

RE-PRESENTING CREOLE IDENTITY: THEORIZING A (WHITE) POSTCOLONIAL CREOLE FEMINISM

white + Creole + woman. How does one define / theorize a body that is at once visible (in its “native” space) and invisible (in the Western world)? In probing white female Creole identity in the postcolonial English-speaking Caribbean, the multi-layered complexities of a geographically fragmented and imperially constructed region must be considered. Here, a violent colonial history of institutionalized trans-Atlantic / plantation slavery fundamentally informed by Christianity and patriarchy has shaped a multiracial society in which the white female Creole body becomes the site of simultaneous privilege and marginalization.

The term “Creole”ⁱ is used in this text to refer to someone born in the Caribbean. This term originated in the seventeenth century to differentiate *whites* born in the newly settled colonies from those of European birth. Despite their similar British ancestry, such a distinction was found necessary in order to assert the *cultural difference* between Caribbean-born whites and those from the British Isles. In *The White Minority in the Caribbean* (1998), Karl Watson notes that “creolisation involved the identification of people, whatever their place of origin or racial composition, with the island societies in which they lived.”ⁱⁱ The author states that “the evolution of this cultural synthesis of West African and West European forms was noticed and commented on in almost every eighteenth-century traveler’s account.”ⁱⁱⁱ Further on, he notes that this “proto-nationalism” became evident in acts of open hostility by local whites towards Englishmen.

Since the nineteenth century, the term “Creole” has been used to describe *all* people born in the West Indies, regardless of race.^{iv} Currently, it is often used in the West to denote the interracial body (particularly of French and African descent), or to refer to Caribbean languages. In this context, I am reclaiming the historical / colonial use of the term “Creole” and inserting it into postcolonial discourse as a cultural term that more succinctly defines (white) identity in the contemporary Caribbean. In doing so, I aim to complexify this identity as being distinct from, yet related to, (white) Western identity through its intertwined historical bond with black identity. As Bocquet suggests, the term has “the unique advantage of distinguishing *mestizaje* in the Caribbean from *mestizaje* elsewhere”^v and consequently serves to “unite” the Caribbean community.

The process of creolisation, which began to take place in the Caribbean as early as the sixteenth century^{vi}, is critical to my definition of (white) postcolonial Caribbean identity. A fundamental characteristic of Caribbean culture, it has been defined by some theorists as the *blending* of Amerindian, European, and African cultures that occurred as a result of colonization and plantation slavery.^{vii} In the essay “Creolisation and Creole Societies”,^{viii} Nigel Bolland cites Kamau Brathwaite’s seminal study, “The Development of Creole Society in Jamaica 1770-1820” (1971), as being the source of the Creole-society model. Rather than a process of “blending”, this model stresses “intercultural creolisation” between “Afro-Creoles” and “Euro-Creoles” as “a two-way process” with the “coloured population” as a “bridge, a kind of social cement” between the two cultures (24). It proposes that “the Europeans and Africans who settled in the Americas contributed to the development of a distinctive society and culture that was neither European nor

African, but 'Creole'" (23). Amerindian culture is omitted. Accepting this model of creolisation as being relevant to my study, I aim to explore the hybrid identity of Caribbean whites and to show that a shared geopolitical and cultural history can thus shape identity beyond the confines of the assumed racial / racist determinants in established Western theory.^{ix}

Using the broader yet intersecting frameworks of feminist discourse and postcolonial discourse, I am also mapping a methodological practice that draws on both black and third world feminisms and postcolonial studies to construct a (slippery) theoretical space for the white Creole *woman*. The history and concerns of (black and third world) feminist theories have in many ways paralleled those of postcolonial discourse, since it is recognized that women and colonized subjects have shared similar experiences of the politics of oppression and repression.^x Both feminist and postcolonial discourses share a political motivation to articulate the voices of the silenced, marginalized, and oppressed. By tracing how gender relations in the Caribbean have been constructed and experienced through colonialism and patriarchy by Creole women, I aim to negotiate an (alter)*native* overlapping cultural space for the former "colonizing female subject" (the white Creole woman) within a discourse which I shall propose as a "(white) postcolonial Creole feminism." The contradictions implicit in such a split subject position (the "privileged" colonizing subject with the marginalized / oppressed female subject) will become clearer later on in this study.^{xi}

Why is it necessary to propose yet another feminism? In a postmodern age with multiple feminist theoretical perspectives and a myriad of shifting, unstable terms, why does one need to theorize gender from yet another margin? Why is it that the white Creole female body cannot fit within the existing "white" Feminist discourse?

Traditional Feminism has been important in undermining boundaries between the personal and the political and giving visibility to women through examining the discursive and material effects of patriarchy, yet it most often remains narrowly focused on white *Western* (heterosexual) interests. Thus, it readily becomes a totalizing theory that accommodates only gender and sex. Race, ethnicity, class, and geopolitical history within such a construct are often overlooked.^{xii} Feminism, in the widest sense, has not celebrated *difference* and has failed to recognize "otherness". Early Feminist discourse viewed women as a monolithic group of white middle- and upper-class, educated married Westerners whose major interest was seeking equal rights in terms of gender.

Though it is recognized that this "white" Feminist discourse has previously been challenged, it still remains largely Western in its outlook.^{xiii} Given the previous discussion of creolisations, the white Creole woman does not recognize herself within this relatively homogeneous Feminist theoretical framework. Though "white" and sharing a "female" history of oppression by institutionalized patriarchal structures, the white Creole woman occupies an "in-between" space (Homi Bhabha^{xiv}). She finds more in common with black / Third World / postcolonial feminisms because of their concern with race, class, culture, and geopolitical history, and ultimately, the *lived* experience of women within particular geographical and cultural spaces. As a former colonizing subject, the white Creole woman *appears* to share a common history with the (white) Western woman. However, as a product of cross-cultural *creolisation*, the postcolonial white Creole woman consciously embraces difference and intuitively understands *her* own difference from (white) Western women. I am arguing here that, for her, the adjective "white" remains a descriptive term rather than a noun. She is, above all, a *Creole* who paradigmatically claims her Caribbean heritage with pride. In the proceeding paper, I intend to situate the white Creole woman's experience away from the margins of historical discourse and to map the historical construction of her identity as Other by navigating between existing theoretical (feminist and postcolonial) methodologies.

The construction of the white Creole woman's *Otherness* becomes evident when colonial texts written by visitors to the "Indies" are examined. Historian Edward Long, writing in the eighteenth century, commented on the "cultural deterioration" white Creole women experienced from

“constant intercourse” with black household servants. According to Hilary Beckles, Long suggests that these women “ ‘insensibly adopted’ the dress, speech, and manners of blacks, which rendered them further removed from European culture than the colour of their skin suggests.”^{xv}

We may see in some of these places, a very fine young woman awkwardly dangling her arms, with the air of a negro servant lolling almost the whole day upon beds or settees, her head muffed up with two or three handkerchiefs, her dress loose, and without stays. At noon, we find her employed in gobbling pepper-pot, seated on the floor, with her sable hand-maids around her.^{xvi}

Such vignettes, captured in the words of British men or women who were resident in or visiting the islands, portray a “fixed” image of the native (white) population.^{xvii} Here, the white woman’s body is visually conflated with blackness. Culture and race are collapsed through a system of bodily signs. The white body is seen to perform blackness through its dress and behavior. The imperial project seemed to necessitate the “othering” of *all* members of “native” populations outside of the “mother country” (a process that ultimately served as a warning against racial mingling and miscegenation). As Ania Loomba notes in *Colonialism / Postcolonialism* (1998), the central contradiction within colonialism was its need to both “‘civilise’ its ‘others’, and to fix them into perpetual ‘otherness’.”^{xviii} In the eyes of the European white, the white Creole woman had become a colonial subject in need of “civilizing”, as a result of her Creole culture. The European writer was employing an “objective” gaze to map her visual signs of difference and to “fix” her identity as culturally inferior.

The fabrication of the white female Creole’s alterity also becomes apparent later in nineteenth century British and American abolitionist publications. These include Sunday school primers, juvenile miscellanies, antislavery newspapers, and giftbooks. Produced largely by women who had organized themselves into Anti-Slavery Societies, these politically motivated publications served a didactic purpose by using sentimental strategies to evoke feelings of outrage in the hearts of their readers. As Sánchez-Eppler notes in *Touching Liberty* (1997), “The tears of the reader are pledged in these sentimental stories as a means of rescuing the bodies of slaves” (26). Such sentimental fiction functioned through stereotypes: “In sentimental writing the self is externally displayed, and the body provides a reliable sign of who one is.”^{xix} Children’s stories, such as *The Barbadoes Girl: a Tale for Young People* (1818), by Mrs. Holland, were written expressly to play on these stereotypes and evoke sympathy from the reader for the slave. In this story, a young white Creole girl (Matilda Sophia Hanson) is sent to England to stay with family friends, following her father’s death in Barbados. Depicted as a proud, self-willed, spoilt child who treats her female slave companion in a cruel and derogatory manner, Matilda is gradually transformed (read “civilized”) into a humble, caring, sympathetic child who understands that slavery is an evil in the sight of God. The book’s frontispiece illustration shows the Creole child, at the start of her visit, throwing a glass of beer into her slave’s face (*****). In the text, we also learn (through hearsay) that in Barbados,

The most delicate ladies are waited upon by naked slaves, whose bare backs are probably bleeding from the recent effects of a sound whipping, inflicted, probably, because Missy’s dolly had fallen, and broken her nose, out of Missy’s own hands. (180)

In addition, we are presented with Matilda’s total self-effacement when she first sees snow in England and is ignorant about what it is. When her English playmates try to placate her, she exclaims with great humility “Oh no, European children know everything, but I am little better than a negro; I find what your mamma said was very true – I know nothing at all” (47).

The Anti-Slavery movement in Britain openly ridiculed Creole society. In a series of exaggerated and satirical cartoons, the Creole woman is stereotyped as an unsophisticated and uneducated “plantation mistress” whose chief concern is to do as little as possible and to maintain a decadent lifestyle at the expense of her black slaves. According to Watson, one such cartoon image shows a white Creole woman sitting at an upstairs window calling down to her slave who is

standing outside. She demands that she come up to her room and take her head in from the window.

In expressly political cartoons such as *A Grand Jamaica Ball! Or the Creolean Hop à la Mustee; as exhibited in Spanish Town* (published in London in 1802 by William Holland), we are shown the unrestrained and decadent behaviour “characteristic” of an “uncivilized” (white) Creole society (Plate 2). White Creole “ladies” prance around with wild abandon, kicking up their legs in an unpropitious manner, as they cavort across the room in the company of the Red Coats (the local militia). Slaves lurk in the wings watching the activities, or serve large glasses of rum punch and Sangaree to the dancers. An inscription below the image reads,

*Farewell ye girls! And still alas! As mama bids sad Red Coats shun!
But soon will each forsaken Lass, / Most keenly rue the Dance she's run!*

*Charmless you'll grow in person, face, and eye,
Joyless in youth, old maids you'll useless die!*

Images of the cruel mistress who abuses her slaves also abound in the literature. In the slave narrative of Mary Prince (1831; the only known West Indian female slave autobiography), we learn that her mistress taught her,

the exact differences between the smart of the rope, the cart-whip, and the cow-skin, when applied to my naked body by her own cruel hand. And there was scarcely any punishment more dreadful than the blows I received on my face and head from her hard heavy fist. She was a fearful woman, and a savage mistress to her slaves^{xx}

Such stories and images were used to launch an attack on institutionalized slavery at the expense of Creole society. The guilt of the colonial slave trade had been effectively displaced onto the Other (the white Creole) with no responsibility shared by the citizens of the “mother country.”^{xxi} Men and women were equally under attack, though a slightly more sympathetic appreciation of the plight of the planter’s wife is apparent in writing by European women who had actually visited or lived in the islands. Mrs. Carmichael’s account of life in the colonies points to fear (isolation on plantations), overwork (managing a large household of slaves), and the impossibility of dealing with slaves as the chief problems encountered by the white female. Yet, the text ultimately makes it clear that ironically, it is the Western *woman* who wields the ideological tools of colonial and patriarchal oppression over her white “sisters” in the islands.

There is no existent published literature from this period produced by white Creole women and no visible traces of their existence made by their own hands.^{xxii} Only much later do they find a voice in the post-emancipation fiction of Creole writers like Jean Rhys. In her well-known novel, *Wide Sargasso Sea* (1966), Rhys counters the canonical text by reinventing the “mad” inbred Creole woman from Charlotte Brontë’s *Jane Eyre* (the first Mrs. Rochester) as the heroine of her tale. The white Creole daughter of a former slave owner in Jamaica, Antoinette Cosway, tries to navigate her way through the in-between space of being neither black (like the rest of her community) nor English (like her husband).

I've heard English women call us white niggers. So between you and I, I often wonder who I am and where is my country and where do I belong and why was I ever born at all.
(102)

Antoinette finally achieves liberation from this impossible situation when she burns down her husband’s English mansion and jumps into a pool (in her dream) where she is able to “merge the colonial blackness and Creole whiteness that have torn her apart and driven her to madness.”^{xxiii} The text offers a site of resistance to the dominant colonial narrative of imperial “othering.”

These colonial texts (both pre- and post-emancipation) clearly articulate a syncretic relationship between black and white Creole identity. It is therefore useful to try to understand (white) Creole identity through the lens of black feminist theory. Black feminism is fundamentally engaged with intersectionality in its insistence that race / colour and sex / gender be simultaneously considered, and as such contests the homogeneity of “white” Feminism. Grounded in the theorization of black experience / identity, black feminism has challenged the assumptions of white Euro-feminism by legitimizing the black female voice as an essential element of Western history. Recognizing the shared experience of patriarchal subordination, black feminism suggests that black women have been doubly victimized and rendered invisible because of “scholarly neglect and racist assumptions.”^{xxiv} The difficulty involved in retrieving black women’s history and understanding its complexities lies in past refusals to regard such material as worthy of recording and institutionalization (with the exception of abolitionist publications).

Here I wish to argue that the refusal of white male historians to acknowledge white Creole women in the master discourse has meant that she must likewise seek her own history in the in-between spaces. The difficulty of finding primary evidence or representations of the life of white Creole women reduces the historical probing to peripheral sources such as personal diaries and letters that often reside within private collections. However, reading between the lines of British-authored Caribbean history (travelogues, European women’s diaries and letters, and published historical texts) and black history (via slave narratives and abolitionist publications), it is possible to glimpse different views of the white Creole woman. For example, a more sympathetic view of her as a product of colonialism and patriarchy is evident in Mary Prince’s slave narrative, where, when describing the home she grew up in, she states,

My master [. . .] was a very harsh, selfish man [. . .]. His wife was herself much afraid of him; and during his stay at home, seldom dared to shew her usual kindness to the slaves [. . .]. My poor mistress bore his ill-treatment with great patience, and all her slaves loved and pitied her. I was truly attached to her, and, next to my own mother, loved her better than any creature in the world. (58)

While Feminist discourse has argued that the patriarchal oppression of women together with their exclusion from documented history have provided women with a shared history, black feminists argue that it is not true to say that this “sisterhood” has been equally shared. Gerda Lerner notes that “black women have always been more conscious of and more handicapped by race oppression than by sex oppression”.^{xxv} According to her, they have never attained higher levels of status than white women. Lerner and Elizabeth Fox-Genovese have demonstrated that slavery and universal sisterhood are thematically irreconcilable because of the impossibility of achieving sisterhood between female slaves and female members of slaveholding classes.^{xxvi} I argue that while this is true in relation to the constructed *historical* identity of the white Creole woman, it is still possible to conceive of a shared “sisterhood” in attempting to understand racial and cultural marginalization in a postcolonial context. Following over three centuries of existence as an empowered racial minority, the postcolonial white Creole is now culturally marginalized within a region where the contemporary black Creole majority has increasingly claimed “native” legitimacy. This shift in power dynamics has sharpened the white Creole’s sensitivity to racial “othering” in a manner that allows the white Creole woman to empathize with the marginality experienced by black women in the West. This conception, though formed from a position of privilege, is nevertheless a more sensitized understanding than that of the Western white who presumes the “normality” of her whiteness and may never need to consider the problems of a marginalized identity.

In recent years, black historians such as Barbara Bush and Hilary Beckles have re-examined historical texts in order to uncover a voice for the black slave woman. These texts have been mined to unearth the “truth” about Creole society during the colonial period. Beckles notes that, since the mid-1980s, the primary focus of research has been the black woman, “with the coloured^{xxvii} woman running a competitive second, and the white woman trailing behind at a distance.”^{xxviii} His essay, “White Women and Slavery in the Caribbean” (2000), seeks to address

this lack by opening up a reading of white female Creole identity using a black feminist methodology. Rejecting the notion of white women as “victims” of white male patriarchal authority or as marginal to the colonial enterprise,^{xxxix} he reveals their important role in the fabrication of colonial ideology (as slaveholders in urban areas and active economic agents of colonialism in their own right). He describes them as being “generally pro-slavery, socially illiberal, and economically exploitative of black women.”^{xxx} As a particular example of their economic role, he cites the evidence (from European travelers) of “the sight of creole white women examining the genitals of male slaves in the markets before making purchases.”^{xxxi} He also points out a crucial point of difference between black and white women through the “linking of white womanhood to the reproduction of freedom”,^{xxxii} although he acknowledges the imposition of this law as a dictate of patriarchal rule.

In his book, *Centering Woman* (1999), Beckles presents separate case studies of white women in the Caribbean as evidence of his theoretical position. He uses the example of the Fenwicks, an English mother and daughter who settled in Barbados from 1811 - 1821 and set up a school, to demonstrate the economic capabilities of white women in the slavery enterprise. The journals and letters of Lady Nugent (the wife of a British Governor resident in Jamaica from 1801-1805), and the travelogues of Mrs. Carmichael (the wife of a Scottish planter who was resident in St. Vincent and Trinidad periodically in the 1820s), are also used to attest to the immorality and social deviance in the islands. He suggests that, through intimate social contact, these women had special insight into the lives of white women in the Caribbean. Though their viewpoints are distinctly British and they were visitors to the Caribbean for relatively short periods of time, he employs their subjectivity to paint a picture of Creole society that maintains and reinforces entrenched colonial stereotypes of white Creole womanhood. The *differences* that set the white Creole woman apart from her European counterpart are displayed as normative. Beckles also maintains a binary opposition between the black woman as slave and the white woman as mistress and fails to present the shared history of black and white women of Creole origin. Furthermore, by titling his chapters “A Planter’s Wife’s Tale” or “A Governors Wife’s Tale”, he undermines the authority of these European women’s voices, and thereby contradicts his own argument, by presenting their viewpoints as subjugated by their position as “wives”. The use of the term “tale” further serves to weaken these women’s voices by relegating them to hearsay and the insignificance of a “fictional narrative”.

The relative lack of texts by (white) Creole women is symptomatic of unequal colonial power relations between (white) European women and women native to the colonies. Without this documentation, it is difficult to formulate a “true” picture of white Creole womanhood. And as Beckles admits, (though his meaning is different) “this research” into the role of women in (white) Creole society “should then be informed by the culturally embracing process of social creolisation in which European immigrants are transformed at the frontier into natives who possessed an increasingly distinct value system and sensibility.”^{xxxiii}

With just such critical interest now developing around the Creole woman’s identity, it is necessary to look at how the (white) postcolonial Creole woman has functioned in response to such a heightened awareness of her historically inscribed “colonizing” identity. Just what is her consciousness of the shifts that have taken place in understanding the role of her female ancestors? How has the critical writing stemming from black historical research (which has unearthed these stereotypical images) been perceived, and how has it been contributed to, changed, or challenged by the white Creole? Has the white Creole woman found agency through literature, music, or art?

Gayatri Spivak argues that the combined workings of colonialism and patriarchy make it extremely difficult for the subaltern to articulate her point of view.^{xxxiv} As a member of a racial minority^{xxxv}, and as a female subject in a postcolonial society that is still under patriarchal dominance, it is relatively impossible for the white Creole woman to articulate a presence within or outside of the present-day Caribbean. However, contemporary fictional literary texts by (white) female Creole authors have attempted to subvert colonial stereotypes by creating complex, multi-

faceted subjects who embrace a Creole ethos. As Evelyn O'Callaghan notes in *Woman Version* (1993), white female Creole writers have questioned the image of the "mistress" of the plantation house and stressed the (sometimes uneasy) "sisterly" bond between Caribbean women as well as their strong attachment to native place. A range of fiction by Caribbean women now exists, which presents a multiplicity of voices from a postcolonial feminist vantage-point (O'Callaghan). Their counter-discursive strategy involves "a mapping of the dominant discourse, a reading and exposing of its underlying assumptions, and the dis/mantling of these assumptions from the cross-cultural standpoint of the imperially subjectified 'local'."^{xxxvi} Strongly resistant to (resurfacing / never completely buried) colonial representations, they contest these perspectives by stressing the hybridity of their world as normative.

A postcolonial Creole feminist consciousness has also begun to appear in some contemporary white Caribbean women's art. Visual artists such as Marta Maria Perez Bravo (Cuba) seem to examine their Creole identity within this theoretical framework. In their work, the white Creole woman does not emerge as being diametrically opposed to the black Creole woman but rather as sharing an interdependent relationship. Her view of self is that of a participant within an ambivalent *shared* colonial history of subjugation and survival, with all of its contested cross-cultural baggage and multiple shifting subject positions. What also emerges is that, unlike the (white) Western woman, the white Creole woman is more willing to acknowledge her "whiteness" as a site of privilege within the historical colonial hierarchy of racist plantation economies and to share shame and culpability for the sins of former colonizers.^{xxxvii}

An understanding of white female Creole identity is clearly not possible within the narrow tenets of "white" Feminist theory. One must look to black and third world feminisms and their intersection with postcolonial studies to articulate an identity for the white Creole woman. Although, previously, white colonial subjectivity has not been considered by postcolonial studies, it is now possible to produce a (white) postcolonial Creole feminism by situating the white Creole woman's voice with those of silenced black and racially "othered" voices. By examining European-authored historical records of slavery and colonial texts and images pertaining to the Caribbean, it is possible to trace the historical construction of white Creole identity as culturally inferior Other. In its desire for regulation, the mother country asserted a code of visual and performative difference on the white Creole body that revealed a contradictory form of "double consciousness."^{xxxviii} The white Creole woman became at once a colonial subject with a colonizing role who was also subject to patriarchal rule. Europeans portrayed her as an unacceptable example of moral and cultural corruption / mutation owing to her proximity to the black body and to her consumption of and participation within the violence of slavery. She was the privileged slaveholder who wielded power over her slaves and, the dutiful wife who remained subject to her husband's wishes and tolerant of both his sexual indiscretions with slave women and of the mulatto progeny that resulted from these illicit unions.

Now aware of the slippery in-between space in which her ancestors have been trapped by black feminist and postcolonial theories, the postcolonial white Creole woman must consequently negotiate the historical attempts to "fix" her ancestral identity as Other as well as demonstrate her historical difference from (white) Western women. Homi Bhabha argues that the "fixed identities" that colonialism seeks to impose on the masters and the slaves are rendered unstable because there can be no "binary opposition between the coloniser and the colonised [. . .] both are caught up in a complex reciprocity and colonial subjects can negotiate the cracks of dominant discourses in a variety of ways."^{xxxix} The Creole can therefore only be understood as part of a hybrid culture that resists fixity and categorization.

The insertion of the story of the Creole body and its subjectivity into a "crack" in white Western Feminism can function to realign the entire narrative ground of feminist discourse in such a way as to actively shift all other stories. This text has undertaken to map out the historical construction of Creole identity in order to unmask just such a story.

ⁱ For a discussion of the changing use of this term and its relevance to Caribbean cultural identity, see Bocquet, Pierre E. "The Visual Arts and Créolité." *Beyond the Fantastic: Contemporary Art Criticism from Latin America*. Ed. Gerardo Mosquera. Cambridge, Mas.: MIT P, 1996.

ⁱⁱ Karl Watson, quoting William Green, in "Salmagundis vs. Pumpkins: White Politics and Creole Consciousness in Barbadian Slave Society, 1800-34". Howard Johnson and Karl Watson, eds. *The White Minority in the Caribbean*. Jamaica: Ian Randle Publishers, 1998, 18.

ⁱⁱⁱ Watson 18.

^{iv} In her book, *Domestic Manners and Social Condition of the White, Coloured, and Negro Population of the West Indies*. Vol. 1., published in 1833, Mrs. Carmichael explains in a footnote that "the word *Creole* means a native of a West India colony, whether he be white, black, or coloured", 17.

^v Bocquet, 118. Bocquet defines *mestizaje* as "cultural hybridism".

^{vi} For example, by 1816, 90% of whites in Barbados were Barbadian born "most of whom could trace their ancestry back at least six generations, being in the main descended from families who had established themselves on the island in the period 1627-60" (Watson 20). Watson claims that by 1839, a Creole consciousness was evident.

^{vii} In Poupeye, Veerle. *Caribbean Art*. World of Art Series. London: Thames & Hudson, 1998, 15, the author points out that the Cuban anthropologist, Fernando Ortiz, in 1939, used the metaphor of *ajiaco*, a traditional Cuban pepper stew of Amerindian origin, to explain the process of creolisation. When ingredients are added to this simmering stew over a long period of time, some dissolve fully while others maintain their identity to varying degrees. The model proposes social unity.

^{viii} A rich discussion of definitions and models of creolisation is found in Shepherd, Verene A. and Glen L. Richards, eds. *Questioning Creole: Creolisation Discourses in Caribbean Culture*. Kingston: Ian Randle Publishers, 2002. Here, Carolyn Allen's essay "Creole: The Problem of Definition" also examines the etymology of the term "Creole" and highlights its varying uses through history by "insiders" (Caribbean people) and "outsiders" (Westerners).

^{ix} However, I remain aware of Bolland's argument for a dialectical theory that takes into consideration that creolisation cannot be a homogenizing process since Brathwaite's model neglects to recognize continuing class distinctions and hostilities within Creole societies.

^x I am referring to the "double colonization" of (black) women in formerly colonized societies by imperial and patriarchal ideologies.

^{xi} I consciously employ the use of the first person throughout my text as a means of asserting the value of my (white) Creole female subjectivity to this project. See Tompkins, Jane. "Me and My Shadow." *Feminisms*. Kemp, Sandra, and Judith Squires, eds. NY: Oxford UP, 1997, 44-51. Here, the author rejects the use of the third person in academic texts. Instead, she suggests the introduction of a personal voice into the professional context (her theoretical writing) as a feminist strategy to counteract the "public-private hierarchy, [which] is a founding condition of female oppression" (45) and to assert the connection between literary theory and her own life (48).

^{xii} Differences of sexuality, religion, and age are also overlooked but beyond the scope of this discussion.

^{xiii} White Feminism has concentrated upon affirming the sexual specificity of women and questioning patriarchal norms and ideals of femininity while generally ignoring the effect that the differences in material and social conditions of non-Western women have on these women.

^{xiv} Bhabha, Homi. "Cultural Diversity and Cultural Differences." Ashcroft, Bill, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin, eds. *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader*. London, New York: Routledge, 1995, 209.

^{xv} Beckles, Hilary McD. "White Women and Slavery in the Caribbean." Shepherd, Verene A., and Hilary McD. Beckles, eds. *Caribbean Slavery in the Atlantic World: A Student Reader*. Rev. ed. Jamaica: Ian Randle Publishers, 2000, 668. Parts of this essay also appear in Beckles, Hilary McD. "White Women and Freedom." *Centering Woman: Gender Discourses in Caribbean Slave Society*. Jamaica: Ian Randle Publishers, 1999.

^{xvi} Edward Long (1774) as quoted in Beckles, "White Women and Slavery", 668.

^{xvii} For example, Carmichael, Mrs. *Domestic Manners and Social Condition of the White, Coloured, and Negro Population of the West Indies*, Vol. 1.

^{xviii} Loomba, Ania. *Colonialism / Postcolonialism*. London: Routledge, 1998, 173.

^{xix} Sánchez-Eppler, 1997, 27.

^{xx} *The History of Mary Prince a West Indian Slave Related by Herself*, 66.

^{xxi} In an article dated November 22, 1831, in the *Bermuda Royal Gazette*, printed in defense of Mary Prince's former slaveowners, the (Creole) writer rebukes the Anti-Slavery Society in England for falsely maligning their character by printing Mary Prince's slave narrative. He accuses the Society of "blackening" and "defaming" the reputations of all West India proprietors and "poisoning" the "public mind in England [...] against their brethren in the West Indies". See Appendix 9 in *The History of Mary Prince*. Also writing in defense of the West India planters, Mrs. Carmichael (1833) states that "although nominally proprietors", they "are really nothing else than the farmer for the British merchant, who receives their annual produce", 17.

^{xxii} O'Callaghan, Evelyn. *Woman Version: Theoretical Approaches to West Indian Fiction by Women*. Warwick University Caribbean Studies 1. New York: St. Martin's P, 1993. O'Callaghan quotes Davies and Fido's introduction to *Out of Kumbia* as defining the "voicelessness" of women's writing in the Caribbean as "the historical absence of a specifically female position on major issues such as slavery, colonialism, decolonisation, women's rights and more direct social and cultural issues", 5.

^{xxiii} Erika Pugh, "Caribbean Women Writers", 5.

^{xxiv} Lerner, Gerda. "Black Women in White America." Bhavnani, Kum-Kum, ed. *Feminism and 'Race'*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2001, 45.

^{xxv} Lerner, 47.

^{xxvi} See Fox-Genovese's *Within the Plantation Household: Black Women and White Women in the Old South*, Chapel Hill: U of North Carolina P, 1988, and Lerner's *The Creation of Patriarchy*, NY; Toronto: Oxford U P, 1986.

^{xxvii} Throughout the body of this text, the term "coloured", as used here, refers to the interracial / mulatto body. Though I am aware that this term is used in a derogatory way in North America, it is commonly used in the Caribbean to distinguish the mixed race body from the black body.

^{xxviii} Beckles, "White Women and Slavery", 659.

^{xxix} Beckles rejects Barbara Bush and Lucille Mair's proposal that white women, though privileged, shared the socio-sexual manipulation and exploitation of white patriarchy in the slave system.

^{xxix} Beckles, "White Women and Freedom", 71.

^{xxx} *Ibid*, 71.

^{xxxi} *Ibid.*, 61.

^{xxxii} *Ibid.*, 62. Beckles notes that in the slave system white women were constitutionally privileged / protected. Children produced by white women with enslaved black men were born legally free, while children of black slave women and white men were born slaves. This legal tradition, known as *partus sequitur ventrem*, whereby slave status was immediately extended to any child born of a slave mother, irrespective of the status of the father, dated from imperial Rome. It guaranteed that black slave populations would reproduce themselves naturally.

^{xxxiii} Beckles, "White Women and Freedom", 71. The term *native*, as used here, refers to the subject's birthplace and ancestry rather than being related to aboriginal and North American uses of the term.

^{xxxiv} Loomba, 234.

^{xxxv} Though the designation "racial minority" has different implications for the white body in the Caribbean as compared to the black body in Canada owing to different balances of power, it still embodies marginality.

^{xxxvi} Tiffin, Helen. "Post-Colonial Literatures." *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader*, 98.

^{xxxvii} I refer to the sins of physical and mental oppression institutionalized by plantation slavery. Works such as Pérez Bravo's *Paths* (1990) indicate a desire to symbolically share the pain of slavery.

^{xxxviii} I acknowledge W. E. B. Du Bois as the author of this concept.

^{xxxix} Loomba, 232.