Island Expansion: Créolization across Time and Space

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Maryse Condé, *The Journey of a Caribbean Writer,* transl. Richard Philcox, (London, New York, Calcutta: Seagull Books, 2020) $14.50 (pbk) $25 (hc);
Adom Getachew, *Worldmaking after Empire* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2019) $19.76 (pbk) $14.72 (Kindle);
Kris F. Sealey, *Creolizing the Nation* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2020) $39.22 (pbk) $34.95 (Kindle) $126.04 (hc).

The environment and socio-political contexts in which we dwell shape our approach to the world. Islands, following Pádraig Ó Tuama, trigger an openness to other persons and sites. They fuel the comity of their inhabitants, motivate their interconnection with others, and thus they sharpen their sense of morality. The Caribbean islands, and the Americas writ large, are also sites of both genocide, and of a novel way to embrace the world. The peoples of the Caribbean islands have used the predicaments of isolation, displacement and genocide, to initiate a mode of living that is best articulated, in the contemporary period, through the concept of Créolization. The authors considered in this essay have expanded our understanding of the créolization. They have made specific the experiential thread of resilience that undergirds the meaning of créolization. In Condé's work, the resilience is highlighted through the individual writer's creativity. Sealey for her part, expands the meaning of creolization to model a prospective inclusionary polity in the form of a Créolizing nation. As we know, nations are not isolated entities. They are part of a conglomeration with other nations. Getachew completes the study to show that the cosmopolitan world that we might aspire to reach can benefit from the post-World War II efforts of Caribbean and African post-colonial nations. In truth, we realize with these authors that a moral and equitable international environment has been the articulated goal of Caribbean peoples since arguably the 16th century. It is a goal consonant with all of the perennial humanist ideals of modernity.

Key words: Créolization; Négritude; post-colonial nations; Glissant; Fanon; Anzaldúa; Identity; anti-Blackness; Collective Responsibility

The poet of Irish descent, Pádraig Ó Tuama, articulates the optimism of island people especially given their existential realities. I agree with him that in times of pandemic, and in my sense whether it is the pandemic of racism we have harbored since the 17th century or the current moment of the novel corona virus, we can benefit from the experience of island peoples. These peoples' life-circumstances model a respite to the difficult conditions of physical and mental confinements. Ó Tuama thus points to the disposition that could help us navigate the obstinate pandemic of racism that hovers over our persons and our global environment. Ó Tuama asserts that

> as we look at the pandemic, I've been thinking a lot about isolation. And the word isolation comes from the same old root meaning island. And if you've ever been on an island, you always find yourself looking to a horizon to see another island or to see the sunset or to see, is there a boat coming? And I think poetry can help lift our eyes to other islands. We can hear stories coming from other people. We can hear ways within which the heart can be uplifted or truths can be named that are otherwise not being named.[1]

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It is rather unusual but not surprising that the conditions that are cultivated on an island or that emerge from island life give way to some openings to other persons or to other modes of beings. I suggest in addition that the conditions of island living give way to solutions for our common human predicament. Édouard Glissant, a Caribbean poet and philosopher who passed away in February of 2011, echoes in a similar vein the Ó Tuama sentiments. For Glissant, the African diaspora, if there is a diaspora, tells its stories too.[2] Those who survived told stories of their experience. They also tell the stories of those who did not survive the journey. Yet if there is no diaspora, Maryse Condé's *The Journey of a Caribbean Writer*, offers an alternative. In a semblance of an intellectual biography, she recounts her trajectory toward shaping a personal identity. She retraces her way to making "a kind of life"[3] that is self-assured and full. Condé's account of her life takes her from the Caribbean Island of Guadeloupe to France, to a series of African countries and to the United States of America.

The classical liberal in me, understands Condé's journey to be a counter-example of the negative libertarian dictates that would propose that persons develop their individuality in a vacuum and ought to be left alone unless they present a harm to the society at-large. Condé explains how she has composed her life from her personal memories in the Caribbean with siblings and parents, to her experiences beyond the Caribbean. We see that with her studies in France, her cultivated interests and curiosities in western Africa, her identity bloomed. Hers is an expansive conception of identity that flows from her errantry. Her sense of identity does not subscribe to the strictures of categories. Condé maintained her opacity as she has traversed the various moments of her life.

The connecting thread of her trajectory is her passion for storytelling. She unmasks the Caribbean writer to delineate the different ways that the modifier/adjective can be limiting unless it is purely descriptive. Beyond its pointing to a locating connection, Condé explains that the contemporary writers that hailed in some ways from the Caribbean, do not all speak in one voice nor on a single issue. She uncovers subtly the oversight of the work of women writers of the region from the moment of the Négritude movement to the contemporary moment of créolization. Writers who have some origin in the Caribbean have from Condé's assessment, written their individuality not by exhibiting some patterned formula that all members of a particular region of the globe are expected to display.

Instead, the writer from the Caribbean, or of the Caribbean, writes her experiences and stories in Kréyol, French, English, German, Spanish, Dutch, or whatever language is made available to her during her upbringing. Condé articulates early on in her collection of essays the peculiarity of the Caribbean writer. For many of these writers, whether "insiders" or "nomads," "the old values are shifting. Place of residence, nationality and even language are all being relativized and redefined. Everything is possible. Everything is to be born. Everything is to be named and renamed" (Condé 2020: 9).

The passage encapsulates Condé's own lived experience. She recognized, and at an early stage in her career as a writer, that words had power. She has sought to recapture that early realization in her subsequent works. Whether she has achieved that goal or not, she realized that something was certain. She will be misread and misinterpreted especially when her readers expect her to fit a particular mold as a writer. She disappointed readers' expectations in the Guinea of Sekou Touré, in Mali, and in Guadeloupe. These readers failed to accept that her work reflected what Fanon referred to as the "'dense subterranean life in perpetual renewal'"[4] that constitutes the writer's world (Condé 2020: 15).

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Wrestling with that life is deeply individual and by definition, risks misinterpretation. The writer's efforts may fall short of others' expectations.

Caribbean peoples have indeed shared a common experience. Having language stripped from them upon arrival in the region, the population of persons transplanted in the first instance from Africa to the area, have had to either adopt the imposed language of the colonizers, or do as some in the Francophone regions have, i.e. invent a new language Kréyol. Some peoples in the region have done both. Colonization and the various practices that it instituted robbed the ancestors of the modern Caribbean peoples of their legacies and imposed upon their progeny a necessity of rebirth. We would be mistaken however in believing that the rebirth required a collective directive, that it followed a specific pattern. The Caribbean writer, according to Condé, does not follow a canon, or a crowd. The writer exemplifies the nexus of the creative work. The work is subjective, unique to the individual, and to her personal history. Perhaps what is essentially true of the Caribbean writer is that her work mimics the tradition of rebirth encrusted in Caribbean, island, living.

The Caribbean writer in Condé's sense is the epitome of the individuality that the classical liberals cherished. The classical liberals, however, did not factor in the sediments of colonialism. Condé's approach and her interpretation of the Caribbean writer is a counter-argument, an antidote, to the classical liberal. She reveals at once the sedimented individualism that saddles not only persons of that region, but all those of African descent who are relegated to a modernity that both excludes them, and could not have arisen without their presence, their contribution. Above all, the price paid by the progenitors of the Caribbean writer was the sacrifice of their humanity. The exclusion of the colonized thus gives way, in Condé's hands, to dialectical and diametric oppositions that rekindle as counter-posing identities that inform the very humanity that modernity precluded.

The Négritude movements, as responses to modernity's dehumanization of indigenous persons and persons of African descent, resonate differently depending on the moment and place of colonization. Condé reads Aimé Césaire and Léopold S. Senghor in that context[5]. Both, advocates of Négritude, aimed to recapture a presumably lost but certainly an at once, imposed and denied, identity. In Césaire's Négritude, Condé sees a recognition and acceptance of an identity that would precede a revolutionary posture against the denial of a person's humanity. She concludes that, in the end, Césaire's Négritude aspires for an assimilation in the very social and political body that sought to denigrate it. It displays a masochism that contrasts with Senghor's version, which for its part, according to Condé, is a Négritude that sources pride and strength in its political combat against anti-Blackness.

Condé rejects these movements because they are premised on a lie, namely that there is such a thing as a Negro, (or a `Black' in our time). That persistent lie has veiled the truth that the motivation of modernity has been all along, social, political and economic power, and exploitation. There have never been Negroes, only exploited individuals whose exploitation was facilitated in part, by the complicity of leaders who shirked their responsibility vis-à-vis their local masses (Condé 2020: 88). Liberation from the exploitative conditions would come in two parts, first from the recognition of the lie, and second, from the rejection of any position that rests on the fictive racial pedestal. With Condé, the Caribbean writer is an ordinary man or woman who listens to the region, the island of origin and its people, and who struggles to express in a unique way how s/he imagines the present in which s/he lives. As she focuses on the creative aspects of the writer from the Caribbean region, Condé witnesses the pervasiveness of the exclusionary practices of modernity but contends, more importantly, that in

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its contemporary instantiation, racial exclusion is but one mutation of the exclusionary practice that is constitutive of modernity.

The writer's liberatory impulse reveals that world and more. If the Caribbean writer is to be a model, he will be a model for liberation simpliciter, a liberation against exploitation and oppression of all sorts. She will also be a model for hope in that as a member of a group of individuals bereft of any tools to build anew, she has persevered. These individuals have uncovered for us, and in these volcanic eruptions that pass for islands in the Atlantic ocean, a world without specified origin and with no borders. They have cultivated a world that reminds us that our very survival as a species depends on our ability to find friendship, comity, and love, with others with whom we only share a basic humanity. The Caribbean has always been "multiform, plural and polyphonic" (Condé 2020: 216).

The trajectory of Condé's book accounts for the journey of one Caribbean writer. It entertains how the writer's singular effort to express the way the Caribbean people are introduced to the world, and the manner in which they have forged a way forward in the world that we share. Condé encourages us to loosen the many layers of our sedimented individuality and to deploy them creatively in the face of institutional and structural efforts to flatten our existence into a common but disposable whole, be it racial, economic, or political.

Ó Tuama's intuition of the impulse that drive islanders to reach or aspire to meet the other, motivates the work of Kris Sealey. In her *Creolizing the Nation*, Sealey explains how the metaphysical and epistemological work of Édouard Glissant can be translated and expanded to meet the exigencies of the contemporary political circumstances. She draws from Glissant's poetics something unique that she attempts to apply to our contemporary socio-political environment. Although various authors from the Caribbean region, from Wilson Harris to Alex Roehmer to Maryse Condé herself, have articulated the refractory pulse that energizes the writers of that region, Sealey chooses the `creolization' that Glissant formulates to help move us into a de-colonial stage.

We learn that Créole itself is not a particularly novel conception and that for some time it designated the effort at distinguishing the European settlers in the new world from their forebears in Europe. The creoles then aimed to lay claim to the independence of the wealth they amassed in the colonial territories. As they distinguished themselves from their counterparts in Europe, they also perpetuated the European hierarchical structure in the colonies that would reinforce their own power over the indigenous and transplanted members of the new territories. Sealey's analysis joins Condé's work to affirm that the 'nation-form,' a bourgeoning notion in that era of colonization, motivated colonizers to implement in the newly acquired colonized territory an inherently exclusionary but fundamentally artificial political structure.

The nation-form presumed a homogeneity conceived as natural. It implied wrongly an affinity between members of that community. It concocted the affinity that formed the basis on which, privileges and rights would be assigned. Contrary to the appeal and openness to the other that Ó Tuama believes is reinforced by island life, the 'nation-form' proposed a negative valuation of the other. When translated onto the Caribbean region, it put power at the service of colonization. Glissant, like Condé, believes that the people of the Caribbean archipelago forged themselves against trauma and complete denigration of their humanity. Yet, out of this abyss, they managed to survive, form culture, and a language. Créolization is the process by which the traumatized people managed to survive. The

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practice of the process has import for the world over and for the human's ability to overcome exclusion and dejection.

In this vein, Sealey's work, is timely and informative. It exemplifies the manner in which one can deploy creolization for liberatory goals. Since Glissant's work is metaphysical and epistemological though it insinuates a political, Sealey enlists the works of Latinx philosophers and thinkers such Vasconcelos by way of Anzaldúa, Lugones, Ortega, Alcoff and adds Fanon to make clear the political reach of Glissant's foundational work[6]. With their help, Sealey expands Glissant's work and anticipates the prospective encounter with the other in the *polis*. In Sealey's hand, the model that créolization signifies accelerates the process of comity.

Her work is innovative. Sealey heeds Fanon's caution that colonial power, because oppressive, triggers in some instances revolutionary counter movements. It is thus inevitable, Fanon thought, and according to Sealey, that anti-colonial efforts would ideally exhibit two stages. The first, the preliminary stage of anti-colonialism, is as Manichean as the colonial power's posture. It pits those who belong and who are acceptable, against those who do not and are not. In short, in as strong a force as the privilege or denigration that follows the distinction of colonizer and colonized, the first stage of anti-colonialism exhibits similarly an unnuanced dichotomy of `us and them' (Sealey 2020: 148). The second phase of anti- or de-colonization for Fanon is aspirational. That stage seeks to bring about in the aftermath of colonization, a new nation devoid of the markers of the colonial era. The anti-colonial project is the "ethical project of a "new humanity" in ways that transcend the old colonial/Manichean divisions of the colony (divisions that tend to ground the struggle's early stages)" (Sealey 2020: 159).

In sum, the creolization that Glissant advocates, coupled with Fanon's caution, points to a new de-colonial community. Créolization encourages the construction of a community whose members maintain their integrity as they dialogue with others, who like them, are committed to the construction of a present and future in which domination has no place. Such world makers admittedly, both local and national, practice errantry that is, the willingness to engage the 'other,' and to enter into relation with one another even without the foresight of a predetermined goal, or the guarantee of a specific outcome. The aspirational imperative that Sealey carves out brilliantly in her work for the new liberatory nation, is the creolized nation which embraces the prospect of a political future that would not be oppressive.

With Sealey we have then the prospect of a liberating future but without a map. Even if we take créolization itself as a positive value, it does not follow that the political environment that it augurs be itself desirable. Unless we take for granted that the elimination of the conditions of domination that the creolized nation purports to eradicate be itself enough of a good that we can afford to disregard the form that that good would take in actuality. There is more work to do to be sure, but Sealey has pointed us to a path forward and potentially, a path away from domination or neo-colonialism. Furthermore, and in fairness to Sealey, her project does not explore the larger political environment, the inter- or trans-national environment, where nations interact with each other by way of agreements or conflicts. If the larger international environment remains Manichean and power-centered and thus unmoved by the moral repugnance of neo-colonial polity, Sealey's aspirations for contemporary post-colonial nations, even if they are erected to aim at some perceived or actual national good, will fail.

I hesitate to suggest that we might need a larger creolizing international environment but Sealey's work, despite its silence on such matters, prefaces Adom Getachew's *Worldmaking after Empire* that

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takes up the question of a Manichean international environment. There, Getachew presents a historically anchored and elegantly woven argument that claims that the right to self-determination had a resurgence in the post-world war II period. She holds however that the anti-colonial reiteration of self-determination in international affairs, exemplified in the independence movement of many of the former colonial territories in Africa and the Caribbean, is not simply an extension of the Westphalian push for nationalism. Her work recounts how the various leaders of the African and Caribbean independence movements met in real time, the intransigence of international neo-colonialism.

The anti-colonial independence movement acted against the particular hold of various European imperial powers. Getachew disabuses us of the seduction of a neutral European Westphalian precedence. In her very rich exposé, Getachew argues in part that

> The anti-colonial right to self-determination functioned as the juridical component of international nondomination […]. This vision of an international order, premised on the independence and equality of states, which are to be free from domination, was not born in the Westphalian Treaty or the UN Charter. Instead, it should be understood as an anti-imperial project that went beyond the inclusion of new states to demand an expansive vision of an egalitarian world order. (Getachew 2019: 74)

Getachew thus rejects the view that colonial independence is simply a more expansive application of the tendencies of Westphalia. She argues that the context in Europe that helped articulate the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648 is different from that in which the fervor of anti-colonial independence arose. Westphalia was to solve tension and violence in Europe and to establish the independence of some newly instituted national groups in that context. It protected their newfound autonomy and guaranteed non-intervention in their internal affairs. One might also argue that Westphalia gestured to some universal ideal ripe for an international community.

Getachew maintains however that if a cosmopolitan environment was the intent of the constitutive principles of that treaty, the resultant was in both, the formulation of the League of Nations Covenant and the United Nations Charter, an inegalitarian world order. Both international institutions sought in fact to maintain European preeminence and with it, a racial hierarchy. Self-determination, as per her analysis, is not a universal, but rather a European concept purposed to promote a regional, hierarchical and thus racial world order that favored folks of European descent. As a relative concept, and left to its own inherent constitution, self-determination excludes non-European prospective members at worst, or at best, only conditionally admit them.

The anti-colonial nationalists recognized early, and especially in the new formulation of the post-second world war institution, the Organization of the United Nations, that the self-determination they were after would need to be buttressed with an anti-domination, anti-imperial, component. Getachew's analysis demonstrates that some of the early mid- 20th century anti-colonial political leaders of African and Caribbean independence envisioned a nationalism outside of the temporal evolution of western ideals. Their anti-colonialist nationalism sought to counter both the racism and the hegemonic trends that motivated the international institutions of the period. The anti-colonial nationalists too attempted to remake the world, in the aftermath of wars that surely proved the bankruptcy of the European purported moral superiority.

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Anti-colonial independence in the hands of figures like Kwame Nkrumah, George Padmore, Eric Williams, Julius Nyerere and the Manleys (Norman and Michael) of Jamaica is certainly a feat of nationalism. Theirs was a self-determination in accordance with, in the best of circumstances, the sentiments of the people that would be represented in the political leadership. But we realize as Getachew's work proceeds that these figures, and including among others W.E.B. Du Bois, learned from the experiences of Haiti, Liberia and Ethiopia in the early part of the twentieth century that self-determination was precarious. The precarity of these non-European nations made limpid that the admission of such independent countries in the family nations, would be conditional. In practice they would not receive, as equal participants in the newly instituted global order, the same protection of rights initially purposed for the sustenance of European, and the ascending American, empires.

The right to self-determination for these countries (Haiti, Liberia and Ethiopia) even in the early versions of an international community postulated through the League of Nations was a conditional right. In the case of Liberia and Ethiopia, Getachew shows that their right depended on whether they satisfied certain conditions delineated by the very institutions that should have protected that right. They were expected to prove their anti-slavery commitment at the same time that colonialism (as oppressive a type of governance as the former) was an on-going practice of the colonial powers of Europe around the globe. To be sure, the international organization had racial undertones and incorporated gradualism that secured the permanent second-class status and membership of the early African States in the League of Nations.

In the second instantiation of international institution in the post-World War II period, the United Nations Organization, the anti-colonial intellectuals and political leaders who were the architects of the independence of Ghana, Nigeria, Trinidad, Tanzania and Jamaica were without fail considering a national self-determination. As national self-determination goes and in the new world order proposed in the United Nations, these leaders sought a political independence from colonials. Their political independence faced head on, in this process, the wall of economic imperialism. In the early moments of their independence, the countries of Ghana, Nigeria and Trinidad sought to rid their territory of domination. Though the political liberation was earned, the economic domination by a consortium of mainly European nations would persist. So armed with the General Assembly at the UN, representatives of the newly independent countries rallied support for their version of the right to self-determination. They encouraged others to rid themselves of their colonial shackles.

The anti-colonial nationalists as world makers in their own right, attempted to reconstruct the international environment. They erected regional organizations in the Caribbean and on the continent of Africa and reinforced those regional organizations with the creation, at the General Assembly, of the New International Economic Order to establish a more "egalitarian global economy" (Getachew 2019: 74). Getachew thinks that this combination of protective pillars against continued and prospective encroachment marks the distinctiveness of the anti-colonial nationalists from their post-Westphalian counterparts. The latter too engaged in world making. The world making they envisioned however was "an effort to preserve the state by guaranteeing a set of legal rights that delimited the exercise of power in the international sphere" (Getachew 2019: 100).

I quote Getachew in the closing moment of this review to encapsulate the thrust and significance of her contribution to our understanding of even some of the contemporary challenges that exacerbate our continued inequality. The anti-colonial leaders did not extend European ideals but rather responded to the prospect of continued European and American exploitation and hegemony. They

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erected regional institutions and infused existing international organizations with additional protective pillars.

> If the right to self-determination prioritized the political and legal over the economic and the New International Economic Order privileged the economic realm over the political, this federal [regional] phase of anticolonial worldmaking marked the most sustained effort to design international political institutions that were directly linked to the remaking of the economic relations at the heart of neocolonial dependence. (Getachew 2019: 138)

Anti-coloniality thus first aimed to eliminate racial domination and second, sought to eradicate the lingering colonial legacy that permeates international institutions. The post-colonial nationalism or 'anticolonial self-determination,' as Getachew would prefer, worked to ensure that post-colonial independence would prevent the resurgence of any neo-colonial tendencies, especially in the economic realm. Unfortunately, this last goal was destined to be defeated because at the international level, the architects of the world-order that followed both world wars injected the virus of racism in these institutional structures. To the extent that self-determination would have an apotheosis, it would be a truncated independence, if independence at all. Now that Getachew has pointed it out to us, it seems now obviously definitional that any conception of independence would imply that one should be rid of all shackles, including those of colonial domination or interference.

The anti-colonial actors/leaders that Getachew's work highlights took anti-colonialism seriously enough to expect that with the legacy of colonialism intact, the survival and autonomy of the former colonial territories would be vacuous without strong institutional and practical protections. In my view these efforts at protection, should expect the former colonizers to assume a responsibility, if not a direct and bi-lateral responsibility from European states to specific new national entities. Perhaps better, international institutions in a post-colonial era should embed in their practice a collective responsibility that safeguards the long term sustainability and integrity of the post-colonial nations.

The sense of assumed responsibility I gesture toward here brings us full circle to the revelation of Ó Tuama. Island life instills in those of us who live it, an interest and aspiration to comity with the other. The anti-colonial nationalists opened the door to that comity in their independence efforts in the aftermath of colonization. It is debatable whether that independence project has failed. It is however clear that our collective responsibility to each other continues to be wanting. We humans are still grappling with the perpetuation of the Manichean world of modernity. Is that the best we can offer humanity and our progeny?

I read the writers reviewed above in this essay, as optimists. They embody an unflinching support for a liberatory future. Condé, Sealey and Getachew have all highlighted the hindrances to the truly liberatory moments of the individual, and at the local, national, and international levels. Although there are no clearly delineated alternatives from them, we know at least, and with their help, what to guard against. We are at bottom individual creatures motivated by our biologic impulses. It is also true that we are creatures with creativity and expressions that can be inhibited or prompted by various social and political institutions. Attacks against our individual creative disposition, by institutions that perpetuate our subservience to others and that prevent our comity, need to be identified. The writers I have covered here have helped make clear that in the first quarter of the 21st c. the challenge we face is old, and although persistent, these writers insinuate that subjugating practices can be reversed by comity and creativity. The tools that islanders take for granted because they are crucial to their own

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continued viability are exemplary. May we continue to tap the resources that reinforce our common humanity and learn to model the recipe for viability from islanders whether they hail from the Caribbean or from elsewhere.

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1 https://www.npr.org/transcripts/918317448, searched on 2/5/2021 on https://www.npr.org/programs/all-things-considered/2020/09/29/918077989

2 We can leave room for a debate regarding whether there is any meaningful sense of diaspora other than an African diaspora. Especially if we accept the proposition that all humans descend from an African ancestor, all dispersions of human beings on the globe would thereby constitute an African diaspora. If on the other hand we accept the ethnic or continental categorizations of persons, it would be meaningful to speak of a Jewish, Asian, Indian, or Nigerian diaspora. In the case of persons of African descent, it is contestable whether in the pre-modern era we can meaningfully apply the term diaspora to speak of their condition. Not only because many would not know of which tribe or ethnic group the surviving successors emanate and that furthermore, for those who survived, it would be the broad conception of a continental diaspora that would apply in that sense, the African diaspora would be as broad and as meaningful as the dispersion of the human race. The specific value of speaking of an African diaspora would flow from the understanding that the transatlantic slave trade did disproportionately affect groups of persons hailing from the continent of Africa. Although these individuals brought to the colonized territories were from different parts of the continent, they forged ahead and constructed a new race, a new people, who equipped themselves with mnemonic devices that anchored them together to a fictive *a priori*, of the home before time, before the time of enslavement. The diaspora that tends to be qualified as African is the dispersion of these people from the continent who remembered a time before the present. The denial of diaspora is the denial of this group memory, the denial of this fictive *a priori*.

3 I use this phrase from Ó Tuama's reading of Lucille Clifton's untitled poem but often referred to as "won't you celebrate with me?" It is part of the same interview mentioned above. https://www.npr.org/transcripts/918317448, searched on 2/5/2021 on https://www.npr.org/programs/all-things-considered/2020/09/29/918077989

4 Condé quotes Frantz Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth*, transl Richard Philcox, (New York: Grove Press, 2005), 160.

5 Aimé Césaire, Léopold Sédar Senghor and Léon-Gontran Damas are three poets who met in Paris as students and formed what would become the Négritude poetic school later to be articulated as an identitarian and counter-colonialist movement. According to Alain Mabanckou, the Négritude school became in the 1930s' Paris a means of elevating oneself against the denial of African values that permeated the Eurocentric and racist ideologies that served to justify anti-Black racism that supported the transatlantic slave trade and later, colonialism. As a cultural and political movement, it countered cultural assimilation and offered a miraculous weapon for the recognition and liberation of Black thought (Mabanckou 2020: 63). Césaire was from Martinique, Senghor from Senegal, and Damas from French Guyana.

6 José Vasconcelos was a Mexican civil servant and intellectual who fought against the exclusion of indigenous peoples from the Mexican family. A militant against European hierarchization in the new

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world, his work can be linked to the writings of later Mexican, Chicano/a philosophers and artist who fought and continue to fight against exclusions. Notably, Gloria Evangelina Anzaldúa promoted the cause of individuals relegated to the margins of society. Her works explores the complexities of collective identity. María Lugones, an Argentine philosopher and activist, examined the legacy of colonialism and the effect of that legacy on labor, gender and race. Ortega and Alcoff are living contemporary philosopher who profess in the United States of America. Mariana Ortega draws from her immigrant and Latin roots to offer a conception of belongingness and identity that embraces both multiplicity and singularity. She explores a truism of identity namely how one can be part of multiple and different worlds. Linda Martín Alcoff is philosopher of central American descent examines the complexities of racial and gendered categories but uses that examination to offer a contemporary critique of whiteness. Although in no way definitive of their work, these introductory excerpts open a window onto the import of the works of these intellectuals. I have wanted to give the reader a first interpretation of the works of their works and propose the thread of identity, exclusion, belongingness and response to colonialism and racism as entries that would make the works of such individuals attractive to Sealey and her cause. I close with Frantz Fanon whose work should be familiar to most because his impact of thoughts of Black freedom. Regardless of the familiarity however, we know that his analysis of the psychology of the colonizer and the colonized has contributed a great deal to many contemporary works that deal with the residues of the practice of colonialism and racism and on how they continue to infect our contemporary polity. These writers draw from their broadly continental and, except for Fanon, their Hispanophone experience in the Americas to examine and broaden the notions of identity and appurtenance that we, in the West, have taken for granted. Their approach is fresh, innovative, and emancipatory.

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