism regarding contemporary Carnival. It is also true that he does not lose hope for Carnival as a platform for
gathering national energies. Most of his novels end with Carnival and its forms. In *While Gods*, Walter resurrects his sense of himself and his relationship to his community on Ash Wednesday, which marks the end of Lenten Carnival and that of the novel as well. In *Wine*, the story ends with steelband music. This Afro-Trinidadian music form provides the Bonasse community with hope after the loss of spirit possession in their practice of the Spiritual Baptist religion. In *Dragon*, the voice of the Calypsonian closes the narration. In *Salt*, the story line ends with Bango’s march, when the narrator expresses his hope in the celebration. As the narrator says, “this march of his was for all our own lives and had to be carried on even if it took us to the very end of time” (*Salt* 260). In *Is Just a Movie*, Lovelace’s most recent novel, the author portrays a Carnival celebration that includes all ethnicities and classes as a hybrid national space.

The representation of Carnival in *Is Just a Movie* expresses Lovelace’s view that cultural performance can only be a factor of change and unification if it is inscribed in a nationalist political agenda. Cultural celebrations are an affair of the masses, but it is the political authorities that should use them not for profit but to mobilize national energies. It is this message that the Prime Minister (PM) expresses in *Is Just a Movie*. The PM’s decision to organize the Carnival celebration comes from his intention to magnify the miracle that has befallen his island. Dorlene Cruickshank, an Afro-Trinidadian woman, dies and is magically resurrected. She wakes up, being endowed with healing power. The Prime Minister uses Dorlene’s healing abilities to cure diseases as a means to raise the economy of the island. The Prime Minister invites foreign countries to come and
benefit from the miracle, which boosts the touristic sector. In commemoration of the miracle, the Prime Minister and his Cabinet decide to initiate a special Carnival celebration since it is “the only occasion on which [they] celebrate together as a nation” (299). To make the Carnival a grand national event, a special invitation is extended to all religious, ethnic, and social communities. The Prime Minister’s efforts, however, meet with resistance from other sections of the society. Mr. Bissoon, leader of the Indian dominated Democratic Party, accuses the PM of “using Dorlene’s resurrection for his own political interests” (301). The African Empowerment league, through the voice of Joshua Little, rejects the imposition of the bacchanal tradition, and claims a space for a proper representation of African cultural heritage (302). These cries of frustration do not prevent the PM from pursuing his project. However, he has had to justify that the Carnival will provide a space for all ethnic and class groups to express themselves. In a speech on TV, the PM declares:

There is not an iota of discrimination intended. What are being highlighted are cultural forms that were developed here in the island and shared by people of all ethnic persuasions. If any community would identify any of their cultural creations that we have ignored we would be happy to include them in the programme.

Let me repeat: in order that nobody feels left out or overlooked or offended, we want to encourage people to wear their native dress and present their native culture. Wear your own clothes, eat
your own foods, display your own culture. Do, as you say in your local parlance, do your own thing. And, yes. We will pay. We will stand the cost of your costumes. (304)

The PM’s speech is a call for the contribution of all national forces, regardless of any ethnic and class categorization, in the celebration of Carnival. The costumes that the PM intends to provide will allow the poor to be involved in the event alongside the middle-class segments of the society. In allowing all people to represent their respective cultural specificities, the PM is making the political statement that to move from a tribal platform to a national platform, it is necessary that individuals bring their various bases and ethnicities into the common space. In other words, the creation of a national culture entails the inclusion of all cultures. The meeting of the different cultures express creolization, hybridity, “tossed salad,” “pilau” or, as Aiyejina calls it, the “culture of the crucible” or the “culture of the crossroad.” Aiyejina claims that Lovelace embraces the African philosophy of the crossroads as the ideal image of the multicultural society (Personal interview). The crossroads is when several roads meet at one point. For Lovelace, Carnival provides the platform for the crossroad society.

*Is Just a Movie* ends the Carnival celebration on a note of hope, however utopian. The narrator, King Kala, is involved in the festivities just like the narrator of *Salt* joins Bango’s march at the end of that novel. When King Kala gets ready to join the music and dancing, he sees Sweet-Mary and Sonnyboy, “coming in from the rain that was easing up now, with a new music that when it stopped
would leave a clearer sky” (353). In these last lines of *Is Just a Movie*, Lovelace somewhat simplistically uses the image of the clearing sky, following the gloomy atmosphere, to express a brighter future for his island. The enactment of Carnival by the political apparatus, which allows the ethnic groups to bring in their distinct cultures, indicates that Lovelace envisions the formation of the national space through the retention of one’s cultural identity and contribution to that space. It is thus the maintenance of diasporic consciousness that facilitates the coming together of all the ethnic entities as a nation. Nationalism for Lovelace is, therefore, in the terms of Stefano Harney, not “strictly about a nation-state in the old sense of the term, but about a national diaspora” (Harney 24). A national diaspora is a number of diasporas that now constitutes a new nation. Lovelace sees Caribbean people as diasporas, composing each Caribbean nation. Lovelace’s nationalist vision therefore leads to what Fanon terms “the discovery and advancement of universalizing values” (180). The diasporic nation, as Lovelace conceives it, promotes national consciousness in Fanon’s terms and thus constitutes an address to the world. In other words, Lovelace envisions the Trinidadian nation as a border space within the Caribbean for the confluence of continents that provided a new home and a new world for its immigrants.
CHAPTER FOUR
HISTORY, NARRATION, AND ETHICAL REPARATION IN SALT AND IS JUST A MOVIE

In his book, *The Caribbean: The Genesis of a National Fragmentation*, Franklin Knight argues that one of the ways to achieve a national consciousness is through the creation of a self-governing state (310). Knight associates the development of national sentiment with the consolidation of a sovereign state. While Gordon K. Lewis corroborates this political approach to nationalism, he includes cultural factors (239). Without dismissing the significance of the nation-state in the Caribbean, Lewis is right in his claim that national sentiments flourish when people possess not just a State but also a sense of self worth, pride and dignity. The four hundred years of victimization and oppression through slavery and colonialism negatively impacted Caribbean people's psyche. Colonial historians documented these aspects of the past as the history of the Caribbean, which was passed on to later generations. The legacy of this dark and debilitating history for some Caribbean people in contemporary times may provoke a sense of worthlessness and identity crisis which undermines their sense of self and place. The colonial history of slavery and servitude can be painful to confront, and brings them to look up to European and American ideals. The rehabilitation of Caribbean history is therefore a necessary process towards the establishment of a stronger Caribbean nationalism.
The restoration of Caribbean history has been a concern in Caribbean literature. With the emergence of Caribbean nationalist literature in the twentieth century, efforts were made to reinstate and revalorize Caribbean history. Earl Lovelace is one the Caribbean writers who is invested in the task of restoring the history of West Indians. His novels Salt and Is Just a Movie together cover the historical period from slavery to the emergence of the Black Power Movement in the 1970s and its aftermath in Trinidad. The narration of history in Lovelace’s novels, I argue, underscores the necessity to re-envision the Caribbean past as a process of decolonization and a starting point of boosting national sentiments and unity. The analysis in this chapter emphasizes the re-narrativization of history as a reclamation of national space and as a process of ethical reparation and national reconciliation.

1. Recovering History, Reclaiming National Space

The inscription of history in literary productions is a source of disagreement among scholars. On the one hand, there are those who reject the representation of history in literary narratives. For instance, New Critics believe that the artistic dimension of the literary text is more valuable than its historical content (Levin 3-4). These critics valued the literary production for its aesthetics and not its politics. St. Lucian poet and playwright, Derek Walcott refutes the replication of history in literature for three main reasons. First, he believes that a literature that deals with history perpetuates the order of the Old World (“The Muse of History” 36). European history records the domination and imperialism of
the Old World on the one hand, and the denigration, subjugation and humiliation of its colonial natives on the other. Therefore, Walcott believes that “the muse of history” produces either a literature of recrimination, hopelessness and retaliation by the offspring of slaves or a literature of guilt by the offspring of slave owners (“The Muse of History” 37). Reflecting on Walcott’s politics and poetics, Paula Burnett states that his objection to the unreflective search for an African past resides in the psychological danger it represents, that is to say “prompting desire for compensatory fascistic power and for revenge” (79). Finally, Walcott rebuts the literary creations that nostalgically seek a heroic past. He argues that Caribbean historical figures and events are not all exemplary. In “What the Twilight Says” he not only mentions Henri Christophe as an embodiment of pride in the first Caribbean Republic, but also as a symbol of hubris, with his Citadel, a “monument to egomania…an effort to reach God’s height” (13). In his play Henri Christophe, Walcott depicts the reigns of Henri Christophe and Dessalines as a history of betrayal and brutality against their own people. Scholar Linda T. Smith attacks mainstream history in that it does not normally include Indigenous people. She views history as a project of colonial Enlightenment, as a tool for upholding Western values. She, therefore, suggests that only theory can redeem Indigenous people, because “understanding theory and research from [their] own perspectives and for [their] own purposes” is a way to achieve decolonization (113). Maryse Condé, the Guadeloupian novelist, also abstains from romanticizing the past on the grounds that it endorses the supremacy of men. Pascale de Souza argues that Condé does not vindicate the
past, because it “has too often been mythified to the detriment of women and women writers” (374). In Crossing the Mangroves, as I noted in Chapter One, Condé does not reclaim marronage as it is often represented as a symbol of masculinity.

On the other hand, some scholars advocate the essential need to address history, especially in literary texts. Martinican writer Édouard Glissant believes that a thoughtful recollection of the past in Caribbean literature represents a necessary step in the process of accessing the collective consciousness of Antillean people. As Glissant says in Monsieur Toussaint, “for those whose history has been reduced by others to darkness and despair, the recovery of the near or distant past is imperative” (17). However, despite the pressing necessity to elucidate history, Glissant pleads for a “prophetic vision of the past,” that is to say, an exploration that “leads to the identification of a painful notion of time and its full projection forward into the future, without the help of those plateaus in time from which the West has benefited, without the help of that collective density that is the primary value of an ancestral cultural heartland” (Caribbean Discourse 65). This notion of history allows access to the collective consciousness without idealizing the past and hampering the future. Glissant’s argument underscores Paul Ricoeur’s formulation of the “work of memory.” While scholars like the Italian Jewish Primo Levi advocate the “duty of memory” as an imperative of remembrance, Ricoeur is in favor of the work of memory as a way to deal with the debilitating effects of the abuses of memory.
Levi equates the duty of memory with obligation of testimony as a quasi juridical act of accusation, and not revenge, punishment and reprisal (23). In the process of testimony, in Levi’s conception, as Federico Creja notes in his introduction to Levi’s *Le devoir de la mémoire*, the witness or survivor should provide an exact, detailed account of the events (7-8). In European countries like France the claims for the duty of memory were meant to restore the injustices of memory. The duty of memory becomes a way to unearth and focus on the silenced past of minorities in accounts by dominant European powers (Rémond 42). René Rémond sees the legitimacy and significance of the duty of memory in the demand for justice and truth, which enables equitable knowledge-based judgments (44).

Ricoeur, however, critiques the duty of memory for it “is not restricted to preserving the material trace, scriptural or other, of past events, but maintains the feeling of being obligated with respect to these others, of whom we shall later say, not that they are no more but that they were” (89). Ricoeur additionally underlines the risks of the duty of memory as it provides the possibility of memory manipulation and abuse. For him, the duty of memory, as it is formulated, is conducive to symptoms of obsession, which demonstrate the biases of the manipulated memory (Ricoeur 90). Ricoeur agrees with the idea that excessive memory leads to acting and not true remembrance, with the risk of undermining the reconciliation between present and past (70). Likewise, Alexandra Laignel-Lavastine views the abuse of memory as a triple inconvenience, which consists in enchaining and confining the past, and blinding
us from the present (34). Ricoeur opposes the work of memory to the duty of memory. He, in fact, claims that it is through the work of memory that collective consciousness will be accessed and liberation from the prism of the past achieved. The work of memory or remembering, an expression he borrowed from Freud, suggests the absence of compulsion to recollect. It is similar to the work of the moralist who, according to Rémond, attempts, unlike the historian, to put a distance between time and collective memory in order to think of the link between past and present (Ferenczi 13-14). The notion of work reflects on the shortcomings of memory failures. It is a therapeutic process that functions like the work of mourning. Freud claims that no matter how painful mourning is, the ego becomes liberated and regains its spirit after the completion of the work of mourning (245). For Ricoeur, it is from the perspective of therapy that the work of remembering and the work of mourning are related. He further argues that “the work of mourning is the cost of the work of remembering, but the work of remembering is the benefit of the work of mourning” (Ricoeur 76). Ricoeur’s statement underscores the interconnectedness between the work of memory and the work of mourning.

Ricoeur’s critical view of the duty of memory raises reactions from scholars. German philosopher Rainer Rochlitz attacks Ricoeur’s problematic of the duty of memory as an injunction of remembrance. For Rochlitz, asking a community’s victims to cease to lament is indecent and philosophically inconsistent and useless. Rochlitz underlines three elements that demonstrate the limits of Ricoeur’s criticism of the duty of memory and advocacy of the work
of memory. For Rochlitz, the work of memory can cause a historical community’s memory to close up its suffering (175). Additionally, he believes that the fear that the function of memory is to bypass the work of history is not justified, because the witnesses can prevent historians from crosschecking the testimonies. Last, he notes that the denunciation of abuses in the process of remembering hide the real problem that involves the victims (175). Following Rochlitz, French scholar Raphaël Draï contests Ricoeur’s conception of the duty of memory. In a review magazine, *L’Arche*, he argues that it is a serious issue that Ricoeur assimilates the duty of memory as a trap. Emphasizing the context in which Levi used the phrase “duty of memory,” as Danièle Bohler and Gérard Peylet note, Draï argues that the duty of memory is a moral obligation towards the victims and should not be used as a weapon of intimidation by the survivors (92). Ricoeur came back to the issue later and clarified that by criticizing the duty of memory, he did not mean that it is in itself an abuse. In the weekly French newsmagazine number 1870 published on September 7, 2000, he acknowledges that the duty of memory occurs in response to the debt with regard the past, but it causes abus and manipulation in the process of remembering (Qtd. in Bohler and Peylet 92).

Lovelace’s literary work echoes Ricoeur’s idea of the work of memory. Though the Trinidadian writer conceives of the narration of history as an essential literary enterprise, he believes that unearthing the Caribbean past should be targeted at liberating and repossessing the self. The reinstatement of history in Caribbean literature emerges as a primary step towards the reclamation of the region and subsequently the establishment of strong
Caribbean nations. Historical consciousness and re-appropriation of history are a means by which Caribbean people can recover their place in a psychological and real sense. The urge to celebrate a fulfilling Caribbean history justifies the need for a new relationship between the people and their place. In “Calypso and the Bacchanal,” Lovelace insists that “we have to re-examine the history and present as well a vision of the past that impels…our future. We cannot have a past in which we are going to get stuck” (8). In Is Just a Movie, Lovelace writes that the lack of historical consciousness is the worst enemy of black people, and it is necessary that they should have their own vision of the world (71). Lovelace clearly believes that many Caribbean people have accepted the historical accounts of the colonizing powers. They have seen the world with the eyes of white people. It is therefore necessary to unearth the past as a means for people to view themselves afresh and establish a new relationship with their place if they, as diasporas, are to come together as one nation.

**Unearthing the Past: A Path Towards Repossessing the Self**

Hegemonic Western discourse supported the European colonial and imperialist project. While it elevated Western people and their values, it debased the colonized subjects in the Caribbean. In her novel, A Small Place, Jamaica Kincaid argues that “the language of the criminal can contain only the goodness of the criminal’s deed. The language of the criminal can explain and express the deed only from a criminal’s point of view. It cannot contain the horror of the deed, the injustice of the deed, the agony, the humiliation inflicted on me” (32). Silvio Torres-Saillant believes that “western discourse construed the Caribbean as a
site of lesser humanity, as a location outside the confines of proper history” (104). These arguments underline the subjectivity of history and its use as an imperialist tool by the Western powers. The past that colonial history evokes naturally emphasizes the perspective and superiority of the European. For example, in early Caribbean literary history, developed by European historians and travelers, the resistance of Indian caciques leaders such as Guarionex and Caguax, and heroic slaves like Cuffy and Cudjoe are not emphasized (Lewis 37). In fact, their struggles for liberty are demonized by colonial authorities.

Paradoxically, with the emergence of Caribbean discourse, historical narratives did not focus on the achievements of Caribbean people. Caribbean history and literary history replicated the history of the colonizer. Even the naming of Caribbean symbolic monuments and places resonates with the duplication of colonial history. In her novel, No Telephone to Heaven, Michelle Cliff writes, “we name hotels Plantation Inn and Sans Souci…A peculiar past. For we have taken the master’s past as our own” (127). The repetition of the colonizer’s version of history derives from traditional Caribbean historians’ attempt to follow the Western historical chronology. Torres-Saillant advises us that Caribbean discourse “must insist on building chronologies by looking at their own historical clocks” (104). The reliance on Western historical chronologies denies Caribbean people a central place in Caribbean historical accounts. As C. L. R. James notes, “one of our weaknesses is that we have little history and our historians ignore what matters to the people” (Qtd. in Lovelace, “Towards Consciousness” 1). Lovelace agrees with James that the past that is initially
represented in Caribbean history and historiography undermines the dignity and value of Caribbean people. The issue in the Caribbean is that history has been written from an external perspective. The values and images that are transmitted are alien to the majority of the Indigenous people and to the descendants of various diasporas. As Lovelace argues, “rather than interpret the heroic struggle of our fathers to hold on to their humanity in the face of the most brutal systems of oppression as an affirmation of the human spirit and a tribute to the indomitability of the human will, our historians have chosen for us a history making us, at best, victims of degradation and abuse” (“Towards Consciousness” 1). The representation of this negative aspect of the past creates obstacles to self-esteem and self-acceptance among Caribbean people.

Looking at the Caribbean space with a Western perspective perpetuates the colonial politics that controlled people’s minds. Colonialism constitutes the main factor of economic and mental subjugation. “With colonialism,” as Lovelace notes and Ngũgĩ would agree, “not only was our economy subject to foreign control, but so were our minds” (While Gods 239-40). In a satirical tone, he expresses this lack of selfhood as he writes in Dragon,

even with guns in hand, even with power, we was looking to somebody else to make a decision.... Even when we have power, when we have guns. Is like we ain’t have no self. I mean, we have a self but the self we have is for someone else. Is like when we acting we ain’t the actor. (188)
In *Schoolmaster*, Benn’s dealing with Captain Grant articulates the degree to which the memory of slavery still haunts Caribbean people and the way they see themselves (71). Both Benn and Captain Grant make reference to ancestral memory as they relate to each other. For Thalia T. M. Arnauld, ancestral memory creates a sense of inferiority in black people and East Indians, and a sense of superiority in white people (106). Ancestral memory here is the memory of slavery and servitude, which recalls the white as dominant and powerful, and the non-white as weak, inferior, and non-human. The feelings of inferiority among East Indians originate from indentureship and the implementation of the Indian traditional caste system. Donna E. Hayles believes that because the memory of slavery will keep on affecting the life of Trinidadians, it is essential that the new nation devises creative means to cope with that memory (129). Postcolonial Caribbean male writers like Lovelace, George Lamming and Kamau Brathwaite, modern Caribbean women writers like Michelle Cliff, pan-Africanists like Marcus Garvey and George Padmore, the initiators of the Negritude movement like Aimé Césaire, and indegenist writers like Hannibal Price, Jean Price Mars and Jacques Roumain provide narratives and philosophies that not only challenge Western myths, but also attempt to revalorize different ancestral values.

Lovelace, like other Caribbean writers and scholars, believes that in order to deal with the historical heritage that confines and debilitates Caribbean people, it is essential to dissect Western myths of superiority. In “From De I-Lands,” Lovelace argues that “to validate them [ordinary people] required not only to know them well but to know and deal with the myths that served to illegitimise
them and myself: ‘the slave mentality,’ ‘black and ugly,’ the devaluing of family, language, thought” (Growing 4). Torres-Saillant explains that “to penetrate the core of the trauma in the history and culture of the region presupposes a willingness to dissect ideologies and myths that have dominated analysis of the human experience in the Antillean world” (239). As for Hayles, reconstructing myths is a way to transcend the colonial version of history and provide Caribbean people with a way of looking at themselves anew (14). Myths are also a means by which Caribbean writers can reclaim “black cultural heritage in opposition to the white construction of blackness” (Lynden 56). Lovelace’s novels, *Is Just a Movie* and *Salt*, like *Dragon* and *Wine*, and his play *Jestina’s Calypso* subvert colonial stereotypes as they represent the beauty and authenticity of Caribbean and particularly black images. Analyzing Lovelace’s work, Hayles tells us that “Lovelace has managed to circumvent this negative image of the Caribbean and Africa and transformed it into a new cultural experience that has elevated African heritage to a higher plane” (15). Lovelace’s fiction often depicts colonial and neocolonial oppression and victimization, but this depiction is countered by a representation of fight and flight, freedom seeking, self-assertion and expression of humanity by the oppressed and the weaker groups.

The reconnection to ancestral values is another way through which Lovelace envisions the rehabilitation of Caribbean people’s feelings of worthlessness and inferiority. Though Lovelace emphasizes the reestablishment of African roots, he also includes other ancestral values. Pariag’s attachment to his “Indianness” in *Dragon* indicates the Indo-Caribbean effort to preserve their
links with their homeland. The Afro-Caribbean’s and Indo-Caribbean’s attempts to reconnect with homeland constitute an important aspect of diasporic experience. A diaspora is maintained through the establishment of links with the homeland while away from the homeland. Tiffany R. Patterson and Robin D. G. Kelly concur with William Safran that diaspora involves exilic movement, suffering, maintenance of vision and memory of homeland, and even longing to return (Patterson and Kelly 14; Safran 83-84). The continuation of the relationship with homeland and the recreation of homeland identity through memory and cultural artifacts characterize diasporas in the Caribbean. This entails the preservation of diasporic consciousness, which, in nation building, suggests that the different ethnic groups should maintain their cultural identities in their contribution to the national space. The reinstatement of ancestral values in the fiction of Lovelace is not just a statement of Caribbean people as a diaspora, but it is also a mechanism of boosting the pride, self-hood and self-acceptance of people in the Caribbean. George Lamming emphasizes the need to establish an institute that will investigate African civilizations so that Caribbean can be aware that Africa existed as a place where people lived as humans with creative skills, and not simply as a land of deserts, rivers, and diseases where people lived like apes with nature (155). Lamming’s invocation of Africa, here, echoes part of Lovelace’s decolonizing agenda and the same could be done for people from other ethnic backgrounds.

*Is Just a Movie* and *Salt* more overtly express the issue of return to roots. In *Is Just a Movie* Clayton speaks for African ethnic space, religions and
festivals, and elevates the sphinx, the pharaohs, the pyramids, the kings and queens of Egypt (Lovelace 179-81). Such symbols of African identity represent a call to re-embrace Africa as a way to achieve consciousness of not only black power, but also black beauty and pride. It is important to note here therefore that the African images that are lauded are from the African elite. The cultural artifacts of the lower classes are not celebrated, which Lovelace is very conscious of and criticizes. In his essay, “In the Voice of the People,” Lovelace points out that we return to Africa but the Africa we return to, the Africa we relate to, is not the Africa of ordinary people; it is the Africa of the elite, of the Pharaohs and the Nile…. And yet I want to insist that it is ordinary people stripped of rank that have created and struggled here for a New World. (Growing 105-06)

In *Is Just a Movie*, Lovelace further challenges the fact that the cultural inventions in the Caribbean achieved by the ordinary people, like Carnival, steelband and calypso, are given less importance than the sphinx, the pyramids and the pharaohs (181). In *Salt* Lovelace deals with physical return to Africa through the character of Guinea John. However, Lovelace values less the real return to Africa than the mental return, because it is those who remained in the New World while retaining connections with Africa who contributed to the making of the Caribbean. The theme of reconnection to African roots is also relevant in other novels by Lovelace. In *Wine*, the attempt of the Bonnasse community to maintain its Spiritual Baptist religion remains an effort to safeguard their links with Africa. In *Dragon*, the enactment of the dragon figure during Carnival by Aldrick
represents an African ethos and masking traditions in Caribbean culture and society. The importance of the identification with the past is that it provides direction for the future. For Lovelace, as Jennifer Scott argues, “to move forward, to grow, there must be an understanding of where you come from as well as where you are going” (14).

Like Lovelace, other Caribbean writers and intellectuals contributed to the revalorization of Africa and its past as part of the process of building Caribbean identity. In the 1930s, movements emerged in the French and Spanish Caribbean to reclaim the dignity of black people through the revival of African roots. Manuel del Cabral, Luis Palés Matos, Nicolas Guillén and Emilio Balagas promoted “Negrismo,” reconnecting art and spirituality with the inheritance of the African past (Torres-Saillant 152). French Caribbean writers Aimé Césaire and Leon-Gontran Damas concomitantly developed “Négritude” with the Senegalese poet Leopold Sédar Senghor. Négritude is a movement “predicated fundamentally on a creed of racial self-assertiveness and a revalorization of the African heritage” (Torres-Saillant 152). Cesaire’s Notebook of a Return to the Home Land best represents the credo and philosophy of the Négritude movement. In this book, Cesaire advocates a detour towards ancestral roots as a way to deal with the identity crisis of the Caribbean subject. His Négritude, however, unlike Senghor’s, is a quest for ancestral values, a yearning for symbols of African pride like the “Amazons of the king of Dahomey,” “wise men in Timbuktu under Askia the Great,” “the architects of Djenné,” “Madhis,” and “[African] warriors” (Notebook 27-28). Cesaire’s celebration of Négritude stands
for an affirmation of Black pride and dignity. As Césaire says in *Notebook*, "my negritude is neither tower nor cathedral / it takes root in the ardent flesh of the sky / it breaks through opaque prostration with its upright patience" (35). Abiola Irele concurs that “the attitude to which the passage gives expression derives quite evidently from a partisan rejection of the scientific and technological culture of the West” (117). Négritude here not only constitutes a claim for African identity, but it also underscores a refutation of Western cultural artifacts represented by the “tower” and “cathedral.”

Preceding Césaire, Haitian writers initiated the Indigenist movement, which, according to some scholars, is the precursor of Négritude. Indigenism is by definition the return to the sources of culture, predominantly of African origin, and the affirmation of Africa in literary and artistic forms (Ntonfo 2). The Indigenist novel therefore celebrates lower-class peasants and their cultures and beliefs like Vodun. Jean Price-Mars’ *Ainsi parla l’oncle* (*So Spoke the Uncle*) claims African heritage as resistance, portrays the folklore, traditions, and beliefs of peasants, and demonstrates that Haitian Vodoun is a religion, not a cult. Vodun provided a source of courage and heroism during the 1791 slave revolution in St. Domingue, the former name for Haiti (Price-Mars 231). Price-Mars’s book envisions the establishment of Haitian identity and pride through the affirmation Afro-originated cultures. Marcus Garvey’s use of Rastafarianism is a sociopolitical movement constituted by workers and founded on the principle of ethnic self-affirmation through Afro-spiritual doctrines (Torres-Saillant 152).
The different literary and socio-political movements which emerged in the Caribbean attempted to deal with the identity crisis that was prevalent in the region. The construction of Caribbean identity also underlined a political agenda that promoted the embrace of an ancestral past as a way to consolidate the nation-state. Paul Gilroy argues that

the acquisition of roots became an urgent issue only when diaspora blacks sought to construct a political agenda in which the ideal of rootedness was identified as a prerequisite for the forms of cultural integrity that could guarantee nationhood and statehood to which they aspire (Black Atlantic 112).

Gilroy is insisting here that the diaspora blacks find the identification to ancestral roots necessary as a way to attain selfhood and as a primary step in the establishment of the nation-state, although he goes on to critique a romanticized return to African roots. While Lovelace corroborates that rootedness provides a sense of identity and direction as a path towards nationhood, he believes that the achievement of cultural integrity won’t be effective until Caribbean people stop seeing themselves as victims. As Alford George claims in his campaign speech in Salt,

enslavement and indenture had brought our peoples to these islands, we had continued to see ourselves as ex-enslaved, ex-indentured…. The truth is that we do not know who we are. And we will never know until we see ourselves with new eyes. (122)
Lovelace further pleads in his essay “Towards Consciousness” that it is an immediate necessity to “change this self image of the victim that we have accepted of ourselves both for the sakes of our individual being and for a national consciousness” (1-2). Lovelace’s point is that choosing a past of victimhood compromises the possibility of a national future. Refuting this sense of victimhood is part of decolonization, which Lovelace describes as “the process by which the previously colonized wrestle to achieve some sense of self, some independence as they disengage from colonialism” (Growing 47). Lovelace’s fiction, in its esthetics, seeks to free Caribbean people from this history of victimhood. He therefore provides a re-narrativization and reinterpretation of history from a Caribbean perspective, extolling the struggles of the people in the Caribbean.

**History from a Caribbean Perspective: Reclaiming Rebellion**

Analyzing Caribbean history, Franklin Knight asserts that it “traces the genesis of the Caribbean from a decidedly international Caribbean and New World perspective. Many other histories are written from the viewpoint of European and imperial affairs, rendering the transformation of the region as a coincidental byproduct of other presumably larger and more important events” (xv). The essence of Knight’s argument is that as Caribbean history is recounted from the standpoint of the West, the Caribbean space and its people are given a subsidiary attention. Though Knight concedes that all African, European, or American influences on political and economic aspects should be considered in examining Caribbean history, he still insists that this examination should
authenticate the Caribbean perspective. In Knight’s view, the reinstatement of Caribbean history from “the inside out,” must not only be regarded as legitimate, but as the sole view (xv). Knight believes that the history of the Caribbean is not a history of “unrelieved despondency” or “crippling despair,” it is a history of “continual struggle” and “magnificent accomplishments” (330). In short, Knight provides a pan-Caribbean perspective of the history of a region that was pushed from the center of the Western world to its periphery. Caribbean writers’ representations of rebellions and riots should therefore be read in the way Supriya Nair views it as “disruptive narrative interventions into those blank spaces of history,” where I would add a capital ‘H’ for colonial History (Caliban’s Curse 81). Edward Said provides a colonial discourse analysis in Orientalism, which paradoxically negates the agency of the subaltern, and so validates the idea that all power lay with the colonizer. In his study of Said’s book, Bart Moore-Gilbert notes that “in Orientalism, imperial discourse operated ‘with very little resistance on the Orient’s part.’ This contentious claim leads to the almost total effacement of traces of opposition to Orientalist discourse from outside the dominant order” (Bart Moore-Gilbert 51). Said’s theory of Orientalism in fact makes subaltern agency invisible, some critics have claimed.

Lovelace is in line with Knight regarding the view that Caribbean people provided resistance against slavery and the colonial system of oppression. Reclaiming rebellion, Lovelace incessantly argues that the history of the Caribbean is not simply a history of slavery, but rather a history of resistance and struggle for liberation and human dignity. Gordon Lewis situates the starting point
of resistance in Caribbean history during the period preceding the advent of the
enslavement of African people. Before Africans, as Lewis views it, there existed
Indo-Antillean rebellion despite the mythical descriptions of the native people as
docile and fragile. Indian chiefs in Cuba, Hispaniola, and Puerto Rico, like
Guarocuya (Enriquillo), provided defiant resistance, and used guerrilla warfare
and scorched earth policies as methods of defense (Lewis 220). Indigenous
people also resorted to feigning inaptitude for work and to laughing at and
mocking at the white people's religion as forms of passive and psychological
resistance (Lewis 221). For Lewis, with the extinction of aboriginal Indians, the
antislavery spirit was taken up by African slaves (Lewis 222). Indigenous
resistance was therefore the New World's first manifestation of opposition
against Western systems of domination and oppression, and paved the way for
African slaves' antislavery ideology and stance.

The circumstances in the New World made it favorable for slave rebellions
to occur. Knight believes that the conditions of African people under slavery have
always pushed them to be rebellious not for the sake of destruction but for
survival (Knight 330). For the same reason, Lovelace claims that African slaves
resisted from the beginning. They never accepted their status as slaves. He
therefore sees the term "slave" as irrelevant, for they did not consent to be the
property of anybody. The term "enslaved," as Lovelace views it, suggests that
slavery was imposed without resistance upon African people in the Caribbean
(Lovelace, “Progress” 56; “Culture and the Environment” 9). Lovelace insists that
the story of the ways in which African people reacted against enslavement has to
be told. He argues that the enslaved responded to their enslavement through suicides, rebellions, wars (1791 Haitian revolution), escapes (marronage in Jamaica and Suriname), freedom purchase, Western education and self-affirmation (“Progress” 56; “The Ongoing Value” 30-37; “Culture they Have Created” 5). The reference to marronage in Caribbean literary texts is an attempt to draw symbols from myths and the past in order to develop narratives of resistance and counter-discursive strategies (Wilson-Tagoe 38). Poisoning, slowed-down work tendencies, sabotage, dance, establishing autonomous culture, and recollection of ancestral past were all types of resistance that African enslaved people implemented to recover their freedom and self-dignity (Lewis 175). Tales and trickster stories were mechanisms of survival. They provided support and hope in situations of oppression (Gilroy 36). Resistance in Caribbean history was therefore both open and hidden but always continuous.

The narration of resistance as reclamation of rebellion is more significantly and exhaustively dealt with in Salt. In this novel, Lovelace depicts both the violence perpetrated against the enslaved Africans for over three centuries, and the ways they dealt with their suffering. As part of the control mechanisms, the white masters were compelled to have the African slaves, both men and women, whipped. As Lovelace writes in Salt,

people had to get licks to keep them in line. How else they coulda carry on the Work, feeding all those people, giving them rations, putting clothes on their back. And it was hard. It was very hard to mould the Negro character, to stamp out his savage tendencies. (6)
The difficulties of taming the relentlessly rebellious character of the enslaved Africans provoked an awareness of the need to relax the slave system. For instance the French devised the “Code Noir” to improve the conditions of the enslaved as a measure of slave control, not out of respect for the humanity of the enslaved Africans. The “Code Noir” as Lovelace describes it permitted the enslaved Africans to have a little enjoyment between the end of Mass and the prayers in the evening. The permitted number of lashes was reduced to twenty-five. Flogging was still administered, but it was implemented in a way that it would not cause any bloodshed or contusion (Salt 6). The relaxation of the slave system was unavoidable due in great part to the untamable character of the enslaved Africans. “What else to do?” asks the narrator (Salt 6). According to Lovelace, Europeans were forced to relax their system of captivity and to change it to another form of control because enslaved Africans did not accept subservience (“Progress” 56).

Salt elevates the enslaved African people’s resilience and abnegation in their resistance even in the face of escalating oppression. Cutting ears off, as a form of punishment to marronage, did not prevent the enslaved from escaping. The fact that their children and wives were taken from them did not inhibit men from resisting (Salt 6). Women were also involved in the resistance. They underwent harsh treatment. Yet, the white masters were not able to destroy them. Lovelace notes that

They had to ban them from talking. They had to ban them from walking and from raising up their dresstail and shaking their
melodious backsides. They wasn’t easy. The plantation people couldn’t handle them. They beat them. They hold them down and turn them over and do them whatever wickedness they could manage; they couldn’t break them. (Salt 7)

These different stories in *Salt* demonstrate the white plantation owners’ misconception of enslaved Africans’ attitude that the enslaved Africans accepted their captivity. As Lovelace says,

four hundred years it take them to find out that you can’t keep people in captivity. Four hundred years! And it didn’t happen so. People had to revolt. People had to poison people…. Haiti had to defeat Napoleon. People had to run away up the mountains. People had to fight. And then they agree, yes. We can’t hold people in captivity here. (Salt 7)

This passage describes the degree to which the white masters were unconscious of the nature of enslaved African people’s personalities, true intentions and desires. The enslaved Africans were not content with enslavement, nor did they conceive of it as a positive enlightenment process as Hegel and other Western scholars thought. They wanted their freedom and fought for it. The Haitian revolution that Lovelace mentions is a patent example of successful anti-slavery revolution. The revolution was not a result of the French Revolution as some historians like Thomas Ott view it (Hutton 27). The term “Black Jacobins” used by Trinidadian historian C. L. R. James implies that the sources and matrix of the Haitian revolution are located within the French Revolution. Though one can
concede that the French Revolution precipitated the Haitian Revolution, it is still certain that it happened because the enslaved Africans did not accept captivity and desired freedom.

_Salt_ does not only focus on resistance against enslavement it also emphasizes struggles and rebellion against colonialism and its subsequent forms from Emancipation to post-independence periods. Jojo, Bango’s grandfather, is the prototype of the resistance figure against forms of re-enslavement after Emancipation. The episode that mostly exemplifies Jojo’s defiance, bravura and heroism is when he curses the Governor at Brunswick Square during Emancipation Day, because the latter gave them half-way freedom (_Salt_ 45). Another instance of Jojo’s rebellion relates his refusal to utter a word after being sentenced to having his ears cut off for attempting to escape. As the narrator describes it, Jojo was “unable to make any other plea but silence, since to argue was to give the impression that he did not believe that he was born free” (_Salt_ 170-71). Jojo’s resistance extended to his refusal to squat on land at the Carabons, and his decision that instead he should be given compensation for over seventy years of unpaid labor. Jojo was not one of those who indulge in strike and sabotage or in the non-work ethic that people of the Hill follow in _Dragon_. He would rather perversely work hard to preserve the Carabon plantation, “so that he became to Carabon more brother than enemy” (_Salt_ 45). Jojo’s hard work habits show a type of resistance that most scholars overlook. It is often viewed that the Afro-Caribbeans developed laziness and reluctance to work, and implemented sabotage as a means to express their anger and
disapproval toward their stifling life conditions. Jojo’s case tells us that rigor and discipline in work provides both the possibility for Afro-Caribbeans to be on good terms with their masters and inhibit labor control and reprimand for ineffective work. Jojo’s iconoclastic and rebellious tendency is passed on to his grandson Bango in contemporary Trinidad. Bango carries on Jojo’s legacy of struggle for full emancipation. The former’s preoccupation in his struggle is the material benefit of Emancipation through land compensation for the four hundred years of exploitation undergone by Afro-Caribbean people. His resistance takes the form of a carnivalesque march that he organizes every year during Emancipation Day.

_Salt_ is not Lovelace’s sole novel that deals with the history of resistance in the Caribbean. In _Is Just a Movie_, as in _Wine_ and _Dragon_, resistance to mechanisms of re-enslavement, colonialism, and neocolonialism is present, but in mostly covert or disguised forms. These are methods of resistance that James Scott calls “infrapolitics of the powerless” or “hidden transcripts,” as I discuss in Chapter One. In one of the stories in _Is Just a Movie_, the narrator tells us about local Trinidadian people who were given minor acting roles in a movie by an American film company, in which the local people would act the roles of people being killed while the American stars would emerge as the heroes. This episode underscores the domination of Western media and culture in the Caribbean. The company owners are foreign, and they broadcast a debased image of local people and space, while promoting cultural values of the West. However, since the roles of dying are imposed on the local people, they decide to die the way they want. The style of dying they implement causes discomfiture to the makers
of the film. The director orders that the scene be cut because, as Kingkala narrates it, “he doesn’t like how we dying at all... The quality of our dying is an embarrassment to them. We dying too slow. We wasting too much of the Whitepeople time” (Is Just a Movie 27). In parodically performing this slow dying, the local people provide a resistance to Western cultural imperialism, and hence repossess their sense of dignity. Additionally, the account of the Black Power Movement in Is Just a Movie stands as testimony of the efforts to battle the mechanisms of social and ethnic discrimination. This movement as it is elaborated in Chapter Three, attempted to bring together Afro-Trinidadians and Indo-Trinidadians in the struggle for justice and opportunity for all, although some understandably viewed it as black struggle alone.

Wine and Dragon emphasize cultural practices as a way to oppose colonialism and its subsequent forms. The first chapter of this dissertation has insisted on how, in Wine, the Spiritual Baptist followers resort to the mimicry of Western religious ways, as a defensive measure, in order to resist violent colonial oppression, preserve their community and safeguard the integrity of their community. Without dismissing physical resistance, the novel elevates the effectiveness of nonviolent resistance, which led to the survival and continuities of the African diaspora and African cultures in the New World. Wine thus contributes to the call for the recognition of the Afro-Caribbean’s struggles and triumphs in Caribbean history (Lovelace, Growing 51). In Dragon, Carnival provides a tactic of survival and resistance. The protagonist Aldrick and the community of Calvary Hill find in Carnival energies that enable them to cope with
the continuous system of colonial oppression and exploitation perpetrated by the Afro-Caribbean political elite. Though Aldrick and Calvary Hill cultivate idleness and refusal to work as defensive mechanisms, it is through Carnival that they find a sense of fulfillment and an instrument to escape and deal with their daily suffering. Dance is another form of cultural resistance, as described in the opening pages of *Dragon*, which permitted Caribbean people to survive and reaffirm their personhood. As Lovelace writes in “Caribbean Folk Culture,” “dancing is perhaps the most affirmative human expression of self, indicating as it does, the exercise by the individual of power/control over his own body. People did not sit around and mope, nor did they pine away and die. They danced” (“Caribbean Folk Culture” 27). In inscribing Carnival, religion, and dance as resistance methods in his fiction, Lovelace elucidates the role of art in Caribbean people’s struggle for survival and in the expression of their humanity from the period of enslavement to the post-independence Caribbean.

The analysis of Lovelace’s idea of reclaiming rebellion highlights a focus on the heroic deeds of ordinary and lower class people. The emphasis on the masses as the principal agents of resistance in the history of Caribbean people seems to ignore the contribution of the Caribbean elite in the heroic history of the Caribbean. However, it would be a misconception to argue that Lovelace dismisses and negates all involvement of the elite in historical triumphs. Lovelace demonstrates how educated Caribbean people have been involved in national struggles, however, with different motivations and interests. In *Salt* Alford George, the schoolmaster, stands against the Western controlled educational
system which jeopardizes the future of young Caribbean people. As a minister
Alford eventually takes on the cause of the poor peasants, agreeing to try and
compensate them with land, although the novel does not actually do so. In Wine,
Ivan Morton helps the Bonnasse community to repeal the Prohibition Ordinance
of the Spiritual Baptist church after his initial stance against his people. These
cases underscore educated Caribbean people’s involvement in struggles against
colonialism and neocolonialism. But by insisting on the common people’s heroic
deeds in his fiction, Lovelace is trying to tell us that these people waged the
principal and most significant rebellions, and achieved triumphs against the
structures of oppression and human denigration throughout the history of the
Caribbean even though they were never given official credit for it. If unearthing
the fulfilling history of Caribbean people is a vital literary endeavor, it is essential
to examine the esthetic style in which this history is reproduced in Lovelace’s
novels.

**Memory and the Reproduction of History**

Caribbean history in its particularity is a fragmented one. Several factors
contributed to its fragmentation. The effacement of collective memory constitutes
a major cause of the disintegration of the history of Caribbean people, as I have
explained earlier. As Édouard Glissant discusses it in *Caribbean Discourse*, the
incapacity of the collective consciousness to access the past engendered the
disruption and fragmentation of Caribbean history (62). The brutal experience the
Caribbean region and its people underwent fomented the sense of discontinuity
of Caribbean history. The experience in the Caribbean is that of people who
suffered from enslavement, considered one of the worst crimes against humanity. The harshness of the plantation system contributed to the discontinuity of collective memory in the Caribbean, which started from the painful phenomenon of the slave trade. Glissant notes that Caribbean history is “the site of a history characterized by ruptures and that began with a brutal dislocation, the slave trade” (Caribbean Discourse 61). Through the triangular Atlantic slave trade Africans were ripped from their motherland, families and cultures. The experience of enslavement not only constitutes a painful severance from their space and communities, but also a tragic separation from their own selves. The enslaved Africans who did not share the same languages were put together in the ships as well as in the new land of the Caribbean. The language barrier and the alienation in the new land made it difficult for Africans to reconstitute their communities and transplant cultures. It was thus difficult for African diasporas to maintain memory continuity in the New World.

The fragmentation of the history of Caribbean people was exacerbated by the absence of early written records that focused on their Caribbean people’s contribution in Caribbean history. That explains the “dislocation of the continuum” and the incapacity of Caribbean people to have a collective consciousness, a phenomenon that is characteristic of what Glissant names “nonhistory”. This nonhistory, as Glissant views it, provokes the erasure of the collective memory (Caribbean Discourse 62). Indo-Trinidadian writer V.S. Naipaul believes that it was quasi impossible to write Caribbean history not just due to the brutality Caribbean people went through, but also because of the lack of achievements
that a true history should be built upon (29). One can concede to Naipaul that it is hard to write about the brutality of one’s own experience, yet it is being blind to history to believe that Caribbean people did not have any achievements or create anything. The successful slave revolts and the reinvention of Afro-Caribbean and Indo-Caribbean cultures are a proof of Caribbean people’s triumphs in their experience in the New World. The previous chapters in this dissertation have dealt with some of the historical achievements and triumphs of Caribbean people. While it is true that the incapacity to access collective memory brings about nonhistory, it is also true that the creative reconfiguration of memory in literature is a means to address and mend the losses of memory and discontinuities in Caribbean history.

Memory is reconstituted as a source of history in Lovelace’s fiction in various ways. The inscription of cultural performance is one way of reproducing memory. In Salt and Is Just a Movie, as in Dragon and Wine memory is revived through Carnival and its components, especially stickfighting, calypso and steelpan. Carnival as celebrated by Aldrick in Dragon and Bango in Salt recalls the memories of resilience, struggle, and survival in the Caribbean past. Bango’s annual march maintains the memory and legacy of resistance in Caribbean history. Through his carnivalesque march, Bango revivifies the tradition of rebellion carried out by his ancestor Jojo. In Dragon, Aldrick’s enactment of the figure of the dragon and the display of his costume, alongside masqueraders at Calvary Hill, most significantly unearth ancestral memory. As the narrator tells us,
Upon the Hill...little boys, costumed in old dresses...move across the face of the awakening Hill, sweeping yards, in a ritual, heralding the masqueraders’ coming, that goes back centuries for its beginnings, back across the Middle Passage, back to Mali and to Guinea and Dahomey and Congo, back to Africa when Maskers were sacred and revered...they would dance and make their terrible cries, affirming for the village, the tribe, warriorhood and femininity, linking the villagers to their ancestors, their gods.... Every Carnival Monday morning, Aldrick Prospect, with only the memory burning in his blood, a memory that had endured the three hundred odd years to Calvary Hill felt, as he put on his costume, a sense of entering a sacred mask that invested him with an ancestral authority.... (120-21)

This passage describes mask, masking and masquerade as a repository of ancestral memory, the memory of the African spiritual and sacred world and the legacy of rebellion and reclamation of human dignity in the Caribbean. Aiyejina concurs that Aldrick’s performance and view of the dragon activates the past and registers the material and spiritual past and the recent experience of his fellow Caribbean people (“Novelypso”107). Brathwaite proposes that the Africanization of Carnival provides it with meaning constituted of an overall sense of disintegrated recollections about old traditions (“Ala(r)ms of God” 91-92). The reproduction of mask and masking in contemporary Caribbean cultural events is
a living symbol of the continuous presence of African and European ancestral memory in Trinidad and the Caribbean.

Stickfighting, calypso, and steelpan are components of Carnival where memory of the past is revived. The character of the stickfighter epitomized by Bolo in *Wine*, evokes a type of African fighting tradition, but actualized in the Caribbean. Quoting Aiyejina, Thalia T.M. Arneaud says,

> the spirit of Africa is present in the tradition of warriorhood represented by Bolo… The stickfighting tradition in the New World is, perhaps, an aggregate of the various similar traditions in Africa, and Bolo must, therefore, be seen as a New World manifestation of an Old World tradition. (36)

Stickfighting or kalinda “was brought to the Caribbean in the memories of Africans, and was predominantly a Congo input into Trinidad culture” (Warner-Lewis 151; Hayles 22). By enacting the stickfighting tradition early on in *Wine*, Bolo thus enlivens ancestral memory, a memory of bravery and heroism not just by Africans in Africa, but also by African descendants in the Caribbean. This is the time when, as a stickfighter, Bolo is considered a hero in his village. Calypso, which is more explicitly dealt with in *Dragon* through the character of Philo and *Is Just a Movie* through the character of Kingkala, is a site where ancestral memory is represented. As Lamming argues, the invention of Calypso, a type of music which originated from France but developed by Afro-Trinidadians in the Caribbean is proof that Africa was still in the minds of people (224). Though it was born in the Caribbean, calypso was rooted in the West African tradition of
the “griot.” In performing calypso, Philo and Kingkala therefore activate memories of African traditions and the realities of their contemporary people. Last but not least, steelpan, a Caribbean invented musical instrument, invokes memories of African drumming traditions. In Wine, after the Baptist followers lose spirit possession, the medium through which they connected themselves to the African spiritual realm, they recover it at the end of the novel through steelpan music (146). Likewise, it is through steelpan that Ant Magenta hears again the call of the spirit in Is Just a Movie (248-49). Also, in this novel, the spirit of Ogun possesses Lance, Sonnyboy’s father, as he is performing steelpan (42). Due to the influence of the tassa drum, the performance of steelpan also includes a symbolic reenactment of Indo-Caribbean memories. In inscribing cultural performance, Lovelace is able to capture the memory of the revolutionary Caribbean. He, however, emphasizes the heroism of Afro-Caribbean people more than other ethnic groups, which contradicts his effort to provide an inclusive nationalist discourse. But Lovelace’s insistence on the historical exploits of ordinary Afro-Caribbean people expresses his intention to honor the latter who waged the most significant battles against colonial domination. It also demonstrates his idea that Caribbean society, though diverse, should give significant space to Afro-Caribbean history, which was most affected by slavery.

Lovelace’s fiction also promotes orality as a medium to deal with the loss of memory and the fragmentation of Caribbean history. From the traditional viewpoint, orality is a tradition of ancient or early modern European poets, storytellers, bards, minstrels and troubadours. In the Caribbean context, African
slaves developed what has been called “oraliture” during the plantation system, through songs, stories and proverbs. As a means to access collective memory, orality supplements writing as literature complements history and other sciences. This type of literary form is popular among French Caribbean writers like Patrick Chamoiseau. The term “oraliture” appears in his novel, *Solibo Magnificent* (115). Chamoiseau, Raphaël Confiant and Jean Bernabé view orality as the vehicle of “créolité” (creoleness). Orality is the mode of expression of creoleness, which relies on the Creole language. As they argue, creoleness is “a real galaxy with the creole language at its core, creoleness, has still today, its privileged mode: orality” (Chamoiseau, Confiant and Bernabé, 95). Glissant believes that the Creole language bears the marks of orality; however, he maintains that this orality is very much altered in writing (*Caribbean Discourse* 12). Glissant proposes the folktale as a marker of orality that contributes to the maintenance of collective memory. For Glissant the tale plays a double function. It can fill the gap history presents, and thus keeps the writer from a paralyzing longing for history, and function as an “antidecree and antilaw, that is to say antiwriting” (*Caribbean Discourse* 84). The issue with Glissant here is that he conceives orality in a frame of duality: orality against writing. He reduces orality to words or speech. Orality, however, includes words, rhythm and performance. The “Abeng” (conch shell), the drum and dance were mediums through which the enslaved African people communicated. They all represent modes of orality.

Orality in the novels of Lovelace takes the form of songs, dances, stories, and myths. These modes of orality represent an alternative source of reliable
history of the people in the Caribbean. Lovelace claims that “although we have very few accounts from Africans of those times as to what they did and what they thought, what we do have are their dances and their songs and their stories….

These songs, dances, and stories, I want to suggest, are a living source of authentic history” (“Ongoing Value of Our Indigenous Traditions” 30-31). The dance of the dragon in Dragon and the calypso songs in Dragon and Is Just a Movie carry the oral tradition in Lovelace’s fiction. The introduction of myths, stories and storytelling in his novels most significantly represents “oraliture.” In Salt, Lovelace relates the legend of the flying Africans, as does Toni Morrison in Song of Solomon (136) and Edwidge Danticat in Breath, Eyes, Memory (215; 228). The shared legend of flying back to Africa in Caribbean and African American literatures expresses a need of memorializing the African motherland, although Lovelace is firmly rooted in the Caribbean. Hayles concurs that “Lovelace’s delineation of the myth of the flying African can be seen as rediscovery, reclamation and preservation of African legacy that is established upon different principles from those of the colonisers” (Hayles 130). Salt additionally narrates the myth of the Caribbean region’s creation, also described in Lamming’s Pleasures of Exile and Of Age and Innocence. Like Lovelace, Lamming provides an account of the origins of the New World as myth, but using Tribe Boys and ants as characters. This kind of legendary fable in Pleasures is a revised form of the legend of the Tribe Boys in Of Age. This legend alludes to the extermination of Indigenous people and the takeover of the Caribbean islands by the Europeans (Pleasures 21). Legends and fables represent an oral tradition
which puts together animal and human characters. These practices are popular in the work of Cuban writer Lydia Cabrera, especially in her book *Afro-Cuban Tales*. Lamming and Wilson Harris view the legends and fables as the work of the historical imagination, which counters the distorted aspects of Caribbean history in colonial accounts (Nair, *Caliban’s Curse* 18). The inscription of myth in Caribbean narratives thus triggers memories that trace the discovery and establishment of the New World.

The description of Guinea John’s flight in *Salt* is thrilling as it blends the real with the unreal: “Guinea John, with his black jacket on and a price of two hundred pounds sterling on his head, made his way to the East Cost, mounted the cliff, put two corn cobs under his armpits and flew away to Africa” (*Salt* 3). With Guinea John’s flight back to Africa, Lovelace introduces aspects of magic realism in his narratives, but also explains how the children on the new land struggled and formed what is known today as the Caribbean. The myth of eating salt explains Guinea John’s children’s inability to fly. The reason why Guinea John did not pass on the secret of flying to his children was that they had consumed too much salt and had become too heavy to fly. Guinea John was aware that the future of his children was not in Africa any longer, but in the islands (*Salt* 3). These are etiological, cosmological, and metaphysical myths, which explain the origin and establishment of the Caribbean. Uncle Bango tells these mythical stories to his nephew, the narrator of *Salt*, who in turn tells them to the reader. Myths and legends are therefore an essential aspect of storytelling.
The introduction of storytelling as a part of orality is a fundamental literary technique in *Salt* and other novels by Lovelace. As Hayles argues, “Lovelace’s exploration of the myth of the flying African can be seen as an extension or recreation of a long-held tradition in storytelling, which survived among the Africans who were transplanted in the Americas” (131). In storytelling, myth functions as a traditional story, which provides a people with guidance and direction. As the Old Man in Chinua Achebe’s *Anthills of the Savannah* says, “it is the story … that saves our progeny from blundering like blind beggars into the spikes of the cactus fence. The story is our escort; without it, we are blind” (114).

The structure of Lovelace’s novels is often constructed as a web of storytelling. The narrators Lovelace inscribes in his novels more or less function as storytellers, as in the example of Travey in *Salt*, Kingkala in *Is Just a Movie*, Philo in *Dragon* and Eva in *Wine*. Orality through myth, story, and storytelling in literature is an essential tool in the maintenance of memory and preservation of cultures.

It is, however, important to underline the lack of emphasis on geography as a repository of memory in Lovelace’s novels. The geographical features of the Caribbean encode the history of Atlantic slavery, enslavement of Africans, Indian indenture, as well as resistance. In Caribbean literature, the topographical images represent the Middle Passage, plantation system, marronage, the Kala Pani, etc. Though Lovelace does not focus on topography as a marker of history in his novels, he is aware of its ability to bear past memory. In his play *Jestina’s Calypso*, Lovelace depicts the female body with its scars as a metaphorical
representation of the Caribbean land that is abused and injured by hundreds of years of enslavement. Derek Walcott is one of the main Caribbean writers who emphasizes the presence of history in Caribbean geography. In “Antilles,” Walcott argues that history is there in Antillean geography, in the vegetation itself. The sea sighs with the drowned from the Middle Passage, the butchery of its aborigines, Carib and Aruac and Taino, bleeds in the scarlet of the immortelle, and even the actions of surf on sand cannot erase the African memory, or the lances of cane as a green prison where indentured Asians, the ancestors of Felicity, are still serving time… Decimation from the Aruac downwards is the blasted root of Antillean history. (81-82)

In his poetry and drama, Walcott often delineates aspects of the geography as a source of history. In his play The Sea at Dauphin and his poem Omeros, the St. Lucian Nobel Prize winner repeatedly portrays the sea and images of water, which recall the memory of the Atlantic slave trade and the painful Middle Passage. Antiguan writer Jamaica Kincaid characterizes the garden in her novel, Lucy, not just as a symbol of beauty, but also as a reminder of the plantation system and mechanisms of colonial subjugation.

The literary reproduction of memory through inscription of Caribbean cultures and oral traditions as well as the topographical esthetics in Caribbean narratives show that the recovery of collective consciousness is not the property of historians. Literature in fact has the possibility of challenging and
complementing history through imagery and imagination. As Walcott views it, the literary imagination is necessary to fill in the gaps of amnesia ("Culture or Mimicry" 53). Glissant also believes that literary creation is a necessity in the face of the erasure of the collective memory. As Glissant writes in *Caribbean Discourse*,

> History as far as it is a discipline and claims to clarify that the reality lived by this people, will suffer from a serious epistemological deficiency: it will not know how to make the link. The problem faced by the collective consciousness makes a creative approach necessary, in the rigid demands made by the historical approach can constitute, if they are not restrained, a paralyzing handicap.

(61)

He adds that

> As far as we are concerned, history as a consciousness at work and history as lived experience are therefore not the business of historians exclusively. Literature for us will not be divided in genres but will implicate all the perspectives of all the human science.

(*Caribbean Discourse* 61-65)

Glissant indicates in these passages that literature, in its universality and flexibility, fills the gap where history and other sciences are deficient. Barbadian writer Lamming, as Nair argues, “sees literature as a kind of imaginative record that paradoxically substantiates and challenges historical narratives” (*Caliban’s Curse* 2). Caribbean literature therefore represents an important tool in the
reinvention of Caribbean history. Rather than present only one historical position, Lovelace introduces multiple narrative voices as a way to reinstate the various histories of the ethnic groups that compose Trinidian society. While I have until now focused on the African aspect in this chapter, the account of the different histories in Trinidad that I will now turn to is part of the process of accounting, reparation and national reconciliation on a larger national stage.

2. Multiple Voices: Re-narrativization of History and Ethical Reparation

One of the complexities in Lovelace’s fictional work is the presence of multiple voices in his narration. In *Salt* and *Is Just a Movie*, the multilayered narrative voice informs the past as re-narrativization of Caribbean history. This narrative technique is indicative of Lovelace’s view of Caribbean history as multidimensional: that is a history constituted by a plurality of histories of the different diasporic groups in the Caribbean. I argue that Lovelace’s representation of histories through multiple voices underscores his vision of nationalism, national unity, and diasporic nationhood. Thus, the function of the pluri-vocal narration in Lovelace’s novels can be delineated in two ways: First, it serves as a platform for Lovelace that includes all national diasporic experiences in his account of Caribbean history and, by doing so, gives legitimacy to all the diasporic groups that inhabit Trinidad and the Caribbean. Also, through multiple voices, Lovelace envisions a space where the different ethnic groups can settle accounts as a process of reparation for wrongs historically done to some groups, and thus arrive at national reconciliation.
The Dialogic: Relating National Diasporic Experiences

Lovelace’s experiment with multiple voices in his novels is similar to Mikhail Bakhtin’s notion of the dialogic. In *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, Bakhtin defines the dialogic as a “whole formed by the interaction of several consciousnesses, none of which entirely becomes an object for the other” (18). The dialogic differs from the monologic, which, on the contrary, consists in a single overarching voice, dominating other perceptions. The dialogic therefore rejects the all-authoritative single narrative voice, and promotes voice multiplicity, dialogue and interrelation between voices. Linked to the dialogic is Bakhtin’s concept of heteroglossia. As he describes it in *Dialogic Imagination*, heteroglossia is “the social and historical voices populating language” (300). Bakhtin believes that a novel must reproduce all the significant “languages” of its era and for him a language is always plurivocal. He argues that the novel represents the socio-ideological consciousness of its era as a “microcosm of heteroglossia” or a “heteroglot unity of societal becoming” through which a language finds its distinctiveness (*Dialogic Imagination* 411). Maria Shevtsova sees heteroglossia as a dialogic discourse as it puts together coinciding voices. She further argues that heteroglossia is the precondition for the dialogic for the reason that its absence creates the monologic (753). Paul de Man characterizes this type of discourse as “exotopy,” since it deals with the interaction between different cultural and ideological categories (102). Another notion that Bakhtin links to the dialogic and heteroglossia is the compositional principal of
“polyphony.” It is “the unification of a highly heterogeneous and incompatible material,” which Bakhtin associates with the plurality of consciousnesses in Dostoevsky’s novels (Problems of Dostoevsky 17). Polyphony involves multiple voices. The common denominator between the dialogic, heteroglossia and polyphony is the absence of a dominant voice and the presence of various voices that interact.

The dialogic is very much characteristic of Salt and Is Just a Movie though this narrative technique is present in Lovelace’s earlier novels. In Wine, for instance, though the story is told by a single narrative voice, it informs a variety of consciousnesses. The events that the voice of Eva narrates are inspired by stories she hears from her husband Bee and other people. Eva borrows voices in her narration, especially when she relates events happening in masculine spaces like the gayelles, rum shops, and stickfighting arenas. She is a combination of various voices in her community space. As Merle Hodge argues, Eva “yields to the voices of the different villagers who provided parts of the story” (Hodge 100). Aiyejina concurs that Lovelace indeed gives Eva the role of “identifying the heroes and anti-heroes of the community, and chanting their stories,” and thus makes her the “secondary or tertiary filter inspired to re-tell her inherited stories, and re-shape them into collectively beneficial visions (“Novelypso” 111). The expression of multiple voices through a single narrative voice in Wine accords with Bakhtin’s notion of heteroglossia since the language she uses is borrowed from other characters.

Like Wine, Dragon develops a single narrative voice through the character
of Philo, the calypsonian. However, unlike Eva, Philo does not relay events from others. On the surface, Philo evokes the single-voiced narrator. Yet, his narration characterizes polyphony, as characters like Aldrick, Fisheye, and Pariag provide the consciousness of events in *Dragon*. In his essay “In the Voice of the People,” Lovelace views that “even when these characters do not tell their own stories, they provide the consciousness through which their stories unfold” (102). For instance, Aldrick provides the materials for the narration of Carnival. The Black Power Movement is traced through the leadership of Fisheye who incarnates the vision of the revolution. The East Indians’ arrival in Trinidad and their attempt to integrate into the Creole society is portrayed through the perspective of Pariag. The dialogic through a single narrative voice enables Lovelace to render the narration in his novels through multiple points of view and subjectivities.

Lovelace’s experiment with the polyphonic narrative voice is even more obvious in *Salt*. The principal narrator of *Salt* replicates the single narrator prototype of earlier novels. However, if in *Wine* Eva’s role is as a secondary filter of the narrator, a re-teller of stories, in *Salt* Travey’s function as a disseminator of information is more overtly expressed. He lets the readers know that the stories he tells are relayed from Bango, his “griot” uncle. This narrative style, according to Phil Langran, “draws attention to oral traditions, setting up a context that requires the relaying of narrative (and hence meaning) by many voices” (58). Like Eva, young Travey did not witness most of the events he is telling. By signaling that Travey got those stories from his uncle Bango, Lovelace not only establishes a relationship of trust between the narrator and the reader, but he
also breaks the authority of the single narrative voice. In addition to the
dyphonic narrative voice, *Salt* provides a narrative technique that allows
tacters to tell their own stories. Lovelace superimposes the characters’
narrative voices on the principal narrator. This narrative technique is also seen in
George Lamming’s *In the Castle of My Skin*, which Margaret Gill views as being
inspired from a heterogeneous oral tradition. As she argues, Lamming
draws heavily on the practices of orality and its consequent
heterogeneous, and sometimes contradictory, voices. He stresses
storytelling and changes of narrator, with consequent
fragmentation. The narrator is sometimes G, sometimes an
omniscient third person and sometimes the boys in their own voice.
(Gill 218)
The characters in Lovelace’s *Salt* and Lamming’s *In the Castle of My Skin* take
hold of the narration as they provide accounts for their own stories. Aiyejina calls
this narrative technique the narrative of possession, which he sees in Orisha and
other Afro-Caribbean religious rituals where the follower is inhabited by,
sublimated to, and possessed by a deity, and thus borrows characteristics of the
possessing deity. Thus, beyond the religious aspect, possession entails a
representational function of an archetype, which is associated with the identity of
the individual who knowingly adopts the attributes of the deity (Barnet 86).
Echoing possession in Afro-Caribbean religions, the esthetics of possession
enables characters and the principal narrator to negotiate the control of narration.
In *Salt* Lovelace inscribes a main narrator, often possessed by other characters
that reprise their own points of view (Aiyejina, “Novelypso” 117; “A Complex Tapestry” 13). In equating the voice changes in *Salt* with the ritual of possession, Aiyejina echoes the storytelling session in which the audience and the teller become a collaborative team. The narrative of possession therefore allows Lovelace to fuse the “reader and the narratee, the protagonist and the narrated, and the storyteller and the storyhearer” into a cooperative unit (“Novelypso” 108). Through multiple voices, Lovelace creates a participatory narrative style.

The change of voice occurs without notice in *Salt*. It is through linguistic clues that the alteration of voice is signaled (Hodge 100-01). The shift in point of view sometimes suddenly occurs, when it seems like the character enters a state of epiphany. Langran views the abrupt changes of point of view in *Salt* as epiphanies, which validate individual experiences of the characters, but also thwart notions of gender and narrative voice hierarchy (59). For Gill, linguistic registers render multiple voices, as in the practice of orality, and allows shifts in “the power of authorizing and taking authority” (219). In *Salt*, both male and female voices are given expression, sharing narrative ownership with the principal narrator. As an example, in the chapter entitled “Alford in the PM’s Chair Listens to Bango,” the narration regularly shifts from one voice to another. The main narrative voice tells the story of Bango’s ancestor, Jojo, and his meeting with the first Indian indentured workers. All of a sudden, Alford intervenes as the other narrative voice, acknowledging his responsibilities and agreeing to recompense black people in Trinidad and the other parts of the Caribbean as well for their historical losses. In another example in chapter 8
(“Miss Myrtle’s story”), the main narrator starts telling the story of Miss Myrtle, and a few pages later, Miss Myrtle comes up and gives an account of her story as a first-person narrator. However, in Chapter 11 (“Adolphe Carabon: The Birthday Party”) and chapter 12 (“Lochan”), Adolphe Carabon, the white Creole, and Sonan Lochan, the Indo-Trinidadian, do not relate their own stories, though they respectively provide the consciousness of their stories. By not allowing Carabon and Lochan to possess the main narrator, Lovelace may be indicating that the ritual of possession is not a tradition associated with white Creoles and Indo-Trinidadians. The dialogic in Salt thus encompasses both the multi-vocal narrative voice and the narrative of possession.

In his later novel, *Is Just a Movie*, Lovelace drops the narrative of possession and emphasizes the tradition of the dialogic through the voice of the storyteller narrator like Philo in *Dragon*. Kingkala, the storyteller or calypsonian narrator tells stories of the characters, yet as in *Dragon* the characters provide the consciousness of their stories. *Dragon* and *Is Just a Movie* have common points in that both narrators are storytellers (calypsonians), the events in the novels relate a recent aspect of Trinidadian history (for instance, 1970s during the Black Power Movement), and the narration focuses on the Afro-Trinidadians and Indo-Trinidadians who were the principal actors during this part of Trinidadian history. For example, in *Is Just a Movie*, it is through the perception of Clayton Blondell that Kingkala portrays the emergence of the Black Power Movement. Manick’s consciousness is the basis of Kingkala’s narration of the establishment
of Indo-Trinidadians in the Hill (Laventille) and their efforts to integrate into the Creole world, as we see with Pariag in Dragon.

Whether with the multi-vocal narrative voice or narrative of possession, the dialogic in Salt and Is Just a Movie is a narrative technique that enables Lovelace to represent the different histories of the Caribbean. As Aiyejina argues in his introduction to Growing in the Dark, “Lovelace has created a narrator with multiple personae through whom the multiple stories and consciousnesses of the region may be revealed” (xviii). Through the voice or consciousness of Lochan in Salt, Manick in Is Just a Movie, and Pariag in Dragon, the reader is introduced to the history of Indo-Trinidad from the indenture period to the 1970s, during the Black Power Movement uprising. The history of the white Creoles is rendered through the perception of Carabon in Salt. The voices or consciousness of Bango in Salt, Blondell and Claude in Is Just a Movie, as well as Aldrick in Dragon are mediums through which Lovelace elucidates the history of Afro-Trinidadian people. The inscription of the different histories of the Caribbean people in fact constitutes a redefinition of Caribbean history. Lovelace views Caribbean history not as a single history but a confluence of all the histories, which cross-fertilized in the Caribbean. In doing so, Lovelace legitimates and validates the experience of all the various groups that contributed to the making of Trinidad and the Caribbean in general. This incentive highlights Lovelace’s philosophy of nationalism that, if the diasporic nation needs to be consolidated, all the entities that compose it should feel they are part of it. Thus, by introducing the multidimensional character of Trinidadian history, Lovelace is saying that all the
ethnic groups matter, that they all contributed to the history of Trinidad, and that they all therefore belong to the Trinidadian nation. While the re-narrativization of history as a nationalist project in Lovelace's fiction stands for a call for recognition of all the histories that involve the mainstream Caribbean history, it also serves as a platform for settling accounts and making reparation, which tends to give prominence to slaves and their descendants.

**Histories, Settling Accounts, and Reparation**

Lovelace’s later novels, especially *Salt* and *Is Just a Movie*, provide a central place to the problematic of reparation. His elaboration of this issue often generates critiques from scholars. Lovelace is criticized for the fact that while he claims to envision the unity of the Trinidadian diasporic nation, he demands reparation mainly for Afro-Trinidadians as compensation for the losses that their ancestors underwent. This act is seen as favoring Afro-Trinidadians at the expense of Indo-Trinidadians and other ethnic groups. In her article, “Diasporic Roots,” Nair argues that reparation “indicates the possibility of taking (back) from someone and to give to others” (274). Though these criticisms are valid, they tend to conceive reparation mostly in material terms. The symbolic and ethical aspects of reparation are not emphasized. One can agree that Lovelace perceives material compensation as a legitimate way to deal with the historical wrongs done to Afro-Trinidadian people as emphasized in *Salt*. The novel portrays Jojo’s and Bango’s struggle to claim material compensation for the centuries of colonial exploitation of black enslaved people in the Caribbean. Also, in *Wine*, Bolo’s demand for land after he comes out of prison echoes this claim.
for material reparation. Lovelace views this demand for compensation as reasonable because, as he says in *Salt*, the enslaved Africans, after enduring centuries of atrocities and unpaid labor for the white plantation owners, were liberated with no compensation, whereas the plantation owners received compensation for their economic losses on the eve of Emancipation (182). In his essay, “Reparation: For & Whom?” Lovelace reiterates this observation:

> It was the planters who had profited from the enslavement of Africans who were given compensation for the loss of enslaved Africans’ labour. Those who had themselves been brutalized and exploited were simply let loose without any thought of the years of abuse, years of forced labour, of all indignities. (179)

Although they did not get the large sums given to European planters, East Indians were compensated with money and a ticket back to India or a plot of land if they decided to remain in Trinidad after ten years of indentured labor.

Lovelace’s advocacy of material compensation for Afro-Trinidadians determines his intention to address, decry, and deal with this sort of historical injustice.

However, because he is unable to resolve the complexity of material reparation in the contemporary context, Lovelace’s claim for material compensation eventually becomes a symbolic act of reparation that will benefit Afro-Trinidadians and Indo-Trinidadians, as well as other ethnicities. Dr. Kennos says in *Salt* that “whatever reparation was decided on could only be symbolic…what was needed was two houses and two plots of land, one for Bango and another for an Indian” (106). Through the consciousness of Dr.
Kennos, Lovelace is in fact trying to articulate that compensation is not exclusively for Afro-Trinidadians. Demanding reparation for Afro-Trinidadians also provides the possibility for Indo-Trinidadians and other ethnic groups to demand compensation for the exploitation that they faced throughout the indenture system. Reparation would then serve as a symbolic means to mend the deteriorated relationships between ethnic groups and unify the Trinidadian nation. It is therefore not the material object being compensated that is more important in Lovelace’s conception. The essential thing is that beyond the material object lies an expression of feelings of compassion, regret, and acknowledgement of the wrong that has been done to the other. This is the reason why, when Alford decided to compensate Bango and his peasant community with land, Bango insisted that the restitution should be done in public. As Bango says, “just getting the land wasn’t going to better our position. If they give me the land they must do it openly. In front of everybody. People must know why they giving land to me. It must be public” (Salt 164). Bango’s stance translates Lovelace’s view that the way the restitution is carried out is as valuable as the object being restituted. Lovelace sees the public restitution as “a public acknowledgement of the debt owed to the descendants of the formerly enslaved” (Growing 77). Regis asserts that, “in Bango’s mind, the business of reparations is as much psychological as physical” (77). Like Lovelace, Kincaid insists on ethical reparation as she calls on the British to at least wear “sackcloth and ashes in token penance of the wrongs committed, the irrevocableness of their bad deeds, for no natural disaster imaginable could equal the harm they did” (23-24). Thus,
contrary to some scholars who view Lovelace’s claim for reparation only in terms of material compensation, Lovelace gives importance to the ethical dimension of the act of reparation.

The ethical aspect of reparation is more significantly elaborated in Lovelace’s advocacy of settling accounts. Lovelace conceives of reparation as not only a material process, but also as a dialogue and settling of accounts between the ethnic groups that compose the nation of Trinidad. Ethical reparation calls for the different segments of society to face each other and recognize the historical wrongs perpetrated against some groups. As a novelist, short story writer, and playwright, Lovelace uses his literary texts as a means to envision the possibility of settling accounts. In “From De-I-Lands,” Lovelace argues that, “reparation is not punishment. We want to call each other to account, to set each other free. Not to punish each other. We have to attend to these matters” (Growing 60). For Lovelace, people sitting together and addressing the historical circumstances of oppression that they faced or perpetrated is a social purging and a healing process. This ethical reparation has the potential to free people from guilt, shame, and sentiments of injustice and victimhood (Growing 100). Wole Soyinka argues in the same sense that reparation and reconciliation “depend on a process of baring the truth of one’s history in order to exorcise the past and secure a collective peace of mind, the healing of a bruised racial psyche” (23). Hayles concurs that the concepts of reparation and cooperation are linked with the necessity to remember the past (129). The evocation of history associated with reparation is a painful process
through which the individual and the community rejuvenate. Excavating the past is likely to unearth shocking and heartbreaking memories. But for Lovelace it is a necessary step towards reconciliation, because it allows individuals to free themselves from a past of victimhood and oppression.

His characters’ endeavor to deal with the sorrows of the past echoes Obeah esthetics, because as Louis Regis defines it, Obeah “manifests as a human and humanistic way of coming to terms with the hurts of history. It offers closure and healing and promises the freedom of a new day” (82). The term ‘Obeah’ is said to have probably originated from the word ‘Obi,’ which East Coast Africans used to designate witchcraft, sorcery, and fetishism (Bell 6). Obeah as a term is mostly associated with the English-speaking Caribbean, and has different names and manifestations in French and Spanish Caribbean islands. In Haiti, the primary religion is Vodoun, and in Cuba it is Santaría that share some of Obeah’s characteristics. Obeah is mainly for its general healing function. It helps to cure physical sicknesses, conquer and keep lovers, gain wealth, draw luck, and even win court cases (Putnam 247). While Obeah is used to heal, it can also be used to cause damage (Bilby 63). The word Obeah is given a negative connotation, so those who practice it in the Anglophone Caribbean refer to themselves as scientists, doctors, spiritual mothers, do-good men, and professors (Forde and Paton 8-9).

Like Obeah, Lovelace’s fiction assumes a social healing function through ethical reparation. The account of history as ethical reparation provides an example of a healing process in *Salt*. For instance, Miss Myrtle trembles at “the
stories of tortures, of the whips, of the chains” she hears from the members of the party in power. However, when Miss Norma asks her about why people are bringing up these sorrowful stories, Miss Myrtle says,

    They want us to know.
    They giving us power.
    They making us wise.
    They making us remember in order for us to forget.
    They purging us out. (Salt 154)

Miss Myrtle’s response materializes Lovelace’s vision of the confessional function of the literary narration of history. For Miss Myrtle and Lovelace, addressing the past brings about awareness of history and the ability to transcend its dark and confining prison. This account of history as reparation rehabilitates both the victim and the victimizer, which characterizes the complexity of Lovelace’s view of reparation. In inscribing a reparation process that involves the rehabilitation of the victim and victimizer in his literary work, Lovelace introduces Obeah esthetics, because as in the Obeah liberation theology, purgation goes beyond the African groups (Regis 82). Lovelace argues in “Artists as Agents of Unity,” that such a collective release has the potential to “overcome the ideas of slave and slave master and nigger and coolie” (Growing 100). Settling accounts thus humanizes both the victim and the victimizer. Bango expresses this view when he declares,

    I ain’t come here to make the Whiteman the devil. I not here to make him into another creature inhabiting another world outside the
human order. I grant him no licence to pursue wickedness and
brutality. I come to call him to account, as a brother, to ask him to
take responsibility for his humanness, just as I have to take
responsibility for mine. (Salt 167)

The settling of accounts as Bango implies involves a dialogue between the
groups that share the history of Trinidad. In Salt and Is Just a Movie Lovelace
brings characters to make restitution through interaction. One can cite as
examples in Salt the exchanges between Jojo and the East Indian indentured
worker about land occupation by the newly arrived East Indians (185); the
discussion between Alford, the Afro-Trinidadian, Lochan, the Indo-Trinidadian,
and Carabon, the white Creole about who was going to welcome the
constituency at the meeting of their newly created party (102-103), among other
instances. Is Just a Movie presents one such instance through a conversation on
the choice of the one who should carry the red flag between Black Power
Movement revolutionaries – Afro-Trinidadians (Kingkala, Sonnyboy, Franklyn,
Evrol, Marvin and Ibo) and an Indian (Manick) (162). Though this group gets
divided when Manick is not allowed to carry the red flag, it is reunited as the
Indian is permitted to hold the red flag during Carnival celebration. This incident
shows Lovelace’s consciousness of the problems of reparation through settling
accounts. These interactions in both Salt and Is Just a Movie stand for settling of
accounts in that they echo the historical responsibilities of injustices undergone
by some groups, and express a desire to surmount these wrongs.
In addition to the characters’ interactions, the introduction of the histories of the main ethnic groups in Trinidad in Lovelace’s novels constitutes a platform for settling accounts. Through the voices and consciousnesses of characters, as shown above, Lovelace inscribes individual histories of Trinidadian people, which should not be looked at separate, unrelated elements of narration. In *Salt* and *Is Just a Movie*, these histories constitute the accounts of African enslavement and their struggles for liberation, East Indian indenture, and European colonialism. Like characters, the histories interrelate and interact, and as such, materialize the process of settling accounts as ethical reparation. Lovelace is conscious of this artistic function of literature and makes a deliberate use of it in *Salt* and *Is Just a Movie*. As he acknowledges in his essay, “Reparation: For & Whom?” “One of the most important values to be derived from literature is its ability to call us to account as humans” (*Growing 181*).

It is, however, ironic that the dialogic esthetics in Lovelace’s literary expression does not emphasize the histories of the Syrian and Chinese. These ethnic minorities occupy a peripheral place in Lovelace’s narratives. Lovelace only superficially mentions a Chinese character, a shopkeeper, in *Is Just a Movie*, as well as in *Wine*. Though the historical accounts of the white Creoles, Indo-Trinidadians and particularly Afro-Trinidadians hold a central place in Lovelace’s literary work, Lovelace does not negate the Syrian and the Chinese as integral components of Trinidadian history and national space. In *Salt* Alford’s imagination of a fulfilling Carnival representation includes the contribution of Syrians and Chinese alongside Africans, East Indians, and Europeans (90). The
focus on the histories of white Creoles, Afro-Trinidadians, and Indo-Trinidadians indicates Lovelace’s will to address the groups that most significantly contributed to the evolution of contemporary Trinidadian history and political landscape. This shows that although Lovelace imaginatively and artistically engages with history in his literary texts, he attempts to be truthful to the reality of historical occurrences in Trinidad and the Caribbean in general. For instance, *Salt* principally deals with Afro-Trinidadians, Indo-Trinidadians, and White Creoles for the reason that it narrates an earlier historical period that witnessed the presence of the three groups as the principal components of the social space. In contrast, *Is Just a Movie*, like *Dragon*, emphasizes Afro-Trinidadians and Indo-Trinidadians, because the novel evokes a contemporary historical period when these ethnic groups are the main forces that confront each other in their negotiation of the Trinidadian national space.

The articulation of history in *Salt* and *Is Just a Movie* conveys an essential aspect of Lovelace’s nationalist discourse that emphasizes the rehabilitation of the Caribbean past as a condition of national spirit and unity. Unlike Caribbean writers who mainly reproduce history to reveal the past injustices of Western history, Lovelace principally re-narrates history to boost Caribbean people’s sentiments of pride and self-worth, and promote contemporary national reconciliation. The reinstatement of multiple histories is a part of the process of reclaiming rebellion and reshaping the relationship between Caribbean people and their place. The elaboration of history significantly characterizes a space of settling accounts as ethical reparation and a process of national reconciliation.
Lovelace’s engagement with history and ethical restitution informs an Obeah esthetics that promotes psychological healing as a means of national unity. Lovelace’s experiment with the Obeah literary technique indicates his intention to go beyond an address of the responsibility of white colonials in the problems of Caribbean social realities, and provide a discourse that seeks to resorb and cure the ills of Caribbean people. With Lovelace, Obeah esthetics defines a new turn in postcolonial Caribbean literature. He does not thus produce a postcolonial discourse of recrimination, but rather develops a literature of nationalism, which envisions the reconstruction of the Caribbean psyche and the consolidation Caribbean national space.
CHAPTER FIVE
GENDER, ETHNICITY, AND NEW NATIONAL VISION

It is said, furthermore, that the notion of “nation” is at risk, subverted, if you will, by social dysfunctional masculine attitudes and cultural tendencies. (Beckles, “Black Masculinity” 226)

In the above passage from his essay “Black Masculinity in Caribbean Slavery,” Hilary Beckles expresses the view that Afro-Caribbean masculinity and cultural trends constitute an obstacle to the construction of Caribbean nations. Some of the earlier chapters of this dissertation have focused on Caribbean cultures and their dynamics in the negotiation of national space. This chapter will particularly emphasize gender constructions in relation to ethnicity and national community building in Lovelace’s novels. Gender is defined as “an order by which human society takes sexual difference and shapes it into recurrent cultural practices and social relations between men and women” (Mohammed, “A Symbiotic Visiting Relationship” 101). Gender is a social categorization through which the definition of masculinity and femininity in patriarchal societies favors the domination of men over women. In the Caribbean context where different ethnicities cohabit, gendered power relationships are not just between men and women, but also, as gender studies scholars have argued, between men and other men. Here, various masculinities face each other in their struggle for control. At the national level, these gender dynamics confer national power to men, because as Anne McClintock argues, the aspirations of men are associated
with the matters of the nation (McClintock 261). This chapter specifically looks at Lovelace’s representation of gender relationships and their impact on the negotiation of national space in Trinidad. I argue that the construction of dominant masculinities in relation to femininity and other masculinities disrupts gender and ethnic relations, and hence national cohesion. It is therefore through the dismantling of patriarchal hierarchies and a reassessment of masculinities that a stronger national community space may be consolidated. The analysis in this chapter will thus emphasize two main points: first, Caribbean women’s marginalization in patriarchal writing and the emergence of their empowerment, and next, the reconstruction of national identities through the negotiation of masculinities in the Caribbean, particularly in Trinidad.

1. **Beyond Domestic Roles: Caribbean Women as Agents**

   In her article “Order, Disorder, Freedom and the West Indian Writer,” Maryse Condé characterizes the “new order” in pre-independent Caribbean literature as the phase in which back male writers emerged in response to the West’s debilitating representations of the black race. However, in the works of these Caribbean male writers, as Condé tells us, black men are given the most prominent roles while women are relegated to the background. Men’s heroism and male sexuality are emphasized and women only play auxiliary roles in the communities’ struggles (126). Condé provides an example of two classic texts by Aimé Césaire and Jacques Roumain, *Notebook of Return to my Native Land* and *Masters of the Dew* respectively. In these texts, Condé notes that “we have two messianic male heroes (Manuel [in Masters] and the poet [in Notebook]) whose
ambition is to change their societies and thus rehabilitate the exploited Black Man” (125). In Caribbean literature, it is not until the emergence of Caribbean women writers, which consists of the “disorder” phase, the breakdown of Caribbean male writing canons, that women are promoted to the “front battle for survival,” with the example of Simone Schwarz-Bart’s *Pluie et Vent sur Télumé Miracle* (Condé 133). The “subjectification” of men and “thingification” of women, however, continue through the twentieth century with the nationalist generation of Anglophone Caribbean writers. The literary productions of these writers emphasize the becoming of man, which is associated with the becoming of the nation. Curdella Forbes argues that Caribbean literature developed in the second half of the twentieth century reinforce the political ideologies and metaphors that envisioned the nation as a symbol of masculinity. She notes that

> Public political discourse and its metaphors created the nation as an iconic masculinity – that is to say in the image of a man. The image was reinforced by the literati: the fictions produced from the 1950s to the 1970s exhibited an almost exclusive concern with male protagonists, depicted in an exigent search for identity. (30)

Earl Lovelace, though part of this nationalist writers generation, exhibits self-consciousness about women’s historical roles as his fiction evolves. His texts portray women’s domestic roles and second-class status; yet, they also inscribe women as moral voices and agents of change.
Patriarchal Writing and Women’s Marginalization

It must be admitted that Lovelace’s fiction reflects characteristics of patriarchal writing. His novels show a dominance of masculine imagery and male characters in leading roles, on the one hand, and a configuration of women in domestic circles, on the other. In almost all Lovelace’s novels, his male protagonists assume the most significant roles in the storyline as well as in the dynamics of promoting change in their communities. The principal characters represented are Walter in While Gods Are Falling, the schoolmaster in The Schoolmaster, Ivan Morton, Bee, and Bolo in The Wine of Astonishment, Aldrick and Fishey in The Dragon Can’t Dance, Alford George and Bango in Salt, and Kingkala and Sonnyboy in Is Just a Movie. Although these male protagonists are Afro-Caribbean, Lovelace also portrays other male characters from different ethnicities with stronger roles. White Creole Adolphe Carabon and Indo-Caribbean Sonan Lochan occupy a central place in the narrative in Salt. Pariag and Manick are Indo-Caribbean characters who figure prominently in Lovelace’s elaboration of the complex inter-ethnic relationships in Dragon and Is Just a Movie, respectively. His male characters, at various levels, embody communal transformative values.

In addition to the emphasis on male protagonists, masculine symbols dominate Lovelace’s narratives. Most of the characters mentioned above evolve with the intention of asserting their manhood. For instance, there is an association of Walter’s quest for freedom with his “balls.” As he says, “All a man – all a man really has to lose is his balls. And in this town, with hustling and
bowing, your balls get squashed outa your guts so fast...” (*While Gods* 29). The “stick,” which is used in stickfighting and drumbeating is associated with manhood, because these traditions constitute “the alchemy through which young boys became men, and where they experienced their 'manness' and enacted their warriorhood” (Lewis, “Masculinity and the Dance of the Dragon” 175). Bolo and Sonnyboy, stickfighting champions, and Fisheye, both a stickfighter and steelband leader, affirm their manhood through the use of the “stick.” The dragon mask confers a sense of “manness” on Aldrick who unleashes terror and control on the Hill during Carnival. Through the configuration of the strong male character, Lovelace provides a narrative that, according to Linden Lewis tells a “time-honored patriarchal tale” (“Masculinity and the Dance of the Dragon” 173). The overarching presence of masculine symbols in Lovelace’s novels defines an aspect of hegemonic patriarchal writing.

Additionally, while Lovelace presents males as his protagonists, his female characters tend to occupy roles in subplots to the main narrative, often as obedient housewives. Stephanie is the prototype of the typical wife presented in stereotypical fashion in *While Gods*. As Merle Hodge argues, Stephanie is “almost always referred to as the wife,” “the woman,” or “she” (98). Her social function as a wife does not go beyond childbearing and companionship, although she does assert herself occasionally. She exists as a shadow, being reduced to silence by her husband’s fulfilling the messianic mission of rescuing their community. At the end of the novel, Stephanie is reduced to complete silence at the meeting summoned by her husband Walter, the ultimate hero. Like
Stephanie, Dolly the East Indian woman in *Dragon* is cast in her role as the ideal wife. As it is customary in the Indo-Trinidadian community, Dolly’s marriage with Pariag is arranged. As an obedient wife, Dolly follows her husband where he goes. The couple’s trip to the city is based on Pariag’s desire for personal growth away from plantation life. Although Dolly supports Pariag in his business, he is the principal beneficiary of the material growth. Pariag’s acquisition of the bike provides him with status in the Hill, while like Stephanie, Dolly is reduced a supportive role. Lovelace’s portrayal of Dolly underlines women’s sacrifices for the betterment of men. At times this sacrifice occurs to the detriment of women’s ambitions, as is the case with Alford George’s mother, May, in *Salt* (24).

Additionally, Dolly is depicted as a passive wife through her shyness and relative reticence, a characteristic that she shares with many female characters in Lovelace’s novels. Manick’s mother, Dolly’s fellow Indo-Trinidadian, in *Is Just a Movie*, Pedro’s mother in *Schoolmaster*, and Philo’s mother in *Dragon* all epitomize the passive housewife. They respond to their husbands’ misconduct or dominance with silence.

Gender roles in patriarchal societies are generally predetermined from an early age. Men assume leadership roles and women take up domestic functions. Boys are given more chances for social mobility than girls. Patricia Mohammed asserts that in the patriarchal societies of the postcolonial Caribbean, “boys were still given the best opportunities for advancement in the family” (“Writing Gender into History” 38). The patriarchal division of social functions prepares boys and girls to occupy specific gender roles. The renewal and strengthening of the
patriarchy depends on men’s occupation of stronger social roles. So, while boys are trained to become leaders and rulers, girls are prepared to assume domestic roles such as wives, mothers, child bearers, housekeepers, and companions. These are measures of womanhood, delineated by patriarchy, and sometimes supported by women. In Wine, Eva believes that her daughter Joyce has become “a woman now with home of her own and a man to cook for and keep clean and hold and console when things get stiff and is nothing in the world but a woman softness to ease his pain” (113). In her study of Gabriel García Márquez’s Cronica de una muerta anunciada, Amparo MacWatt observes that Angela Vicario has been brought up to carry out certain domestic duties in a society that assign roles to men and women (221). This categorization of gender roles define masculinity and femininity, man and woman, which echoes French feminist Simone de Beauvoir’s seminal argument that, “one is not born, but rather becomes, woman” (152). De Beauvoir emphasizes here that being a woman is not biological, but is a social construction instead. Biological determinists, however, rebut this argument, underlining the biological and psychological differences between men and women (Mohammed, “A Symbiotic Visiting Relation” 109). In making her argument, in fact, de Beauvoir insists on the definition of gender roles through social institutions, which fixes women with an inferior position and auxiliary social function with regards to men.

Lovelace’s novels demonstrate how these social institutions predetermine gender roles and responsibilities at a young age. In Schoolmaster Paulaine Dandrade observes that, “Christiana is a girl, and soon may be she go to make
some man happy” (52). Christiana is restricted to a companion, child-bearer, and mother. Dandrade reminds his daughter that she “must be a wife to him [her fiancé, Pedro] to lift him up and to lighten the times of his life and have his children and bring them up and teach them how it is to live” (112). The predestined role of wife makes Christiana unfit to further her education, unlike Pedro. With the establishment of the school in Kumaca, Christiana helps the schoolmaster as a teaching assistant due to her ability to read and write. She additionally takes private lessons with the schoolmaster in order to prepare for the exhibition examination. However, Pedro tells his brother Robert that when they get married, Christiana will be busy, taking care of things in the house, as it is a custom in the community (95). Advising Robert, Pedro says, “maybe just now you get better, and go to school for yourself, maybe even take private lessons, and take the examination like Christiana would take if she is not getting married” (95). Marriage is the factor that will prevent her from continuing with her studies. Gem’s case in Wine is similar to Christiana’s. In spite of her intelligence and ability to pass the exhibition examination, her teacher prefers that her brother Reggie wins the examination for the reason that “he is a boy and a boy is a man and a man have the burden of his shoulders in a way that a woman don’t, can’t have it” (11). Such conventional paradigms do not reflect the Caribbean reality of female-headed households, which Lovelace does not seem to appreciate.

The Indo-Trinidadian Maya faces similar gender biases in Salt. Although she is more intelligent than her brothers, they choose her brother Sonan to lead their family business. The family is certain that she will win the exhibition
examination, but wonders what she will do with that education (222). In *Is Just a Movie*, Aunt Magenta believes that the education Dorlene is acquiring will only alienate her as a woman. Commenting on Dorlene, Aunt Magenta says, 

her only sin is she just happen to pass an examination that her schooling was preparing her for. And it will take her away and keep on taking her away if she unlucky enough to pass another one, and she will go completely if there is another one after that. That is education for you. Is a lucky thing you ain’t have none. (190)

Aunt Magenta’s observation does not so much allude to physical separation as alienation from one’s identity. Her statement means that the more education Dorlene acquires, the more alienated she will be from the ideal of a model, acquiescent, and obedient woman.

Lovelace’s depiction of the domestication of women’s social function reflects a typical aspect of patriarchal writing that relegates them to a peripheral role in the evolution, renewal, and transformation of society. Feminists and gender critics have viewed this as a negation of women’s historicity and agency. They argue that in representing women’s socio-familial role as housekeeper, educator (upbringing), and force of reproduction, patriarchal writing traps the woman in a non-historical time and, thus, negates their historicity (Jaccard 73).

Lovelace can be labeled as a patriarchal writer, if one looks only at the prominent roles that he confers to his male characters. But it is a misunderstanding of Lovelace to believe that he produces only hegemonic patriarchal writing. Though he emphasizes the notions of masculinity and patriarchy, he sometimes
challenges some of the symbols that incarnate patriarchy. Lovelace critiques the anti-social and destructive attitudes of some of the male protagonists, which is counter to hegemonic patriarchal writing. This point will be thoroughly elaborated in the second section of this chapter. Also, by developing narratives that configure women in a subsidiary social position, Lovelace is only representing one aspect of patriarchal writing. He does not adhere to the process of de-historicizing women. Lovelace is self-conscious about Caribbean women’s contribution to history. So, although women occupy a subplot in his narratives and mainly assume domestic responsibilities, there are episodes and situations in which they emerge as agents and hold power.

**Women as Factors in Men’s Transformation**

Women in Lovelace’s fiction should not be looked at as a mere subordinate social category. Though men assume more prominent leadership roles, women constitute the forces that prompt men’s transformation. In *While Gods*, Stephanie, the housewife, is the one who convinces her husband, Walter, to take responsibility and deal with the problems their community faces (133). It is through Stephanie’s influence that Walter decides to help Mrs. Roach’s son get out of jail and organize the meeting to discuss the community’s social problems at the end of the novel. Funso Aiyejina argues that Stephanie is not just a face, but she is also a voice (Personal interview). She represents the ethical conscience and social motivator, which prompts the rejuvenation of both the male protagonist and the community.
Dragon presents us with several transformative female voices. Young Sylvia is the cause of Aldrick’s transformation. As mentioned in previous chapters, Aldrick lives in the Yard at the Hill isolated from the community, not working or taking any social responsibilities. His reluctance to assume responsibility prompts his rejection of Sylvia’s love. However, through Sylvia’s interactions with Aldrick, she makes him realize the need to “learn how to live and how to give life” (127). Aldrick’s gradual commitment to his relationship with Sylvia constitutes a sign of his growth. As Victor Chang concludes, “Aldrick’s growth in awareness stems largely from his commitment to Sylvia, and can be measured by his growing relationship with her, as well as by his attitude to the dragon dance” (99). Aldrick eventually becomes aware that “he had been cheating himself of the pain, of the love, of his living” (131). Yvonne is another female agent since she constitutes the critical voice, which promotes Fisheye’s temporary change and the reorganization of steelbands into unified forces against the mechanisms of oppression. Yvonne advises Fisheye, the badjohn, that the steelbands are not enemies and shouldn’t fight each other. Instead, they need to “fight the people who keep down black people. Fight the government” (58-59). He soon realizes the steelbands can be a cultural army. As Fisheye says, “we have to sign peace with the bands... We is one army – Desperadoes, Invaders, Tokyo, Casablanca, Rising Sun: all o’ we is one. We is the same people catching hell” (59). Fisheye urges the steelbands, whose members share poverty and dispossession, to cease their rivalries, unite as one, and face the political authorities that keep them down, but it is Yvonne who first inspires him
with the idea. In *Dragon*, the young Indo-Trinidadian Dolly is given agency despite her docility and quietness. When the community of the Yard rejects Pariag, it is Dolly who uplifts his morale, and shows proof of resilience where her husband almost collapses in distress. Dolly exclaims, "you is more, Boya. More than what you show them. I is more than what I show you, not so?" (212). Dolly emerges as a strong character when she advises Pariag “You shouda talk to Aldrick in truth” (212). Linden Lewis defines Dolly as a voice of “reason and stability” (“Masculinity and the Dance of the Dragon” 178). It is surprising how Dolly suddenly transforms from silence to a strong voice and political stance. This metamorphosis partly stems from her growth as a woman, and, particularly, from her experience with the women of the Yard, who have helped her deliver her child.

In depicting women as moral voices and influences of men’s change in his early novels, Lovelace signals the emergence of women’s consciousness about their socio-political responsibilities. Feminists and women writers, however, perceive the representation of women’s moral voices as not fulfilling. For Condé the conception of women’s position as counselors and moral supports to men assigns them an auxiliary role in society. Analyzing Annaïse’s support to Manuel in his effort to find water for his village in *Masters of the Dew*, she concludes that “The brave hard working woman should be the auxiliary in his struggle for his community” (Condé 126). Annaïse echoes Stephanie, Sylvia, Yvonne, and Dolly in their ultimate roles as supportive women. The representation of these women as moral voices replicates the Victorian conception of women, which confine
them in subsidiary social roles. The promotion of Victorian women’s morality constitutes a way to categorize femininity, and at the same time reinforce masculinity and patriarchy. Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar reveal the ways in which patriarchal writing silences and marginalizes Western women. In The Madwoman in the Attic, they demonstrate the dismantling of “cultural paradigms of femininity” in texts produced by nineteenth-century women writers (qtd. in Morgan, “Under Women’s Eyes” 289). However, although feminist writers and critics view the characterization of women as moral voices and influence of men’s change as not liberating, Lovelace’s early novels mark a step in the revalorization of women in twentieth century Caribbean male writers’ narratives.

Lovelace provides his female characters with a stronger political awareness in his later novels: Salt and Is Just a Movie. In Salt, it is Angela Vialva who advises Alford about the need to form a new party that will involve all ethnic groups, in order to allow the island to have a fresh start (93). Angela is a clear-sighted woman who sees the support of the different segments of Trinidadian society for his strike, his fasting in front of the Ministry of Education, as an opportunity to unite them into a party. Angela tells Alford, “your fast coming to an end. We have to organize these people before everything dissipate. You know Trinidad, how fast we forget” (86). Like Angela, Florence constitutes a political voice since she is the one who suggests Bango as the ideal man to do the welcoming of the constituency for the launching of the newly created party (103-04). Maya demonstrates a political consciousness through her understanding and expression of the divisive effects of ethnically divided parties. A student at
the University of the West Indies, she advises her brother Sonan to “seek the new politics that was emerging, that would do away with all this race stupidness” (*Salt* 230). Maya is part of the new generation of Indo-Trinidadian women whose conception of politics supersedes ethnic preferences. Reena Loutan is another Indo-Trinidadian student who does research on “the Indian Woman and Politics.” She tries to show how the oppression of Indo-Trinidadian women by Indo-Trinidadian men is reinforced by the latter’s impotence under colonialism and the threat of African political power (231). Reena’s project signals the emergence of feminist militancy among Indo-Trinidadian women.

In *Is Just a Movie*, Lovelace characterizes women’s activism through Dorlene’s efforts to rescue Carnival and steelpan. Her commitment to save these Trinidadian cultural artifacts, which are now in a state of decline, contradicts her brother’s resignation. Dorlene invests herself in the business of steelpan and leaves her job at a library to help her community establish a steelpan band. She puts forth so much effort that she eventually becomes sick and dies, although she is magically resurrected. In establishing Afro- and Indo-Trinidadian women’s political consciousness, Lovelace depicts another reality in the evolution of Trinidadian society. He evokes women’s contribution to the national debate, an era of women’s growing empowerment, which is already seen in other avenues such as religion.

**“Grassroots” Religions and Women’s Empowerment**

Studies on religion in the Caribbean have shown the involvement of women as leaders. The leadership position women hold is found in “grassroots”
religious practices like Shango, Orisha, and the Spiritual Baptist Church. In mainstream religions like Christianity, women are mainly followers. On the contrary, in Shango, Orisha, and the Spiritual Baptist Church, women are both participants and leaders. As Rhoda Reddock argues, “these grassroots religious experiences provide more scope for women’s religious expression as celebrants, unlike the more mainstream patriarchal religions” (“Contestation Over Culture” 74-75). Deidre Crumble similarly notes that “African Instituted Churches tend to provide a greater opportunity for female leadership than older mission churches” (82). George Eaton Simpson’s fieldwork in Trinidad in 1960 reveals that the female religious leader is named “Mother,” “Queen” or “Aunt,” and represents a figure of authority (79). Orisha priestess, Iya Rodney, is the prototype of the dominant female spiritual leader in Trinidad. Having served for more than eighty-five years since the 1920s when she was initiated, Iya Rodney expanded the Orisha religion throughout Trinidad (Hucks 25). Her leadership responsibilities include initiations, divinations, offerings, sacrifices, rituals, and feasts. This grand spiritual function, according to Tracy Hucks, confers a religious status that allowed her to play a fundamental role in “legitimizing and concretizing the local authority of the religion” (23). Following Iya Rodney, Iya Sangowumni is the first Orisha priestess who is allowed to celebrate legal Orisha marriages in Trinidad. She stands apart because she sought to expand the understanding and respect for the Orisha religious principles through the education of children (Hucks 27). The examples of Iya Rodney and Iya Sangowumni demonstrate women’s authority and influence in the institutionalization of grassroots religions in
Trinidad. They “illustrate the broader ways in which diaspora identities reclaim authority, voice, and ownership” (Hucks 36). Women’s empowerment is not, therefore, a recent phenomenon. The authority of the spiritual Mothers or priestesses in grassroots religions underscores the historical self-expression and influence of women in a relatively dominant patriarchal system in the Caribbean.

Lovelace’s fiction replicates this socio-historical reality. Though his narratives portray men in dominant social roles, when they discuss Afro-Caribbean religions, women have strong voices and exert authority. Lovelace re-appropriates the figure of the spiritual Mother to re-inscribe women in a historical time as participants in the evolution and development of Caribbean society. In *Wine*, Eva plays the function of the Spiritual Mother in the Spiritual Baptist Church community in Bonasse. As Kenneth Ramchand states, “Eva is cast in the tradition of those clear-thinking, resolute and spiritual-resilient mother-figures who have always peopled the world of Caribbean fiction” (ix). However, Eva is not given the dominant spiritual roles that the Spiritual Baptist Mothers assume. Her husband Bee is the head of the Spiritual Baptist Church in Bonasse, leading the services and other related activities. At the same time it is Eva’s voice that dominates the novel. Though she does not lead the religious activities, Eva evolves as the spiritual mother of the Bonasse community through her voice and role. She is, as in Haitian Vodoun, the “poto mitan” (central post) that keeps her community from falling apart. In the midst of colonial reprisals, it is Eva’s sound advice that helps Bee and the villagers to adopt the right conduct and safeguard the integrity of the community and the Baptist Church. As a wise and clear-
sighted woman, she warns her people about the risk of attacking the law, because, as she says, “the law is not only the police you see in the uniform here today. The law is the judges and the magistrates and the British soldiers. The law is the whole empire of Britain” (72). Whenever Bee and the Bonasse community are in distress, Eva guides them.

After the repeal of the Prohibition ordinance that forbade the practices of the Baptist church, the followers lose their ability for spirit possession. Bee attributes the loss to their accommodation to Christianity, and wishes they never stopped the mixed worship of the Spiritual Baptist church. It is Eva who calms him down, reassuring him that the decision not to go against the colonial law is sound because it has allowed the community and the Spiritual Baptist Church to survive (145). When the Bonasse community condemns Bolo for his violent behavior and Ivan Morton for betraying his people, Eva tries to understand the reasons for their acts. She presents the voice of hope and positivity. Eva therefore appears as a healer of the psychological wounds of her community. Lovelace’s female narrator is cast in the image of the Obeah woman or Shango priestess who uses her power to cure the illnesses of her people, and help them solve their social problems.

In Salt, Lovelace presents us the typical Shango priestess with the character of Mother Ethel. If Eva is a symbolic representation of the spiritual mother, Ethel is endowed with more authority as a religious leader. She lives in a shrine with a “calabash tree,” a “pomegranate tree with iron for Ogun,” a “conch shell for Yemanja,” and a “sugarcane plant, for Damballah, the snake” (22). The
features of the shrine indicate that Mother Ethel is both a Shango priestess and an Obeah woman. Shango is heavily drawn from African traditional religions, unlike the Spiritual Baptist Church, establishing a strong connection with African deities like Ogun, Yamanja, and Damballah. As a Shango priestess, Mother Ethel is responsible for baptizing members, and thus connecting them with their African roots and community. When Maybelle takes her son Alford George to Mother Ethel to help him with his inability to speak, the priestess expresses her discontent with Maybelle’s lack of involvement with Shango. Maybelle has to face Mother Ethel’s questions:

You and Dixon living up there on that hill for yourself alone, thinking about nobody but yourself and your children…Why you wait till trouble take you to come? And you don’t know you must baptize? Nobody ain’t tell you you must come home to your nation? (22)

As an Obeah woman, Mother Ethel has divination powers. She predicts that Maybell’s son Alford will become a famous man. Mother Ethel advises Maybelle: “this child…care this child he have a big work to do” (22). The priestess’s powers also include healing abilities. Nine-year-old Alford recovers from his incapacity to speak after Maybelle makes the sacrifice of a ram prescribed by the Shango priestess (22). Like Iya Rodney and Iya Sangowumni, Mother Ethel is a female religious leader whose beliefs and curative activities provide her with authority and status. Her influence on the community is seen in the change she provokes in Maybelle, as described by the narrator: “she [Maybelle] found herself crying; but the sadness she felt as Mother Ethel held her bosom, it was a feeling of
homecoming, of being found, being rescued” (22). Through this episode, Lovelace evokes the contribution of the spiritual woman in the cohesion and protection of Caribbean communities. Lovelace’s emphasis on the good the Obeah woman does on the community should not, however, prevent us from acknowledging the evil use of Obeah. While the Obeah woman, as well as man, can be consulted for good things, she can also be approached to do harm against other people. In Haitian Vodoun, the good and bad men are distinguished: the “houngans” represent the healers, who work with the right hand and play a more positive role in the community; the “bocors” work with the left hand and use magic to do evil.

Though the analysis here focuses on grassroots religions as a space of women’s empowerment, it is worth emphasizing that there are other domains where women demonstrate a certain type of power. Wage earning and sexuality constitute avenues through which women have control over their own lives. In her article, “Writing Gender into History,” Mohammed shows us how early Indian women immigrants in Trinidad wielded power through their income earning and sexuality. She notes that they would change male partners as it suited them (39). Job opportunities enabled Indian immigrant women to assume more independent roles and exhibit less passivity (Mohammed, “The ‘Creolisation’ of Indian Women” 602). Such independence led to demonizations of supposedly immoral Indian immigrant woman paralleling the whore who is also found in Afro-Caribbean female stereotypes. These images of licentious women counter the image of the virtuous Victorian woman, a dichotomy that Gilbert and Gubar
describe in A Madwoman in the Attic. As Evelyn O’Callaghan tells us, Gilbert and Gubar distinguishes two opposed types of women’s sexuality: the “angel” and the “witch/whore” (98). The latter represents the image of the fallen angel, but also the independent woman.

Lovelace, however, does not emphasize women’s sexuality and wage earning as a means of women’s empowerment. Like most Caribbean male writers, women’s sexuality is almost absent in his fiction and he does not really elaborate sex or sexuality in general, including same-sex desire among men and women. Condé argues that sexuality is a taboo in Caribbean male writers’ texts. She says that if they ever describe sexuality it is male sexuality (126). Walter’s insistence on his balls in his quest for freedom and self-fulfillment in While Gods underscores Lovelace’s reference to male sexuality. In his novels, sexuality is often associated with the assertion of masculinity. There are a few cases where women exert control over men through sexuality as in Miss Cleothilda’s sexual attraction to Philo, the calypsonian, and Sylvia’s seduction of Aldrick in Dragon. Additionally, professional responsibilities and the wage-earning capacities of women are not presented as a platform for women’s emancipation. There are only a few cases of female characters who assume professional duties. Among them, one can cite Dorlene in Is Just a Movie. Before she invests herself in the project to save steelpans, she has worked as a librarian, which provides her with a sense of independence. Besides Dorlene, Dolly works in collaboration with her husband, Pariag, to cook the savories he sells. In his essay, “The Dragon Can’t Dance,” Lovelace describes Dolly as a hardworking woman (3). She sells bottles
and other items alongside Pariag. Though her job is not at an individual and independent level, it gives her agency, as she contributes to the provider role in the household and acquires a relatively equal status to her husband. These few examples show that although Lovelace does not give due attention to women’s sexuality, wage earning or professional activities as a mechanism of agency, he is conscious of their potential to liberate and empower women.

Grassroots religions offer the main basis of understanding how Lovelace inscribes women’s empowerment in patriarchal Caribbean society. This space of women’s emancipation is favored over other conceptions of the mechanisms of women’s liberation from the confinement of patriarchy like professional occupations and sexuality. One can also argue that in promoting Shango, Obeah, and Spiritual Baptist female leaders, Lovelace pays tribute to the tradition of religious female authorities that is imported from Africa. On the whole, through the different avenues of women’s empowerment, Lovelace’s fiction tries to demonstrate that even though silenced by patriarchy, women have always found ways to express themselves. They have not just been passive objects; they have also been agents. Lovelace’s restoration of women’s historicity reclaims women as actors in the evolution and development of Caribbean society, departing from patriarchal writing’s negation of women’s historicity. He further critiques hegemonic patriarchal writing through his interrogation and questioning of hegemonic masculinity.
2. Revisiting Patriarchy: Transcending Ethnic Hegemonic Masculinity and Reconstructing National Identities

Social scientists have defined patriarchy as a social organization ruled by men who function in their role as heads of household. This definition of patriarchy evolved throughout time and included men’s victimization of women. Some feminists and gender theorists like Sylvia Walby conceive of patriarchy as a system of cultural practices and norms through which men control, oppress, and exploit women (114). This theory excludes patriarchy as a system of men’s domination over other men. The construction of masculinity in relation to race, ethnicity, class, and sexuality demonstrates the ways in which patriarchal power can be directed against both men and women. As such, masculinity signifies culturally generated gendered ideologies and practices negotiated through hegemonic conceptions of ethnicity, class, race, religion, sexual orientation and age (Lewis, “Caribbean Masculinity” 245). As a social construction, masculinity is not only assimilated by men. Women also support masculine ideologies. In her essay, “O Gosh, Boy George,” feminist and queer theorist Eve K. Sedgwick claims that “as a woman, I am a consumer of masculinities, but I am not more so than men are; and, like men, I as a woman am also a producer of masculinities and a performer of them” (Sedgwick 13). As Sedgwick adds, “when something is about masculinity, it isn’t always ‘about men’” (12). Here, she suggests a repositioning and refiguring of masculinity. This notion permeates through binary gender categories as some women display masculine traits alongside men.

The various avenues through which masculinity is constructed show that there exists not a single masculinity, but multiple masculinities. Lovelace’s novels
represent different versions of masculinity in both essentialist and non-essentialist ways. His problem with masculinity, however, is when it becomes hegemonic. For Lovelace, hegemonic or dominant masculinity constitutes an obstacle to bringing ethnic and gender categories into the national space. The negotiation of masculinity by these groups becomes necessary in order to transcend the debilitating character of hegemonic masculinities and promote national identities.

Hegemonic Masculinities and Marginalized Masculinities

Hegemonic masculinity is a concept introduced in gender studies by Raewyn Connell in 1987. He took the term “hegemony” from Antonio Gramsci, and used it to describe certain types of men’s behaviors and practices (Qtd. in de Moya 75). The Italian Marxist defines “hegemony” as a process by which dominant ideology or the consciousness of the dominant class is maintained. The term underscores leadership dominance of a group over others in a society. Connell defines hegemonic masculinity as the “image of masculinity of those who control power” (39-40). Aviston Downs similarly views that hegemonic masculinity is “a discursively constructed masculinity which gains and maintains its preeminence through its ideological linkages with socially dominant men” (107). In modern Western society, the image of masculinity is equated with the white, heterosexual, married, middle-class, and educated male.

However, dominant masculinity is not limited to white men. In societies with a different cultural background, the notion of the “ideal” man is constructed on different values, “on a darker hue” (Nurse, “Masculinities in Transition” 6). As
such, hegemonic masculinity is not just defined in opposition to femininity, but also against other masculinities, marginalized or subordinate. Michael Messner and Donald Sabo point out that “hegemonic masculinity is constructed in relation to various subordinate masculinities as well as in relation to femininities” (12). This helps understand that the imbalances in gender power relationships in a patriarchal system are not only between men and women, but also between men and men (Mohammed, “Writing Gender into History” 21). The power relationship between different masculinities thus posits masculinity as a hierarchical paradigm (de Moya 74). Historiographical studies have shown that subordinate masculinities have been constructed as effeminate and infantile compared to hegemonic masculinities (Nurse 6). While Jewish and Asian masculinities are conceived of as desexualized and effeminate, black men are described as infantile, due to their dependence on Europeans’ economic and political leadership (Shohat and Stam 140). These categorizations of subordinate masculinities emanate from a Western cultural universalism, which standardizes and validates hegemonic masculinities and ostracizes other masculinities (Nurse 6).

In the Caribbean, the standards of colonial white masculinity are inherited by the middle class, especially the Afro-Caribbean middle class, which dominated the political leadership during the early years of independence. Lovelace’s fiction not only examines the marginalization of non-elitist masculinities, but also demonstrates how marginalized masculinities radicalize and become dominant masculinities. Lovelace introduces three main types of
masculinities in his fiction: elitist masculinity exhibited by the educated middle-class, which draws its substance from Western patriarchy; non-elitist masculinities embodied by lower-class Afro-Caribbean people; and the Indo-Trinidadian patriarchal system. These masculinities cohabit and contend with one another. The elitist masculinity functions as the dominant, hegemonic masculinity with regard to the other non-elitist masculinities. Early black middle-class Caribbean writers have developed narratives that focus on black male protagonists who construct their maleness in relation to their intellectual superiority and control over political leadership. Examining early Caribbean literature, Leah Rosenberg identifies “brown heroes” who demonstrate supremacy in intellectual, moral, and political leadership capacity as in the example of the Creole protagonist who is a lawyer and politician in Steven Cobham’s *Rupert Gray* (8).

In Lovelace’s fiction, these types of male protagonists are exemplified in the character of Ivan Morton in *Wine*. He occupies a position of authority and power through his education and position as a representative of the Council. As Bee tells us, Ivan creates “manness” with books and position (136). Through his social ascent, Ivan isolates himself from his community. He demonstrates a moral superiority, rejecting his people’s cultural and spiritual practices, which he views as heathen and barbaric. Similarly, the schoolmaster in *Schoolmaster* builds an image of masculinity based on his function as a teacher and the support he provides for the council of the Kumaca community. Though a stranger, the schoolmaster’s role in the village gives him authority and power.
However, he uses his position not only to rape and subsequently impregnate young Christiana, but also to attempt to force the Kumaca community to give him the girl in marriage. In *Dragon*, Philo embodies aspects of Afro-Caribbean bourgeois masculinity. As a successful calypsonian, he acquires a social status, which enables him to have access to privileges he did not have as a former member of the Afro-Trinidadian lower-class at the Hill. Now with his success, Philo conquers girls and goes around with them to show off in the destitute community of the Hill. Miss Cleothilda, the mulatto woman who used to despise him and reject his love, allows him to woo her. Philo initially upholds the haughty attitudes of the Afro-Caribbean middle class. This is seen in his move from the Hill and establishment in a bourgeois district. Ivan, the schoolmaster, and Philo all enact a hegemonic masculinity that replicates the Western patriarchal system. These protagonists demonstrate ideals of bourgeois and middle-class white men: dominance in economic, intellectual, and sociopolitical leadership and heterosexuality (Downes 107). Their hegemonic masculinity is directed against both women and other men from inferior social class or different ethnic groups, as will be elaborated below.

Lower-class Afro-Caribbean masculinity is constructed upon values that do not represent the standards of “manness” conceived by the bourgeois class. This masculinity is developed in relation to warriorhood, physical ability, cultural performance, and ideals of non-possession. Bolo in *Wine*, Fisheye in *Dragon*, and Sonnyboy in *Is Just a Movie* embody masculinity built upon warriorhood and physical strength. These protagonists are literal warriors who excel in the art of
stickfighting, which gives them status as heroes in their own communities. Steelpan is also a cultural space through which lower-class Afro-Caribbean people construct masculinity. In *Dragon*, the steelband battles in which Fisheye participates go beyond mere cultural performance. They involve an expression of manhood, which appeals to badjohns like Fisheye (73). In Trinidad, the figure of the badjohn is historically linked with masculinity. According to Ramchand,

> The term itself has early and strong associations with the yard, the ghetto and lower-class Afro-Trinidadian life…If it was formed by analogy with other combinations ending with "john" (a common male name, applied to anyone the speaker does not consider worthy of individual notice), it is possible that it was first used to indicate persons repeatedly flouting colonial attempts to regulate and civilize them. (“Calling all Dragons” 313)

Masks and masking stand for another medium for the construction of masculinity. Male performers dominated masking and masquerade in Carnival, although, as Pamela Franco argues, women were involved in this cultural celebration through “dressing up and looking good” (62). The masquerading art of “dressing up and looking good” resonates with a representation of femininity. In contrast, however, male performers’ masking underscores a symbolism of masculinity and power, especially with characters like Midnight Robbers, Moko Jumbies, Bats, Bears, Jab Jabs, Red and Blue Devils, and Jabs Molassi (Scher 110). For Franco the revival of these traditional characters constitutes a reaction against women’s increasing presence in contemporary Carnival (91). In *Dragon*, Aldrick’s
enactment of the dragon costume reconstitutes “ole mas” (traditional Carnival) as a space of masculinity reconstruction. His performance of the dragon mask dance during Carnival season inspires fear and terror in the spectators, which gives him a sense of worth, authority, and power that he does not normally have throughout the rest of the year. Aldrick’s masculinity is built on warriorhood and intimidation (Lewis, “Masculinity and the Dance of the Dragon” 172). Cultural performance also provides a space for asserting manhood through Bango’s annual carnivalesque march. Besides his intention to initiate a struggle for total freedom, Bango reenacts a legacy of resistance and warriorhood that he inherits from his ancestor, Jojo.

Indo-Caribbean masculinity is not traditionally defined in terms of physical ability and warriorhood or intellectual and political leadership capacity, although that has changed with increasing presence on the national stage. It does not, however, mean that Indo-Caribbean people do not possess these qualities of masculinity. In the evolution of Caribbean society and Trinidadian society in particular, Indo-Caribbean men have acquired Western education and occupied political leadership positions. Like the Afro-Caribbean middle-class men, they embody a type of masculinity that replicates aspects the Western conception of the ideal man. In Samuel Selvon’s A Brighter Sun, Tiger’s migration to the city and his quest for Western education and a more fulfilling profession away from the plantation is a yearning for the bourgeois type of masculinity. Dr. Kennos, an Indo-Trinidadian lawyer, Sonan Lochan, a representative of the Democratic Party in Salt, and Mr Bissoon, the leader of the Democratic Party in Is Just a Movie are
Indo-Trinidadian male characters who define their identity in relation to the standards of the middle-class man. They seek intellectual development and control of political power.

Initially, however, Indo-Caribbean masculinity is seen as effeminate. In Dragon, Pariag is described as thin and physically weak. In addition, he is not endowed with the ability to fight, as are the Afro-Creoles. He in fact sees himself lacking in masculinity within the Afro-Creole community of the Hill. As Pariag says to Dolly, "I ain't big. I mean, I ain't have no huge muscles, and I don't sound tough, and I ain't tough, and I can't fight" (105). His definition of Afro-Caribbean masculinity echoes racial and class stereotypes, which makes him see his own masculinity as impaired. So Pariag desires both bourgeois and lower-class masculinities. Also, the Indo-Trinidadian custom of arranging marriage between young girls and young men denies the Indo-Trinidadian men the choice of their own wives, and thus seems to undermine their masculinity. This is the case with Pariag, who is forced to marry Dolly, a girl he does not know nor love (Dragon 79). Though Pariag initially resists, he eventually succumbs to the pressure of his culture and traditions. He visits the selected girl, Dolly, and accepts the marriage (Dragon 79-80). His acceptance of the marriage indicates his inability to withstand the rigid Indo-Trinidadian patriarchal system. With Pariag's case, Lovelace shows us that gender dynamics includes generational power relations. Patriarchal domination is also directed against the younger male generation. Audre Lorde argues that in oppressive societies, the “generation gap” remains an essential means of control. She further underscores that the domination of the
older members fosters contempt from the younger members, which provokes the inability of collaboration between both generations (Lorde 117). Another aspect of Indo-Trinidadian masculinity is the possession of land and plantation. Some Indo-Trinidadian men gain authority and power through wealth accumulation related to land ownership and agricultural production. Pariag’s uncle in Dragon is an embodiment of that type of masculinity. He owns a cinema in New Lands, a sawmill, trucks, a lumber yard, and an entire settlement he names Ramlogan village (146-47). His masculinity is not only linked with wealth accumulation, but is also associated with the rural feudalism of traditional Indian villages.

The coexistence of these three types of masculinities in Trinidad creates a dynamic of hierarchy, dominance, and marginalization between men as they negotiate the national space. Mohammed calls this the “patriarchal contract,” that is to say “a competition between males of different racial groups, each jostling for power of one sort of the other – economic, political, social, and so on” (“Writing Gender into History” 35). The dynamics in the struggle for power results in the marginalization of the subordinate masculinities by hegemonic masculinity.

Lovelace exemplifies the marginalization of subordinate masculinities through the way in which the traditional warrior hero is downgraded and the intellectual, middle-class man celebrated. This is evident in Wine when Eulalie Clifford, the voluptuous Afro-Creole woman, chooses Ivan, the educated man, as a boyfriend, and dumps Bolo, the warrior and champion in stickfighting (45). Eulalie’s attitude is indicative of the general view of the educated man as the new hero, of education as a medium to control power and win battles. Another similar instance
is Ivan’s victory over Rufus Georges during the elections for the council representative. Rufus is a woodcutter from Charlotte, earning his bread with his muscles. He has a good relationship with the men in Bonasse, but his disadvantage is that he lacks education (83). Similarly, in *Is Just a Movie*, Sonnyboy is excluded from holding the position of the Hard Wuck Party representative, and therefore excluded from taking part the revolution. As Kingkala says, “We [Kingkala] were revolutionaries and although we were willing to grant him a role in the revolution, his being a badjohn did not quite qualify him as a revolutionary” (74). Sonnyboy lives in a modern Trinidad when being a badjohn does not represent an ideal of masculinity or leadership quality anymore, and therefore disqualifies him from political responsibilities. The cases above show the educated men’s control over political leadership in pre- and post-colonial Caribbean society.

Lovelace also demonstrates the marginalization of uneducated Afro-Caribbean men through the ban and denaturalization of the cultural institutions and practices by dint of which they construct their masculinity. Under colonization, Afro-Caribbean non-elitist masculinity is hampered with the prohibition of Carnival celebrations in Trinidad. *Wine* shows how with the ban of Carnival in 1917, warriors like Bolo become nonentities. Carnival is a medium through which these men show their manhood and gain a sense of worth. The outlawing of Carnival goes along with the interdiction of stickfighting and steel band battles, which constitutes an inhibiting factor to the possibilities for these men to construct their masculinity. In the absence of stickfighting, Bolo indulges
in drinking as a substitute for building a sense of self. His feeling of emasculation is further accentuated by the arrival of the U.S. soldiers who become the new heroes. Their popularity marks an end to the reign of the stickfighters. In the post-independence period, the commodification and commercialization of Carnival by the Afro-Trinidadian political elite stripped this celebration of its original meaning as a social critique and its display of resistance and masculinity. Dragon provides the example of how the intrusion of commercials and inclusion of fancy costumes estrange the lower-class Afro-Trinidadian men during Carnival. As I said earlier in Chapter Three, this constitutes the reason why Aldrick, the dragonmaker, withdraws from the celebration. Carnival therefore goes from a lower-class to a middle-class affair. The ban and estrangement of the cultural institutions that involve lower-class Afro-Trinidadian men are meant to shake a fundamental basis of the construction of their manhood.

Like non-elitist Afro-Caribbean masculinity, Indo-Trinidadian masculinity is subject to marginalization. It is paradoxical that this marginalization sometimes comes from a likewise subordinate masculinity embodied by lower-class Afro-Caribbean men. Lovelace provides a significant instance of this type of marginalization in Dragon with Pariag’s experience with the poor Afro-Creole men of the Hill. As it is already stated in Chapter Three, Pariag’s move to an urban area at the Hill, drawn from Laventille, a poor suburb in Port-of-Spain, is motivated by his desire to be part of the bigger world and be a man. However, in a community where the standards of masculinity are measured by physical abilities, warriorhood, and skills in Afro-Creole cultural performances, Pariag has
difficulty integrating partly because he is lacking in this type of Afro-Creole masculinity. He views his rejection by the community as a result of the men’s inability to see him as a man. In addition to his lack of physical strength, Pariag knows little about Carnival, cannot play steelpan and perform calypso, and has no stickfighting skills (105). At the political level, the standards of heroism and warrior in Afro-Creole masculinity are ironically used to prevent Indo-Caribbean people from assuming major political roles. This is the main means of excluding Indo-Trinidadian from political responsibility as both the Afro-Trinidadian and Indo-Trinidadian elitist groups have got relatively similar levels of education. The incident of the red flag in Is Just a Movie indicates the marginalization of Indo-Trinidadian men in the political battlefield. The revolutionary group’s refusal to let Indo-Trinidadian Manick carry the red flag during the Black Power demonstration is based on the premise that since the flag symbolizes black struggle Indo-Trinidadian men are not entitled to carry it (161-62). Indo-Trinidadian men are thus excluded from the heroic past of Trinidad, and are consequently seen as not eligible to take leadership roles in contemporary revolutionary struggles. The above types of marginalization of Indo-Trinidadian masculinity show that in the hierarchical coexistence of patriarchal systems in Trinidad, the Indo-Trinidadian occupies the bottom of the ladder (Mohamed, “Writing Gender into History” 35).

The marginalization of the subordinate masculinities, both Afro-Caribbean and Indo-Caribbean, fosters their radicalization. The rigid character that the subordinate masculinities take is motivated by the desire to overcome the sense of emasculation that Afro- and Indo-Caribbean men have through their
experience with dominant patriarchal systems. The marginalized subordinate masculinities either become oppressive towards both men and women or adopt aspects of elitist hegemonic masculinity. Afro-Caribbean marginalized men resort to violence as a way of dealing with their emasculation. Having undergone relatively similar types of marginalization as described above, Bolo in *Wine* and Fisheye in *Dragon* try to rehabilitate their masculinity in similar ways. Both protagonists go around looking for fights. They drink at rum shops, refuse to pay and expect someone to challenge them into a fight. Fisheye goes even further as he organizes a mutiny with Aldrick and seven other Afro-Creoles, hijacking the police men jeep and roaming around the city, claiming to represent Black Power.

Additionally, Bolo and Fisheye abuse women as a response to the systems that keep Afro-Creole men down. Bolo kidnaps Primus’s daughters in order to rebel against the hegemonic colonial system and his community, which seems to support the very values that denigrate men in his community (*Wine* 119). His victimization of the girls comes out of his frustration with the authorities' refusal to grant him land, so he can get himself a woman, set up a household, and consequently be a man. Bolo is denied the right to “assert domestic authority as a husband and a father,” as was the black man during the plantation system (Beckles, “Black Masculinity” 236). Beckles’s study shows us that during slavery, as mentioned in Chapter Two, the child enters social relations through the mother, from whom he or she takes the name. This colonial rule not only prevents the children born from slave women to inherit, especially in case their father is a white master, but also makes it difficult for male slaves to establish
family and perform household leadership roles. In contrast, while Bolo cannot settle down with a woman, the educated Ivan wins Eulalie and later marries a mulatto woman, and the U.S. soldiers have become popular among girls in the community of Bonasse. Bolo’s oppression of Primus’s daughters is a critique of a social system that denies the warriors and allows privileges to Caribbean middle-class and white men. As for Fisheye, he brutalizes his girlfriend Yvonne for warning that she will replace him with a more decent man if he does not get a job and act like a responsible man (Dragon 64). Yvonne’s observation hurts Fisheye because it brings his masculinity into question. Yvonne suggests that in order for Fisheye to be a man, he needs to go beyond his life as a badjohn, earning a living and taking care of her. In making this point, however, she replicates the bourgeois conception of the ideal man against which Fisheye defines his masculinity.

Marginalized Indo-Caribbean masculinity, unlike Afro-Caribbean subordinate masculinity, tends to radicalize by replicating the standards of the bourgeois hegemonic masculinity. In Dragon, Pariag resorts to material acquisition in order to respond to his rejection and marginalization by the Afro-Creole men. He believes that by acquiring a bicycle, he will be able to restore his impaired masculinity, and hence be seen as a man. His bicycle, however, represents an object related to modernity and technological advance that he can afford. Lewis argues that Pariag opts for a bicycle because “a car was out of his immediate reach” ("Masculinity and the Dance of the Dragon" 179). Pariag’s rehabilitation of his manhood through material acquisition is motivated by his
inability to embrace the type of masculinity proposed by Afro-Creole men. Since warriorhood and violence do not appeal to him, he identifies with the alternative bourgeois hegemonic masculinity. The bicycle confers on Pariag both a masculine and economic status. Likewise, Biswas in V.S. Naipaul’s *A House of Mr. Biswas* seeks to rehabilitate his limited masculinity in line with bourgeois hegemonic masculinity. Being entrapped and isolated by rural life in an emasculating matriarchal Hindu system, represented by the extended Tulsi family, his in-law family, Biswas moves to the city, acquires a house of his own, and earns an independent revenue. The matriarchal aspect of the extended Hindu family contributes to the emasculation of Indian men in Naipaul’s early novel. It reduces their authority as heads of households as they are subject to subordination by the in-law family. It is therefore by relocating to a new house and earning an income that Biswas not only achieves freedom, away from his in-laws, but also reinforces his shaky manhood.

Naipaul’s evocation of the Indo-Trinidadian matriarchal system refers to the earlier period of indenture when East Indian women were empowered by their role as bread winners, alongside East Indian men, and when the original Indian patriarchy initially collapsed. For Mohammed, the Indo-Caribbean matriarchal power was influenced by the indenture system, which provided Indian women with roles as wage earners, and thus weakened the original Indian patriarchy in Hindu and Muslim households (“Writing Gender” 39; “‘Creolisation’ of Indian Women” 602). This induced Indian immigrant men to use domestic violence as a way to reinstate the traditional Indian patriarchal power. Lovelace
depicts the oppressive Indo-Trinidadian patriarchal system in *Is Just a Movie* through Manick’s father who locks his wife and daughter away from the outer world (152). The confining character of this type of patriarchy is additionally seen in the fact that Indian girls are prevented from playing netball, volleyball, cricket, and athletics (*Is Just a Movie* 169). Mohammed, in her article “Writing Gender into History,” notes “the absence of Indian women from the public records as mouthpieces of the Indian community” as a proof of their marginalization by Indian patriarchy (35). In her research on Indian woman and politics, Reena Routan, a student at the University of the West Indies reveals in *Salt* that the Indian men’s impotence before the white man and later the African political power forced them to “keep the Indian woman hidden away, unexposed, cocooned by whatever means available to him” (231). Keith Nurse argues in this sense that although Asian masculinities are constructed as effeminate, they are also liable to “despotism” (9). The typical oppressive male figure is found in older Indo-Caribbean men who replicate the rigidity of homeland Indian patriarchy as in Manick’s father in *Is Just a Movie* and Pariag’s uncle in *Dragon*. The examples of Pariag and Manick, however, demonstrate that younger Indo-Caribbean men tend to reshape their masculinity in reference to non-traditional Indian patriarchal systems and social organization, accommodating bourgeois and lower-class Afro-Trinidadian masculinities.

**Negotiating Diasporic Masculinities**

Lovelace’s representation of hegemonic masculinities indicates how a man’s desire to assert manhood disrupts social, gender, and interethnic relations,
which constitute a platform upon which multi-ethnic Caribbean nations like
Trinidad can be consolidated. Lovelace’s novels successfully reveal the
excesses, and the destructive and exclusive character of dominant masculinity,
directed against other men and women, as stated earlier. Lovelace, however,
advocates the reassessment of masculinity as a means to restore the
imbalances between gender and ethnic groups as they negotiate the national
space. The balancing of the hierarchical relationship between the coexisting
masculinities in Trinidad entails a renegotiation of power, which involves men of
the same ethnic group, as well as men of different ethnic groups. Through the
character of Philo, the calypsonian, in *Dragon*, Lovelace describes the
reconversion of dominant, hegemonic Afro-Creole masculinity. Philo who initially
isolates himself from his community, establishing himself in a bourgeois
neighborhood, eventually comes to realize his place is among his community at
the Hill. His reassessment of his social mobility constitutes a revision of his
bourgeois hegemonic masculinity. Reflecting on the middle-class world around
him, Philo says, “I is a’ ole nigger, you know. I is a Calvary Hill man. I ain’t no
hifalutin Diego Martin jackass” (234). This interior introspection marks Philo’s
severance with his new bourgeois ascent and his reconnection with his
community at the Hill. His reconnection with his people, according to Lewis,
stems from his reassessment of his cultural values and revaluation of bourgeois
manhood (“Masculinity and the Dance of the Dragon” 182). Philo finds meaning
as a “nigger” and not a middle-class man.
In *Is Just a Movie*, Lovelace introduces the rehabilitation of Indo-Trinidadian masculinity in his characterization of Manick’s evolution and political responsibility in the Creole world. Lovelace’s earlier novels show how Afro-Caribbean people assert manhood through the acquisition of education and control of political leadership. The example of Ivan in *Wine* is worth noting. The Bonnasse community’s choice of Ivan as a council representative is based on his education, as well as on his being a son of the soil. His election reveals his community’s unexpressed acknowledgement of the standards upon which elitist masculinity is built. However, in *Is Just a Movie*, Lovelace’s most recent novel, the paradigm in constructing masculinity in relation to the control of political responsibilities changes. In the election of the representative of the Hard Wuck Party in Cascadu, Indo-Trinidadian Manick is chosen over Carlos Nan King, a part-time resident geologist (149). This choice is an acknowledgement of Indo-Trinidadian leadership capacity, and consequently a recognition of a new Indo-Trinidadian masculinity, transcending ethnic borders, in an Afro-Creole dominated community. Manick’s experience in Cascadu tells us that in modern Trinidad, the conception of the political leader and masculinity evolves, and extends across ethnic boundaries. Elections of female political leaders from different communities also suggest an expanded sense of presence and power.

The negotiation of masculinity does not only implicate the balancing of hierarchy between masculinities. It also concerns the reassessment of manhood in regard to femininity by both Indo-Caribbean and Afro-Caribbean men. The new order of Indo-Trinidadian masculinity displayed by Pariag in *Dragon* is an
instance of the ways in which Indian masculinity is negotiated in relation to Indian women in the national space, which symbolizes the cosmopolitan world. In the city, Pariag and his wife Dolly develop a relationship on relatively equal terms, a relationship that will probably not exist in their patriarchal rural Indo-Trinidadian community where a wife is expected to be submissive and the husband dominant. On many occasions, Pariag consults Dolly on the issues he faces in the urban community of the Hill. The scenes that represent the Indo-Trinidadian couple’s interactions describe a growing sense of solidarity between two individuals without any hierarchical pretense. Pariag attentively heeds Dolly’s opinion and advice. When Pariag comments that he did not address Aldrick when he walked across his shop, Dolly acknowledges that he should have indeed talked to Aldrick (Dragon 212). After his rejection by the Afro-Creole community, Pariag does not take out his anger on Dolly. Instead, he confesses to her: “We have to start to live, Dolly, you and me.” This statement surprises Dolly who chokingly replies: “you and me?” (Dragon 212). Dolly is astonished at Pariag’s transformation. The phrase “you and me” characterizes both of them as partners, which indicates that Pariag, having experienced rejection, is now able to see Dolly as an individual, a living subject, and not as the submissive, docile, silent Indian wife. She remembers the former Pariag who, on the eve of their move to the capital, paternalistically tells her: “You going to have to live in Port of Spain” (Dragon 212). Pariag’s revaluation of his masculinity in his relationship with his wife is a natural process, stemming from the fact that the young Indian couple is embattled in an urban place where they live as a minority. The newly balanced
power relationship between Pariag and Dolly determines how Indian gender relations can change when they are transplanted from rural to urban areas, although this is not to say that women in rural areas were always meek and submissive.

The balancing of hierarchy between Indian men and women in Lovelace’s fiction is also seen in the relationship between Afro-Caribbean men and women. The reduction of the imbalances in Afro-Caribbean gender relations not only stems from the gradual empowerment of Afro-Caribbean women, but also from Afro-Caribbean men’s reshaping of their masculinity. This indicates that women’s self-fulfillment and emancipation is closely linked with the deconstruction of dominant masculinities (Hooks 99; Nurse 15). The relationship between Aldrick and Sylvia in *Dragon* takes a new turn as the former reconceives his traditional sense of masculinity. Aldrick, as it is said earlier, builds his masculinity through masking. It is also important to add that besides the dragon mask, he also constructs his masculinity against a colonial capitalist conception of masculinity. Aldrick lives in dispossession and uses it as a form of asserting manhood, because it allows him to resist the consumerist forms of neo-colonization. The issue with this type of masculinity is that it encourages Aldrick not to participate in any sort of work, social responsibility and stable relations with women. This justifies Aldrick’s earlier rejection of Sylvia’s love, as mentioned earlier. In the progression of the novel, Lovelace allows his protagonist to grow from this unfulfilling notion of masculinity. Sylvia prompts Aldrick to see that his life is only a surface rebellion. He ultimately takes responsibility and commits to her. The
relation between Sylvia and Aldrick echoes Lovelace’s portrayal of Pariag and Dolly given that both male protagonists assert a new form of manhood that collaborates with a new femininity embodied by the two women (Ramchand, “Calling on Dragons” 322). This mutuality in gender relations is articulated in Salt in the way in which Bango reconfigures his traditional march, allowing women to take leading roles. In the march Bango organizes at the end of the novel, he and his wife Myrtle stand side by side at the front line. The woman is not just present at the march, but she stands beside the man, not behind him. Bango’s revision of his march stands for a reassessment of his masculinity, which symbolically attributes roles to women in the creation of the Trinidadian nation. Lovelace’s national political vision thus transcends ethnic, gender, and class limits and shows the way to a more just diasporic nationhood.
CONCLUSION

Studies of Caribbean nationalism address the need of political and economic independence as the basis for the consolidation of Caribbean nations. But political and economic approaches alone do not provide appropriate answers to the complex issues that involve the construction of these nations. Such narrow disciplinary conceptions of Caribbean nationalism seek to reinforce the autonomy of political superstructures and economic institutions rather than include the people and the inherent cultural factors that inhibit their social relations, which are the foundation of the becoming of Caribbean nations. In multi-ethnic Caribbean islands like Trinidad, the fragmentation of the social fabric is more acute. Unless the problems that hinder the fluidity and solidity of social and interpersonal relations are addressed, there are no hopes that viable and stronger Caribbean nations will emerge soon. This study has tried to analyze the core of social disintegration in Trinidad and outline a more fulfilling conception of Caribbean nationalism through the reading of Earl Lovelace’s fiction.

The approach to Caribbean nationalism here entails looking at nation building through diasporic lenses. This study insists that a reconciliation between nation and diaspora is essential to envisioning new formulations of Caribbean nationalism that include diversity and ethnic identity without, however, rigid identity politics or ethnic absolutism. The analysis insists that for a harmonious pluri-ethnic Trinidadian nation to emerge, there is a need to allow the different
ethnic groups to maintain their diasporic consciousness as they contribute to the national space. This nationalist-diasporic vision encourages the reconstitution of national identities in relation to configurations of ethnicity, gender, and culture that respect their differences rather than dissolving them into a homogenous, hegemonic discourse.

What emerges from this study is the understanding of Lovelace’s shift in the course of his literary career that maps the development of national politics. As the first part of this dissertation has shown, his fiction mainly deals with the African diasporic communities, shedding light on the earlier stages in Trinidadian nationalism and community building which were influenced by slavery and Emancipation. The Spiritual Baptist followers’ struggle to practice their religion in *The Wine of Astonishment* epitomizes cultural resistance historically carried out by the African diaspora in the Caribbean, which also mirrors the early dynamics of establishing Caribbean communities and nations after the fragmentation of the Middle Passage. Such resistance proves that nationalism in Trinidad and elsewhere in the Caribbean is a phenomenon prior to independence and post-independence periods, as is commonly assumed. The endeavor to preserve African cultures in the Caribbean defines a diasporic memory, which indicates that the preservation of diasporic consciousness remains an essential paradigm in the establishment of early Caribbean slave communities that were, in fact, closer to African belief systems and lived experience. The diasporic consciousness appears here as cultural praxis without which a united community could not emerge. This explains the Bonasse villagers’ strong commitment to
cherish their Spiritual Baptist worship in *Wine*, using infrapolitics like mimicry as a means of cultural survival. The Spiritual Baptist religion is a principal aspect of Afro-Caribbean culture, a sine qua non, as far as Lovelace is concerned, for the creation of a viable community in Bonasse. But it must be noted that it combines different diasporic cultures, since it is a Christian religion that incorporates African practices, which the colonial authorities tried to erase.

Lovelace’s writing on the African diaspora additionally highlights a community in crisis and the endeavor of its people to overcome inherent social divisions of culture and class in order to create a more harmonious community in *While Gods Are Falling*. Lovelace’s treatment of the interpersonal relationships within and between Afro-Caribbean families on Webber Street underscores class tensions, which metaphorically represent the Trinidadian political landscape after independence with the emergence of middle-class Black political leadership and nationalist control. Lovelace’s interest in this stage of the evolution of Trinidadian party and community politics is motivated by an intention to criticize the growing dictatorial and selfish tendencies of Afro-Trinidadian political leaders, but also the prevalent sense of individualism and citizen irresponsibility that delays the formation of stronger Afro-Trinidadian collectives. The conversion of Walter’s authoritative elder brother into a more cooperative and understanding father figure and Walter’s decision to internalize responsibility express Lovelace’s advocacy of a more participatory democratic political leadership in Trinidad and the Caribbean. His ideal and his conception of the good citizen is one who takes
responsibility for the welfare of the community rather than just relying on a distant elected leadership.

Lovelace’s growing awareness of the multiple constituencies and his inscription of different diasporas in his fiction determines the later phase of his literary career. *The Dragon Can’t Dance, Salt, and Is Just a Movie* mark the diversification of Lovelace’s literary discourse from a sole emphasis on black identity to a more multi-ethnic politics. The incorporation of various diasporas serves different purposes. Addressing a postcolonial Trinidadian society when new political ethnic constituencies have emerged, Lovelace provides a discourse that seeks to analyze the factors of ethnic dissension and conflict from their sources. The historical understanding of the causes of ethnic tensions helps to understand the foundation of fragmentation in the social fabric of Trinidad. If colonial “divide and rule” politics created the environment of ethnic mistrust and discord between various communities, the tensions are heightened by ethnic preferences and leadership control in the political, economic, and cultural domains. Lovelace does not, however, emphasize solely political and economic ways to address these ethnic issues. Politics and economy are domains where tribalism and ethnic sectarianism are most acute due to the interest in power and rivalries in resource control. Lovelace rather sees the cultural sphere as the space of potential for mending conflicted ethnic relations. Carnival, for instance, is a cultural space where Lovelace envisions the unification of ethnic groups as a nation. The analysis of the politics and performance of Carnival in Lovelace’s novels reveals both skepticism and hope of this cultural celebration as a national
symbol. He is skeptical about Carnival which in the course of its evolution becomes a black bourgeois capitalist and consumerist appropriation, excluding lower-class people and minimizing the contribution of non-Afro-Trinidadian groups. The enactment of Carnival in which the masses are provided with costumes, and in which the other ethnic groups are invited to represent their cultural specificities in *Is Just a Movie*, underscores Lovelace’s political statement that national cultural celebrations are more fulfilling only when they involve all class segments, including lower-class people, and all ethnicities. Such a celebration of national cultures facilitates the coming together of the different ethnic groups since it allows them to keep their separate cultural identities as they participate together in the common national space, but it does not completely resolve the differences caused by economic and political competition. The divisive issue of material reparation, for instance, is softened to a more symbolic, ethical reparation for those Lovelace believes suffered most in the modern formation of the Caribbean—the slaves.

The re-narrativization of history in Lovelace’s novels pertains to a nationalist discourse that involves reclamation of the Caribbean space as a primary step towards the establishment of a stronger Caribbean nationalism, which involves a process of ethical reparation toward those most affected by slavery. Lovelace reinterprets Caribbean history in an attempt to unearth and promote the multiple acts of resistance and creativity that Caribbean people, particularly the poor and dispossessed, have generated, which have been silenced in colonial historical accounts as well as in bourgeois narratives.
Aldrick’s dragon masking and steelpan performance during Carnival celebrations in *Dragon*, the slaves’ rebelliousness, involving both men and women, the struggle for emancipation carried out by Bango and his ancestor Jojo in *Salt*, and the Black Power revolution in *Is Just a Movie* all underscore rebellions as not only a reappropriation of Caribbean history but also a repossessing of the Caribbean national space by groups largely excluded from it. Such a reorientation of Caribbean history involves the enhancement of feelings of pride, of belonging, and of a truly national sentiment. The rewriting of Caribbean history in Lovelace’s fiction additionally provides a symbolic platform for accounts settling as a means of ethical reparation and national reconciliation. Lovelace presents the various histories of Caribbean people to validate the diasporic experiences of the different ethnic groups and to redefine Caribbean history not as a singular history, but as a confluence of multiple histories.

Aesthetically, Lovelace reproduces these histories through a dialogic narrative style of multiple voices. He not only develops the single narrative voice or griot that tells the histories of the characters, but he also allows the characters to relate their own stories as in narratives of possession. This dialogism allows Lovelace to use his fiction as a space to redress the historical wrongs done to some groups more than others, to close the wounds of history and promote national reconciliation. This echoes Obeah esthetics, which seeks the purgation and healing of both the victimizer and the victim. Obeah esthetics provides narratives that emphasize the healing of social and historical wounds.
The reproduction of narratives on Caribbean diasporas also enables Lovelace to develop a revolutionary nationalist discourse that incorporates the examination of not just ethnicity but also gender in order to redefine national identities. His later fiction emphasizes the creation of a diverse Trinidadian nation where the negotiation and reconstruction of gender and ethnic identities becomes a necessity. In his later novels, he demonstrates a manifest effort to envision women beyond their restricted domestic roles. His female characters have agency and political voice through their position as agents of men’s change and as leaders in grassroots religions as well as through their pursuit of education and professional development. Some of his female characters, both Indo- and Afro-Trinidadian, demonstrate a political awareness that sometimes goes beyond some of the male characters’ understanding of politics. A few other female characters are deeply involved in political activism. Besides this endeavor to restore women’s historicity and public role in national politics, Lovelace’s engagement with gender and ethnicity reveals his concern about hegemonic masculinities. He criticizes these dominant masculinities for being factors of social exclusion and division. The analysis of Lovelace’s novels shows us that patriarchal domination is directed against both women and men. The marginalization of masculinities, which involves the emasculation of lower-class Afro-Caribbean and all Asian men, contributes to class and ethnic tensions. The re-negotiation of masculinity, for Lovelace, is an imperative to reshape class, ethnic, and gender relations for a more cohesive and harmonious society.
This study is an effort to provide a more productive way to conceive of nationalism and nation building in the Caribbean, particularly in the ethnically diverse island of Trinidad. Based on the examination of Lovelace’s fiction, my analysis concludes that it is urgent for the conception of a united Trinidadian nation to put diaspora at the center of the debate rather than be suspicious of diasporic difference. The importance of associating diaspora with the creation of nation avoids any autochthonous claims, however, which have a divisive and exclusive potential and considers a more fluid and accommodating sense of diasporic identity that holds on to ancestral connections but also welcomes other communities in their differences. Trinidad is inhabited by various diasporas, and its people in contemporary times should continue to be seen as such even as they constitute a nation. The preservation of diasporic consciousness helps to discard any pretense about territorial ownership or native right to political and economic control in the host land since so many communities migrated to the Caribbean around the same period even as the Indigenous communities unfortunately are overlooked in modern claims of who came first to the Caribbean.

Diasporic consciousness enables the different diasporic groups in the new land to cultivate the individuality of its members while accommodating their differences in the national space. The progression of Lovelace’s literary career from an emphasis on the African diaspora to a focus on multiple diasporas in Trinidad demonstrates his gradual self-consciousness of the necessity to includes various diasporas into the national project and promote national
diasporic consciousness, which may seem a contradiction in terms. The national diasporic consciousness helps to create national identities in the new land in relation to the motherland, which is often imagined, wrongly, as a space of unity and cohesiveness. Similar to Frantz Fanon’s perspective on national consciousness, it puts the nation in relation to the world due to its distinct components originating from different parts of the world rather than seeing the nation as a purist, insular space. Trinidad does not exist on its own, it stands in connection with the other islands with which it shares relatively similar socio-historical experiences, but also in connection with the continents that provided its diasporas. One of the tragic consequences of electoral division and ethnic absolutism, as we see in Guyana, is not just the fragmentation of national unity but also the erasure of Indigenous peoples, who were arguably the region’s first communities. Their disappearance in Trinidad conveniently allows for the rivalry between Afro- and Indo-Trinidadian to take precedence, ignoring the multiple populations of the Caribbean.

Lovelace stands out in his imagination of national identities that promotes ethnic and gender diversity. His dialogic conception of the nation, however, raises some issues. While he calls for the incorporation of the diasporas and their cultural specificities, Lovelace does not focus on minority ethnic groups like the Chinese and Syrians. His later narratives mostly put on the stage Afro-Trinidadians and Indo-Trinidadians, except in Salt where he represents the French Creoles. Minority ethnic groups, including Indigenous people, are almost absent in his fiction, apart from a peripheral representation of a Chinese
character in *Wine* and *Is Just a Movie*. Lovelace’s self-consciousness about the necessity to include all ethnicities into the national project does not quite materialize in a fully inclusive national vision, as some ethnic groups are given more attention and others not represented. His advocacy of material reparation for poor black men complicates his call for national unity. This material compensation is viewed as exclusive, because it favors Afro-Trinidadian peasants over other ethnic groups and does not seem to involve his female characters. In his later novel, *Is Just a Movie*, Lovelace drops the claim for material compensation and insists on ethical compensation. This perhaps shows his belief that the question of material compensation has become less relevant and more complicated at this stage of the evolution of Trinidadian society in the second half of the twentieth-century.

Lovelace began writing in the period between the 1950s and 1970s when the Anglophone Caribbean experienced a proliferation of writers. This period was mostly dominated by male writers, except for a few women writers like Jean Rhys, Paule Marshall, and Merle Hodge who also produced outstanding fictional works. These Caribbean women writers, alongside their male counterparts, developed narratives of migration, emphasizing the need to emigrate for self-fulfillment. The male writers generated a masculine discourse of nationalism, with the focus on men as victims, agents and saviors, but they also expressed a relatively skeptical view of national unity due to ethnic conflicts. Lovelace’s literary career reached its peak in the 1980s and 1990s with the publication of his masterpieces *Dragon Can’t Dance*, *Salt*, and *Is Just a Movie*, a novel published
in 2011 but written much earlier. This period also marked the boom of remarkable women writers such as Michelle Cliff, Jamaica Kincaid, Edwidge Danticat, Elizabeth Nunez, Dionne Brand, Jennifer Rahim, and Ramabai Espinet. Some of these Caribbean women writers replicated the narratives of migration produced by the earlier generation of women writers. This new wave of Caribbean women writers tackled notions of gender, giving women prominent roles and criticizing patriarchy and notions of hegemonic masculinity. More writers raised issues of sexuality, including diverse gender and sexual identifications. While Lovelace is silent about the last two issues, he stands as a bridge between these early and late twentieth-century Caribbean male and female writers. His depiction of ethnic relations and gender dynamics defines a nationalist discourse that departs from the literary narratives of his peers among the nationalist generation, going beyond their skepticism about ethnic relations, and setting the basis for ethnic reconciliation. Lovelace’s advocacy in redefining masculinity and his effort to locate women, however incompletely, with agency, connect him with this later generation of Caribbean women writers.

Lovelace’s fiction also demonstrates connections with the younger generation of male writers who are more accepting of differences and fluid conceptions of them. He has particularly had an influence on younger Trinidadian male writers like Lawrence Scott, whose work has focused on sexuality in a way that Lovelace does not. In his article on The Schoolmaster, “On the Road to Kumaca,” Scott acknowledges that Lovelace’s literary work, with its detailed and loving sense of daily life in Trinidad and ordinary characters, has inspired him
and other writers of his generation in Trinidad. The focus on Trinidadian
domains, its people, and their language, and the representation of a multi-ethnic
discourse are, among others, elements that are inspired by Lovelace.

The aim of this study has been to conceptualize a new and more
appealing and fulfilling view of nationalism and nation-building in Trinidad by
reading Lovelace’s fiction based on diasporic, postcolonial, gender, socio-
historical, and cultural perspectives. In doing so, I intend to make a critical
contribution to the complex debates on diaspora and nation, but also to enrich
scholarship on Lovelace and on Anglophone Caribbean literature. Beyond the
Anglophone Caribbean scope, Lovelace’s work has a universal appeal. His
advocacy of the right to be human and his defense of the poor, the
dispossessed, and other subaltern groups in his fiction is not only meaningful to
mainstream Caribbean literature, but also to postcolonial and Third World
literatures.
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BIOGRAPHY

Chérif Saloum Diatta joined Tulane University’s Stone Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies in August 2009 as a Fulbright Student Fellow. He is a native of Dakar, Senegal, and holds both a B.A. and an M.A. in English as well as a pre-doctoral diploma (D.E.A.), with a thesis written on Caribbean literature. In November 2007, he received a commendation from the Senegalese Head of State for his distinguished scholarship at Cheikh Anta Diop Dakar University. He received his high school teacher training degree in 2008 and has taught at both the Djignabo High School of Ziguinchor and at the University of Ziguinchor in Senegal. In 2013, Chérif spent six weeks in Trinidad doing research for his dissertation on Earl Lovelace’s literary work. There he interviewed Earl Lovelace. From 2010 to 2015, Chérif presented research papers at several conferences: in Jamaica (the Second International Maroon Conference), at Tulane University (New Orleans), at the University of Indiana (Bloomington), at Stevens Point, WI (NCCLA conference), and at Charleston, SC (SECOLAS conference). In September 27, 2013, Chérif received the NCCLA Student Research Award for his paper, “Masks of Resistance: Mimicry and Cultural Survival in Earl Lovelace’s The Wine of Astonishment.” Chérif is also a member of the local host committee organizing the 2015 Caribbean Studies Association (CSA) conference to be held in New Orleans May 25-29, 2015. Chérif is set to graduate from Tulane University’s Stone Center Ph.D. program in May 2015.