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Colonial Ideology and Legacy and Feminine Resistance in Jamaica Kincaid

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Résumé de Synthèse

Mon mémoire "Colonial Ideology and Legacy and Feminine Resistance in Jamaica Kincaid" est une lecture féminine de la colonisation. Il définit, en premier lieu, l'idéologie coloniale comme une idéologie manichéiste et déshumanisante. Étant critique de cette idéologie binaire et réductrice, mon mémoire déchiffre et propose une résistance féminine, riche et diverse, à travers quelques écrits eux même divers de l'écrivaine Jamaica Kincaid. Ce mémoire conteste toute idée reçue sur la femme, en s'appuyant sur des théories anticoloniales et féministes. Il s'agit en effet d'un travail déconstructif où je vise inlassablement à décortiquer et à délégitimer ces hiérarchies qui habitent nos pensées et nos corps, et qui, entravent l'épanouissement de l'être humain. Les trois chapitres qui forment le corps de mon mémoire sont organisés à chaque fois en terme d'oppression et de résistance; de déshumanisation et humanisation, où le sujet colonisé essaie de se libérer des différentes formes d'oppression pour vivre pleinement son humanité. Cette relation hiérarchique est représentée métaphoriquement à travers la relation mère-fille, une relation que j'étudie dans le deuxième chapitre. Le troisième chapitre s'intéresse au mouvement du corps féminin, qui devient l'espace de résistance à une identité limitatrice.

Mots Clés: Manichéisme du colon, féminisme, corps, déshumanisation, résistance, Jamaica Kincaid.

Abstract

My thesis "Colonial Ideology and Legacy and Feminine Resistance in Jamaica Kincaid" analyzes, criticizes and deconstructs the foundations of colonial ideology. It examines how colonial Manichaeanism oppresses the woman, and explores the sites of feminine resistance for (formerly) colonized women. In the first chapter, I define colonial ideology as based on Colonial Manichaeanism. I argue that the colonizer-colonized relationship is reductive and dehumanizing. I explicate and criticize Frantz Fanon's analysis of this relationship of superiority and inferiority and his understanding of violence. I also study Jamaica Kincaid's *A Small Place*, which reproduces this relationship and extends it to the present through the tourist/native relationship. In the second chapter, I study the mother as a colonial figure in *Annie John*. The mother-daughter relationship offers another re-enactment of the colonizer-colonized relationship, which is highlighted through images of heaven and hell. I also develop the metaphor of death and I argue that love and Obeah are resistance strategies to colonial figures. The last chapter engages the corporal in colonial oppression, and feminine resistance. I scrutinize the female body in its wavering between veiling and exposure in *Lucy*. I analyze the movement of the female body as emblematic of the fluidity of feminine identity and as such, an identity which is misrepresented by colonial and patriarchal discourse.

Key words: Colonial Manichaeanism, feminism, body, resistance, dehumanization. anticolonial. Jamaica Kincaid.

For my family

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Introduction

"By analyzing it, we aim to destroy it"

***(BSWM* xvi)**

"How can we, within a dominant Eurocentric discourse, make our study of postcolonial texts itself a mode of resistance?" questions Ketu H. Katrak (255). The dominant Eurocentric discourse imposes rigid and restrictive definitions on the woman, and even more on the (formerly) colonized woman. Resistance is only possible when this discourse is deconstructed and debunked. My thesis questions this dominant discourse in the colonial context, and examines the methods of resistance that aim at re-writing the erased woman. The aim of this project is to de-colonize the oppressed woman and propose various sites of liberations. It also seeks to revive Frantz Fanon's anticolonial theories through a close reading of *A Small Place*, *Annie John* and *Lucy* by the Caribbean novelist Jamaica Kincaid. All three of Kincaid's texts are literary works about the "wretched of the earth." Despite the different genres of these writings, varying from the essay to the postcolonial bildungsroman, they all address and condemn colonial ideology and legacy and offer an alternative resistance.

Frantz Fanon has had such a tremendous impact on anti-colonial theory and struggle. *The Wretched of the Earth* was dubbed the "Bible of decolonization" (*The Wretched of the Earth* xvi). It seems to me that his conclusions on colonial mentality and oppression are echoed in Jamaica Kincaid's writings, and are indeed helpful for an effective decolonization. My fascination with both Fanon and Kincaid has to do with their forthright expression of a revolutionary anger, in which I see an expression of

love that counters colonial ideology. In a biography on Frantz Fanon, David Macey describes anger as "a truly Fanonian emotion" (27). It is, as he says:

> A response to his experience of a black man in a world defined as white, but not to the “fact” of blackness. It was a response to the condition and situation of those he called the wretched of the earth. The wretched of the earth are still there, but not in the seminar rooms where the talk is of post-colonial theory. They came out on the streets of Algiers in 1988, and the Algerian army shot them dead. […] Had he lived, Fanon would still be angry. His readers should be angry too. (27)

Kincaid's writings convey this same anger. She is not afraid to remind people that the wretched of the earth are still here. And similarly critics commented on Kincaid’s explicit anger both favorably and unfavorably, to which the latter responds:

> I now consider anger as a badge of honor…I’ve really come to love anger. And I like it even more when a lot of reviews said it’s so angry. The New York Times said it didn’t have the “charm” of Annie John…When people say you’re charming you’re in deep trouble. I realized in writing that book that the first step in claiming yourself is anger. You get mad. And you can’t do anything before you get angry. (Perry 497-98)

In "A Small Place Writes Back," Jane King, a West Indian writer, disparagingly comments on Kincaid's anger: "Fine, so Kincaid does not like the Caribbean much, finds it dull and boring and would rather live in Vermont, There can really be no difficulty with that, but I do not see why Caribbean people should admire her for denigrating our small place in this destructively angry fashion" (qtd. in Land-Peralta 11). To my mind, Jane King fails to decipher Kincaid's anger. If there is anything destructive about it, it is directed to colonial ideology as a dehumanizing ideology. This anger is rejection of colonial ideology, which I define, through the lens of Frantz Fanon, as dominated by a Manichaean allegory "of white and black, good and evil, salvation and damnation, civilization and savagery, superiority and inferiority,

intelligence and emotion, self and other, subject and object," (JanMohamed 4) and which needs to be subverted. My thesis examines and deprecates some of these allegories through selected works by Jamaica Kincaid. I believe that her writings provide a unique ground in which Manichaeanism is constantly undermined and deconstructed. Her novels are eloquent examples of disrupting conventional boundaries and conventions.

Through the space of writing, Kincaid recovers her agency and re-creates identity. Giovanna Covi states that Kincaid's writing "defies a realistic interpretation of her voice; it challenges any possibility of deciphering a single meaning by emphasizing multiplicity" (Covi 353). This multiplicity is a resistance strategy that demystifies the division of the colonial world. Actually "looking at the immediacies of the colonial context," writes Fanon, "it is clear that what divides the world is first and foremost what species, what race one belongs to" (*WE* 5). Long after decolonization struggles and independence of colonized countries, this compartmentalized human reality still persists. Colonial ideology still oppresses the colonized female subject.

In *Caribbean Genesis: Jamaica Kincaid and the Writing of the New Worlds* (2009), Jana Evans Braziel denounces identitary categories and examines similarities between Frantz Fanon and Luce Irigaray in studying Kincaid's short story " blackness." She argues that:

> Le Noir or le *féminin* are not fixed identitary categories, but rather discursive and ideological constructions—and thus empty or unoccupied, if also totalized. As such, these constructions are necessarily nonrepresentational of real subordinated people; indeed in the case of la *femme* ("woman"), it is a construction that has been deployed in such a way as to violently erase "Third World" women and women of color. (28)

Likewise, my thesis refutes these fixed identities. It demonstrates how these identities misrepresent the colonized woman. It also explores effective sites of decolonization, which aim at re-writing the "third-world" woman. In other words, this thesis rejects fixed and static ideas and identities that nourish racism, sexism and oppression, and promotes openness, fluidity and love, as anticolonial strategies.

Scholars have extensively written on Jamaica Kincaid. A great part of them addressed the mother-daughter matrix, its ambiguity and its layers. Wendy Dutton describes *Annie John* as a "mother-obssessed" (Dutton 407) text, and the mother-daughter conflict as "a universal one, the natural rebellion of a fifteen-year-old-girl against her mother" (Dutton 407). On the front cover of *Annie John* (1986), *the New York Times Book Review* says it is a "coming of age in Antigua– so touching and familiar...it could be happening to any of us, anywhere, any time, any place." The exclusion of the colonial context in dealing with the mother figure is spurious because it universalizes the colonized subject's experience. It, in Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's words, "romanticizes and homogenizes the subaltern subject" (Loomba 195). To resist this acculturation, it is necessary to contextualize the mother-daughter relationship.

Susheila Nasta's decoding of the mother-motherland bond acknowledges the colonial context. She argues that this relationship is a bi-fold weapon. First, it serves "to demythologize the illusion of the colonial 'motherland' or 'mother country'. And second it is a movement to rediscover, recreate and give birth to the genesis of new forms and new languages of expression" (*Mother Imagery in the Novels of Afro-Caribbean Women* 8). The mother as a colonial figure envisions the world as Manichaeaist, and imposes a fixed identity on her daughter. Many critics perceive the

mother as a threat to the daughter's subjectivity. Diane Simmons compares the former to the colonial educational system, "which seems bent on erasing all that is native to the child, rewarding only that which imitates the European rulers" (31). Moreover, Helen Pyne Timothy argues that in "the Caribbean context, the mother is unable to continue successful role-modeling after the child reaches puberty" (236). The genius of Kincaid is that she re-enacts the relationship of oppression with the closest person to her, her mother. This destructive and cryptic relationship enhances the atmosphere of death that characterizes her writings–which I try to analyze in chapter two– and mirrors the colonial context which is marked by horror. In "The Horrors of Homelessness: Gothic Doubling in Kincaid's *Lucy* and Brontë's *Villette*," Evie Shockley offers a compelling reading to account for Lucy's anxiety and fright. Analyzing Lucy as a double of Brontë's Villette, she argues, that we can perceive "the shifting boundaries of identity" (46). The terror and horror, of which Shockley speaks, stems from Lucy's inability to fit in "the supposed fixity of domestic ideology's identity boundaries" (50). These boundaries are horrendous because they are dehumanizing and deadly.

In order to analyze and criticize colonial ideology and its legacy as well as feminist resistance, I have chosen to divide my thesis into three chapters, in which I examine different works. *A Small Place* is a direct indictment of imperialism and a poignant mourning for precolonial Antigua. *Annie John* adopts a less accusatory tone, but still denounces the colonizer's ideology and its impact on education and women. *Lucy,* which is often considered a sequel to *Annie John*, makes the protagonist leave Antigua for a North American metropolis. However, Lucy carries with her memories of her mother. I argue that her works articulate, both on the level of style and content, a

feminine resistance to colonial ideology and legacy. I will thus first deal with *A Small Place* since it explicates colonial ideology as based on a Manichaean binarism. I will then investigate the impact of colonialism on women in *Annie John* and *Lucy*.

In my first chapter, I focus on Jamaica Kincaid's *A Small Place* through Frantz Fanon's anticolonial theory. I define colonial Manichaeanism in both Fanon and Kincaid. This essay is a critical polemic on colonialism and neocolonialism. It is divided into four sections where Kincaid exposes racism as the foundation for colonialism and denounces its repercussions. In order to do so, she develops and addresses a prototypical tourist; she then delves into his mind and deconstructs his obtuse assumptions about Antigua. This is done through a movement back and forth into the past. The tourist is an allegory and a continuation of British colonization. Kincaid actually assaults the white colonizers through these white (American or, worse, European) tourists. She later divulges the violence of the post-colonial ruling-class who far from assisting Antiguans, are corrupted and work in favor of Western imperialism. In *A Small Place*, Kincaid focuses on the political and economic aspects of post-colonial Antigua to point out the dialectical link between accumulation of capital and postcolonial dispossession. I argue that this dispossession is violent and is rooted in colonial Manichaeanism, which stipulates that the white/colonizer subject is superior to the black/colonized object. Unlike Frantz Fanon, however, in Kincaid, such dehumanization only results in anger. I will examine how she uses language to subvert colonial Manichaeanism.

The second chapter re-produces the colonizer/colonized, tourist/native relationship through the mother/daughter relationship. This ambiguous relationship is

represented in the narrative through the metaphor of heaven and hell. Metaphorically, *Annie John* opens with the protagonist's preoccupation with death. This death is symbolic of the death of, or at least the attempt to annihilate Afro-Caribbean culture as well as the black female's voice. Jamaica Kincaid succeeds in enlivening her culture and making her voice heard. Counter-hegemony is achieved here through the rejection of British culture, on the one hand, and, on the other, through the revival of the native's culture which circumvents the death motif. The Obeah motif, which haunts the novel, is an example of such a revival since it is a reference to precolonial Antigua and to the independent woman. Female identity, in a postcolonial male-dominated space, is my concern in the chapter to follow.

Lucy does not begin with a reference to death but to daffodils. The daffodils create tension between a white woman and a black woman. Irline François speaks of "the daffodil gap," which is at the core of this eponymous novel. Lucy inhabits an American home only to be disappointed by the perpetuation of colonial ideology and its threat to her. As such, she has to struggle against the forces that seek to tie her body down, and to stifle her voice. Relying on Fanon's theory of the veil of the Algerian woman in anti-colonial struggle, I criticize and develop the metaphor of the veil, and of rending the veil as a re-negotiation of female identity. The movements of the body, between veiling and exposure become an expression of resistance to colonial Manichaeanism. Ultimately, these bodily movements mirror the fluidity of identity which cannot be contained in Manichaeanism.

Chapter I:

Colonial Manichaeanism

> Racism is also the consequence of the history of colonialism. (Fanon: *Toward the African Revolution* 40)

> It will be understood that the first impulse of the black man is to say *no* to those who attempt to build a definition of him. (Fanon: *Black Skin, White Masks* 36)

My first chapter, entitled "Colonial Manichaeanism," is a theoretical chapter which defines on one hand the concept of colonial Manichaeanism in the anticolonial works of Frantz Fanon and Jamaica Kincaid, and which highlights, on the other hand, the similarities and differences between the two writers regarding the ideology, expression and effects of colonialism. Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth* and Kincaid's *A Small Place* are the principal books analyzed in this chapter. *A Small Place*, in Moira Ferguson's words, "grounds [Jamaica Kincaid's] earlier fictional-autobiographical texts by explaining the cultural situation of Antigua and Antiguan response" (*Jamaica Kincaid* 78). Likewise, *A Small Place* (along with *The Wretched of the Earth*) grounds my analysis of *Annie John* and *Lucy* by explicating colonial ideology. For the sake of conciseness and due to the richness of *A Small Place* and *The Wretched of the Earth,* I will not cover all the themes that are exposed in these two texts. I will only deal in depth with the ideas that are relative to my thesis: those

related to the dehumanizing aspects and consequences of colonialism and neocolonialism.

My contention is that colonial ideology is fundamentally dehumanizing and results in resistance. By "dehumanizing" here I mean every act which represents a danger to humanness, that is any act which negates or tries to reduce the other's humanness. This dehumanization is the very definition of colonialism and is criticized by both Fanon and Kincaid. For Fanon, colonialism is equated with violence and, paradoxically enough, resistance to violence occurs when the colonized himself uses violence. Be it physical or symbolic, it is the only way for him to rearticulate his humanity. To use Fanon's words:

> Colonialism is not a thinking machine, nor a body endowed with reasoning faculties. It is violence in the natural state, and it will only yield when confronted with greater violence. (*WE* 23)

The "greater violence' is a humanizing violence; "it is man reconstructing himself" (lv). Paulo Freire defines humanization as the goal of liberation from the oppressor (Freire 75). Since the oppressor reduces the colonized to the state of an animal (*WE* 7), liberation elevates him to that of a human being. This path from dehumanization to humanity, from objectification to subjectivity, from the status of slave and master to that of a human, is marked and enabled only through an overthrow of colonial ideology.

In this chapter, I deal with colonial ideology and its racist foundations. I see in both Fanon and Kincaid a denunciation of racism as a brutal, irrational phenomenon. They indeed both argue that colonialism and imperialism are based on a Manichaeist view of the world which naturalizes racism. I will deal with Fanon's theory of violence as postulated in *the Wretched of the Earth*, which was originally published in French under the title *Les Damnés de la Terre* in 1961. I am using a new

translation of the book published in 2004 by Richard Philcox, with a foreword by Homi K.Bhabha and a preface by Jean Paul Sartre. I will also refer to his other seminal work *Black Skin, White Masks*, which was originally published in French in 1952 under the title *Peau Noire, Masques Blancs*, and which, far from contradicting the former, corroborates the idea that colonization and decolonization are violent processes. Likewise, *A Small Place* is about the dehumanizing repercussions of colonialism and imperialism. In other words, it is about racism and its consequences on an underdeveloped country. Another common point between the Antiguan writer and the Martiniquo-Algerian writer is that they both use their works to subvert colonial ideology, discard the master-slave dialectic and affirm humanity. While the end is shared, the means is however different, or at least it takes a different form. Actually, physical violence is not a common theme in Kincaid. She instead offers other politics of resistance. The emphasis on the heterogeneity of forms of resistance is indeed crucial in my analysis of Jamaica Kincaid's novels. In fact, resistance in this paper will not be addressed in a narrow way. I will investigate various forms of resistance varying from linguistic to sexual resistance. I shall now deal with the cause of resistance that is colonial ideology and its Manichaeist structure.

Colonial Manichaeanism:

Although *the Wretched of the Earth* deals with the Algerian struggle for independence, it is able to transcend its locality and address the colonized man throughout history. In his foreword to the text, Homi K.Bhabha points to the immediacy of Fanon's theory of decolonization and applies it in his criticism of globalization. Bhabha is interested in the Manichaean history of colonialism and in the necessity of disrupting the polarization of the world, which assumes that black and white are antithetical. It is only through deconstructing this polarization that we can create a new history of man (xiv). Bhabha's analogy draws an association between the colonized man and the Third World. Indeed, it entails a link between the period of colonialism and post-colonialism, or as Fanon states: "Colonialism and imperialism have not settled their debt to us once they have withdrawn their flag and their police from our territories" (57).

In *The Wretched of the Earth*, Frantz Fanon describes the colonial world as a compartmentalized world (5). In his book *Manichean Aesthetic: the Politics of Literature in Colonial Africa*, Abdul R. JanMohamed corroborates this idea in the following words:

> The colonial mentality is dominated by a Manichean allegory of white and black, good and evil, salvation and damnation, civilization and savagery, superiority and inferiority, intelligence and emotion, self and other, subject and object. (4)

The relationship of power is thus a relationship of violence, which reduces the colonized and glorifies the colonizer. It is based on an erroneous egocentric assumption that white is better than black, and that Europe is better than Africa. Jacques Derrida suggests that these binary oppositions are hierarchically structured

with one term being better than the other. He also suggests that these definitions are unstable since they derive their meaning from what they purport to oppose (Derrida ix). The elevating associations with Europe are thus meaningless without the demeaning associations with Africa.

This Manichaean ideology is not rooted in biological attributes. Rather, it is an artifact which is reinforced through culture. "If philosophy and intelligence are invoked to proclaim the equality of men, they have also been employed to justify the extermination of men" (*WE* 22). Manichaeanism is based on Western prejudices about the Third World which presuppose that the West is antithetical to and even better than the non-West. According to Edward Said's theory of Orientalism, this bias is the consequence of a deeply entrenched eurocentrism, which is a discourse of power, an ideology and a methodology. "At the heart of European culture during the many decades of imperial expansion," writes Edward Said, "lay an undeterred and unrelenting Eurocentrism" (221). Fanon claims that this eurocentrism justifies slavery:

> It is not possible to enslave men without logically making them inferior through and through. And racism is only the emotional, affective, sometimes intellectual explanation of this inferiorization. (*WE* 40)

This relationship of inferiority and superiority is nurtured by the social discrepancy between whites and blacks. In *The Wretched of the Earth*, Fanon argues that race determines the social class of the colonizer and the colonized: "The cause is effect: You are rich because you are white, you are white because you are rich" (5). Racism, in Marxist terms, is not only the superstructure that is determined by the base. It is in itself a base, a determining principle in the shaping of society. Indeed, Fanon believes that class is not independent from race, nor opposed to it. Actually, Fanon's

theory of racialization points to the dialectical relationship between race and class. Race is produced by class and vice-versa. The white man is rich; the black man is poor. And again, the black/white dichotomy, far from being biological, is developed through culture. According to the Martiniquo psychiatrist, the black man sees his blackness through the eyes of the white man. He does not exist outside the gaze of the white man. In *Black Skin, White Masks*, he describes the profound and painful psychic rift that he experiences when, in France, a child looks up at him and shouts, "Look, a Negro!" (93). The "Negro" is unaware of his own blackness. It is the white man who informs him that he is different from him. The repugnance of the latter inculcates in him the idea of separateness. White is different from and even opposed to black. Thus the black man and the white man cannot live together in an egalitarian society.

The black man is indeed constructed as poor and, consequently, as inferior both by and in relation to the white man. This polarization of wealth and poverty is trivialized and even naturalized. Fanon argues that such binarism is not spontaneous and is a violent product of colonization. "For not only must the black man be black; he must be black in relation to the white man…his inferiority comes into being through the other" (*BSWM* 50). In other words, there is no logical correlation between blackness and poverty on the one hand and whiteness and wealth on the other hand. For example: middle-class Antilleans are considered as white since they negotiate with the colonizer instead of fighting against him. Antillean poets whose, "artistic creations bear no special watermark, are white" (*BSWM* 192). Thus, whiteness is not genetic. Rather, it is culturally transmitted. Fanon advocates the dissolution of race in order to free the black man from alienation (86) for "the Negro is in every sense of the word a victim of white civilization" (*BSWM* 192). "The

Negro" is a victim of a violent enforcement of white civilization, a victim of colonization.

The first manifestation of colonization is physical violence. Manichaeanism as a symbolic violence, results in actual violence. Slavery, as an example of this onslaught, is justified by the European Manichaean vision of the world. To use Fanon's words, "It is in the name of the Spirit, meaning the Spirit of Europe, that Europe justified its crimes and legitimized the slavery in which it held four fifths of humanity" (*WE* 237). During and after colonization, the colonized suffers "the countless and sometimes indelible wounds inflicted on people by the colonialist onslaught" (*WE* 181). Expressed differently, the history of colonization is marked by both inevitable and ineffaceable physical and psychological violence. Actually, colonization is an annexation of territories by foreigners without the consent of the indigenous. It is achieved by force, by the merciless shedding of blood. Colonization is equated with whips and bayonets. It is a rape of the native's land, a blemish of its beauty; it is the expression of utmost violence. The violent and dehumanizing nature of the act of colonizing is the focus of my thesis. This aggressive settlement in foreign territory is a violation of humanity. The moment he is colonized, the native is no longer a human being. In *the Wretched of the Earth*, Fanon traces the relationship of causality between Manichaeanism and dehumanization as follows: "This Manichaeanism goes to its logical conclusion and dehumanizes the native, or to speak plainly it turns him into an animal" (40).

The white colonizer's unfounded feelings of superiority lead to the objectification of the colonized. The non-white man is not considered a man. In his preface to *The Wretched of the Earth*, Jean Paul Sartre, the existentialist philosopher, stresses the connection between violent colonization and dehumanization. He says:

"Colonial violence not only aims at keeping these enslaved men at a respectful distance, it also seeks to dehumanize them" (l). In Fanon's words, it is "a systematized negation of the other, a frenzied determination to deny the other any attribute of humanity" (*WE* 182).

According to Fanon, this negation of the other is reinforced through language, or rather through the hegemonic use of the settler's language. Language becomes a tool of discrimination against people. In this regard, Fanon states that, "to speak is to exist absolutely for the other….To speak means to be in a position to use a certain syntax, to grasp the morphology of this or that language, but it means above all to assume a culture…"(*BSWM* 17). When the colonized speaks the language of the colonizer, he harmonizes with his culture and ends up internalizing the ideology behind the white man's language. The black man is dispossessed of his language and therefore of his culture. The native is dispossessed of his inalienable rights. The struggle to regain his rights, his humanity, is violent. Fanon's controversial claims of violence as the most efficient tool of resistance are a response to the violent colonial ideology and legacy. As such, the Manichaeanism of the colonist induces a Manichaeanism of the colonized. This reproduction or mimicry of manichaenism is a major argument in Fanon's theory. According to him: "On the logical plane, the Manichaeanism of the colonist produces a Manichaeanism of the colonized" (*WE* 50). In conclusion, the violence of the colonizer entails and necessitates the violence of the colonized. Colonial Manichaeanism and its violent consequences are rebuked severely in *A Small Place*.

Moira Ferguson places *A Small Place* in the same continuum as Aimé Césaire's *Return to My Native Land* and Frantz Fanon's *Black Skin, White Masks* in their critique of colonialism and postcolonialism (*Jamaica Kincaid* 79). Jamaica

Kincaid's *A Small Place* denounces the continuation between colonialism and post-colonialism. The author, disappointed with independent Antigua, angrily dedicates her essay to blaming the colonizer. Her writing is a splendid example of resistance to colonial ideology. Contrary to Fanon's revolutionary theory, Kincaid's struggle for the colonizer's humanity is not violent, at least not in the literal sense. Kincaid traces the violent perpetuation of colonial Manichaeanism that holds one people superior to another. She indeed bitterly questions whether self-ruled Antigua is a better place or not (*A Small Place* 41). The non-linearity of *A Small Place*, punctuated by the use of flashbacks, intensifies the plight of post-colonial Antigua. The master-slave relationship, characteristic of colonial rule, seems to resurface in post-colonial Antigua in different shapes. The tourist becomes the colonizer. The passive native becomes the colonized. Divided into four sections, *A Small Place* exposes the inhumanity of the colonizer, which is incarnated in the white tourist's egocentrism and indifference. It then criticizes the Antiguan neo-colonialist government which perpetuates colonial ideology. In the end, it calls for an overthrow of Manichaeanism for the sake of humanity. Paradoxically enough, *A Small Place* is built on Manichaeanism. Both style and content nourish the dichotomy between colonizer/ colonized, black/ white and poor/ rich. Jamaica Kincaid uses such binarism only to distort it in favour of the oppressed and then utterly discard it. I shall now analyze *A Small Place* as an illustration, yet a highly critical one, of Fanon's rejection of Manichaeanism as dehumanizing.

A Small Place opens with a capitalized "YOU" (3). This "you" already sets the choleric and indignant tone of Kincaid's memoir. It indeed foreshadows the dualism which is at the heart of Kincaid's criticism of colonial ideology and legacy. The "you" is a North American (or, worse, European) tourist. This "you" is first

characterized by his whiteness. Indeed, just like Fanon, Kincaid analyses colonial theory as rooted in racism; a Manichaean symbolism which associates black people with sin, evil, dirt. She puts the blame on Europeans for creating and inflicting racism on her people. *A Small Place* seems to endorse Fanon's claim: "Yes, European civilizations and its best representatives are responsible for colonial racism" (*BSWM* 80). Kincaid denounces racism as something foreign to the black. Racism is an artifact, a western artifact.

In *A Small Place*, she cites the example of the headmistress of a girl's school who is an illustration of "the racist who creates his inferior," as Fanon puts it (*BSWM* 93). The Antiguans fail to condemn the rejection of girls born out of wedlock as racism (29). They fail to comprehend the relationship of causality between racism and colonialism, which I have argued through Fanon's revision of Marxist base and superstructure. They, quite naively, decontextualize racism and interpret it as bad behaviour. They dub the Czech dentist and the headmistress as "ill mannered" (*A Small Place* 29) rather than racists. In her article "*A Small Place*: Some Perspectives on the Ordinary" Suzanne Gauch suggests that this reduction of racism to bad manners demonstrates the "everydayness" of racism and its unnaturalness (Gauch 910-919). Racism is a learned practise that permeates everyday life so much so that Antiguans do not see racism as a derivation of colonialism. In this passage, Kincaid is a feminine Fanon. She is the psychoanalyst who delves into the black's psyche and develops his first experience with racism. She indeed subtly does so, following herself this process of the black discovering his blackness. She first refers to racism as "keeping black children out of this school" (29). She then reproduces the internalized myth about the English. At this stage, the English are associated with noble values and are to be identified with, and even imitated. Black people suffer

from an inferiority complex and want to be white. This is reminiscent of Fanon's psychoanalytic diagnosis:

> All colonized people – in other words, people in whom an inferiority complex has taken root, whose local cultural originality has been committed to the grave – position themselves in relation the civilizing language...The more the colonized rejects his blackness and the bush, the whiter he will have become. (*BSWM* 2)

Race is thus not innate. Rather, it is a construct which serves to justify colonial violence and dominion. Kincaid exposes the violence of the colonizer, which does not end with colonialism but is perpetuated by both the tourist and the native elite.

Just like the tourist feels free to travel to Antigua, Jamaica Kincaid feels free to make the tourist travel back in time and confront him with his ancestor, the colonizer. This return to a colonial past aims at uncovering the coercion and brutality of the colonizer. Kincaid tells the tourist of the pollution of the East Caribbean, of which the colonizer is primarily responsible. She indeed blames him for his indifference to this pollution: "Oh it might well end up in the water you are thinking of taking a swim in; the contents of your lavatory might, just might, gaze gently against your ankle as you wade carefree in the water, for you see, in Antigua, there is no proper sewage-disposal system" (13). Moreover, she attacks the colonizer who violently enslaved Blacks. The tourist would be amazed even to know the number of black slaves this ocean has swallowed up, she tells us (13). The damage inflicted here is ostensibly physical. The colonizer is associated with notions of death, decay and carnage. Colonial ideology is destructive, deadly and dehumanizing. Actually, Jamaica Kincaid denounces the commodification of human beings: "The human beings they traded, the human beings who to them were only commodities, are dead" (54). The "they" is clearly a contemptuous "they." She despises them because:

> They got off, they were forced to work under conditions that were cruel and inhuman, they were beaten, they were murdered, they were sold, their children were taken from them and these separations lasted forever. (54)

So does Jamaica Kincaid describe the horrors inflicted on "they," her people who were considered inferior. Interviewed on the history of the West Indies, she conveys her indignation at the atrocities perpetrated by the colonizer: "I can never believe that the history of the West Indies happened the way it did […] the wreck and the ruin and the greed. It's almost on a monumental scale […] The truth about it is that it erased actual groups of people – groups of people vanished, just vanished" (Cudjoe 403-4). The European settler is thus the generator of violence. She analyzes the idea of colonialism as a ruthless, fierce and an inhuman anomaly. Colonialism is the most evil and murderous deed perpetuated by man, by the white man. He is indeed driven by a "diseased" violence. Antigua was colonized by the British and still is dependent on and exploited by the West. Jamaica Kincaid castigates the fundamental structures of imperialism which she considers to be a continuation of colonialism as she ironically, yet brutally points:

> They don't seem to know that this empire business was all wrong and they should, at least, be wearing 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. Actual death might have been better. (…) They should never have left their home, their precious England. (23)

Here, the Caribbean novelist sardonically addresses the tourist. She wants him to feel guilt for the damage and persecution of the colonizer. She scornfully wants his feelings of remorse and shame to be palpable so as to never forget the inhumanity of the colonist. However, the tourist is indifferent to the plight of Antiguans. He is a replica of the colonist. This indifference to human beings negates the (formerly) colonized's humanity. The tourist does not pay attention to the Japanese cars, to the

damaged library or to the sewage-disposal system. He is only interested in himself. Kincaid ridicules his self-centeredness thus: "You see yourself lying on the beach, you see yourself taking a walk in the beach, you see yourself eating some delicious, locally grown food. You see yourself, you see yourself…" (13).

This tourist is portrayed in a way similar to the colonizer. He is the modern colonizer. Moira Ferguson points to the persistence of colonial ideology through tourism. She says: "Tourism is a modern version of colonialism; it is domination's new, lucrative face" (86). The tourist's relationship to the native is the colonizer's relationship to the colonized. He perpetuates colonial Manichaeanism, which stipulates that the whites are civilized unlike blacks. He also believes in the civilizing mission of Europe. Kincaid assumes that the tourist, while passing the streets of Antigua, claims that "If it were not for [his ancestors] , [Antiguans] would not have Government House, and Prime Minister's Office, and Parliament Building and embassy of powerful country" (10-11). Besides, the tourist does not suffer the guilt of colonization but suffers from the existential boredom of his forefathers, which encouraged them to colonize Antigua. The white tourist seeks in travel an egotistic cure for his self-inflicted alienation:

> You make a leap from being that nice blob just sitting like a boob in your amniotic sac of the modern experience to being a person visiting heaps of death and ruin and feeling alive and inspired at the sight of it. (16)

He manages to transform the native's banality into a source of pleasure for himself (19). He denies the native's sense of home by making of the Caribbean Island an object of consumption. He therefore denies the native's humanity. In her essay "Homeplace in Yearnings," bell hooks points to the centrality of homemaking in the process of identity making. She says: "This task of making homeplace […] is about

the construction of a safe place where black people would affirm one another and by so doing heal many of the wounds inflicted by racist domination (42). The tourist, with his objectifying gaze, hinders such endeavors to humanize the colonized. The native is left with no home, no identity. He is homeless at home; he is too poor "to live properly in the place where (he) lives" (19). The feeling of homelessness and the urgency to move, which are shared between both native and tourist, are accentuated by the native's inability to move. For him, mobility is not granted. Indeed, his dispossession is only furthered by his passiveness and submission to a corrupt government.

Apart from the tourist, the native is confronted with the Antiguan elite who preserve the violence and hegemony of the colonizer. According to Fanon, Colonial ideology is not only implemented by the colonizer. When the colony gets independence, it is faced with neo-colonial powers who are the former colonists and the native bourgeoisie. The native is still alienated; he is still objectified. In *The Wretched of the Earth*, Fanon formulates it this way: "for the colonized subject's last resort is to defend his personality against his fellow countrymen" (17). Fanon explains how the intellectual elites condemn revolutionary violence since it clashes with their promotion rather than overthrow of western views (22). As such, they nourish imperialism. They compromise with the former colonizer. The latter's only interest in a native-foreigner relationship is the detrimental accumulation of wealth. The native's emancipation is contravened because of this very notion of compromise, which is paradoxically "very important in the case of decolonization" (*WE* 24).

A Small Place is a valuable illustration of the native elite as the new colonizer. The damages of colonialism do not disappear when the colonizer leaves. On the contrary, the situation worsens. To cite an example, the colonial library is

better than the post-colonial library. The anticolonial writer is almost nostalgic about colonial times: “I love the old Antigua” (44). She is offended by the failure to rebuild Antigua’s only library. She questions: “Why is the library above a dry-goods store in an old run-down cement-brick building?” (42). The library is indeed a blatant example of the inescapability of the colonial past. Kincaid blames the Antiguan government for their participation in preserving the remnants of the colonial structure. The majority of black Antiguans are poor, and are subjected to a government “for sale” (47). The Hotel Training School continues to train Antiguans to be servants. They are thus still seen as inferior, as less than human.

In *A Small Place*, both tourist and neo-colonizer cultivate and sustain the dehumanizing Manichaeanism in order to subdue the Antiguans and secure the imperialists’ interests. The native is still subordinate. He is not a human being. How then to humanize the native? How then to “deconstruct” race? How to think through and beyond its power to alienate human beings, and to enclose them within identities that destroy, objectify and dehumanize?

Subversion of Colonial Manichaeanism:

> Decolonization is quite simply the substitution of one “species” of mankind by another (*WE* 1).

In the Wretched of the Earth, Fanon argues that “the colonized finds his freedom in and through violence” (86). His violence is directed against colonial ideology and its practices. The colonized realizes that in order to regain his humanity, he needs to annihilate colonial Manichaeanism. He needs to realize that he

is not inferior to the white man. Fanon develops the black man's awareness of the unnaturalness of colonial Manichaeanism in these words:

> Thus the native discovers that his life, his breath, his beating heart are the same as those of the settler. He finds out that the settler's skin is not of any more value than a native's skin; and it must be said that this discovery shakes the world in a very necessary manner. All the new revolutionary assurance…stems from it. For if, in fact, my life is worth as much as the settler's, his glance no longer shrivels me up nor freezes me, and his voice no longer turns me into stone. (*WE* 45)

This "revolutionary assurance" is concretized through violence against the colonizer. This violence allows for the development of a new humanism. It acquires an ontological dimension since it allows the Negro to reclaim his humanity and free himself from the colonizer's violence and hegemony. This correlation between freedom and violence was seen by some critics as anti-humanist and as violence for violence's sake. I plead, on the contrary, that it is humanism at its best. Fanon explicates the concept of violence which stems from the Manichaeist essence of colonialism. Manichaeanism is built on, manifested in and can be fought only through violence. Violence read in the light of Frantz Fanon's approach is a two-fold concept. The violent nature of colonialism imposes a bifold understanding of violence rather than a condemnation of it on the pretense that it clashes with the colonized's aspiration to freedom and humanness. In Fanon's words: "Each individual forms a violent link in the great chain, a part of the great organism of violence which has surged upward in reaction to the settler's violence in the beginning" (WE 93). Additionally, in "On Violence," the first chapter of *The Wretched of the Earth*, Frantz Fanon insists on the necessity of physical violence in the struggle for liberation. Violence is liberating in two ways; it binds people together through the creation of a national consciousness, however, as signifying, it

delivers the colonized from his inferiority complex implanted through the oppressor's racism (*WE* 51).

The oppressed's subjectivity is achieved through refuting the Manichaeist basis of colonialism and neocolonialism, which can only be defeated by violence, be it physical or symbolic. Men need to renounce the culturally constructed racism in order to articulate their humanity. This resistance or this desire to attain full humanity requires risking one's life. In *Black Skin, White Masks*, Fanon insists on the centrality of violence in the struggle for freedom: "But the Negro knows nothing of the cost of freedom, for he has not fought for it… The former slave needs a challenge to his humanity; he wants a conflict, a riot. But it is too late" (84). The black man is his own object of desire. The black man desires to be a man. This desire can be satisfied only through a confrontation with death. Man acquires an independent self-consciousness the moment he is ready to die for his freedom. His violent resistance is thus humanistic. He is indeed driven by the need to articulate his humanity and an implicit love for his fellow countrymen. For Fanon, the only way to dis-alienate and free oneself from colonial and postcolonial dispossession is violent resistance. The colonized has to break free from this unhealthy situation. In order to do so he has to deconstruct this Manichaean vision of man. Fanon does not seek to re-negotiate the racial antinomies but to invert them. He advocates a total eradication of such a restrictive perception of man and of the world. *Black Skins, White Masks* ends on this humanistic note:

> Both must turn their backs on the inhuman voices which were those of their respective ancestors in order that authentic communication be possible. Before it can adopt a positive voice, freedom requires an effort at disalienation…Superiority? Inferiority? Why not the simple attempt to touch the other, to feel the other, to explain the other to myself? (231)

If Frantz Fanon advocates physical violence in order to free the colonizer from subjugation, Jamaica Kincaid resorts to a linguistic form of resistance in order to humanize the colonized. The politics of resistance in *A Small Place* are not similar to the resistance advocated by Fanon, but are no less humanistic. I have already hinted at the consolidation of style and content so as to invalidate the Manichaeist colonial ideology. Kincaid's voice, angry and derisive at the same time, is her tool of resistance against colonialism and imperialism. Salman Rushdie, describes *A Small Place* as a "jeremiad of great clarity and force that one might have called torrential were the language not so finely controlled"(4). Rage in Kincaid is Fanon's revolutionary violence. Behind this rage lies anger against racism and the desire to denounce it and deconstruct it. In her article "the Uses of Anger," Audre Lorde analyzes anger as a female response to racism:

> Women responding to racism means responding to anger, the anger of exclusion, of unquestioned privilege, of racial distortions, of silence, ill-use, stereotyping, defensiveness, misnaming, betrayal and coopting. (278)

This anger is Kincaid's encounter with racism. In *Notebook of a Return to the Native Land*, Aimé Césaire explains these feelings of anger in a forthright way: "Because we hate you, you and your reason, we claim kinship with dementia praecox, with flaming madness, with tenacious cannibalism" (17). Likewise, Kincaid linguistically expresses her anger and uses language to annihilate the master/ slave dialectic. Actually, the Fanonian idea of a reproduction of Manichaeanism is eloquently and bitterly rendered in *A Small Place* where the author follows, then subverts, this preconceived and unjust binarism.

Kincaid met the world through England (*A Small Place* 33). She indeed uses, with much displeasure, no other language but the English one to denounce the crimes

of the West. This idea is formulated in her rhetorical question: “For isn’t it odd that the only language I have in which to speak of this crime is the language of the criminal who committed the crime?” (31). Moreover, as Salman Rushdie points out in the quote stated above, she finely controls the English language. Kincaid’s knowledge of the English language allows her to resist, to make her voice heard. In an interview, she confesses: “Language is one of the things I rebelled against… I could write in a voice that was my own” (Birbalshing 142). The Antiguan writer distorts the use of language. While the colonizer uses it to inculcate Manichaeist discourse in people’s minds, she uses it to subvert this colonial Manichaeanism and humanize the colonized.

The Caribbean writer uses language to denounce the dispossession of language. A striking example of an attempt to deprive the native of his language is the law against abusive language: "There was a law against using abusive language. Can you imagine such a law among people for whom making a spectacle of yourself through speech is everything?" (25). Kincaid’s indignation, perceived through her rhetorical question, points to the magnitude of the disaster of censoring one’s native language. By silencing the colonized, the colonizer uses language in an attempt to implement colonial ideology. The colonizer instills in the colonized an inferiority complex that renders them submissive and prevents them from acting to reverse colonialism. In essence, the colonizer rewrites history, thereby erasing the previous identity of the colonized. As a result, the colonized becomes “divorced from reality” (Memmi 106).

Jamaica Kincaid writes *A Small Place* in reaction to the speechlessness of the oppressed. Interviewed by Moira Ferguson, Jamaica Kincaid admits that she is

writing about the powerful and the powerless. She is thus pursuing a political project in favour of "the wretched of the earth":

> In my first two books, I used to think I was writing about my mother and myself. Later I began to see that I was writing about the relationship between the powerful and the powerless. (Ferguson 9)

Driven by a subversion of "a single-minded way – the tourist's, the government's – of looking at things" (Ferguson 86), Jamaica Kincaid attempts to give us the muffled voice of the native. She thus uses language to enforce recognition of herself and of

> the people in Antigua now, the people who really think of themselves as Antiguans (and the people who would immediately come to your mind when you think about what Antiguans might be like; I mean, supposing you were to think about it). (*A Small Place* 80)

Kincaid here linguistically creates a distance between the "you" as the white tourist and colonizer and the "they" as the black colonized. Ironically, it is the black subject as a formerly colonized subject, who uses the white's own language in order to exclude the white. Language, in this sense, becomes a means of fighting colonial Manichaeanism and violence. At first, the Manichaean view of the world is kept but subverted. Now, black is beautiful, white is ugly. Throughout the memoir, Kincaid ridicules the colonizer and reduces him to rubbish. According to Keith Byerman : "Just as the Eurocentric perspective reduces the colonized to objects of ridicule and abuse, so here the visitor from the outside world is made the object of derision by the natives" (93). Jamaica Kincaid's irony is conveyed when she insists:

> An ugly thing, that is what you are when you become a tourist, an ugly, empty thing, a stupid thing, a piece of rubbish pausing here and there to gaze at this and taste that, and it will never occur to you that the people who inhabit the place in which you have just paused cannot stand you, that behind their closed doors they laugh at your strangeness (you do not look the way they look); the physical sight of you does not please them; you have bad manners (it is their custom to eat with their hands; you trying to eat their way, you look silly; you try eating the way you always eat, you look silly); they do not like the way you speak (you have an accent); they collapse helpless from

> laughter, mimicking the way they imagine you must look as you carry out some everyday bodily function. (17)

The tourist/ colonizer is turned into a caricature. It is now the tourist, not the native, who is the object of amusement and diversion. The tourist is no longer seen as a human being. In *Mother and Motherland in Jamaica Kincaid*, Sabrina Brancato points to the sub-humanization of the tourist (94). Tourists might be human in their lands but the moment they leave their lands driven by imperial incentives, they lose their humanity. A tourist is "a whole person" at home, with his family, with his relatives, with his friends (15-16). Otherwise, he is an object. He is rubbish.

Jamaica Kincaid deconstructs the language of the colonizer. The language which used to glorify the white man is now used to belittle him. In "Confronting Empire," Arundhati Roy advocates such a resistance to Empire through "shaming" it, "mocking" it, "depriving it of oxygen" and through "the ability to tell stories that are different from the ones we're being brainwashed to believe"(112). The Mill Reef Club is subject to such subversive mockery. The Mill Reef Club elite are "pigs" (112). Kincaid indeed describes them in relation to Antiguans only to belittle them. She says:

> And then there was another place, called the Mill Reef Club. It was built by some people from North America who wanted to live in Antigua and spend their holidays in Antigua but who seemed not to like Antiguans (black people) at all, for the Mill Reef Club declared itself completely private and the only Antiguans (black people) allowed to go there were servants. People can recite the name of the first Antiguan (black person) to eat a sandwich at the clubhouse and the day on which it happened; people can recite the name of the first Antiguan (Black people). (27)

The reiteration of parenthetical references to "Black people" and Black person" serves Kincaid's project of reinforcing black identity. She echoes Césaire's motto: "We adopted the word Negro as a term of defiance" (*Dicourse on Colonialism* 29).

While white people are reduced to pigs, black people are defined twice, first as Antiguans and then as blacks. Kincaid uses language to shatter the Manichaeainsm of the colonist. At this level, she has not renounced binarism but uses it in order to avenge the Antiguans who have internalized the colonizer's Manichaeanism. The people of Antigua lack political awareness. They fail to identify the enemy, the master. They have interiorized slavery as their identity. They speak of slavery "as if it had been a pageant full of large ships sailing on blue water" (54). By reviving the slave narratives, they negate their humanity. In *the Colonizer and the Colonized*, Albert Memmi argues that the colonized ends up accepting this Manichaean division of the colony (131). He thus participates in his own dehumanization.

In order to remedy this dehumanization, Kincaid condemns colonial Manichaeanism, turns it upside down, uses it in a burlesque way and finally eradicates it. Kincaid is willing to totally abandon this Manichaeist reduction of the world, whether it serves Antiguans or Europeans and Americans. This is foreshadowed in questioning the fairness of "heaven as a reward and hell as a punishment" (26). The Antiguan author seems to be asking whether the perpetuation of the bifold prejudiced understanding of the world is productive.

Rejection of and resistance to the dehumanizing nature of colonial ideology necessitates a renouncement of colonial Manichaeanism. As Paulo Freire argues, "the process of humanization requires all to shift to a dialogic world that breaks down the binaries of an oppressor repressed world" (Freire 41-52). Colonization is based on these binaries; decolonization is thus the annihilation of these binaries, the annihilation of Manichaeanism. In her book, *Nous, décolonisés*, Helé Béji advances that decolonization is the human being's resistance to his dispossession (13). The colonized rejects the identity assigned to him and struggles to create a new

humanism which would recognize him as a human being. The oppressed's subjectivity is thereby achieved through the refusal of the Manichaeist basis of colonialism and neocolonialism, which can only result in violence, be it physical or symbolic. Though not physical, Jamaica Kincaid's linguistic resistance is a form of violence since it shatters the foundation of colonial ideology which is Manichaeism.

This rejection is lauded in *A Small Place*. Even though this work is marked by Kincaid's hatred and disdain of the tyrannical white colonizer, it is a book that is driven by love, love of the human being. Jamaica Kincaid is concerned with articulating the humanity of the subaltern, a humanity negated by the colonizer. She wants both colonizer and colonized to be human beings:

> Of course, the whole thing is once you cease to be a master, once you throw off your master's yoke, you are no longer human rubbish, you are just a human being and all the things that adds up to. So, too with the slaves. Once they are no longer slaves, once they are free, they are no longer noble and exalted; they are just human beings. (81)

Thus ends *A Small Place* echoing *the Wretched of the Earth*'s ending about "creating a new man" (239). Kincaid's resistance to Manichaeanism reaches its climax here. The tourist is no longer rubbish. The native is no longer a slave. They are both human beings. Colonialism and neocolonialism are dehumanizing. Resistance acquires an ontological dimension, hence the concern with subjectivity in Kincaid's writings.

Both fervently cry out against the dispossession, and for the humanization of the "wretched of the earth" or as Fanon himself calls them "the gangrene ever present at the heart of colonial domination" (130). While the absence of women in *The Wretched of the Earth* is undeniable, one cannot say so of *A Small Place*. It is, first of all, the resistant voice of a woman. Isabell Hoving suggests that the very fact of refusing to gender tourists and colonists involves the white woman in colonial and

neocolonial practices. She says: "Kincaid's writing is never gender-neutrally postcolonial, not even in its most straightforward anticolonial moments" (224). Indeed, the references to the speaker's militant mother engages femininity in anti-colonial struggle. Most importantly, it foreshadows the pertinent mother-daughter relationship with its colonial overtones, a crucial subject matter in Jamaica Kincaid's novels.

In the following chapters, I will study colonial Manichaeanism and its repudiation in two eponymous novels: *Annie John* and *Lucy*. I will decipher the processes of dehumanization and humanization through resistance to colonial ideology and its cultural legacy. I will refer, apply and criticize Fanon's decolonial theory as well as feminist theories to account for the problems and danger in mis-representing female subjects, and to trace their agency and resistance. I will investigate the relationship between women, and how it underscores the indefiniteness of the female subject. I will focus, in particular, on the mother–daughter relationship. In *Dying Colonialism*, Frantz Fanon offers a pertinent image whereby he links the rape of the Algerian woman to the rape of the homeland (35). Jamaica Kincaid uses such an analogy between her mother and the motherland only to insist on their painful conspiracy to erase her subjectivity.

Chapter II:

Death and Resistance of Colonial Subjects in *Annie John*

My second chapter: "Death and Resistance of Colonial Subjects in *Annie John*," focuses on the implementation and internalization of colonial dogma and the protagonist's resistance to it and to its deadly practices. I argue that colonial ideology is marked by death, and that resistance to it both appropriates and withstands death. I first study the mother-daughter relationship as emblematic of the colonizer-colonized relationship. I contend that this ambiguous love-hate relationship represents the pre-colonial and colonial periods. In the novel, Annie's childhood represents the pre-colonial period marked by obedience and innocence, where the girl enjoys a symbiosis with her mother. Her maturity symbolizes the colonial period where the mother splits from her daughter and becomes one with the colonizer, pushing the girl to rebel. This rupture engenders symbolic death, and a descent into hell, which is conveyed through the Satan metaphor. Images of heaven, hell and death are tropes for colonial hegemony and resistance, and are the angle from which I address the anticolonial semi-autobiographical novel. Kincaid manages to manipulate death in her engagement with power and resistance. Authority figures such as the mother and the school celebrate symbols and particularities of the settler's culture and violently smother those of the native's culture, hence the analogy with death.

Annie John depicts the damaging effects of colonialism in twentieth century Antigua and illustrates how colonial ideology persists through the settler, the mother and the teacher. Antigua, a small island in the Eastern Caribbean, is a former British colony marked by slavery. The novel, which was written in 1985, transcends time and space to take place in colonial Antigua and pay homage to slaves, Jamaica Kincaid's ancestors. Analogous to *A Small Place* which was written three years later, *Annie John*

becomes a space for poetic justice whereby the Caribbean novelist seems to avenge her forefathers, and sometimes even blame them for the violence and ravages that had been done to them. A world of childhood and adolescent adventures marked by merriness and depression replaces, however, the blunt choleric tone of *A Small Place*. Through this marriage of innocence and experience, heaven and hell, autobiography and fiction, reason and spirituality, Kincaid once again denounces colonial principles which are grounded on Manichaeanism, and outstrips their oppressive boundaries.

In the previous chapter, I have defined colonial Manichaeanism, studied Kincaid's condemnation of it, and analyzed the nature of resistance offered in *A Small Place*. To be more precise, I argued that colonialism and neo-colonialism are violent, unfair, prejudiced and dehumanizing enterprises that legitimize and nurture racism, and that they are met with resistance from the colonized. I used Frantz Fanon's understanding of dehumanization as an inevitable result of racism and unfounded feelings of superiority. The value of this chapter is to prove, extend and evaluate my previous argument as studied in the first chapter and to critically explore modes of resistance other than anger and writing, as I argued is the case in my analysis of the controversial memoir. In her novels, Jamaica Kincaid seems to resuscitate aspects of Afro-Caribbean culture, such as traditional food, the practice of obeah and even slavery, as her characters struggle against the Eurocentric colonial ideology. Such an ideology is mainly imposed and preserved through the school and, quite disturbingly, through the mother. They both seem to adopt and strive to enforce colonial ideology to the detriment of Afro-Caribbean culture. In a less explicit manner than *A Small Place*,

Annie John articulates the repudiation of colonial ideals which, in this case, are exercised by the mother and the school and which entail impending resistance.

Mother and Daughter between Heaven and Hell:

The complex mother-daughter relationship is a recurrent theme in Caribbean women's writings, which are marked by a nostalgic return to the homeland and a symbolic, oftentimes angry, confrontation with the mother. The mother figure is central in the development of the daughter's identity and arouses ambivalent feelings on the part of the daughter. She is at the same time the example and the obstacle towards attaining a personal voice and space. Simone A. James Alexander speaks of the biological mother's entering an "enemy zone for her complicity with the mother country" (*Mother Imagery in the Novels of Afro-Caribbean Women* 7). This duplicity of the mother figure is rendered in the novel through the love/hate relationship. The colonized both hates and loves the colonizer. In his seminal work on colonialism, Albert Memmi questions: "How could he [the colonized] hate the colonizers and yet admire them so passionately?"[1] (x). Similarly, Annie John hates and yet admires her mother. The former "spent the day following [her mother] around and observing the way she did everything" (15). The love and complicity are lived in a paradise-like phase, a precolonial phase. The hate and rupture are lived in the hellish phase: a

[1] Richard Philcox, the translator of *The Wretched of the Earth*, describes Fanon's relationship with France as a "love-hate, off-again/on-again relationship" (*WE* 244).

colonial phase. The mother as a colonial figure banishes her daughter from the Garden of Eden, an act which endorses binary structures of metaphysical thinking.

Kincaid seems to appropriate the creation myth, and infuses it with colonial connotations to subvert Manichaeainsm. In *Caribbean Genesis: Jamaica Kincaid and the Writing of New Worlds*, Jana Evans Braziel puts forward a pertinent argument to this idea. She remarks: "In the biblical account of Genesis, there are three fundamental divine separations –light form darkness; sky from water; land from sea" (21). What interests me is these separations that are sustained by the biblical creation myth, and that nourish Manichaeainsm. For instance, the light and darkness dichotomy is a recurrent antithesis in colonial discourse. In *WE*, Fanon provokingly says that "the final aim of colonization was to save them from darkness" (2004: 149), "to lighten their darkness" (1967: 166). This darkness, he explains, is associated with "barbarism, degradation, and bestiality" (149). Kincaid re-writes the Genesis creation narrative to disrupt these racist and unfair divisions. The reference to John Milton's *Paradise Lost* and its role in the narrative sustains this idea where the rebellious protagonist is made to copy a literary European appropriation of the Fall of Man as a bitter punishment. The mother/daughter relationship, a duplicitous relationship, enacts both periods: heaven and hell, where the mother represents the colonizer.

The mother has not always been a colonial figure. The second chapter of the novel, "The Circling Hand" is, in part, about the idyllic mother-daughter relationship and the love and admiration felt for the mother. Annie John enjoys the days spent in perfect harmony with her mother, during which the mother and daughter are described

as inseparable and almost the same person[2]. They often take a bath together, "in which the barks and flowers of many different trees, together with all sorts of oils, were boiled in the same large caldron" (14). Annie's home becomes an edenic space, replete with flowers and herbs and associated with happiness and innocence. The pre-colonial mother is an unsubordinated mother who celebrates her Afro-Caribbean heritage. Indeed, she is associated with Obeah and traditional Caribbean food, which she is resolute to teach to her daughter (17). The protagonist seems to inhabit a precolonial edenic garden, where the mother is depicted as a beautiful woman, with almost angelic features. In this heavenly paradise, the mother stands for Eve. Annie repeatedly brags about her mother: "What a beautiful long neck, and long plaited hair, which she pinned up around the crown of her head. [...] Her nose was the shape of a flower on the brink of opening. Her mouth [...] was such a beautiful mouth" (19). Annie describes her joy in living harmoniously with her mother. She stresses their intimacy. As Annie remembers, the mother used to "stoop down and kiss [her] on [her] lips and then on [her] neck" (25). Annie equates this union with Paradise when she says: "It was in such a paradise that I lived" (25). This prelapsarian mother also resists parental patriarchal authority. After quarrelling with her own father, Annie's mother leaves his house on Dominica to go to Antigua (19), and takes her trunk, a trophy of freedom, with her.

Yet, the trunk announces the mother's betrayal and the painful mother/daughter separation. In the paradisiacal phase, the loved mother is keen on recording events of her child's life. Annie informs us that "No small part of [her] life was unimportant that

[2] I develop this physical oneness with the mother in chapter 3.

[her mother] hadn't made a note of it" (22). The trunk is a book on which Annie's history is written. But, like the colonizer's interference in writing the colonized's history, the mother's story-telling denies the girl's agency. In this sense, the trunk becomes a token of colonial dominion. It, most importantly, reveals the mother's feelings of love as beguiling. Linda Lang-Peralta fairly describes the mother's love as a "desire for mastery" (102). She expands her idea thus: "One cannot fail to recognize in this brief description of a mother's love the same self-delusional justification of oppressive control employed by a colonial ruler" (102). The mother's oppressive control is only felt when Annie John grows up. The mother seems to reject her daughter's independence and subject-formation. She resembles in this respect the colonizer who is not willing to accept the colonized's "mature humanity." As Diane Simmons elucidates: "the mother's refusal to accept the girl's impending maturity mirrors the colonial society's refusal to recognize the mature humanity of those descended from slaves" ("Jamaica Kincaid and the Canon: In Dialogue with *Paradise Lost* and *Jane Eyre*" 85).

When Annie John grows, the mother shatters the bond of love and cruelly substitutes it with chains of mastery and authority. Annie John laments:

> Because of this young-lady business, instead of days spent in perfect harmony with my mother, I trailing in her footsteps, she showering down on me her kisses and affection and attention, I was now sent off to learn one thing and another. (27)

The process of "cultivation" and "civilization" now begins, entailing much like the plight of colonization, death, destruction and decay. Both the mother and the colonizer

threaten the colonized's existence and identity. In *the Wretched of the Earth*, Fanon portrays the colonizer as a smothering mother:

> Colonialism was not seeking to be perceived by the indigenous population, as a sweet, kind-hearted mother who protects her child from a hostile environment, but rather a mother who constantly prevents her basically perverse child from committing suicide or giving free rein to its malevolent instincts. The colonial mother is protecting the child from itself, from its ego, its physiology, its biology, and its ontological misfortune. (149)

This maternal over-protection results in dehumanization. By preventing the child from developing a subjectivity of her own, the mother suppresses her daughter's freedom, makes hell out of heaven, and triggers the fall.

This ethereal mother is suddenly disfigured, reduced to a hand, a "circling hand" that eludes love. This treacherous hand symbolically displaces the devotion felt for her daughter to the husband. It now caresses the small of the father's back (30). But, Annie, a faithful angel, takes the certificate for best student in her study-of-the Bible group, to reconquer her mother (30). To her dismay, the docile girl finds out a sinful, lustful mother with an aura of death[3], and whose hand is depicted as "white and bony, as if it had long been dead and had been left out in the elements" (30). The angel transforms into the rebellious Satan. She "talks back" to her mother for the first time: "And what if do?" (31), foreshadowing her imminent resistance. The metaphor of the circling and treacherous hand links the mother to the colonizer in still another way. Annie Senior lures little Annie into eating the (bread)fruit, "the much hated breadfruit" (83). In *My Garden (Book)*, Kincaid tries to account for this *hate* of breadfruit which

[3] In Milton's *Paradise Lost*, Satan meets Sin and death at the gates of Hell in book II of *Paradise Lost*. The mother in this scene seems to incarnate the allegorical trilogy of death, sin and Satan and announces the entrance to hell.

seems to be common to Antiguan children. She explains that the breadfruit "was meant to be a cheap food for feeding slaves," and that "in a place like Antigua, the breadfruit is not a fruit, it is a weapon." Children refuse it because they seem to "sense intuitively the part this food has played in the history of injustice" (135-36). By forgetting the history of injustice, the beautiful mother "turns into a crocodile" (84), because she collaborates with the colonizer. Worse, she is now equated with the colonizer.

This mother-conspiracy is an obstacle to the daughter's quest for emancipation and self-identity, hence the disobedience that characterizes Annie John and her desire to thwart her mother's expectations. Much like Satan, the girl's sedition leads to her fall. The girl bitterly discloses: "To say that I felt the earth swept away from under me would not be going too far" (26). The mother withdraws her empowering love, and replaces it with a snake as ominous of death. *Annie John* is a critical re-writing of the biblical myth. What is lost is not love for God, but love for the human being. The fall is the death of the human being, and more specifically the colonized subject. The snake is also, traditionally speaking, a phallic symbol that highlights the mother's submission to colonial patriarchal ideology. The garden is plagued by decay, where graves and dead bodies have now come to replace flowers and herbs. The deterioration of the edenic garden stands for the colonization of the native land. In the previous chapter, I have evoked the colonizer's connection to death through his responsibility in the killing and disappearance of indigenous people. In this chapter, death is metaphorically conveyed through the withering of the garden, through the end of the pre-colonial period. In *Annie John*, the images of death coincide with the ruthless separation between Annie John and her mother.

Both the mother and the colonizer reduce the colonized to the status of slave, to a subhuman. They rely on the same dogma and both seek to coerce her into Englishness, into “something she is not”[4]. Annie John is aware of this unfair and inhuman division. In chapter five, she compares her ancestors and the ancestors of Ruth, an English girl. She says: "Her ancestors had been the masters, while ours had been the slaves" (76). *Annie John* is a girl's response to this dehumanization which, despite the abolition of slavery, only seems to persist through the indoctrination of colonial ideology. In trying to make Annie English, the mother, buttressed by the colonial school, tries to eradicate Annie's Afro-Caribbean identity, hence the complex death imagery and anxiety that a ten-year old girl shares with us in the beginning of *Annie John* and which prevails throughout the novel. The first chapter of the novel, "Figures in the Distance," opens with the theme of death. It is first strikingly associated with the mother. Annie John mentions that a girlfriend of hers died in her mother's hands (5). Kathleen Renk goes so far as to suggest that Annie “fears death at her mother’s hands” (47). This atmosphere of death prepares for the annihilative forces, embodied in the mother and the school, that threaten the main character's identity. The mother, just like the colonizer, believes in a monolithic notion of what it means to be human. This negation of difference, especially of one's singularity, is a Eurocentric project which can only harm the one reduced to silence. The mother, in Fanon's terminology, is negrophobic (*BSWM* 163). She sympathizes with the myth of

[4] Interviewed by Selwyn Cudjoe, Kincaid says: "I was always being told I should be something, and then my whole upbringing was something I was not: it was English" (219).

black inferiority and imitates the Europeans' way of life.[5] She sends Annie John to British teachers to teach her "good manners" and piano lessons and is alarmed when her daughter disapproves of such impositions (28).

These attempts at framing Annie according to British ideals are met with resistance. Little Annie makes "farting-like noises each time [she] had to make a curtsy" (28) and eats from the bowl of plums the teacher had placed solely for decoration (28). By acting childishly, Annie John is denying growth and thus separation from her mother. Indeed, her infantilism is deliberate and calculated since she lies to her mother to avoid attending one of these classes; she tells her that she does not need improvement, which can only please the latter. It is interesting to note that Annie John's disobedience starts when she is made to learn the British way of life. Earlier in the novel, she is happy to obey her mother and bring her thyme or basil or some other herb (25) as part of the Caribbean woman's duties. Indeed, the paradisiacal phase is marked by an emphasis on Caribbean food like this long parenthesis Annie John gives us: "When we got home, my mother started to prepare our lunch (pumpkin soup with droppers, banana fritters with salt fish stewed in antroba and tomatoes, fungie with salt fish stewed in antroba and tomatoes, or pepper pot [...] ") (17). But when the mother starts to make of Annie an exemplar British girl, the latter chooses another camp, a camp where the mother can no longer command.

The mother is evidently devastated by her daughter's noncompliance with British rules. Actually, she only feigns separation; she is not willing to let her daughter

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[5] In the previous chapter of my thesis, I have used and explained Fanon's concept of whiteness: according to him, black people who comply with the whites see themselves as whites and are considered white and can thus be perceived negrophobic.

have an identity of her own. Instead, she wants her to conform to British ideals which she has herself internalized through what Fanon terms "the collective unconscious," (*BSWM* 191), which is the result of the "unreflected imposition of culture" (191). That is, Annie's mother seems to believe that to be a good person, one has to model oneself on a white person, for as Fanon explains: "in the collective unconscious, black= ugliness, sin, darkness, immorality. In other words, he is Negro who is immoral" (*BSWM* 192). Now she walks away from Annie. This Hellish phase thus coincides with Annie's maturation, foreshadowing the Lucifer metaphor that flourishes later in the novel.

Resistance:

"So black subjects share the space the dead inhabit"
(Sharon Patricia Holland, *Raising the Dead* 6)

Annie John mourns the end of a love relationship, which is abruptly replaced by a relationship of dominion and control, similar to the colonizer/colonized relationship. She, however, does not give in to the noxious forces around her, and plays with death, making it almost a laughable matter. Actually the major character of the novel seems to hold a morbid interest in death as a reverse psychology. She plays with the leitmotif of death in order to rebel against the death of love, the death of the memory of her past, the death of her heritage. She wants to revive her past, her local

culture in specific and human bonding in general. To do so, she first appropriates the theme of death and turns it upside down. She does so on two levels; on the level of form and the level of meaning. She then resorts to love, water and Obeah to counter death.

The title Annie John leads us to believe that it delineates the spiritual and moral growth of a girl named Annie John and as such could be classified as a bildungsroman. Some critics like Adlai Murdoch do categorize Annie John as a bildungsroman (Caton 133). A bildungsroman, according to Maria Karafilis, is "a novel that relates the development of a (male) protagonist who matures through a process of acculturation and ultimately attains harmony with his surrounding society" ("Crossing the Borders of Genre" 63). *Annie John* relates the development of a female protagonist who refutes acculturation, and who ultimately leaves her surrounding society, subverting the classic application of the bildung genre. The incorporation of death in the coming-of-age story further undermines the classic interpretation of the bildung. In his review of the book, Louis F. Caton, referring to Dana Heller, interestingly argues that, unlike the male version which ends in maturation "this male quest motif to a female character end [...] in either her death or her marriage" (126). Between death and marriage, the unruly girl chooses death.

Annie John indeed "plan[s] never to marry at all" (132). In this sense, we are offered a parody of the genre in which everything is subverted, birth is replaced by death, and adjustment to society by rebellion and eventually separation. Ultimately, the novel closes with her departure, which denotes openness, and thus resists death. Jamaica Kincaid subtly warns us against reading her novel as a classic coming of age

story. She, once again, challenges conventions in order to castigate colonial authority and practices and to resist the reductive Manichaean vision of the world. Indeed, this ironic appropriation of a European tradition foreshadows the protagonist's disapproval of imitation. Kincaid "colonizes" this literary form ("Crossing the Borders of Genre" 64). To put it another way, the Caribbean novelist deforms a European practice in order to suggest that the colonized is not a mere replication of the colonizer. Instead, she is an imitation with mockery, or as Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin argue:

> When colonial discourse encourages the colonized subject to "mimic" the colonizer, by adopting the colonizer's cultural habits, assumptions, institutions and values, the result is never a simple reproduction of those traits. Rather, the result is a "blurred copy" of the colonized that is quite threatening. That is because mimicry is never very far from mockery, since it can appear to parody whatever it mimics. (*Key Concepts in Postcolonial Studies* 139)

In this "blurred copy," the first chapter of the novel is entitled "figures in the distance." These "blurred" figures seem to be mourners. Annie John extends this image thus: "From our yard, I could see the cemetery. [...] I could see various small, sticklike figures, some dressed in black, some dressed in white, bobbing up and down in the distance" (4). By establishing "distance" between her and these mourners, Annie John is saying no to death. She shuns people having experience with death. She shuns death. Her fear of the dead confirms this idea of distance. In the colonial context, the bildungsroman is replaced by a survival narrative. Indeed, her first encounter with death is traumatizing. Annie John sees dead people everywhere: "Sometimes they showed up in a dream [...] But sometimes they would show up standing under a tree just as you were passing by" (4).

These haunting images might translate a deeper anxiety that goes back to Annie

John's past. Elaine Pigeon's psychological analysis of Annie John's fixation on death, in her article "Jamaica Kincaid's *Annie John*: The Trauma of Colonial Education," is concerned with the traumatic mneme that is engendered by the colonial experience (384). Pigeon reads the figures in the distance as ghosts of the past, Annie's ancestors (384). Indeed, the little girl soon overcomes her death phobia and instead develops a fascination for death and becomes an adept of the cemetery. Following Pigeon's logic, one might argue that this interest in the graveyard is a search for and a commemoration of a silenced past. Annie John is reminding us that the history of colonialism is a history of destruction and eradication. Her preoccupation with death becomes an attempt at avenging and even resuscitating her enslaved ancestors. It is an attempt at voicing the voiceless, at decolonizing the colonized. This "raising of the dead," in Sharon Patricia Holland's words, is

> a figurative enterprise as well as an intellectual and therefore concrete endeavor. The task was both to hear the dead speak in fiction and to discover in culture and its intellectual property opportunities for not only uncovering silences but also transforming inarticulate places into conversational territories. (3-4)

In other words, the death imagery is a resistance technique, which reinvokes the history of slavery and makes the dead reappear and occupy a space that has been denied to them. Mimicking the colonizer, Annie John associates herself with death to denounce the former's annihilation of her history, identity and culture. Once again, Jamaica Kincaid's ironic style is omnipresent in her work. Annie John employs a parody of death to ridicule the colonizer. The recurrence of death references and images which accustom the reader to the idea of death trivializes death and withholds its horror. Annie's approach to death borders on the grotesque. She goes to a cemetery

to wait for funerals to come (4), she repeats the details of Nalda's death to her friends at school (6), and later in the novel, she does not react when Mineu is about to be hanged (98). But the most telling example is when she and her friends "sit on the tombstones of people who had been buried there way before slavery was abolished, in 1833, [...] sing bad songs, use forbidden words [...] and show each other various parts of [their] bodies" (80). In this instance, the space of death becomes a revolutionary space, where rules are defied, language misused and female bodies uncovered. It is a space that allows for a re-writing of history, blurring the boundaries between past and present, life and death, evil and good.

Going further, these practices are connected to a fundamental understanding of self and salvation. Kincaid appropriates death to resist the strictures imposed on her by an oppressive ideology. Death becomes a relief from those suffocating spaces such as home and the school, which are marked by authority and discipline. The only moments of respite we have are when she takes us to tombstones or graveyards where the manacles can no longer contain the metaphorical dead body. Jamaica Kincaid is radical in the sense that she fights submissive life with death. Faithful to her subversive style, she uses death to advocate life and freedom. With this idea in mind– that of advocating life by embracing death– , I would like to study the contravention of conventions and confines as a form of resistance to the narrow tyrannical ideology and thus as a resistance to death. Similarly, Sharon Patricia Holland links the "raising of the dead" to the subversion of Manichaeanism. She interestingly says:

> Perhaps the most revolutionary intervention into conversations at the margins of race, gender, and sexuality, is to let the dead–those already denied a sustainable subjectivity–speak from the place that is familiar to them. Moreover, speaking from the site of familiarity, from the place

> reserved for the dead, disturbs the static categories of black/white, oppressor/ oppressed, creating a plethora of tensions within and without existing cultures. (*Raising the Dead* 4)

Annie John is indeed a space of transgression, a space of resistance where Jamaica Kincaid plays with conventions, laughs at them and deconstructs them. Her tone is conflicting, at times derisive, at others exacerbated. She seeks to subvert preconceived ideas and to prove their erroneousness. She plays with forms and identities to delegitimize colonial culture and legacy. I analyzed the manipulation of the bildungsroman as a transgression of a European form. At the level of meaning, Jamaica Kincaid resists the stereotypical representation that the colonizer attempts to enforce. I already explained how such a reductive and unfounded image participates in the dehumanization of the colonized. She does so by deconstructing fixed identities.

The ambiguous relationship between Gwen and Annie is a noteworthy example of mockery and deconstruction as forms of resistance. While many critics try to categorize this relationship as a homosexual one, Jamaica Kincaid herself justifies that it is an example of contravening conventions. As she comments: "The relationship between Gwen and Annie is only a practicing relationship. They were meant not to observe the convention of men and women because I was trying to do away with certain conventions" (Vorda 52). Kincaid refuses limitations that subdue her, and proves her agency in the face of the colonized by resisting the conventional forms of representation and proposing a politics of resistance based on love. Love becomes another type of resistance against racism, the foundation of colonialism.

Indeed, Gwen appears when Annie John is forsaken by her mother. Gwen incarnates an attempt at re-living the pre-colonial period based on love. Gwen

becomes Annie's love object, from whom she cannot separate, as she herself reckons: "Gwen and I were soon inseparable. If you saw one, you saw the other" (4). The girls' reciprocated love alleviates the deadening aloofness of the mother so much so that Annie John no longer suffers, at least temporarily, from her mother's treason. She recalls: "When I was younger I had been afraid of my mother's dying, but that since I had met Gwen this didn't matter so much" (51). Love is a counter-motif to death. Since colonial ideology is based on notions of hate, racism, inferiority and superiority that result in death, Jamaica Kincaid proposes a politics of resistance that is based on love and that would defy death. In his theorizing of love, Michael Hardt, the political philosopher perceives love as a political concept, which corroborates this idea of love beyond death, of love beyond difference, of love beyond destruction. In *Multitude*, he suggests:

> We need to recover today this material and political sense of love, a love as strong as death. This does not mean that you cannot love your spouse, your mother, and your child. It only means that your love does not end there, that love serves as the basis for our political projects in common and the construction of a new society. Without this love, we are nothing. (351)

Jamaica Kincaid denounces colonial principles and makes Annie John love Gwen because she is a stranger, and the red girl because she is different and because she does not "meet with her mother's approval" (59). Actually, the colonial school does not encourage difference; on the contrary, it seeks to produce similar and obedient school girls. Annie John observes: "I was sure I would never be able to tell (the girls in my classroom) apart just from looking at them, and I was sure that I would never be able to tell them apart from the sound of their voices" (35). The school, like the mother,

inculcates in pupils a fixed and strict mode of behavior, which can only thwart Caribbean identity.

The colonial school aims at forming or rather erasing the Caribbean female subject. In "the African Presence in the Caribbean," Edward Brathwaite underscores the colonial project of the school and its disregard and even elimination of native cultures. He explains it thus:

> Second, the process of education began-first clerical, then secular, but always colonial. Depending on who owned the territory, the ex-slaves were to be molded into the British or the French or the Spanish system. They began to learn to read or write so that they were diverted from the oral tradition of their inheritance; they became literate in a language which was foreign to them, "liberated" into a culture which was not theirs…At the same time, there was no countervailing influence to help them learn about their own tradition. This of course did not "have to" happen. (75)

The education system plays an important role in producing and maintaining colonial ideology. It preserves the idea of superiority. The teachers, who are associated with knowledge and power, are British. They indoctrinate, punish and evaluate the young. Apart from the hierarchy between teachers and pupils, the school encourages the division between pupils. The less studious girls are considered inferior: " the girl who scored lowest was made to wear the dunce cap all day the following day" (75). It cultivates feelings of rivalry and egocentrism. Miss Edwards has an explicit preference for Hilarene because she is a "model of good behavior and keen attention to scholarship" (73). Annie John deconstructs this notion of the model. She wins the first place over all the other girls (72), and yet she is "among the worst-behaved in [her] class and [does not] at all believe in setting [herself] up as a good example, the way a perfect [is] supposed to do" (73).

However, Annie John seems to take pride in being reckoned as extremely smart by her British teachers. Read in Fanon's psychoanalytic theory of the black intellectual, Annie John seems to reclaim recognition from her mother and her teachers through her knowledge and perspicacity. According to Fanon, black intellectuals expect their color to be forgotten by displaying the force of their intellect (*BSKM* 193). Annie John uses her intelligence to get respect from the colonial figures that suppress her: "Whenever I felt I was falling out of my mother's good graces I would let her see me absorbed in these books. She would come over and caress my forehead, kiss me" (55). It is not surprising that her superior position, "perfect of [her] class" (73), is withdrawn from her when she flouts the British educational system and undermines its symbols.

Among Annie John's rebellious deeds that create consternation and tension is the "Columbus in Chains" episode. The protagonist defies this obliterating enterprise and strains once again to revive her culture. The importance of this anecdote lies in the significant rupture it creates. It first marks an actual breach between Annie John and her mother and teachers. It then signals Annie John's spiritual growth, and her consciousness and awareness of her colonized past. Dissatisfied with the account of her own history transmitted by the colonizer, Annie John tries to imagine a different history, to imagine a reversed situation where her ancestors had left from Africa to Europe (76). This re-created past is marked by friendship, kindness and reverence and not racism, exploitation and bondage. In an attempt to rewrite history, Annie John attributes a mocking legend to the picture of Columbus. The legend which says "The Great Man Can No Longer Just Get Up and Go" (78) debilitates "the usually

triumphant Columbus" and challenges the idea of invasion and conquest. Columbus is no longer depicted as the traveler and discoverer of lands, but as a paralysed man. Annie John's symbolic act of defiance is condemned as blasphemous both by her mother and the school so much so that she now is equated with Satan.

Satan is the first major character introduced in John Milton's *Paradise Lost*, the book Annie is made to copy as a punishment. His credo "Better to reign in Hell than serve in Heaven" seems to be Annie John's credo, and even Jamaica Kincaid's. Annie John is actually portrayed like Satan "blasphemous" and "arrogant" (82). In an interview with Allen Vorda, the Caribbean novelist uses the same words as Milton's Satan and confirms her sympathy with the evil figure's audacity and rebelliousness: "Yes. It is better to reign and to have self-possession in Hell than to be a servant in Heaven" (64). This metaphor of Satan is worth studying for its complexity and richness, for not only does it assimilate both Annie John and Kincaid to Satan but it also questions Manichaean European essentialism. Fanon had already made this parallelism between evil and blackness: "In Europe, the black man is the symbol of Evil" (188). He even writes: the "torturer is the black man, Satan is black" (189). Kincaid plays with this disconcerting image of Satan to prepare for the emancipation of Annie John from the repressiveness of colonial figures who are actually satanic. This episode ends with the mother's description as a crocodile: "It was as if my mother had suddenly turned into a crocodile" (84), an image which distorts the mother's angelic beauty, and emphasize the withering of the edenic garden.

This mother-daughter disunion and the estrangement from the school cause Annie John to suffer from alienation. She goes through a physical and a metaphorical agony.

In *Black Soul White Artifact*: *Fanon's Clinical Psychology and Social Theory*, Jock McCulloch underlines Fanon's differentiation between neurosis and trauma in this way: "Thus, while all Antilleans live the situational neurosis of believing themselves to be white, only the évolués experience the trauma accompanying the destruction of the white mask" (70). Right after her rebellion, Annie John, the bright child, endures the Fanonian trauma of the "évolué." She describes this enigmatic suffering as follows:

> In the year I turned fifteen, I felt more unhappy than I had ever imagined...My unhappiness was something deep inside me, and when I closed my eyes I could even see it. It sat somewhere-maybe in my belly, maybe in my heart; I could not exactly tell--and it took the shape of a small black ball, all wrapped up in cobwebs. (85)

Confronted by a new world of unfriendly and docile girls, Annie John feels even more alienated, tears the "white mask" and sees herself as black: "My skin was black in a way I had not noticed before, as if someone had thrown a lot of soot out of a window just when I was passing by and it had all fallen on me" (94). She only finds comfort in imagining and identifying with the fallen angel's affliction and solitude. Once again, Kincaid endeavours to recast the opposing categories of good and evil by commiserating with the devil incarnate. "At heart, you could see (Lucifer) was really lonely and miserable at the way things had turned out" (95). Likewise, Annie John is lonely and miserable but she now wants a trunk of her own, she now aspires for a life of her own. It is then not in the least incongruous that her unfathomable disorder is accompanied with a symbol of life, growth and vitality: the Long Rain. Water counters death. More importantly, its fluid and agitated nature washes off the restrictive boundaries which are enforced by colonial ideology. Commenting on the enlivening significance of the water, Ferguson writes: "The family's immersion in water marks

their stability. Water with beautiful aromas spells a hydrotherapeutics that negates a stagnant colonialism. Water is vitality and an awakening of nerve centers" (*Where the Land Meets the Body* 45). The water imagery now supersedes the death imagery foreshadowing feelings of freedom and denoting resistance. Symbolically enough, her father and mother handle her as if she "were just born" (113). Ma Jolie, the Obeah figure, a highly Afro-Caribbean emblem, acknowledges the significance and the animating nature of the rain: "She said that, with all the rain, it was impossible for anything meaning [Annie John] harm to be living outside in the yard" (117). The Obeah world is an essentially female world replete with liberated and non-conforming women. Annie John's father retreats when Ma Jolie comes. Other Women appear however, and they are unsurprisingly disliked by Annie's mother. Miss Catherine and Aunt Mary are described as barren (123) and as such as anti-mother figures. These two women actually deprecate Annie's domestication by her mother. Indeed, the latter's lack of interest in Obeah (123) furthers the gap between her and these independent and resistant women.

In *Annie John*, Obeah is a tool of resistance against colonialism, its reductive ideology and its destructive practises. In *Sacred Possessions: Vodou, Santeria, Obeah and the Caribbean*, Obeah is defined as an African practice of healing and harming. The slaves used it against British colonies (6). Allan lan Richardson explains, in "Romantic Voodoo: Obeah and British Culture, 1797-1807," how Obeah formed a repository for the "collective memory of the slaves" by preserving African traditions that opposed the dominant colonial culture (7-8). In popular culture, Obeah women are said to restore life. Ma Chess, the Obeah figure par excellence, metaphorically restores

life by performing an aspect of Afro-Caribbean culture and curing Annie from colonial trauma. Obeah is a counter-motif to death. The reference to Uncle Johnnie's death corroborates this idea. We are made to understand, at least from Ma Chess's point of view, that Uncle Johnnie died because he was not saved by the power of Obeah. Instead, a doctor came to see the ailing uncle, as Pa Chess decided, causing him to die. As a result, Ma Chess never spoke to her husband again, did not attend the funeral, and always wore black (125). This episode is interesting for the following reasons: it first confirms the practice of Obeah as a feminine practice; it then establishes Obeah as contrasted to death and even beyond it. Obeah, like water, counteracts the lifeless and the stagnant.

Ma Chess, protected by the long rain, comes to save Annie. She succeeds in liberating Annie from her mother's colonial handcuffs and takes her to a pre-colonial era. Besides, Annie's grandmother even recreates the craved for and untainted mother-daughter bond. "(Ma Chess) did all the other things that my mother used to do" (126). Critics like Diane Simmons and Lizabeth Paravisini Gebert link Ma Chess's religious beliefs to African cultural practices, through which the latter offers a lost "primordial maternality" to the 'deserted' daughter (Gebert 104). Actually, Ma Chess helps Annie reconnect with her heritage and culture, that the mother strains to thwart, and thus help her redefine herself and overcome the psychological ordeal. When Annie feels better, Ma Chess leaves in a spiritual and enigmatic atmosphere congruent to the Obeah ritual. The triumph of Obeah anticipates the freedom of Annie John from the smothering colonial constraints incarnated by both the mother and the school.

The opening sentence, "My Name is Annie John" (130), of the last chapter

corroborates this idea of liberation and announces ideas of subject re-construction, which I will dwell on in my final chapter through the eponymous novel *Lucy*. As Annie John walks to the jetty, she inwardly abandons her mother, Obeah women, Gwen and her homeland. Extending the metaphor of Satan, Annie John re-enacts the former's exile from heaven, and exiles herself from the homeland. Commenting on this "closing image," Maria Karafilis writes that it "is one of enervation, loss and emptiness, as the protagonist leaves for the metropole, not to achieve hybridity but to repress her West Indian heritage" (74). This West Indian heritage resurfaces, however, in *Lucy*. *Lucy* is as critical as *A Small Place* and *Annie John*. It is yet another genre Kincaid masters to convey her anger and pain because of colonialism and neocolonialism. She indeed offers other sites of resistance in order to assert a denied subjectivity.

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Chapter III:

Movement and the Female Body or the Movement of the Female Body in *Lucy*:

In this chapter, I argue that in Jamaica Kincaid's *Lucy* the female body is both a site of oppression and a site of agency and resistance to colonial patriarchal ideology. I more specifically focus on the movements of the female body, and how it vacillates between veiling and exposure to resist colonial Manichaeanism. The woman moves her body in many ways to escape the objectifying gaze. This chapter demonstrates how feminine identity is re-negotiated through the movement of the body between visibility and invisibility. It studies both veiling and exposure as methods of subjugation and resistance.

In Jamaica Kincaid's *Lucy*, migration, sexuality and photography are but some of the activities in which the body is engaged. They are also processes which question meanings and identities, and which reveal sites of feminine resistance. Divided into five chapters which are respectively called "Poor Visitor," "Mariah," "The Tongue," "Cold Heart" and "Lucy," *Lucy* traces a perilous, non-linear journey, whereby the major character seeks to reclaim her denied subjectivity. The novel, which was written in 1990, was described as a postcolonial bildungrsoman, and/or an anti-travel narrative; much like its protagonist, it refuses classifications. The aspect of deviation from a particular tradition is however undeniable and is indeed corollary to Kincaid's creative project. In *Lucy*, creativity is conveyed through the form but most importantly through the content. I perceive feminine identity in the novel as related to movement and as such fluid and creative. The profusion of antagonistic female figures corroborates this idea of fluidity and openness which debunks patriarchal and colonial fixed ideas. To account for this resistance to reductive colonial hegemony, I read and criticize Fanon's

analysis of colonized women's resistance, and apply Irigaray's keen insights on women's relationships and their exile from their bodies.

In “Algeria Unveiled,” the first chapter of *A Dying Colonialism*, Frantz Fanon analyzes the importance of women in the eyes of the colonizer. He writes: "After it had been posited that the woman constituted the pivot of Algerian society, all efforts were made to obtain control over her" (164). Control over women becomes a strategy that enforces the process of colonization. Fanon focuses on clothing, which is related to the body, in his examination of the colonizer's desire to possess the woman. He is particularly interested in the veil of the Algerian woman[1]. According to Fanon, the European man wants to take the Algerian woman's veil off, a veil she wears as a resistance to European values, to claim possession of her body, and thus of her. To use Fanon's words: "To the colonialist offensive against the veil, the colonized opposes the cult of the veil" (171). The veil hides the colonized woman from the colonizer, who wants to "have" her. He explains: "This woman who sees without being seen frustrates the colonizer" (169).

In "Feminism and the Colonial Body," Kadiatu Kanneh, commenting on Fanon's theory, writes:

> The feminising of colonized territory is, of course, a trope in colonial thought. In Fanon's analysis, Algerian women are placed in a metonymic process where both veil and woman become interchangeable, scopic signifiers of colonized Algeria itself–as oppressed, inscrutable and dispossessed. (346)

[1] In “Algeria Unveiled,” Fanon admits in a footnote that by veiled woman in the Arab Maghreb, he does not refer to the rural or Kabyle woman. He acknowledges that the Kabyle woman resists domination in many different ways but he does not deal with them.

Added to this representation of the colonized woman as a veiled, "inscrutable" and oppressed woman, Kanneh proposes another representation, in which the body is not veiled but still oppressed. He argues that there are two "static and yet contradictory, representations, of the colonized woman," the veiled body, as explained by Fanon in "Algeria Unveiled," and the exposed body, its alternative in the West Indies. In the West Indies, Kanneh explains, the veil is replaced by the breasts which are exposed, confirming the colonizer's racist prejudice about the black woman's promiscuity. In this second representation, the European man seeks to possess the colonized woman by concealing her and taming her (347). While Kadiatu Kanneh has the merit to point out the exposed and veiled female body as a colonial and decolonized body, I think, it is restrictive to separate between them. I would argue that the same female body can be both veiled and exposed. He also, together with Fanon, disregards the magnitude of other forms–non-literal ones–of female exposure and veiling as resistance tools: scars, the camera, and writing, all of which we find in *Lucy*, a West Indian novel. The role of women, both colonizer and colonized, in concealing and revealing bodies is not fully developed, despite its major importance. This chapter tries to fill these gaps. It, on one hand, analyzes the movements of the female body between veiling and exposure, and, on the other, examines the role of women in suppressing or promoting corporality as resistance to colonial Manichaeanism.

In this same article, Kanneh writes that these two representations emerge from "a network of European knowledge systems," which Fanon identifies as: "written accounts...photographic records...motion pictures," and the gaze of the tourist and the foreigner" (347). This European system is based on colonial Manichaenism and is thus

to be subverted. *Lucy* offers both the exposed and the veiled body. The female body must resist colonial and patriarchal attempts, which are implemented by both women and men, and which aim at veiling or exposing it. The first part of the chapter deals with these oppressive attempts encountered mainly in two mother figures: Mariah and the biological mother. The second part deals with the body as a site of agency and resistance through a deliberate swaying between visibility and invisibility.

The oppressive and oppressed female body:

The novel opens with a migratory move which does not guarantee the expected freedom to the colonized subject. This is due to the oppressive presence of two mother figures: Mariah and Lucy's own mother. Lucy leaves to distance herself from the body of the mother/motherland only to find out she is haunted by it, and to perceive a colonial gaze in another woman: Mariah. Indeed, Mariah, both consciously and unconsciously, promotes the female body but seeks to veil the colonized female body. The first and best example of this argument is Mariah's western feminism. At the end of the novel, the latter speaks of women in universal terms, to which Lucy responds:

> Mariah wanted to rescue me. She spoke of women in society, women in history, women in culture, women everywhere. But I couldn't speak, so I couldn't tell her that my mother was my mother, and that society and history and culture and other women in general were something else altogether. (132)

According to Kanneh, Mariah participates in the "acculturation" (347) of "the Third World" female body. This means that she wants to impose her own culture and way of seeing on the colonized woman, or as Kanneh puts it: "The bodies of black people have

been metaphorically invaded, analyzed and represented by liberal, paternalist (or maternalist) principles"(348). This metaphorical invasion veils the colonial body and denies its agency. Mariah's attempts at veiling the colonized's body are reinforced through her disavowal of her past. The European man in the West Indies wants to veil the breasts. The American woman in *Lucy* wants to veil the colonized's past. I interpret Mariah's nostalgia for her own past, and the Daffodil episode as examples of this argument.

The difference between these two women is announced from the titles of the two first sections of the novel, "Poor Visitor" and "Mariah," each of which has been carefully chosen. Lucy is dislocated; Mariah is not. The former is but a visitor with no feeling of belonging, to either past or present. Mariah's movements, however, are free, both spatially and temporally. And the change in weather is the only inconvenience for her. To resist the fixed representation which paralyzes the body, the transnational major character of the novel develops an obsession for movement. Not only does Lucy fantasize about moving, but she imagines this act to be repetitive and endless. She claims: "for I would imagine myself entering and leaving them, and just that – entering and leaving over and over again"(3). At this point, Lucy is unaware of the "unhealable rift"[2] that awaits her. She believes exile is the *sine qua non* condition of liberty. She reckons:

> For I felt that if I could put enough miles between me and the place from which that letter came, and if I could put enough events between me and between the events mentioned in the letter, would I not be free [..]?(31)

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[2] I borrow this expression from Edward Said in his definition of exile in "Reflections on Exile." The quote goes as follows: "Exile is strangely compelling to think about but terrible to experience. It is the unhealable rift forced between a human being and a native place, between the self and its true home: its essential sadness can never be surmounted" (173).

The deliberate unnaming of the homeland, and the linguistic distantiation through the adjective "that" underline the emotional distance from "true home," and nullify nostalgic feelings about the past. Actually, we are offered a condemnation of nostalgia–at least in the beginning of the novel–which becomes synonymous with dispossession, in the figure of Mariah, the American model mother and employer. Mariah is nostalgic about a past where the colonized is denied agency, and whose past is veiled. While Lucy flees her past, Mariah goes back to her past in search for freedom. When they drive to the small town, the foreign girl observes: "As she passed through this town, she seemed to forget she was the wife of Lewis and the mother of four girl children" (34). First, Mariah is afforded the possibility to relive her past, which arouses in Lucy, to use Edward Said's word, "resentment" ("Reflections on Exile" 180).[3] Then, in her childhood town, Mariah feels nostalgic and starts speaking of Gus, her family's employee, "as if he belonged to her," (33) "as if she owned [him]" (33). In her article "The Daffodil Gap," Irline François explicates how Lucy discerns a reductive gaze in Mariah's love for her childhood friend, who is also her employee. She elaborates that "Mariah's image of Gus [is] subsumed by nostalgia so that he is denied agency or an identity of his own" (*Jamaica Kincaid* 88). What particularly interests me is this causal relationship between nostalgia and the repudiation of agency. Mariah's privileged position is not threatened by romanticised nostalgia. In fact, it is the servant, Gus, who is being reduced for the sake of a merry past with no necessary

[3] In his thoughtful essay "Reflections on Exile," Said, himself an exile, analyzes the gaze of the exile at the non-exile. He writes: "Exiles look at non-exiles with resentment. They belong in their surroundings, you feel, whereas an exile is always out of place. What is it like to be born in a place, to stay and live there, to know that you are of it, more or less forever?" (180-181). Lucy, indeed, echoes Said when she bitterly and repetitively asks: "How does a person get to be that way" (26).

awareness of master/servant hierarchy. Mariah's revival of the past perpetuates subjugation. Lucy, on the contrary, cannot delightfully revive a past where she is made a subaltern, hence the repudiation of the past. Furthermore, her anger at the impossibility of recovering the past is emphasized by the leitmotif of the ruin, which is recurrent in the novel. The ruin, a visible remainder and reminder of an irrecoverable past, is associated with other people in a symbolic attempt to counter death and decay. In this sense, the ruin becomes another ploy to distance oneself from the body of the colonized land. However, Kincaid connects the ruin to Western characters. She makes Paul love ruins (156) and Mariah's family look like ruins (88), which suggests a wish to revive the colonized's past in the eyes of the colonizer, to make it visible to them.

In *Where the Land Meets the Body*, Moira Ferguson suggests that Mariah feels culpable for being on the colonizer's side. She writes: "Mariah desires forgiveness for colonial complicity, but Lucy cannot countenance Mariah's efforts to rewrite history. In her efforts to cancel the past and reposition Lucy, Mariah contributes to and continues the totalizing narrative of old colonial relations" (113). While I do agree with Ferguson about the colonial undertones of their relationship, I disagree about Mariah's confession of colonial complicity. All Mariah seems to truly want from Lucy is approval of her way of life, which is quite narcissistic and perilous for Lucy's decolonization. Throughout the novel, there is no mention of Mariah's awareness of the colonizer/colonized dichotomy. References to Mariah's ecological commitment abound, however, as if to deride her concern for animals over human beings. She does not desire forgiveness because she does not even admit her complicity, at least for being an imperial tourist who buys a memento from every visited country (12). She

rejects it by claiming Indian origins, which she uses to distance herself from the colonizer, and through which she perpetuates the savage/civilized division. She boasts of her Indian blood which, as she says, endows her with fishing, catching and hunting skills (39). To Mariah's disappointment, her shallow efforts arouse neither the reader's nor Lucy's sympathy. In fact, Lucy acerbically reminds us that her American employer is a victor who claims to be the vanquished (41).

Indeed, Mariah's "efforts to cancel the past," as formulated by Ferguson in the quote cited above, only target Lucy's past. The daffodil episode is an example of erasing the colonized's past. This is suggested by Mariah's emphasis on the beauty of the daffodils and disregard of Lucy's trauma. Mariah fails to grasp Lucy's anger at daffodils, and tries–in a physical move–to obliterate their corrosive significance. In fact, she tries to subdue Lucy's "untamed" body; she blindfolds her, uncovers her eyes, holds her hand and walks her to the garden (28). In another time, Mariah draws the blind in the train to expose this same landscape (33). By veiling and unveiling spaces, Mariah controls Lucy's body and physically forces her into her ahistorical, though not depoliticized, sphere. She, again, wants to veil the colonized body. She loftily calls Lucy's attention to the aesthetic aspect of the flowers, and overlooks their British colonial connotations. In doing so, not only does she eulogize about Western values, to the detriment of non-Western ones, but she tries to circumvent Lucy's resistance manifested in her anger. This "unveiling," in Kanneh's words: "is confused with a mission of female liberation and a paternalistic notion of empowerment, which, in practice and at base, is a politics of ownership and control" (347). The young employee does not yield to her employer's attempts at "breaking her resistance" (347) and

"controlling" her. Lucy, as a colonized subject, realizes the danger in ceding to the beauty of these flowers, however insignificant it may seem, and performs instead an act of poetic vengeance. She imposes the memory of her past on "these freshly plowed fields" when she cruelly says to Mariah: "Well, thank God I didn't have to do that" (33). Lucy sees slaves in these fields and tries to make them visible to Mariah by sharing her feelings with her, which is, after all, an endeavor initiated by the latter. Thus, the negation of the colonial body is resisted through a restoration of colonial bodies. She then continues, as an aside: "I don't know if she understood what I meant, for in one that statement I meant many different things" (33). "Different things," technically speaking, is an understatement for colonization and dispossession, which Kincaid/Lucy uses to highlight Mariah's heedlessness to colonization. This episode marks the continuation between Lucy's history of enslavement and her present dislocation. Lucy discerns a colonial gaze, manifested in the negation of her history, despite the "vast ocean" she has crossed.

In coming to this unnamed city, Lucy's expectations are thwarted and her journey does not promise to be unencumbered. She rejects her new colonial surroundings. This new place –critics inform us it is New York – is "dirty," "ordinary," the food is day-old and cold, the sun is pale, "all is wrong" (5). She deconstructs ideas of superiority associated with the Western world and revives instead images of Antiguan food:

> In the past, the thought of being in my present situation had been a comfort, but now I did not even have this to look forward to, and so I lay down on my bed and dreamt I was eating a bowl of pink mullet and green figs cooked in coconut milk, and it had been cooked by my grandmother, which was why the taste of it pleased me so, for she was

> the person I liked best in all the world and those were the things I liked best to eat also. (7)

This highly evocative and sentimental image is contrasted with the dimness and narrowness of the maid's room, an image which doubly confines her. She is labeled as a maid, which she is not, and she feels squeezed into a box like cargo (7). This subjugation causes her body to shrink and even to metamorphose. Later in the novel, she stresses the necessity to leave this narrow "maid's room" because it thwarts her assertion and self-realization. It makes her feel like “a dog on a leash” (110), making the human body totally disappear.

But she is aware that "home" is not a better place. She firmly says: "I knew that I never wanted to live in that place again" (51). In the motherland, her affliction is most intense since she sees the colonial gaze in the closest person to her: her mother. Lucy has physically removed the body of the mother/motherland, but is still overpowered by it through ambivalent feelings of anger and melancholia. She is haunted by the memory of her mother because she suffers a self-exile, or an exile from the body, as Irigaray explains. The Algerian woman, in Fanon's essay, overcomes this self-exile through the veil. That is, she becomes aware of her body the moment she covers it from the colonizer. When she wears the veil, she perceives a new gaze in the colonizer's eyes; a perplexed gaze desperate for control. It is at this triumphant occasion that she discovers her body, and regains it. Fanon explains this self-possession in terms of revelation and maturity. He writes: "The body of the young Algerian woman, in traditional society, is revealed to her by its coming to maturity and by the veil" (181). The veil becomes that which connects the woman to her body. In Lucy's colonial past, the woman is unaware

of her body, disconnected from it. The girl is often shocked when she discovers her feminine body, an idea we find both in *Annie John* and *Lucy*. It is not only invisible to the colonizer, but also to herself. In "Women's Exile," Luce Irigaray stipulates that women are exiled from themselves because of the absence of a female Symbolic, which is governed by the Law of the Father. The dominance of the masculine inhibits a symbolized mother-daughter relationship. The woman's earliest libidinal attachments to her mother are thus destroyed for the sake of a male Symbolic, which entails a denial of female subjectivity and results in self-exile (77-78). To use Irigaray's words:

> A woman, if she cannot in one way or another, recuperate her first object, i.e., the possibility of keeping her earliest libidinal attachments by displacing them, is always exiled from herself. ("Women's Exile" 76)

In "Women's Exile," Irigaray compares such an exile to rape where women's auto-eroticism has been interrupted "by instructing them that they are nothing by themselves, that they are not female without the penis" (83). The woman is nothing. She does not have a penis and is thus invisible. Rethinking the representation of the mother-daughter relationship, according to Irigaray, is threatening to the patriarchal system, which considers the former as "the dark continent of the dark continent" (Irigaray qtd. in Whitford 77). Lucy's inability to attain freedom, that which she has left her country for, is due to her loss of her earliest libidinal attachment. She is exiled from her body. Her mother abandons her for her three male children, in whom she projects her hopes and dreams. By doing so, she thwarts both her subjectivity and her daughter's, as Lucy says: "I pointed out the ways she had betrayed herself. I said I believed she had betrayed me also" (127). The forsaken daughter expresses her

bitterness at the phallic mother who prevents her from exploring her female desires, and who devoted her whole upbringing to preventing her from becoming a "slut" (127)[4]. In Lucy's past, the female body is a locus for male and female control and dominion. For instance: one of Lucy's schoolmates is chastised because she integrates a male space: her father's room. She is bodily dispossessed and beaten (21). Interestingly, the taming of the female body in this instance both hides and exposes the body. It first hides it by the very act of devilish possession, making the devil visible, not the girl. It then exposes it to others as a marginalized female body in pain, and as such as highly visible. Annie recalls how she and her friends used to contemplate this tormented body:

> She took sick, and we, my other schoolmates and I, used to stand in the street outside her house on our way home from school and hear her being beaten by what possessed her, and hear her as she cried out from the beatings. (21)

Again, control over the woman is a corporeal process that results in veiling or exposure. The impetuous girl who transgresses spaces vanishes. Her body melts when the devil possesses her. Later, the narrator recalls instances of punishments and moral reinforcement that target the body:

> If I did anything she considered bad, she would threaten to give me senna tea, a purgative that caused bad stomach gripes; or she would threaten to put me in a barrel and shut the lid tight and forget about me. When I did things that pleased her, she would bathe me and comb my hair and dress me up in her old clothes, and then she would insist that I go to sleep in a clothes basket lined with clean rags[...] It was hard to see the difference between the punishments for one set of things and the rewards for others. (111)

[4] A '"slut," a leitmotif in many of Kincaid's novels, can easily and ironically be attributed to all the female figures in the novel, which only stresses its relativity.

Nevertheless, the attempt at taming the body does not result in a normalization because Lucy fails to differentiate punishments from rewards. Lucy does not subscribe to Maude's dialectics of good and evil. Her body seems to resist Manichaeanism. And yet, the efforts at subduing Lucy's body persist through the mother's letters about frightening U.S underground trains. After reading them, the exile says she "was afraid to even put [her] face outside the door" (20).

Mariah and Lucy's mother do not only oppress other bodies but also their own bodies. In *An Ethics of Sexual Difference*, Luce Irigaray elucidates:

> Without realizing it, or willing it, in most cases, women constitute the most terrible instrument of their own oppression: they destroy anything that emerges from their undifferentiated condition and thus become agents of their own annihilation, their reduction to a sameness that is not their own. (88)

Mariah and Lucy's mother "constitute a terrible instrument of their own oppression." Their frustrated and failed sexual lives corroborate this idea. Sex is, interestingly, used as a metaphor for these two central women figures. The self-effaced and submissive woman, Mariah, blames herself for male impotence and accepts bad sex from Lewis, her husband who cheats on her (114). Upon hearing this, Lucy advices her "to forget herself completely" (115). Appropriating Irigaray, Mariah reduces herself to "a sameness that is not hers." Thus, she is not a subject because she does not acknowledge sexual difference. She negates female pleasure, and privileges male pleasure. In other words, she promotes the male body, and veils her body. By forgetting herself, Lucy might mean that she should forget this patriarchal sameness, and rediscover herself and her body, as a woman. By recognizing sexual difference, Mariah would no longer see herself as subordinate to the man, and would no longer blame herself for not fulfilling

his desires. Instead, she would promote her body and her own pleasure. Besides, Lucy’s mother is the "slut" she does not want Lucy to become. Describing the sexual experience as prosaic and apathetic, the mother literally exchanges sexual intercourse for financial security. Both Mariah and her mother collaborate with the patriarchal system. This alliance with the colonial patriarchal ideology prevents a positive mother-daughter relationship, central to the woman's subject-formation, and oppresses the body, reducing its multiple pleasures.

What follows is an analysis of the use of the body in Lucy's struggle against subjection. In this struggle, the eponymous character unveils her body through an exploration of sexuality and veils it in different ways, only to claim control of her body and prove the fluidity of identity. At this juncture, however, she is a foreigner whose only possession is family letters, to which she clings in a desperate attempt to write a selfhood Mariah and Lewis denied her though their reductive and somewhat condescending baptism: the poor visitor. This literal embrace of letters–she places the letters inside her brassiere–is, however, unsatisfying. Neither the perspective of a Western subject nor that of the colonial subject seem to entice her, for they are both alienating for the freedom-aspiring young woman. Not only that, the idea of conforming to a single ready-made identity decided by the dominant forms of knowledge comes to repulse her. She wonders: "In this great big world, why should my life be reduced to these two possibilities?" (21), the possessed girl "beaten by a *man* she could not see" or the immigrant girl "getting her throat cut by a *man* she could see" (21). Lucy resists colonial and patriarchal control of her body.

The resistant body:

In *Politics of the Female Body*, Ketu H. Katrak describes the woman's exile from her body, or her dissociation from her body in the following words: "Female protagonists undergo what I term 'internalized exile' where the body feels disconnected from itself, as though it does not belong to it, and has no agency" (2). This idea of disconnection is wonderfully rendered in *Lucy*, where the re-connection with the body is signalled through "the tongue." The third chapter, which comes after the "Mariah" and "Poor Visitor" is significantly entitled "the tongue" and comes as a prelude to self-possession. The tongue is a metonymy for the body, but also for language. In *A Small Place*, Kincaid expresses her outrage at the colonizer's erasure of her mother tongue, which she describes as the worst dispossession:

> But what I see is the millions of people, of whom I am just one, made orphans: no motherland, no fatherland, no gods, no mounds of earth for holy ground, no excess of love which might lead to the things that an excess of love sometimes brings, and worst and most painful of all, no tongue. (31)

By reclaiming the tongue/body, which is–as is inferred in the quote above–linked to identity, Kincaid gives voice to Lucy and tries to ease her exile and allegorical orphanhood. The remainder of the novel becomes a recovering of that which has been usurped, denied and lost due to colonization: tongue (voice/female body) and earth (body of the motherland). It is, in other words, a reclaiming of one's humanity.

The body is described as a body in movement, in a constant struggle to be seen, to resist the attempts at veiling it. I study both the scarred and sexualized body as visible bodies. Scars and sex expose the body and thus re-configure it. The visibility of

the colonial female body is, provocatively, introduced in the novel through a woman who served time in prison: "Her name was Sylvie; she had a scar on her right cheek, a human-teeth bite" (24). Significantly, this woman is an outcast because her body is highly visible. While this woman is rejected by the hypocritical mother –who keeps their relationship secret– Lucy holds such an admiration for her that she sees beauty in imperfection. Scars become more beautiful than flowers. She recalls: "I was sure that the mark on her face was a rose she had put there on purpose because she loved the beauty of roses so much she wanted to wear one on her face" (25). This beauty in perversion is part of Kincaid's project of the deconstruction of Manichaean aesthetics, and is a reconfiguration of the female body. It challenges the imposition of western norms of beauty on non-western ones. Looking at Mariah, Lucy implicitly denounces these standards, yet unconsciously subscribes to them and is seduced by her blue eyes. She remembers: "she looked at me, and her blue eyes: (which I would have found beautiful even if I haven't read millions of books in which blue eyes were always accompanied by the word "beautiful") (39). Lucy admires Sylvie because she distorts and exposes her body, for which she is punished. Sylvie's incarceration, which literally conceals her body, underscores the threat of the visibility of the rebellious female body.

Surprisingly, the mother bears a scar. The harmony between mother and daughter in the past is bodily expressed[5]. Lucy recollects a childhood memory marked by physical intimacy and in which the mother's face is not only visible but also deformed:

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[5] In the previous chapter, I analyzed the duality of the mother in *Annie John*. She is both an oppressive and resistant figure.

> When I was at an age where I could still touch my mother with ease, I used to like to sit on her lap and caress a large scar she had on the right side of her face, at the place where her temple and hairline met. (54)

The scar (which is what Lucy wants to have) presents another facet of the mother, an obstinate and defiant woman, who is thus admired by her daughter. On her way to school, the mother walks through a forest and gets attacked by a monkey. The monkey might very well be a degrading metaphor for the masculine gaze of the colonizer. This approximation of monkey and colonizer is suggested by Louis's story who, in a patronizing act, tries to make Lucy feel better and tells her a story about his uncle who preferred the company of monkeys to the company of men (14). This analogy is subversive. It challenges the mythical association of the black subject with the monkey, an association we indeed find in both *A Small Place* and *Annie John*. In *A Small Place*, the headmistress asks the children to "stop behaving as if they were monkeys just out of trees" (29). In *Annie John*, the protagonist wonders why her "silly" friend is "behaving like such a monkey?" (137). In *Lucy*, it is the colonizer who is a monkey, a proof that the Manichaeainsm of the colonist produces the Manichaeainsm of the colonizer, as Fanon argues. Kincaid reverses the dehumanizing gaze, which is quite shocking for the reader, who almost grew accustomed to the assimilation of the black to the monkey.

Now, Lewis is portrayed as a monkey chasing Lucy around in her dreams (14), an image that is closer to the possessive gaze of the colonizer. Analyzed in the light of Fanon's psychoanalytic theory, Lucy's nightmares highlight the depiction of Lewis as a colonial figure. Frantz Fanon deciphers the erotic dream of the European man about the Algerian woman in which there is a "rending of the veil" (169) and " possession, rape,

near-murder" (170). These two aggressions are "a double deflowering" (169). Lewis's "chasing around" in the protagonist's dreams can be read as a fear from "a double deflowering," which is triggered by the reference to the monkey, or rather by the re-creation of the colonial context. To put it clearly, Lewis recalls the colonizer, and provokes anger in Lucy, who is unconsciously threatened by the monkey reference, and as such has to fight him and return his dehumanizing gaze.

The gaze of the monkey–just like Lewis's gaze–makes Lucy's mother uncomfortable, but, this time, it does not go unpenalized:"She did not like the way the monkey stared at her and so she picked up a stone and threw it at the monkey" (54). The violent confrontation ends with the mother bleeding "as if she were not a human being but a goblet with no bottom to it" (54). The monkey dehumanizes the mother metaphorically and literally, first with its gaze and then with the stone. The latter "miraculously" survives this "double deflowering" thanks to her own "mother's skill at dealing with such events" (55). Not only does Lucy allude to Obeah as female resistance, but she specifically exhibits the colonized female body as a scarred body. The scar, it seems, is the retribution for each woman who wants to unveil her body through interactions in supposedly male spaces: physical fight (the mother and Sylvie) and going to school. It is a taming of the exposed body, as Kanneh demonstrates, except that the exposed breasts are replaced by a mark of deformed beauty: the scar.

In many instances, the visibility of the body prevails over the voice. One of them is Lucy's description of her first forms of sexual experimentation. She remembers having a voiceless relationship with a boy in the library, which, consistently, ends because of an unpleasant smell. In this childhood memory, Lucy uses her body to

assert her power over the boy. They do not kiss. SHE "places [her] tongue inside his mouth" (51). She seeks to reclaim possession over her body, which he seems to have denied her when he approached her. She describes his desire to dominate her thus: "And suddenly he got up, walked over to me, and pressed his lips against mine, hard, so hard that it caused me to feel pain, as if he wanted to leave an imprint" (50). Not fully satisfied with this emblem of dominion, she returns an apparent "imprint" "in front of his trousers" that he seeks to hide (51). In other words, she rends the veil–in this case the trousers–and thus controls him.

Another noticeable childhood episode in which the body is physically distorted as part of a rebellion against oppression is the Myrna episode. Myrna's body refuses to evolve almost as though it defies the cruelty of her mother, who is compared to a "wicked stepmother" (102). Luce Irigaray argues that this representation of the mother-daughter relationship (daughter-wicked stepmother) is a frequent image, especially in Greek mythology, which is however denigrating and not adequate, and which needs to be re-thought (Whitford 77). Myrna's disproportionate body mirrors this misrepresented relationship. It also stresses the perversity of Mr. Thomas and Myrna's disturbing imperturbability when hearing the news of his death. Actually, the death of Mr Thomas triggers in Myrna feelings of anger and contempt because her lucrative source disappears. Lucy is amazed to learn that "she had been crying for herself" (104), that she cried because "whatever she would eventually do with the money, she did not have enough of it" (105). Lucy sees in Myrna the "slut" her mother does not want Lucy to be. Kincaid/Lucy's reaction is doubly hypocritical, both to Myrna and the reader. Through displaying mock sympathy (to Myrna), and absurd jealousy (to the

reader), she wants to be provocative. Her cold-heartedness, as is the title of this section of the novel, is as shocking as the abuse of a girl. She performs a vicarious "sluttish" behaviour. The narrator and protagonist of the novel tries to compensate, through her narrative style, for not having been disobedient to her mother, for not having been a "slut." In terms of the chronology of the narrative, this return to the past comes when Lucy meets Paul, the "pervert" guy (97). The desperate attempt for past reparation is obvious here. Paul's hands refer to Mr Thomas's hands, the crime tool, and become an obsession associated with the sea.[6]"And so it was that hands I would come to know very well –Paul's hands, moving about in the fish tank –reminded me of some other hands lost forever in a warm sea" (109). Put simply, Lucy tries to make of Paul a Mr. Thomas in order to herself resemble Myrna and appropriate her rebellion. Apart from the written compensation, Lucy engages in sexual adventures and mimics the identity of a "slut" in the hope to acquire a denied identity.

Echoing Kanneh's analysis of the colonized West Indian female body as promiscuous, Ania Loomba points out that: "non-Europeans, especially women, are repeatedly constructed as libidinally excessive and sexually uncontrolled" (*Colonialism/Postcolonialism* 154). Lucy replicates this fixed image and uses it to repossess her body. The sexualized body plays a key role in the process of subject formation and self-possession. Lucy embarks on a hedonistic journey as an awareness and acceptance of the transformation of the body, and the desire to free this body from any constraints, including the self-inflicted ones. Actually, Lucy, and previously Annie

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[6] The image of dirty hands to be washed form crime is a notable Shakespearian image that haunts Lady Macbeth in *Macbeth*. The **cold-hearted** woman pushes her husband to kill a man, subverting preconceived ideas of frailty and delicacy associated with a woman.

John who ends up sick, are frustrated because they repress and displace their sexual desires. They do not accept their physical growth, in part because it entails a separation from the mother, and also because they ignore the manifestations and repercussions of these changes. Lucy is "shocked" (68) when she grows up. She realizes she is "undergoing a change, and there [is] nothing [she] could do to stop it" (69). These repeated and desperate undertakings to discipline the body now give way to the exaltation of a highly visible and loved body. Lucy is taller than her first lover Hugh. (65). This new acquaintance who has just come from travel does not direct a racist gaze at Lucy. He indeed praises the idea of movement as a source of elation:

> Isn't it the most blissful thing in the world to be away from everything you have ever known–to be so far away that you don't even know yourself anymore and you're not sure you want to come back to all the things you're a part of ? (66)

This interrogation is a call for indeterminacy and variation, which reflects Lucy's sexual experience with Hugh, Paul, Ronald and, to some extent Peggy.The eponymous character engages in sexual exploration in defiance of her ascetic education, but also as a celebration of feminine pleasure. She exalts female eroticism to remedy the exiled body, as explained by Irigaray, to reconnect with it, to be aware of it. On feminine pleasure, Luce Irigarary reveals that: "The geography of her pleasure is far more diversified, more multiple in its differences, more complex, more subtle, than is commonly imagined – in an imaginary rather too narrowly focused on sameness (28)". This broadening of feminine pleasure, which is, in fact, a broadening of identity, subverts the idea of lack and invisibility often associated with the female body. Lucy is thrilled to discover that "pleasure could exist and, what was more, be available to [her]" (113). The enumeration of erogenous zones reconfigures the female body and

makes it even more visible, and especially more visible than the penis. When she first sees Hugh, she imagines him kissing her everywhere, caressing her everywhere (66). They often lie on the grass with no clothes on (67), celebrating the visibility of the body.

In a remarkably Kincaidian fashion, the Caribbean novelist proposes an episode where roles are reversed –a strategy she uses to denounce these roles, where the female body seeks of her free will to hide in order to reclaim possession of her body. In "Algeria Unveiled," Frantz Fanon studies the unveiled Algerian woman's body as a de-colonized body. The woman, he explains, forsakes the veil to physically engage in colonial struggle (182). Paradoxically, she rends the veil to hide. She is no longer an Algerian woman but a European woman: "The Algerian woman who walks stark naked into the European city relearns her body, re-establishes in a totally revolutionary fashion" (181-182). What interests me is this movement from veiling to exposure, or from exposure to veiling, as a bodily resistance tactic. In this regard Fanon says: "This new dialectic of the body and of the world is primary in the case of one revolutionary woman" (182). In the novel, when Lucy leaves the countryside for the city (86), she withdraws and becomes an invisible "flâneuse." She subverts the gendered concept of Benjamin and Baudelaire's flâneur as a bourgeois gentleman of leisure to precisely mock the possessive male gaze. Janet Wolff's criticism of the flâneur is pertinent to this idea and is encapsulated in these words:

> The flâneur is a man of pleasure, a man who takes visual possession of the city, who has emerged in postmodern feminist discourse as the embodiment of the 'male gaze'. He represents men's visual and voyeuristic mastery over women. (*Gender and Popular Culture* 190)

Kincaid's voyeurism seeks to undermine this "male gaze." Lucy peeks into the apartment across the way and spies on an anonymous couple who are as empty as their home. It seems there is nothing to be seen, no visible bodies. Kincaid empties the spaces, there are more rooms than needed (87), but no bodies to fill them. It is as though she were saying, in that same sarcasm typical of *A Small Place* : Why would the colonizer occupy another land when his own land is empty? In this instance, Lucy distorts dispossession and turns it to her advantage. Now she is happy because she does not belong, while others are unhappy because they do belong. Miserable because bereft, Lucy is sadistically relieved by her master's suffering. This demystification of the superiority of the colonizing country acquires a heuristic significance. It foreshadows Lucy's autonomy from erroneous binaries.

The body is also made invisible via the camera. In *Family Frames: Photography, Narrative, and Postmemory,* Marianne Hirsch suggests that the camera shifts the focus of the gaze from the colonizer to the colonized (72). I agree with Marianne Hirsh, and I would like to add that,"by seeing without being seen" thanks to the camera, she now controls the colonizer's body. Lucy converts from the passive flâneur to the stage director who guides others' acts and gestures. Her obsession with movement is extended to an obsession with depriving other people from moving. By taking pictures of people, she bids them, for a fraction of a second, to keep still and smile. Quite unsurprisingly, she has no pictures of herself or of Lewis (120), the rival who always wins in the game of checkers, and who eventually *moves,* leaving his family behind, Lucy's heavy burden. Lewis is also immune to her camera because he, himself, hides behind masks; one of which, is the "Lion's mask" that he puts on to play

"the role of the amusing and adorable father" (88). The camera is also important because it allows Lucy to establish physical and emotional distance from her relatives. It becomes an emblem of Lucy's rebellion, by which she expresses her reluctance to share her feelings with others. Lucy builds a figurative wall to be emotionless. She, though unknowingly, goes to buy a camera at a crucial and tragic moment in her life, her father's death. While we expect Lucy's tears, the narrative gives us Mariah's eyes red from tears:

> I followed carrying my camera, which I now took with me everywhere, and when I saw them, apart yet closely together, Mariah's eyes red from tears, a crooked smile on her face as if she were a child trying to put up a brave front, I knew that the end was near. (118)

The camera is also her response to Paul's unrequited love. Symbolically, she buys her photographic device from Ronald, the one with whom she cheats on Paul. She seemingly seeks to protect herself through this gadget from love, because she still suffers from the grip of her first love: her mother. She previously says in the novel: "I was only half a year free of some almost unbreakable bonds, and it was not in my heart to make new ones" (71).

The penultimate episode "Cold Heart" reaches its apex and prepares for a denouement. Maude, Lucy's mother replica, comes to announce the news of her father's death. At first seeing Lucy, Maude reduces the former to a "tiny speck" (122). Maude ignores and would certainly minimize Lucy's journey from her leaving Antigua to her present day. She says Lucy's name, dragging her back to the past where her mother has mastery over her body. Maude is also described as a "bully" (121), underscoring the physical threat she represents. Consequently, Lucy's body, which she has been directing and constantly moving, betrays her:

> I stood still in silence. My head ached, my eyes ached, my mouth was dry but I could not swallow, my throat ached, inside my ears was the sound of waves wanting to break free but only dashing themselves against a wall of rocks. I could not cry, I could not speak. I was trying to get the muscles in my face to do what I wanted them to do, trying to gain control over myself. (123)

This episode anticipates lacerating feelings of betrayal, treachery and abandonment. Both Lucy and her father were forsaken by their mothers. Lucy goes on narrating overemotional and doleful details about her father's life, and how, unlike her mother, he married out of love. This sudden textual and sentimental kinship between father and daughter seems to compensate for the mother's mutilating rejection of Lucy in favor of three male children. She describes her feelings in these expressive words: "I felt a sword go through my heart" (130).

Besides, this histrionic agony, in which the body is most visible, emphasizes the power of the female body to voice inward feelings. In this scene, the power of the body is such that it inhibits the subject from resorting to other modes of expression, as speaking or crying, having thus the exclusivity of articulating pain. Also, I would like to suggest that this impressive scene of the body in pain is a re-enactment of the mother in labour. Lucy wants to retie the umbilical cord with her mother. Commenting on the mother-daughter relationship, Luce Irigaray writes: "The stress on Oedipus, on castration, serves to conceal another severance, the cutting of the umbilical cord to the mother. This relationship with the mother needs to be brought out of silence and into representation" (Whitford 25). In the passage quoted above, this relationship is metaphorically represented, brought out of silence, making visible the umbilical cord in order to re-perform Lucy's birth. The body is saved thanks to a verbal interpellation:

“You remind me of Miss Annie, you really remind of your mother" (123). Lucy breathes again: "I was dying, and she saved my life" (123). By obtaining this statement of connectedness with her mother, Lucy no longer feels alienated, regains control of her body and has the life-saving chance to object to Maude’s gaze: “I am not like my mother. *She* and *I* are not alike” (123). She finally acknowledges the two, the mother and the daughter as separate women. It is an Irigarian language work par excellence. Irigaray links the idea of subject-formation to language in this way: "for the daughter discovering a relationship of words with her mother corresponds to discovering the path of her incarnation as a woman: the path of the relationship inside herself between body and words" (Irigaray qtd. in Cimitile 180). Lucy, with the (material) help of Mariah, sends the needed money to her mother, joining thus the three women in a philanthropic act, a gesture which *betrays* the cold letter.

The double-edged leitmotif of death, that is extensively developed in *Annie John*, reappears in *Lucy* as a sign and signal of freedom. The traumatic experience of the paralysed body, which is significantly triggered by the news of death, leaves the body “old and leaden” (128). By contrast, Mariah is described as “young and light” at this moment of her life where she only thinks she is free. Lucy ironically comments: “she said she felt free. I meant to tell her not to bank on this “free” feeling, that it would vanish like a magic trick” (128). Mariah's freedom is delusional. Lucy mocks it and pursues freedom elsewhere, in death for instance. She says to the self-subsumed Paul: “On their way to freedom, some people find riches, some people find death” (129). Freedom is again connected to death, hence the aging body anticipates the last chapter of the novel: Lucy.

Lucy justifies her moving in with Peggy as a necessary step for the latter's independence from her parents. This altruistic sisterly endeavour, in the name of freedom, prepares for Lucy’s feared, yet longed-for, autonomy. Peggy is indeed the epitome of "anti-motherhood": She hates children. She does not conform to social (both white American and Antiguan) norms of femininity. This woman who, hates her parents, wears tight jeans, smokes cigarettes and genuinely asks Lucy if she comes from Ireland, takes the train every day. When first meeting Lucy, she describes " a long trip she had just taken" (62). Peggy's nomadic nature mirrors the fluidity of her identity. She transgresses gender, class and racial boundaries. The description of Peggy which accentuates the masculine gestures: "her shoulders hitched up and benched forward, sucking in heavily the smoke of a Lucky Strike cigarette" (62) recalls Judith Butler's gender performativity where "acts, gestures, enactments, generally construed, are performative in the sense that the essence or identity that they otherwise purport to express are fabrications manufactured and sustained through corporeal signs and other discursive means” (*Trouble* 173). Peggy deviates from the norm. She distorts her body to enact multiple identities. This appropriation of male gestures–albeit enticing–does not seem satisfactory for Lucy, who symbolically tries Peggy's cigarettes but does not like them, stressing even more the (de)construction of binaries which oppress the female body. Indeed, Peggy has a dissimilar history than that of Lucy. Lucy's autonomy is an autonomy from binary metaphysics, from static ideas that can only thwart her subjectivity. When she meets the colonizer's eye, she realizes that Manichaeanism persists. She wants to unsettle these fixed hierarchical identities. She wants to be surrounded by artists. When she meets Peggy's friends she says: "I am not

an artist, but I shall always like to be with the people who stand apart" (98). She resists attempts at veiling or exposing her body, and (de)constructs her identity. She re-invents herself, and rewrites her past through anger and memory[7]. She admits at the end of the novel:

> I understood that I was inventing myself, and that I was doing this more in the way of a painter than in the way of a scientist. I could not count on precision or calculation; I could only count on intuition. I did not have anything exactly in mind, but when the picture was complete I would know. I did not have position, I did not have money at my disposal. I had memory, I had anger, I had despair. (134)

To regain her agency, Lucy has to re-connect with the body of the native land. "January, beginning, again" (133) are words that open the last section of the novel and that release us from the onerous mood of the previous episode. The body acquires an aesthetic dimension: "My hair was the same, though now I wore it cut close to my head, and this made my face seem almost perfectly round, and so for the first time I entertained the idea that I might actually be beautiful" (133). The description of the body is followed by a description of the small island. The female body is a metonymy for the body of the homeland. "I was born on an island, a very small island, twelve miles long and eight miles wide" (134). Her last and necessary re-connection is with the body of the motherland. "In the Search of the Lost Body, Redefining the Subject in Caribbean Literature," Michael Dash notes that: "The end of exile, the triumph over the estranging self, is only possible when the subject feels his or her bonds with the lost body of the native land" (332). Lucy recuperates "the lost body" of the native land, and writes it on her own body, to never let it slip from her again. She refuses Mariah's

[7] *A Small Place* is an example of re-writing the past through memory and anger. It is an example of resistance of the female colonial body.

book, an attempt at writing her story which recalls the mother's trunk in *Annie John*. Mariah "misinterpret[s] [Lucy's] situation" (132). To resist this misrepresentation, this disregard of colonial history, Lucy inscribes her "situation," her "geography" on her body, and offers a description of her "very small island" in the episode that bears her name.

At the end of the novel, Lucy performs another geographical move in a last attempt to reclaim her subjectivity. She moves to an apartment she pays for, and which she decorates in accordance with Antiguan climate as a counter-motif to the ruin. She shares her new home with Peggy, despite their disagreements in order to re-cut the umbilical cord. She rejects Paul, who grows possessive towards her. Her use of the camera is influenced by the changes in her life. Freed from dispossession and dislocation, she releases people and grants them the power to move: “I mostly like to take pictures of people walking on the street. There were no pictures of individuals, just scenes of people walking about, hurrying to somewhere” (160).

Lucy’s quest for freedom, for humanization, is not without peril. It causes her to suffer both pleasant and unpleasant ontological solitariness. She walks around by herself, fully aware of her body, and is now able to enjoy the change in weather. But she is alone. And loneliness and absence of enduring human bonds seem to be concomitant to death. She believes she would die from loneliness (161). Again, Lucy articulates the need for love as a strategic resistance against the deadening forces that, whether consciously or unconsciously, erase her. In this exile without love, she resorts to writing as the ultimate home for the colonial subject. Quoting Adorno, Edward Said writes in his "Reflections on Exile," "The only home truly available now, though

fragile and vulnerable, is in writing" (184). The vulnerability is perceived in the tears that vitiate the vulnerable identity, which lacks love. The tears also come to symbolize the bliss as defined by Roland Barthes. Applying his theory as stipulated in his book *the Pleasure of the Text*, *Lucy* can be read as a text of bliss which is a "text that discomforts, [...] unsettles the reader's historical, cultural, psychological assumptions, the consistency of his tastes, values, memories, brings to a crisis his relation to language" (Barthes 14). The body becomes the literal text, which unsettles the reader's assumptions, which deconstructs Manichaeaenism. The bliss as defined by Barthes is linked to orgasm. Accordingly, the narrative becomes a sexual act which ends with the body in pleasure, visible and self-possessed. In this sense and using Barthes' terminology, *Lucy* would be fairly classified as a writerly text that refuses closure on all levels.

The love/death association that closes the journey exemplifies Kincaid's deconstruction of Manichaean aesthetics, and uncovers Lucy's yearning for openness and love, a synthesis Kincaid seems to offer us each time through her ambiguous endings, which are, I believe, anti-colonial strategies.

Conclusion

This thesis is anti-colonial. It sought to denounce the oppressive foundations of colonial ideology, and its corrosive effects on the colonized's community, culture and identity. It addressed the sites of resistance offered to the colonized woman through Jamaica Kincaid's writings. In the first chapter I defined colonial ideology as explicated by Frantz Fanon. Observing the colonial situation, Fanon claims that we live in a compartmentalized world. Colonial mentality is built on Manichaeanism. The colonizer embraces divisions between black and white, evil and good, sin and morality, and promotes them to justify colonialism. Colonialism, which is in every way, a violent practice is enabled through these unfounded, and fixed definitions. I argued that decolonization and resistance necessitate an overthrow of these definitions which are dictated by colonial ideology. To do so, I examined some of the metaphysical analogies such as black and white. The first chapter focused on racism, its nature and its consequences. Pivoting between *The Wretched of the Earth*, *Black Skins, White Masks* and *A Small Plac*e, I criticized racism in the colonial context, and its continuation in the post-colonial context. I also examined different modes of resistance to subvert and annihilate Manichaeanism. Both Fanon and Kincaid's anti-colonial strategies aim at shattering Manichaeanism and espousing a new humanism based on openness and love.

In my second chapter, I analyzed *Annie John* and the way binaries are dismantled and disassembled. In the first part, I scrutinized the mother-daughter relationship, where the mother plays two roles: the loving mother and the colonizer. By stressing the paradoxical figure of the mother, through the image of heaven and hell, I highlighted the pain of colonialism and its destructive nature. The mother becomes a

colonizer and causes the fall, or the withering of the garden. In the second part, I studied the imagery of death that conducts the novel. I argued that the denigration of humanity in the novel is conveyed through the complex leitmotif of death. The comparison between the colonized subject and the dead stems its origin from their common dehumanization, denial of agency, and voicelessness. However, death is used as a reversed strategy to defeat colonial ideology, which is indeed part of Kincaid's subversive style. Jamaica Kincaid manipulates death both on the level of form and meaning to resist the colonial deleterious forces. She also resorts to love, water, and Obeah as enlivening powers that per se counter Manichaeanism.

My last chapter was a critical analysis of the female body in anti-colonial struggle through Frantz Fanon's conclusions in "Algeria Unveiled." In this chapter of *A Dying Colonialism*, Fanon explicates the use and significance of the veil for the Algerian woman, and for the colonizer. While Fanon's veil is literal, I argued that in Kincaid, veiling and exposure, as resistance tactics are both literal and metaphorical. I endeavored to prove the fluidity of identity through this constant swaying of the female body, which stands for the voice of the (formerly) colonized woman. Kincaid does not refute identity, but prefers identities. She believes in multiplicity, in ideas of renewal and transformation, in a process of endless creation. Writing is by definition a space of creation and innovation. Kincaid asserts: "Whatever I may say about being black, or female when I'm sitting down the typewriter I'm not that. So I think it's sort of limited and stupid to call anyone by these names" (Vorda 53).

Lucy ends with a poignant reconnection with the homeland, where the anger explodes in tears. Though more lyrical than *A Small Place*, *Lucy* is not a story of

forgiveness, redemption and return; it is the expression of anger. In an interview with Moira Ferguson, Kincaid declares that she could never forget her past and the history of slavery of her ancestors: “I just could never forget it. Or forgive it. It’s like a big wave that’s still pulsing" (*Where the Land Meets the Body* 132). Kincaid, haunted by her history, participates in saving her culture through her writing. In *Reading The Body Politic: Feminist Criticism and Latin American Women Writers*, Amy Kaminsky writes that: "Exile writing also needs to stay responsible to its own origins [...] By seizing the language the exile writer rescues it from evisceration and acts to save the culture her language encodes" (46). Kincaid's anger gave rise to "stories that are different from the ones we're being brainwashed to believe" (Arundhati Roy 112). One particular myth, which is quite relevant to my thesis, is the depiction of Antigua as Paradise. Antigua, a country plagued by colonialism, is portrayed by the Western eye as an Edenic garden. Speaking of Antigua, Kincaid admits that "everyone who can leave, leaves." The Carribean novelist demystifies this delusory representation which disregards the history of colonialism, and re-inscribes the harsh reality of oppression.

In the three works I studied, Kincaid re-enacts the colonizer-colonized relationship each time differently, first through the tourist and the native, then through the mother and the daughter, and lastly through the black servant and white master. Each time, she seeks to revert binaries, to return the colonial gaze, but only to stress love for the human being. Colonialism, which is based on racism and indifference to human beings, nurtures hatred. Love, which binds human beings together, is a de-colonial strategy that Kincaid and Fanon seem indeed to promote. Their works stress the eradication of Manichaeanism, the need for love and the urgency of decolonization.

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