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Patriarchy and Paradise: Celebrating *Macadam Dreams*

Lorna Burns

French-Caribbean author, Gisèle Pineau, is often cited among the elite of the *créolité* movement headed by Jean Bernabé, Patrick Chamoiseau, and Raphaël Confiant. Yet, her inclusion in this group belies a fundamental difference between Pineau and the authors of *Éloge de la créolité* (1989). The displacement felt by Pineau’s female protagonists – whether it be Mirna returning to Guadeloupe after three years at a French university in *The Drifting of the Spirits* (1993), or Mina’s seemingly pathological sexual encounters in an oppressive Parisian suburb in *The Devil’s Dance* (2002) – is indicative of Pineau’s own exile.¹ Unlike the other *créolité* authors, Pineau was born in Paris, only returning with her parents to Guadeloupe at the age of fourteen.² Thus where Bernabé *et al* state that they are ‘[n]either Europeans, nor Africans, nor Asians, we proclaim ourselves Creoles’,³ Pineau has stated ‘I was born in Paris. I am Parisian. But I was in exile’.⁴ If *créolité* may be read as valorising creole as an identitarian category equal to that of European or African, as Édouard Glissant maintains it can,⁵ Pineau’s claim highlights the difficulty of achieving a unified, stable identity: she is both Parisian and an exile of Guadeloupe. Neither is it the case that her return to Guadeloupe resolved these feelings of displacement: ‘[w]hen I came to the Antilles, I didn’t speak Creole like everyone else, I rolled my Rs, I was different, thus automatically pushed aside, just as I had been in France’.⁶ Racial and familial ties alone do not always secure a return to one’s native land, and creoleness reveals itself as just as exclusionary and essentialized as the identitarian categories it replaces. However, if *créolité*, as Glissant has argued, relies on ‘generalizing concepts’,⁷ Pineau’s own biography suggests a closeness to the

more fluid notion of identity. As Lucia Suarez argues: '[h]er writing advocates an individuality enriched by two communities, structured by multiple cultural inheritances'.⁸

This individuality and freedom from a close identification with any one community, affords Pineau a critical stance on the position of women in Caribbean communities and the discourses of landscape and paradise which surround them. And it is this particular strand of Pineau's work that this article develops through a reading of her novel, *Macadam Dreams* (1995): identifying in it tropes of violence and oppression with respect to the natural world, the communities that live therein, and the various forms of discourse that seek to represent both. Whether it be literary representations of the Caribbean as a paradisiacal or Edenic landscape, the idealism of the novel's Rastafarian characters, or even the very terms of postcolonial-Caribbean criticism, such as creolization, Pineau suggests that these forms of discourse may only contribute to the effective liberation of oppressed members of the community by disregarding idealism and becoming socially responsive, facing the real and present circumstances of everyday life and responding to individual instances of abuse.

Macadam Dreams, originally published as *L'espérance-macadam*, engages with tropes of paradise and idealism in order to establish a correlation between the devastation wrought by a cyclone and the violent experiences of rape and incest. As Pineau herself explains:

L'espérance-macadam relates the violence that is done to women and girls. I have met many people who were victims of incest and it is an injury about which, as a woman, I couldn't keep silent. I wrote *L'espérance* to show the human being in this violence, bounced around like a canoe at sea, wounded by the hurricanes, like an island, like Guadeloupe. At the time I was thinking about writing this book, we had Hurricane Hugo. That was 1989. After spending the night praying and struggling against the elements, the next day, when we opened the doors and saw the land with its devastated features, I told myself that Guadeloupe had been raped [...]. That cyclone had fallen upon Guadeloupe the way a father raping his daughter falls upon her.⁹

Pineau's vision clearly approximates what Glissant in *The Ripening* (1958) referred to as a 'true and painful knowing';¹⁰ a realisation of the Caribbean as a land marked by poverty, violence, and destruction, not as an Edenic or paradisiacal refuge. As in the case of Glissant's protagonist, Thaël, for whom true knowledge can be discerned only once he discovers his connection to the land and the community, for Pineau's protagonist, Eliette, the discovery of

her own story is a slow and painful process initiated by the impending arrival of Hurricane Hugo and the fulfilment of the Haitian fortune-teller's prediction that although she would never have a child of her own, she would care for a niece. Yet, while Thael's enlightenment is gained through the various stages of his journey, the linearity of which is emphasised by the progression of the river he follows from source to sea, Eliette's narrative reflects the nature of the cyclone: circular, disconnected, and disordered.

The novel's opening scene finds Eliette among the ruins of her cabin in Savane Mulet following the passage of Hurricane Hugo: '[a] few belongings hung in the sky. A mattress a top a miraculous straight pole, amidst all the others, bent, decapitated, flung to the ground'.¹¹ The surreal image of belongings suspended in mid air testifies to the violence inflicted by the passing of the hurricane: reality itself appears to have been disrupted. In fact, the violence of the hurricane permeates all aspects of *Macadam Dreams*, from the discontinuous memories of Rosette, the shifting narrative perspective between characters and from first to third person narration, down to the askew chapter numbers. Pineau herself has commented on her clear intention to emphasise the force of the hurricane: 'I wanted to bring to life the forces of nature, their violence, and the violence of human beings. I wanted to evoke the whirling winds of the cyclones through a circular construction that grows denser and denser until you see the father commit this act of violence'.¹² This paradoxical arrangement by which the increasing density of the narrative leads to clarity and revelation, is tentatively structured around the two most notable cyclones to affect Eliette – that of 1928 and Hurricane Hugo in 1989. In the first instance, Eliette's inability to clearly recall her past appears to be the result of her childhood encounter with the cyclone of 1928: 'so bad that she'd been unable to speak for three full years, it [a rafter] had wounded her in the head and the belly, had dispossessed her of all her faith in herself'.¹³ However, it becomes increasingly apparent that this version of events is the creation of her mother, Séraphine:

the truth is, Eliette didn't remember a thing. It was her mama who had always told her about the night when Guadeloupe had capsized in the cyclone and been smashed to bits. She called that nightmare the Passage of the Beast. And better to burn the story into Eliette's mind, she was constantly rehashing the memory of the head and belly wound, the bloodstained sheets.¹⁴

Séraphine's compulsive retelling of this story in order to 'burn' her version of events into Eliette's mind, is part of her wish to forget the truth of the past: that the bloodstained sheets

were the result of Eliette's rape by her father, tellingly known as Ti-Cyclone. Pineau's intentional and quite straightforward association between cyclone and rape in *Macadam Dreams* potentially sets up the act of rape as an occurrence as devastating and violent as a cyclone, but also as disinterested and naturally occurring. Certainly, this much is suggested in what little is revealed of the thoughts of Ti-Cyclone and Rosan, the son of Ti-Cyclone who is responsible for the other rape detailed in the novel (reinforcing, perhaps, violence as a natural, inherited disposition). Both characters show little remorse in their actions; Ti-Cyclone, it is noted, had 'even forgotten Séraphine and her little Eliette as he grew older'.¹⁵ Yet reading the novel's depiction of rape in this way does little justice to Pineau's text, for in it her focus is not the violence of hurricane or rape, but the aftermath and people's response to tragedy. In this way, linking together rape and the cyclone in Séraphine's tales, her unsuccessful attempt to shield her daughter from the memory of that night, is exposed for what it is: a poor response to violence that, in turn, prevents Eliette from coming to terms with what happened to her.

Eliette's recovery of the memory of 'the Passage of the Beast' is triggered by the gradual revelation of Angela's story. The parallels between these two narratives – that of Eliette's rape by Ti-Cyclone, and the more sustained sexual abuse of Angela by her father, Rosan – affords Pineau the opportunity to assert the cyclonic structure of her narrative, the image of 'the beast' surfacing in both accounts.¹⁶ However, once again Pineau is interested in the response to violence, and Séraphine's attempt to hide the truth finds a parallel in the character of Rosette, Angela's mother, whose storytelling and dreams stop her from recognising Rosan's abuse. As Eliette comments, 'Rosette was a kind girl. She walked a straight path, dreamt of a better world – a sort of paradise'.¹⁷ Whereas Séraphine's fabrication is nevertheless faithfully rooted in violence and devastation, Rosette refuses to acknowledge painful reality, substituting it instead with fantasies of paradise. Even when being interviewed by the police, Rosette finds a means of escape: '[s]he answered all the questions docilely while her mind rambled in an autumnal landscape munching on apples and pears'.¹⁸ The reference to 'apples and pears' and 'an autumnal landscape' is indicative of just how far removed she is from the reality of the situation in Guadeloupe. The image is reasserted a few pages later where she wishes her own death, seeing it as a means to become 'a free, liberated woman', with access to 'the apples and pears' of the vast garden of heaven and 'where she would have never been forced to imagine Rosan pulling down Angela's panties'.¹⁹ Though Séraphine's fabrication allows her to, initially, avoid the reality of her husband's actions, she

recognises the violence done to Eliette's body (in the form of the rafter); Rosette, on the other hand, rejects knowledge of both the act of abuse and the scars. Séraphine's account at least accepts the fact of cyclone even if it refuses to name it; Rosette rejects both, a point enforced ultimately by her refusal to acknowledge the approaching threat of Hurricane Hugo.

Clearly, both Rosette and Séraphine mask reality, but the distinction that I am making is between a fantasy that nevertheless is grounded in the painful and specific realities of the Caribbean environment and society, and one that is not. Throughout, Rosette's escapism is significantly bound to discourses of paradise and utopia:

all that time she'd been exalting in her paradise, busily hanging stars in the sky. Walking back up the slopes of the valley of tears to enter the kingdom of the ancestors, return to Mother Africa with Beloved. Surely her eyes had been elsewhere, picking flowers in Eden, stroking lions, and speaking with birds. Or maybe she was dancing to reggae music, lifting her knees high – one of Bob's numbers, a Gregory Isaacs or Prince Jazzbo tune.

*Step forward, youth, and let I tell you the truth
Step forward, youth ...*

Seen nothing, heard nothing.²⁰

Turning a blind eye, 'seen nothing, heard nothing', throughout the novel is the response of the community to the various acts of violence levelled at women. Yet, Rosette's claim to ignorance is here clearly linked to utopian, or idealistic discourses: paradise/Eden; the return to Africa with the Rastafarian prophetess, Beloved; and reggae music. Pineau presents these as three related tropes and critiques the desire to capture lost innocence and purity at the expense of recognising the real and present ills of society.²¹

In a very clear way, Rosette's obsession with reggae music allows her to isolate herself from the outside world: literally she shuts herself up in her cabin and listens to her records all day. While this physically isolates her, paradoxically, she imagines great freedom as she listens:

[s]he drifted up, began running, walking, pedalling in the air, moving forward, forever forward. Suddenly, she was far from Savane and all of its misery. Free, despite the battles she fought to put food on the plates [...]. 'No woman no cry ...' She was a woman, by God! A Negress that stood tall. There was nothing left to fear. The eyes of the Almighty were upon her! Glory be to Jah-God! Yes, justice will be done in Babylon. One day there would not be the slightest recollection of a crime in Savane. And the

macadam dreams in these parts would give way to a dream never before seen in the world.²²

Significantly, Rosette associates justice with forgetting – ‘there would not be the slightest recollection of crime’ – while the narrative itself goes on to insist on retelling the crimes of Savane – ‘she forgot the child thrown to the bottom of Nèfles Bridge, the three piles of rotten christophines, Glawdys’s gray eyes [...]. She no longer saw the mangled baby in Rosan’s arms’.²³ The narrative, therefore, restates the particular crimes of the community in the face of the more generalizing, Rastafarian concept of Babylon. By adopting this position, Rosette herself no longer has to dwell on the specific acts of violence, and her own complicity with them. This over simplification or diversion is confirmed as her mental flight evokes images of slave ships and maroons until ‘crime’ comes to represent the historical situation of all black people, and “‘Revolution! ...’” as the only chance to ‘escape eternal sorrow’ and ‘be reborn far from macadam dreams’: ‘yes, Lord, her people would finally rise up, free themselves from the mire of the ancient curse and that, yes, Lord, blacks would be seen as men on this earth’.²⁴ However, blind faith in the Revolution’s promise of escape and reparations, like Rosette’s own refusal to engage with the community and specific crimes committed there, glosses over the specificities of individual lives in need of rebuilding.

The passage’s reference to the novel’s title, ‘macadam dreams’, is particularly revealing of the need to focus on individual lives, rather than a general notion of black empowerment. Clearly, Rosette regards her fantastical dreams of drifting away, eating apples and pears in paradise, as the very antithesis of the macadam dreams of Babylon/Savane.²⁵ Everyday, ordinary, unremarkable dreams are indeed set in contrast to the ‘autumnal landscapes’ of Rosette’s fairytales. However, this is a novel about the importance of macadam dreams; of recognising suffering and abuse, and rebuilding one’s life. As Pineau has commented, her novels are about ‘learning to come to terms with one’s past. As living human beings, despite the sexual violence (in *L’espérance*), death (in *Chair piment*), we cannot remain in the past’.²⁶ Pineau gives this point expression in *Macadam Dreams* through the words of Eliette’s godmother, Anoncia: ‘[t]here’ll be other cyclones, lots of them. And no one can do nothing about that, even the great scientists in France. No one can stop them. Just predict them. And a body will just have to lie low and then stand back up again, rebuild, dress the wounds, try and look forward to tomorrow’s dreams’.²⁷ The inevitability of the cyclone and, by association, male violence against women is too easily accepted in this statement. There is a sense that

female characters like Eliette should accept their situation passively – just ‘lie low’. However, Pineau’s most forceful critique is reserved for diversionists, idealistic characters like Rosette who fail to acknowledge that there is no guarantee that the Revolution will end the individual instances of abuse and violence: an important warning for Césaire and Glissant who fail to acknowledge the ways in which women find themselves vulnerable within the communities both writers valorise.

Rosette’s failure lies in her inability to ground her dreams, her future, in the real world. The criticism here is of course the same as that which Glissant levelled against *négritude*. Celebrating the return to mother Africa as an ideal state is, as Glissant argues, to ignore the real and present problems of one’s native land, effectively a ‘diversion’.²⁸ In *Macadam Dreams*, the return to Africa is similarly critiqued through the Rastafarian ideology inherent in Rosette’s reggae music, but also in the small community of Rastafarians with which she becomes temporarily involved: it was said ‘they’d drunk too much pure Ital tea and that they sought neither bread nor job because they fed on a herb that gave them light, opened the gates to paradise, and beat the drums of love and the dream country in Africa that had been founded across the seas’.²⁹ The induced flight into paradise, ‘the dream country of Africa’, is exposed as a form of escapism and refusal to acknowledge one’s physical conditions, a fallacy that even Rosette becomes aware of: ‘other memories brought home the whole mockery of Beloved’s paradise: the hungry children, the rancid oil, the garden of the early days – abandoned, the laziness of Ras Gong, the useless words, the contempt of Delroy, the madness of Zauditu, who saw life only through ganja tea’.³⁰ Paradise is exposed as a mockery because it is a refusal to respond to the real and specific conditions of one’s life.

The danger in such a belief is made apparent through Beloved, the group’s prophetess, who leads the group up a mountain during a violent storm, claiming ‘that Jah had revealed the path to her. To return to the state of original purity, they – the Lord’s anointed, the earth-coloured brothers and sisters – must eat the earth itself, the earth whence they came. They all ate earth, for seven days [...] wearing their teeth down on the rocks of creation’.³¹ Like Alejo Carpentier’s protagonist in *The Lost Steps* (1953) or Thaël in Glissant’s *The Ripening*, the journey away from civilization towards an isolated natural world is once again represented as a search for original purity. And like these precursors, Beloved’s quest is exposed as absurd, many of the group falling ill with colic and dying of exhaustion and malnutrition. On the seventh day the group is finally decimated by the storm and swelling river. Although Beloved

believes right up to the moment of her death that she has ‘returned to the Garden of Eden’,³² the true trauma of the incident is evident in the appearance of the two sole survivors of ‘the purification of the Great Return. They came back broken, emaciated, ragged, nearly jumping out of their skins when anyone asked what had become of the tribe’.³³ In such moments Pineau is clearly critiquing both paradisiacal discourse and the idealisation of Africa as the site of purity and origin. In *Macadam Dreams* such fantasies prevent characters from responding to the real issues which affect the people of the Caribbean. Whereas Pineau seems to suggest the inevitability of domestic violence and rape, her focus is fundamentally on the reaction to devastation and those idealistic discourses that prevent her female characters from accepting the past. Beloved’s faith prevents her from accepting the abuse she receives from her partner, Delroy, just as Rosette dreams of autumnal landscapes and black liberation rather than acknowledge the truth about Rosan. Both characters are, to some extent, aware of oppression – the ills of Babylon or the slave trade – but, as Glissant’s concept of ‘diversion’ suggests, they ‘must look for it *elsewhere* in order to be aware of it’.³⁴ As such they, like all misled by diversion, are alienated from the particular circumstances of their own community and, therefore, are unable to rebuild their lives: ‘[d]iversion *leads nowhere*’.³⁵

For Glissant diversion is a failure to ‘live in one’s country’³⁶ and as such offers no grounds for creolization which functions as both an intermixing of cultures/identities as they are brought into contact with one another, and as a response to the New World environment in which that encounter takes place. Similarly, Pineau suggests in *Macadam Dreams* that the community’s, and in particular, Eliette’s, poor response to violence and devastation leads to the failure of the creolization project. Throughout the novel Eliette is painfully aware of the fact that she has never been able to conceive a child, and of all the memories that haunt her it is that of the child she almost adopted, Glawdys, that is one of the most painful. Glawdys is described as possessing a

beauty [which] was peculiar and magical, that girl had inherited nothing from her mama, except for the smile. Some said that the seven wise men from the slaughterhouse had mixed their blood so that she would take on equal parts of each of them, the best parts. Black Negress with green eyes, straight nose, thick, purple lips, and long, curly, straw-coloured hair, Glawdys baffled everyone who tried to pin point her race.³⁷

Uncertain of the father, Glawdys’s mother identifies ‘the seven wise men from the slaughterhouse’ as responsible, each of whom represent a different racial group from the

Caribbean: 'Black man, Indian, mulatto, white man, *chabin*, Carib, and coolie-bastard'.³⁸ Although the 'best parts' of all the races are here identified, Glawdys's racial ambiguity and 'magical appearance' suggest her as an archetype of a creolized identity, conforming to Glissant's claim that creolization forgoes the possibility of identifying unique racial origins and 'deconstruct[s] in this way the category of "creolized" that is considered as halfway between two "pure" extremes'.³⁹ However, Glawdys is rejected by her mother and taken in by another woman, Eloise, whose mental instability and paranoia causes her to keep the child locked away or tied up in the front yard. Instead of confronting this situation, Eliette and the community ignore Glawdys's suffering: '[I]ike everyone else in Savane Mulet, Eliette heard her yapping all day long. Of course, she could have stepped up, chided the cruel stepmother, and freed the innocent child [...]. But she lacked the necessary strength and courage. She was always putting off D-day till tomorrow'.⁴⁰ For seven years Glawdys is subject to her stepmother's abuse. As a result:

the golden colour of her curls was already fading. For lack of sunshine, her hair now shone like pinch-beck. From staying shut up in the dark cabin, her green eyes took on the glaucous colour of the marshes in Grande-Terre. From purple, her lips turned the disquieting blue of the high seas. Even the ebony black of her skin became dull and ashen, lost its lovely sheen.⁴¹

Abuse and the failure of the community to respond to the situation cause the visible markers of Glawdys's creolized identity to fade. Here creolization theory transcends purely racial mixing (a biological function) and implicates a process of transformation bound to the politics of place and environment.⁴² Similarly, here Pineau illustrates that creolization cannot be sustained where the community fails to acknowledge and engage with the real and present issues of their environment.

Pineau exposes the problematic discourse of paradise and innocence, however, she is careful to distinguish between those diversions which mask reality and other 'macadam dreams' which enable characters, particularly Eliette and Angela, to rebuild their lives after the hurricane. Paradise, then, is not rejected outright; but it is a paradise firmly located in the real circumstances of the land: a macadam paradise. This particular distinction is evident in the ambivalent character of Joab, Eliette's stepfather and the founder of Savane-Mulet. To Joab, 'Savane is the Good Lord's paradise'.⁴³ However, his pastoral vision is regenerative, as Séraphine tells Eliette: '[y]ou wanted to disappear from their sight, you told me they pierced

through you and stripped you. With the animals in his paradise, Joab showed you each day that by God, you couldn't remain a prisoner to old fears and that life here on earth also had its advantages and kinds turns'.⁴⁴ Joab's paradise enables Eliette to regain something of her confidence, allowing her to find her voice after three years of silence. But this paradise is not located in an imagined, idealised or hoped for elsewhere, rather it is simply the natural world and its inherent regenerative power.

After the passing of Hurricane Hugo and out of the devastation of the land, Pineau finds hope: '[o]n the hills the still, leafy green trees were waiting too, in awed calm. Tomorrow, they said amongst themselves, we'll count those who've been broken, who've been left on the ground [...]. Tomorrow we'll grow new limbs'.⁴⁵ The resolute determination to rebuild is reflected in Eliette, the 'old new mama who was already thinking about a roof to cover Angela's head [...]. She'd probably have to rebuild. Yes, there was still a way to get it back on its feet, old Joab's paradise of macadam dreams'.⁴⁶ Again Pineau is drawn to Glissant. In *The Ripening*, Thaël's isolated paradise is rejected in favour of the community which co-exists with the natural environment. Certainly like Aimé Césaire before him, Glissant depicts a 'sick paradise',⁴⁷ for to do otherwise would be a failure to respond to the realities of the environment and to replicate the coloniser's idealisation the New World space. Similarly, while rejecting the idealisation of purity and innocence, *Macadam Dreams* also privileges a sick, 'macadam' paradise; identifying in it a regenerative power that accepts the suffering of both landscape and people, and allows them to rebuild, to 'grow new limbs', *despite* what has passed. As Pineau states: 'I didn't want it to be only ruin, rage, desolation. I wanted there to be hope [...] because that's what matters, showing that we can rebuild ourselves. Never forget, but rebuild'.⁴⁸

Macadam Dreams illustrates that there is potential in idealistic or generalising forms of discourse when they are grounded in the specific and real contexts of peoples' everyday lives. In this way, Pineau conforms to Glissant's assertion that '[w]e must return to the point from which we started. Diversion is not a useful ploy unless it is nourished by reversion: not a return to the longing for origins, to some immutable state of Being, but a return to the point of entanglement, from which we were forcefully turned away'.⁴⁹ The idealisation of Africa as ancestral origin whether through Rastafarianism or *négritude*, tropes of paradise, and even the very terms of the postcolonial critic's lexicon: these represent sources of diversion, of looking elsewhere, that must necessarily be rooted in the real experience of the Caribbean people if

they are to prove anything more than the source of further alienation. This ‘reversion’, for Pineau, not only involves grounding discourse in a Caribbean environment, ‘the point of entanglement’ – which is Glissant’s contention – but grounding with a full awareness of the various power hierarchies and social relations that shape that environment, and each individual’s particular place within it. ‘Never forget, but rebuild’; *Macadam Dreams* offers a sense of the future as a response to the afflictions of the present, fashioned from the legacies of the past.

Notes

1. Njeri Guthrie’s article, ‘Horizon’s Adrift: Women in Exile, at Home, and Abroad in Gisèle Pineau’s Works’ in *Research in African Literatures* Vol 36, No. 1, Spring 2005 pp. 74-90, offers an insightful reading of Mina’s pathological behaviour as a critique of the oppression suffered by minority groups in the metropolis.
2. Pineau would spend the next twenty years in Guadeloupe. She now lives in Paris (Nadege Veldwachter. 2004. ‘An Interview with Gisèle Pineau’. *Research in African Literatures*. 35:1, pp. 180-186. pp. 180 and p. 182).
3. Jean Bernabé, Patrick Chamoiseau and Raphaël Confiant. 1993. *Éloge de la créolité (In Praise of Creoleness)*. Translated by M. B. Taleb-Khyar. Gallimard. p. 75.
4. Pineau cited in Veldwachter. 2004, p. 182.
5. In *Poetics of Relation*, Glissant writes that ‘Creolization brings into Relation but not to universalize; the principles of creoleness [*créolité*] regress towards negritudes, ideas of Frenchness, of Latinness, all generalizing concepts – more or less innocently’ (Édouard Glissant. 1997. *Poetics of Relation*. Translated by Betsy Wing. Michigan: The University of Michigan Press, p. 89).
6. Pineau cited in Veldwachter. 2004, p. 183.
7. Glissant. 1997, p.89.
8. Lucia M. Suarez. 2001. ‘Gisèle Pineau: Writing the Dimensions of Migration’. *World Literature Today*. 7:3/4, pp. 8-21, p. 10.
9. Pineau cited in Veldwachter. 2004, p. 181. Themes of incest also recur in Pineau’s other works *Devil’s Dance* and *The Drifting of the Spirits*, a thematic concern which she relates to her own experiences as a psychiatric nurse.
10. Édouard Glissant. 1985. *The Ripening*. Translated by Michael Dash. London and Kingston: Heinemann, p. 33.
11. Gisèle Pineau. 2003. *Macadam Dreams*. Translated by C. Dickson. Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, p. 1.
12. Pineau cited in Veldwachter. 2004, p. 181.
13. Pineau. 2003, p. 88.
14. Pineau. 2003, p. 88.
15. Pineau. 2003, p. 208.
16. Séraphine constantly refers to ‘the Passage of the Beast’ when referring to the night Eliette was raped. Similarly, Angela, unable to associate her father with the man who enters her room at night, thinks of him as ‘the beast’ (Pineau. 2003, p. 153).
17. Pineau. 2003, p. 164.
18. Pineau. 2003, p. 120.
19. Pineau. 2003, p. 138.
20. Pineau. 2003, p. 1776.

21. In this respect, Pineau may be aligned with both Glissant (especially in *The Ripening*) and Aimé Césaire, whose *Notebook of a Return to My Native Land* (1939) initiates this movement by drawing attention to, and exploding the myth of Europe's idealism of a paradisiacal Caribbean islandspace. In the Anglophone Caribbean, a similar process may be identified in the poetry of Una Marson, in particular 'Jamaica' (1930) and 'In Jamaica' (1931), and more recently in Jamaica Kincaid's *A Small Place* (1988).
22. Pineau. 2003, pp. 117-8.
23. Pineau. 2003, p. 118.
24. Pineau. 2003, p. 119; p. 118.
25. Renée Larrier notes that in Guadeloupe *macadam* not only refers to the material used to surface roads, but is also the name of a staple dish of spicy cod and rice, often eaten by the poor (Renée Larrier. 2006. *Autofiction and Advocacy in the Francophone Caribbean*. Gainesville: The University Press of Florida, p. 98). As such, this second meaning adds Caribbean specificity while enforcing the connotations of everyday reality, but also, Larrier suggests, of 'resilience' given its association with poverty (Larrier. 2006, p. 98).
26. Pineau cited in Veldwachter. 2004, p. 183.
27. Pineau. 2003, p. 213.
28. 'Diversion' is a term employed by Glissant in *Caribbean Discourse* (1989). For Glissant, *négritude's* celebration of African origin is nothing other than a 'diversion': a strategy of avoidance, of looking elsewhere (a place other than the native land) in order to recognise oppression or to find a solution. As Glissant argues, '[t]he universal identification with black suffering in the Caribbean ideology (or the poetics) of negritude also represents another manifestation of redirected energy resulting from diversion. The historical need for the creolized peoples of the small islands of the French Caribbean to lay claim to the 'African element' of their past [...] very quickly surpassed, so much so that Césaire's negritude poetry will come into contact with the liberation movement among African peoples and his *Notebook of a Return to the Native Land* [*sic*] will soon be more popular in Senegal than in Martinique. A peculiar fate. Therein lies the diversion: an ideal evolution, contact from above' (Édouard Glissant. 1999. *Caribbean Discourse: Selected Essays*. Translated by J. Michael Dash. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, p. 24). The detachment inherent in diversion, Glissant argues, is an irresolvable paradox: one cannot solve the community's problems if one looks elsewhere: diversion '*leads nowhere*' (Glissant. 1999, p. 23), which, for Glissant, means that it offers no vision of the future of the community living on their native land.
29. Pineau. 2003, p. 7.
30. Pineau. 2003, p. 133.
31. Pineau. 2003, p. 136.
32. Pineau. 2003, p. 137.
33. Pineau. 2003, pp. 134-5.
34. Glissant. 1999, p. 23.
35. Glissant. 1999, p. 23.
36. Glissant. 1999, p. 23.
37. Pineau. 2003, p. 40.
38. Pineau. 2003, p. 37.
39. Glissant. 1999, p. 140.
40. Pineau. 2003, p. 43.
41. Pineau. 2003, p. 42.
42. Robert Young has argued for the clear association between 'hybridity' and biological terminology: in Latin hybridity 'meant the offspring of a tame sow and a wild boar, and hence, as the OED puts it, "of human parents of different races, half-breed"' (Robert Young. 1995. *Colonial Desire: Hybridity in Theory, Culture, and Race*. London and New York:

Routledge, p. 6). Similarly, Susan Castillo, via Robert Chaudenson, finds that ‘the word “creole” is probably Portuguese in origin, derived from the Portuguese *crioulo*, used to designate the offspring, born in the New World, of European settlers’ (Susan Castillo. 2006. *Colonial Encounters in New World Writing, 1500-1786: Performing America*. London and New York: Routledge, p. 188). The crucial distinction between hybridity and creole, however, is the specificity of location. Creole designates a transformation that occurs in response to the New World environment. As E. K. Brathwaite has argued, the etymology of ‘creole’ traced back to Spanish roots reveals the combination of two words ‘*criar* (to create, to imagine, to establish, to found, to settle) and *colono* (a colonist, a founder, a settler) into *criollo*: a committed settler, one identified with the area of settlement, one native to the settlement though not ancestrally indigenous to it’ (Edward K. Brathwaite. 1971. *The Development of Creole Society in Jamaica 1770-1820*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, pp. xiv-xv). Whether the provenance of ‘creole’ is assumed to be Spanish or Portuguese, both accounts reveal that the term is etymologically linked to notions of settling, colonisation, and the New World experience, not, as in the case of hybridity, inter-racial mixing: a point reinforced, David Buisseret points out, by the verb form ‘to creolize’ which ‘is defined by the *Oxford English Dictionary* as “to spend the day in a delectable state of apathy”, for the English long had the idea that life in the tropics involved an agreeable languor’ (David Buisseret. 2000. ‘Introduction’. *Creolization in the Americas*. Edited by David Buisseret and Steven G. Reinhardt. Arlington, Texas: Texas A and M University Press, pp. 3-17, p.6). In this way, both creole and creolize signify a state effected by the New World experience and environment. Moreover, these descriptors of identity are blind to racial distinctions, since, as Brathwaite puts it, ‘the designation “born in the New World” would have to include groups such as Caribs, Black Caribs, Cultural Americans *ladinos*, Brazilian *caboclos*, Maroons and others’, all of whom existed outwith the plantation system (Brathwaite. 1971, p. xv). This point is reasserted by Jean Bernabé, Patrick Chamoiseau and Raphaël Confiant who argue that the term creole ‘was applied to all the human races, all the animals and plants transported to America from 1492 on. There was, therefore, a mistake in French dictionaries which from the beginning of the nineteenth century reserved the word “Creole” for the white Creoles (or Béké) only’ (Bernabé *et al.* 1993, p. 121).

Brathwaite does, however, make a brief reference to creolization as the product of sexual relations between the races. As he writes ‘it was in the intimate area of sexual relationships that the greatest damage was done to the white creole apartheid policy and where the most significant – and lasting – inter-cultural creolization took place’ (Brathwaite. 1971, p. 303). Clearly visible, mixed raced inhabitants of the New World were an undeniable sign of creolization. However, even in this passage, Brathwaite maintains that creolization is primarily a cultural phenomena – ‘inter-cultural creolization’ – and not dependent on heterosexual relations. It is creolization as a cultural/environmental response that Glissant elaborates from *Caribbean Discourse* on.

43. Pineau. 2003, p. 96.

44. Pineau. 2003, p. 96.

45. Pineau. 2003, p. 202.

46. Pineau. 2003, p. 215.

47. Discussing Césaire’s *Notebook of a Return to My Native Land*, Mireille Rosello argues that the poet’s description of Martinique is, ‘unexpectedly violent and sordid. The native land of the *Notebook* is a sick paradise [...]. The picture of a cane-cutter crushed to death by a locomotive or “the suddenly grave animality of a peasant urinating on her feet, her stiff legs parted” ruthlessly shatters the idealised version of the pastoral peasantry’ (Mireille Rosello. 1995. ‘Introduction’. *Notebook of a Return to My Native Land*. By Aimé Césaire. Translated

by Mireille Rosello with Annie Pritchard. Newcastle upon Tyne: Bloodaxe Books Ltd, pp. 9-68, p.57).

48. Pineau cited in Veldwachter. 2004, p. 181.

49. Glissant. 1999, p. 26.