

IMMIGRATION, IDENTITY, AND THE CARIBBEAN IMMIGRANT STUDENT  
IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS CLASSROOM

A Thesis

Presented to

The Faculty of the Department of English  
Southern New Hampshire University

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts in English

by

Neisha Jones-Young

May 2016

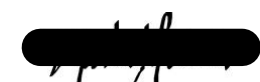
© 2016

Neisha Jones-Young

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

Student: Neisha Jones-Young

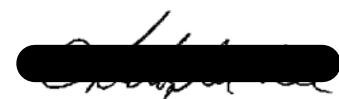
I certify that this student has met the requirements for formatting the capstone project  
and that this project is suitable for preservation in the University Archive.



Capstone Instructor

1/5/22

Date



1/25/22

Southern New Hampshire University  
College of Online and Continuing Education

Date

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to acknowledge the contribution of my professor Dr. Marlen Harrison, whose guidance helped to hone my focus. How wisdom and encouragement not only helped to shape this thesis, but his wisdom and encouragement also shaped me into a stronger scholar.

I would also like to acknowledge the contribution of my peers who helped me to review my thesis at various stages and offer objective criticism. I have grown as a result of the critiques, and my paper has benefitted from their guidance.

Finally, I wish to acknowledge my two boys, Joshua and Nathaniel, whose patience and assistance provided me with the opportunity to write this thesis. I am forever indebted to them.

## ABSTRACT

The incidence of immigration to the USA from the Caribbean region has seen a steady increase in the last few decades. As such, the number of Caribbean immigrants, in particular those of school-age, has increased exponentially. These immigrants often experience a sense of displacement and alienation as a result of being uprooted from their Caribbean culture and transplanted in a foreign one. The absence of adequate Caribbean cultural representation in mainstream society and in the schools, in particular, serves to deepen this identity crisis. However, there are a variety of ways in which this problem may be addressed and alleviated. One such way is through the expansion of the ELA curriculum to incorporate representations of Caribbean culture. Such an expansion would benefit not only the Caribbean immigrant student but also the other students as well.

## Introduction

*from Colonial Girls' School by Olive Senior*

Borrowed images...  
yoked our minds to declensions in Latin  
and the language of Shakespeare  
Told us nothing about ourselves  
There was nothing about us at all.  
How those pale northern eyes and  
aristocratic whispers once erased us  
how our loudness, our laughter  
debased us.  
There was nothing left of ourselves  
Nothing about us at all...  
There was nothing of our landscape there  
Nothing about us at all.

The excerpted poem above, written by Jamaican poet Olive Senior, relates the erasure of identity that students faced when they attended school in a colonial setting. In an attempt to establish their own culture and mores upon indigenous peoples, colonizers often used education as a tool of cultural subjugation. As a result of the mere absence of their culture and history from what they were being taught, many native students found that they suffered an identity crisis because ‘there was nothing of themselves there’.

Even though we currently live in a postcolonial world where countries are no longer actively colonizing other nations, many of the ills of colonialism remain. One such ill is the denigration of cultural identity, in the context of a hegemonic society where there is an

imbalance in the power structure of dominant cultural groups over ‘minority’ groups.

Immigration, which is a phenomenon that very often sees people moving from poorer countries to richer, more dominant ones, is one way in which this cultural erasure is made possible in our era. Emigrating from one’s homeland is a complex enterprise with many hidden challenges, and it is made more complex by the fact that many immigrants experience an upheaval in personal identity when they are uprooted from everything that they have ever known and are transplanted, not only in a new country but a new culture. In fact, the resulting displacement and anomie can be quite profound.

My own experience illustrates this challenge. I moved from Jamaica to the United States of America (USA) when I was twenty-four years old. Prior to my emigration from Jamaica, I was a self-assured professional who was very active in my community. I had served for almost four years as a teacher in the Jamaican high school system, I had mentored countless young adults, and I had spearheaded a plethora of initiatives. I was a leader, and I was very secure in my identity. However, my immigration to the USA elicited a host of complex reactions within me that I found deeply unsettling. I found that I felt like a *stranger in a strange land*, and I struggled to find myself in the context of the culture in which I was now living. This struggle had a profound impact upon the quality of the relationships that I established, as well as upon how those outside of my cultural background perceived me.

What was my reaction to all this? I sought out the familiar. I sought out places and people who connected with my Jamaican culture in an effort to reaffirm my identity. In fact, I found myself in a paradoxical situation where my culture became much more important to me as a resident in the USA than it had ever been while I resided in Jamaica. Dominican-born writer, Junot Diaz, testifies to a similar experience as he recounts that his absence from his homeland, compounded by his feelings of not fitting into his new country, worked to deepen his love for his

homeland. In speaking of this challenge, he confesses that “The solitude of being an immigrant, the solitude of having to learn a language in a culture from scratch” drove him to seek out representation in books and to eventually write stories of his own (*Junot Diaz On 'Becoming American': NPR*). For us both, being able to engage in cultural expression became crucial to finding and reestablishing our identities in our new country.

Operating as a student in the US college system, and then as a teacher in US middle and high schools opened my eyes to the fact that my experience as an immigrant, and as a Caribbean immigrant in particular, was not a unique one. Many Caribbean immigrants suffer a similar onslaught on their identity upon their immigration to the USA (Mirabal and Danticat; Matthews), and these identity issues affect not only first-generation immigrants, but second-generation immigrants as well (Lorick-Wilmot; Plaza). Since many of these immigrants are minors, it is important that we examine how best to alleviate the impact of this phenomenon upon this subgroup.

This research project aims to examine the impact of immigration upon the cultural identity of the Caribbean immigrant student who moves to the USA, considering that the USA is an area that has limited representation of his or her culture, especially in the English Language Arts (ELA) classroom. It then proposes to suggest a model ELA curriculum that synthesizes cultural representation from the Caribbean with mainstream American literature. The goal of this examination is twofold. I intend to demonstrate the need for greater inclusion of Caribbean cultural representation and to advocate for a restructuring of the English Language Arts curriculum to utilize literature as a method of alleviating this identity struggle that so many Caribbean immigrant students experience.

The impact of literature upon identity formation and affirmation is not a new concept. Neither is the focus on the exclusion or limitation of minority voices in the English Language Arts curriculum. Many papers and books have been written on the representation of culture in the English Language classroom (Harry Levin's "*Literature and Cultural Identity*", Keisha McIntyre-McCollough's "*The Issue of Equity in the English Language Arts Classroom*", Cross et. al.'s *Teaching in a Multicultural Society: Perspectives and Professional Strategies*, to name a few). Multicultural and ethnic studies are thriving fields in academia. Many theories have been posited, and a plethora of curriculum design frames and teaching strategies have been outlined and tested. In reviewing Sonia Nieto's *Affirming Diversity: The Sociopolitical Context of Multicultural Education*, Mahmoud Souleiman speaks of the benefits that all students in the US can reap if education is approached through a multicultural lens, considering the cultural diversity in US classrooms (Souleiman). However, much of the focus has been on other minoritized cultures such as the African American culture, the Hispanic culture, or the Asian culture. Not much focus has been paid to the lack of representation of the Caribbean culture in the classroom. There are many policymakers who still do not even recognize the Caribbean as a region with its distinctive cultural heritage, preferring to categorize the peoples of the Caribbean in relation to the color of their skin, rather than in relation to their region of origin.

To examine the issues outlined above, this paper utilizes autoethnography as a research method. Carolyn Ellis et al. describe autoethnography as "an approach to research and writing that seeks to describe and systematically analyze personal experience in order to understand cultural experience", further arguing that it is "both process and product...[that] treats research as a political, socially-just and socially-conscious act" (Ellis). This research method was birthed in the 1980s when social scientists realized the need to acknowledge the impact of personal

background and history upon social interactions, and upon the validity of research findings. The idea is that, with the use of autoethnography as a research tool, one gets to appreciate the impact of culture upon the lens through which experiences are viewed and recounted.

Of course, I acknowledge that everyone has different experiences, but I believe that the experiences that I share in this paper, as I explore the issues of immigration upon identity, are experiences shared by many other Caribbean immigrants. Thus, I hope that these experiences may stand as one representation of the experiences of Caribbean immigrants, and Caribbean immigrant students in particular, in the Northeastern United States, as well as nationwide. It is hoped that this approach will help to empower countless Caribbean immigrant students who find very little of themselves in their new homeland.

## **Chapter One: Immigration Within the USA- An Explorative Overview**

The United States of America is peopled by immigrants. From the Native Americans who first crossed the land bridge, to European settlers from England, Ireland, and Germany fleeing persecution of one form or another, to Africans forced into slavery, the nation has long been a beacon for people in search of a new home. Immigrants have always been coming, and they are still coming to what is seen by many as the 'land of opportunity'. In fact, according to the Migration Policy Institute, there were over 41.3 million immigrants in the U.S. in 2013, which amounts to approximately 13% of the population (McCabe). While 13% of the total population might not appear to be a significant figure, when one considers the fact that many nations around the world boast population counts far less than 41.3 million, one begins to understand the magnitude of the immigrant population here in the USA, and one begins to grasp the fact that immigration is a perennial reality of American life.

The first three waves of immigration, beginning before the 1820s and extending up until the beginning of the First World War, saw the arrival of millions of European immigrants (Martin). With each influx, immigrants brought with them their cultures and their languages, and these cultural expressions creolized and coalesced into the melting pot that is currently thought of as a unique expression of American identity. In short, since the founding of the union, the USA was heralded as the place where people could go to find the freedom to practice their own cultures and eke out a cultural identity for themselves, while at the same time enjoying and participating in the cross-cultural exchange happening at the national level. America was multicultural, and it celebrated this.

There came a time, however, when this celebration of the multicultural reality of the USA underwent a significant change. This change found its roots in the shifts that started with the

Chinese Exclusion Act in 1882 (Martin), and in the subsequent immigration quotas and restrictions of the early 1900s (Department of State. The Office of Electronic Information). This change was quite paradoxical. The USA, the melting pot of the world, seemed to have hit a cultural milestone, as it became an environment that actively sought out and promulgated the spread of one dominant cultural expression, sidelining all other expressions of culture that did not fit within this newly minted mold. A system of cultural hegemony was established whereby certain cultural traits and traditions were uplifted and praised as being truly 'American', and all others were subjugated and presented as the inferior 'Other' (Davis and Schwartz). Interestingly, this system of cultural hegemony operated in disturbing likeness to the hegemony established during the era of colonialism; the same hegemony that still dominates (though on a less obvious basis) our currently postcolonial world.

What does this mean? This means that the cultures that have been fortunate enough to find expression within the celebrated realm of Americana are the cultures that are representative of those nations that operated as the center of the empire during colonialism. In the same way, many of the cultures that have been sidelined are from countries or regions that were once members of the periphery (Spence). In this way, the USA has established a sort of neo-colonial environment, where certain cultures have been relegated to the role of the subaltern and have been subjugated and silenced.

The changing of immigration laws in 1965 heralded a more inclusive immigration policy where people from other nations outside of Europe were able to enter more freely (Keyes). This started what some consider the fourth wave of immigration, with many immigrants coming from Asia, Latin America, and the Caribbean (Martin). However, these immigrants found themselves in a nation where they were hyphenated citizens, and their cultural expressions were paid scant

regard by mainstream America. Researchers and other scholars and advocates have compared this situation to a sort of “internal colonization” (Schwarz and Ray 114). Since then, in response to protests from and continued discourse with ‘minority’ groups, an effort has been made to achieve greater inclusivity, and to incorporate, though to a much lesser extent, cultural representations of African Americans, Asians, and Hispanics. However, Caribbean cultural representation has not enjoyed a similar inclusion, as it has not been extended formal acknowledgment and representation in mainstream America. This is problematic because of the growing number of Caribbean nationals who now call the United States of America their second home.

### **Immigration and the Caribbean National**

“By de hundred, by de tousan/ From country and from town, / By de ship-load, by de plane-load”  
- Louise Bennett Coverley

Immigrants from the Caribbean represent one of the groups that have registered the highest rate of increase in immigration statistics since the 1960s, and the number of Caribbean nationals migrating to the US remains quite steady. According to Kristen McCabe, researcher for the Online Journal of the Migration Policy Institute, the population of Caribbean immigrants in the US has seen a drastic increase to approximately 3.5 million immigrants within the last half-century, with most Caribbean immigrants settling in New Jersey and New York (Caribbean Immigrants). In her article, “The Golden Age of Immigration is Now”, Professor of Anthropology at the State University of New York at Purchase, Nancy Foner, revealed that five Caribbean nations were numbered among the top nine immigrant groups in New York City in the late 1990s, representing immigrants from the Dominican Republic, Jamaica, Guyana, Haiti, and

Trinidad and Tobago. Added to this are the thousands of Cuban immigrants who have sought and received asylum. To put it in context, statistics from the 2010 US Census Bureau reveal that immigrants from the Caribbean account for the fourth highest immigrant population behind people from Asia, Europe, and Mexico (The Foreign-Born), and according to McCabe, “there were 6.0 million self-identified members of the Caribbean diaspora residing in the United States in 2009”.

Within this overlooked group of immigrants is a sub-group that is in dire need of attention. This sub-group is comprised of the children within the Caribbean diaspora, whether they be first or second-generation immigrants. In her paper focused on the psychoeducational adjustment of migrant children from the Caribbean, Tania Thomas quoted statistics estimating that there were more than two million Caribbean immigrants who fell within the school-age bracket (Thomas). That was almost thirty years ago. With the population of Caribbean immigrants having increased exponentially over the past fifty years, one can imagine the vast number of Caribbean children who operate within the relatively alien culture of the USA on a daily basis.

McCabe, in her research of “Caribbean Immigrants in the United States”, reveals that “in 2009, about 1.2 million children under the age of 18 resided in a household with at least one immigrant parent born in the Caribbean”. As a teacher of English Language Arts in Northern New Jersey, I can attest to the overwhelming number of first and second-generation Caribbean immigrants who sit in American classrooms every day. While teaching in Orange, New Jersey, I was surprised and disturbed at the regularity with which children immigrated to the US during the active school year. It felt like almost every week I received at least one new student who had newly migrated from somewhere within the Caribbean. Added to this was the fact that almost

every student in my classroom was either born in the Caribbean or had been born to parents of Caribbean origin. I currently teach in Perth Amboy, New Jersey, and this trend holds true for this school district as well. Of the seventy-seven students with whom I interact daily, approximately 80% are comprised of either first or second-generation Caribbean immigrants. As such, many of the children represented in classrooms in these regions have identities that are inextricably linked to their Caribbean culture and heritage. Similar to my identity crisis that I experienced upon emigrating from Jamaica, these students undergo a plethora of adjustment struggles that require focused attention.

### **Struggles Faced by the Immigrant Student**

“Many rivers to cross/ But I can't seem to find my way over/ Wandering I am lost as I travel along/ The white cliffs of Dover” - Jimmy Cliff

Among the major struggles that many of these children face are the loss of a sense of belonging and the loss of their sense of personal identity, as a result of the experience of being untethered from the country of their origin and placed in an environment with too few familiar things to which to cling. These adolescents find themselves, like the persona in the excerpt above, wandering, adrift in a strange culture, and they struggle to define themselves within this new context. The fact is that people form their identity and their notions of themselves based on the culture of the country in which they were raised. This then becomes their idea of home, and it is a very integral part of how they view themselves, and of who they are. When they are then either asked to leave their home or when foreign elements are introduced that impact the cultural dynamics of home, they experience a sense of confusion, as they struggle to find themselves in

their newly defined environment. This identity confusion very often leads to a sense of displacement, where individuals struggle to come to terms with the cultural changes around them, and they feel as if they fit in nowhere- as if they do not belong.

Bill Ashcroft et al., in their work, The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures, define this sense of identity confusion, and the absence of ‘belonging’, as a sense of displacement, alienation, and anomie. They posit that displacement, as a result of being taken from one’s culture and deposited in a foreign culture, brings with it “the concern with the development or recovery of an effective identifying relationship between self and place [since]... a valid and active sense of self may have been eroded by dislocation, resulting from migration” (Ashcroft et al). In their book, Postcolonial Studies: The Key Concepts, Ashcroft et al. expands upon this conversation by referring to “Heidegger’s term *unheimlich* or *unheimlichkeit* – [which means] ‘unhousedness’ or ‘not-at-home-ness’ – [and] is also sometimes translated as ‘uncanny’ or ‘uncanniness’... to describe the experience of dislocation” (65). It is quite telling that, according to these researchers, “the alienation of vision and the crisis in self-image which this displacement produces” is a phenomenon that is widespread, and is not unique to geographic region, culture, or ethnicity. In other words, the fact that movement such as immigration serves as a catalyst for personal identity issues resulting from cultural disruption is a fact that is virtually indisputable.

Dominican-raised writer, Julia Alvarez, explores the displacement, anomie, and resulting identity crisis that the Caribbean immigrant experiences in her novel How the Garcia Girls Lost Their Accents. In the novel, Alvarez tells the stories of the four Garcia sisters as they are forced to flee the politically charged climate of their native Dominican Republic for exile and safety in the USA. The novel opens with one of the sisters, Yolanda, returning home to her native

Dominican Republic, in search of a sense of home. Very early on she admits that “she has never felt at home in the States, never” (12), and she goes about searching for cultural markers such as guavas, as a way of trying to reconnect to a sense of who she truly is. In her paper “Hating the Self in the “Other” or How Yolanda Learns to See Her Own Kind in Julia Alvarez’s *How the Garcia Girls Lost Their Accents*”, Ibis Gomez-Vega argues that “for the Garcia girls, life in the United States means that they must...begin to see themselves as “aliens” who have no place at all within their new country” (Gomez-Vega). This sense of not belonging and losing touch with one’s identity is made clear when Yolanda returns to the Dominican Republic in search of her pre-immigration identity, telling her husband “I’m going to my folks...until my head-slash-heart-slash-soul...clear” (78). This echoes the identity confusion that so many Caribbean immigrants feel, and it sets the stage for the rest of Alvarez’s exploration of what happens when children emigrate from the Caribbean to the USA.

Throughout the novel, the reader sees over and over again the anomie that the girls experience as they are thrust into a society and a culture that has values and mores that contradict sharply with those of their native Dominican culture. They are caught at the crossroads between two cultures, and with very few cultural markers to cling to, they all undergo intense identity struggles, with one sister even going mad.

Upon my own immigration to the USA, I found it difficult to operate within the nuances of the new culture, and those around me found it difficult to understand me. Of course, this conflict was not very evident on the surface. After all, I spoke Standard English, so it appeared that we were all on the same page. However, this fact only served to heighten my identity crisis, as it became a private struggle. For example, in Jamaica, formal propriety demands that one does not interrupt an ongoing conversation. Rather, one waits quietly until there is a lull. This is

something that is expected in the Jamaican culture. This is a cultural tenet that I had mastered and with which I expected others to comply. However, in the USA, whenever I waited quietly for a lull in conversation to make a contribution, or to make a request, those around me were left with the impression that I was timid, and they responded to me with that supposition foremost in their minds. This then led me to question myself, and I began wondering if indeed I was shy. Of course, the result of this was an internal battle as I struggled to convey my boldness and strength, while at the same time battling with the weak, timid impression that those who misunderstood my culture had formed of me; an impression that I was fighting hard not to buy into.

Caribbean immigrant children face a similar struggle, as their Caribbean cultural expressions and mannerisms are very often misunderstood, resulting in those around them having a warped view of their identity. In her work, “Psychoeducational Adjustment of English-Speaking Caribbean and Central American Immigrant Children in the United States”, Tania Thomas describes these identity issues, brought on by displacement and alienation that the Caribbean immigrant student faces as a set of “psycho-cultural adjustment problems.” She asserts that “immigrant children often enter the educational system in the United States with a variety of academic and sociocultural adjustment difficulties”, citing research by Esquivel & Keitel (1990) that revealed that “children who migrate often experience the loss of friends, severance of extended family ties, difficulties in learning a new language, and problems adjusting to the new culture (qtd. In Thomas). These students have to come to terms with the fact that certain nuances of their Caribbean culture and, by extension their Caribbean identity, do not exist in this new culture. Certain expectations do not hold for the US context, and there are certain requirements for this new context that they must learn. In short, it can sometimes be an overwhelming struggle to adjust to the cultural shift.

Not only is the overall culture different, but the school culture is also different. Thomas argues that

a healthy adjustment to a new school structure requires the immigrant child to first use his or her cultural background as reference. [However] most educational and psychological research has neglected Caribbean immigrants. Since educators and school staff know relatively little about the Caribbean as a whole, and still less about the historical social, and cultural nuances of the people, [they struggle because they do not] understand the experience of their pupils in order to facilitate their cultural transition. (Thomas)

Therefore, while these students are trying to eke out a new identity for themselves by referencing the cultural tenets of their Caribbean identity, they have to deal with educators and peers who misunderstand them.

To further complicate matters, the fact that they are culturally misunderstood also intensifies the yearning for home that these immigrants feel. Claude McKay, the well-known Jamaican poet who migrated to the USA, exemplifies this longing for home and the cultural markers of home in his poetry. For example, in his poem “The Tropics in New York”, McKay describes a moment when he sees a display of tropical fruit. All at once, he is reminded of the home and the culture which he has left behind and he is filled with longing for what he has lost. He writes

My eyes grew dim, and I could no more gaze;  
A wave of longing through my body swept,  
And, hungry for the old, familiar ways,  
I turned aside and bowed my head and wept. (9-12)

This sense of intense grief is wrapped up in the loss of a place where one knows and is known. It is wrapped up in the loss of a cultural haven and the loss of identity. In his poem “Flame-Heart” he laments all the things about his homeland of Jamaica that he has forgotten. As one examines those things which he has forgotten, one begins to realize that he is yearning for the cultural familiarity and comfort which his Caribbean homeland represents. He reflects “We were so happy, happy, - I

remember” (29), asserting that he “still remember/ The poinsettia's red, blood-red in warm December” (9-10). In doing so, he evokes a similar tone of extreme nostalgia and longing with which “The Tropics in New York” is also imbued, and he provides his readers with a glimpse into the powerful sense of cultural loss that many Caribbean immigrants live with.

I see this daily in my classroom. I constantly deal with immigrant students caught in the battle with who they were and who their new environment dictates that they become. Added to this, is their profound longing for their homeland, and their desire to share that part of themselves with those around them. As such, I observe that many students seem to exist within two personae; their identity as a Caribbean national, and the identity that they are trying to adopt as a US resident. They work hard to fit in with their peers, but when their American peers are absent, they become a different version of themselves, and their mannerisms and attitudes become more reflective of their Caribbean culture.

Many of my Caribbean students gravitate to me because of our shared geo-cultural background. During their lunch break, they seek out my classroom. In my classroom, all efforts to adapt to the culture of the USA are forgotten, and their language, and how they relate to each other, change. It is as if they are transported back to the Caribbean. In addition, they constantly ask me to play Bob Marley songs, and the music of other reggae artistes so that they may sing and dance along. They share pictures and stories of their homeland with me. They prepare Caribbean cultural dishes at home and take them to school so that they may share them with me and their peers. In short, as a result of my background as a Caribbean immigrant, my classroom has become a sort of haven where Caribbean immigrant students can reconnect with their cultural identity.

This is reminiscent of the title character in Jamaica Kincaid's novel Lucy. Lucy is a tale of a young Caribbean woman who migrates to the USA and experiences several identity issues. Lucy suffers so much from cultural displacement that she is plagued by homesickness to the extent that she shares "[I] longed to be back in the place that I came from...I longed to sleep in a bed I had outgrown, I longed to be with people whose smallest, most natural gesture would call up in me such a rage that I longed to see them all dead at my feet" (6). When she hears the American maid singing, she tries to reaffirm her own cultural identity through the vehicle of calypso, which is a musical form from the Caribbean. She "burst[s] into a calypso about a girl who ran away to Port-of-Spain, Trinidad, and had a good time, with no regrets" (12), as her way of trying to find meaning.

Sadly, however, for many Caribbean immigrant students, the opportunity to reaffirm personal identity through the celebration of cultural identity, is not commonplace since there is no formal recognition of the Caribbean cultural identity within the curriculum of the school.

In addition to the struggle with personal cultural identity, some Caribbean immigrant students also suffer from a sense of cultural inferiority. Since their Caribbean culture is not a part of the dominant culture of their new homeland, they find themselves in a state of alterity, which is "the state of being other or different" (Ashcroft et. al. 22). As such, they try to assimilate the culture of the powerful, ultimately to the detriment of their sense of who they are. Franz Fanon, in his work Black Skin, White Masks, refers to this as the psychopathology of colonization, where students internalize a colonial consciousness represented by "the demand of intrinsic domination, the requirement to relinquish one's self-identity, one's mode of defining and being in the world" (Fanon). We see this in Alvarez's novel where Yolanda is robbed of her confidence and her identity through the Americanization of her name. She was "nicknamed Yo in Spanish,

misunderstood *joe* in English...or when forced to select from a rack of personalized key chains, *joey* -" (68). These changes to her name are mainly due to the difference in culture and language, and they highlight the denigration and erasure of identity that so many Caribbean immigrants experience.

I too have been in a similar situation. Neisha, which is my Christian name, is not a common name here in the USA, though it is quite popular in the Caribbean. I have been called Nyesha, Nishi, and quite several other variations, and everyone immediately knows that I am not a 'true' American; that I am from somewhere else. This has affected me so profoundly that, when I had my sons, I ensured that they were not given Caribbean names. Rather, I gave them 'regular', mainstream names that no one would mispronounce. Names that would not identify them as being different or 'other'. Names that they can find on keychains. For Alvarez's Yolanda, her name had been substituted so many times that "her real name no longer sounded like her own" (78), and she ends up using the Americanized name used by others, thus marking a loss in her personal identity due to the lack of cultural representation.

second-generation immigrant children also struggle when they are unable to identify anything of the cultural identity to which their parents have exposed them, within the context of their formal education. Paula Moya refers to this as a "complex nexus of identity, experience, knowledge, and belonging" that many first and second-generation immigrant students are unable to navigate (Moya 2). Thomas argues that "immigrant children usually find themselves confronted with the difficult task of trying to develop values in two conflicting social and cultural situations, each demanding a different content." Thus, these students struggle to reconcile their heritage with the cultural identity to which they are being exposed at school. Again, we see this in the Garcia girls, who have had to learn to navigate the space between the

culture to which they are exposed at school, and the strict Dominican culture by which they must abide at home.

These issues all contribute to the sense of displacement and alienation that Caribbean immigrant students undergo, and it is crucial that solutions be explored to ameliorate the impact of this phenomenon upon the psyche of these students.

## Chapter Two: Geo-Cultural Identity and the Caribbean Enclave

“The fish, /Even in the fisherman's net, /Still carries, /The smell of the sea.” — Mourid Barghouti

One question that many might ask is “why do we need to pay specific attention to Caribbean cultural identity?” This is a fair question. After all, as far as many are concerned, American society, and the American education system has come a far way from the days of segregation. It is now quite multicultural and inclusive. Surely the Caribbean immigrant student can find his identity somewhere.

However, this is not the case. It must be understood that conversations surrounding identity in America have typically focused on defining identity through the lens of ethnicity or religion. Even though the identity tags placed on minority groups such as African Americans or Asian-Americans would suggest a focus on geographical identity, the fact is that the USA has boiled identity down to a system of essentialism that categorizes people based on broad stereotypes connected to their ethnicity. Enough focus has not been placed on truly assessing identity as a geo-cultural phenomenon.

Here in the USA, Caribbean immigrant students are often placed in the same cultural groups as African- Americans or Latinas, because of a shared ethnicity. Black Caribbean immigrant students are grouped with African Americans, and Hispanic Caribbean immigrant students are grouped with Latin-Americans. White Caribbean immigrant students are viewed as White and are offered no racial tags. However, there is a difference between being a Black immigrant student from the Caribbean and being an African American student. In her examination of the identity quandary in which she found herself as a Caribbean immigrant, Lorraine Gilpin lamented “I am Black, but I am not African American. I exhibit many White

middle-class norms and values, but I am not White” (Gilpin 4). Junot Diaz also had a similar lament when during an interview with Fox News Latino he revealed “I was neither black enough for the black kids nor Dominican enough for the Dominican kids. I didn't have a safe category” (qtd. in Garcia). The same is true for me. While I am black, there are many aspects of the African American culture that are foreign to me. Conversely, there are many aspects of my Jamaican culture that African Americans find mystifying. As such, I do not feel at home when relegated to the culture of African Americans.

My experience as a Teach For America corps member in Newark, New Jersey really highlighted this difference. Very often, corps members would be divided into ethnic identity groups, and the groups would then engage in discourse surrounding their ethnic identity and the prospect of teaching in the urban American classroom. I was always assigned to the group of African Americans. However, I found that I could not connect to the experiences of their culture that they shared, because their culture was far removed from my own. Conversely, they had difficulty connecting to my experiences, because they lacked the exposure to the Caribbean culture that would help them to understand where I was coming from. In short, I was an outsider. I can recall one day during these ethnic-group meetings, where I moved from group to group, trying to find a group that reflected my cultural background. Unfortunately, even though there were groups dedicated to Whites, African Americans, Hispanics, and Asians, I could not find any that reflected the Caribbean culture.

### **Identity as a Geo-Cultural Phenomenon**

In light of this reality, it is important to postulate a different theory of identity. Instead of examining identity from the perspective of race or religion, it is more useful to embrace identity

as a geo-cultural phenomenon. Geo-cultural identity simply refers to an understanding of identity as being influenced by the cultural norms of the specific region from which one hails. In other words, different regions around the world exhibit different cultural practices and beliefs, and we must acknowledge that immigrants from different regions will be influenced differently, regardless of a shared skin color or a shared religion. Gilpin, in speaking to this issue, refers to Hau (2000) and Moya (2000) by postulating that

We develop our beliefs, attitudes, and values, the components of identity, through cognitive and affective processes from within our sociopolitical locations. We use our beliefs, attitudes, and values to measure and represent various groups of people, including the groups in which we claim membership. Rather than simply be dismissed or lauded, our beliefs, attitudes, and values should be examined to develop more accurate understandings and re-presentations of identities. (Gilpin 2)

Moya & Hames-Garcia reinforce this notion through their assertion that “identity categories provide modes of articulating and examining significant correlations between lived experience and social location” (qtd. in Gilpin, 4). In other words, people develop their sense of self, establish their connection to the world, and formulate their cultural identity, based on where they originate.

This understanding of identity as a geo-cultural phenomenon closely aligns with the postpositivist theory of identity, a theory that was first posited by Mohanty and Moya. According to Gilpin, “in postpositivist realist theory, understanding emerges from one’s past and present experiences and interactions as interpreted in sociopolitical contexts. Understanding, then, is relative to one’s experiences as a raced, gendered, classed, nationalized, and so forth, being” (Gilpin 1). As such, one’s collective experiences in a specific location work to shape one’s cultural identity.

Considering this, it becomes apparent why Black students from the Caribbean are so very different from Black students who originate in the USA, and why Hispanic students from the

Caribbean are different from those who originate here in the USA or in South America. The experiences, the policies, the histories are quite different. Therefore, the cultural identities are also different. Caribbean immigrant students are just that- Caribbean.

This idea of identity calls to mind the title of Alvarez's novel. The very title of the novel alludes to the loss of cultural identity. One's accent is a marker of where one is from; it is a clear geo-cultural label. When one loses one's accent, one loses a marker of one's geo-cultural identity. Therefore, it is quite clear that one of Alvarez's chief aims is to establish identity as a geo-cultural phenomenon and then reveal the devastating effect of immigration to a country where one's culture is sidelined.

### **The Caribbean as a Cultural Enclave**

*from Islands by Guy Tirolen*

This is the low house  
in which my race has grown.  
Twisting and lifting, the road  
takes off beyond...  
Smells of burnt earth and salt cod  
Wafting under the muzzle of thirst.  
A smile splitting the ripe coco-plum  
of an aged face...  
Voices of rum  
with their breath  
warming our ears.  
  
Clatter of dominoes rifling the birds' repose.  
  
Calypso rhythms

in the warm belly of our banjos.  
The island pushing towards morning  
its weight of humanity.

What then are the components of Caribbean culture and Caribbean cultural identity?

What defines this region and makes it so distinct from other regions? Cultural identity is comprised of the specific beliefs, practices, and behaviors attributed to a group of people. These characteristics are closely linked to the shared history and the present reality. Aaron Kamugisha, in his journal article “On the Idea of a Caribbean Cultural Studies”, postulates that “the emergence of cultural thought in the Caribbean is yoked to resistance against colonial domination” (Kamugisha 45). While it is true that, regardless of similarities in colonial history, each island had a different experience, it can be agreed that “the sum of the common experiences and understandings of the Caribbean outweigh the territorial and insular differences and peculiarities” (Clarke 492). This notion invokes the shared history of the island nations within the Caribbean as being postcolonial nations. In addition to being postcolonial, the islands have benefitted from a multiplicity of cultural heritage with the fact that many of them changed hands from one colonizing power to another, and many of them have witnessed the syncretism of peoples from various regions coming together to form a single, creolized Caribbean identity.

Another impact of the colonial background upon the cultural expressions of the Caribbean native is in the subtle nuances that govern interactions and relationships, especially in a formal context. Many of the islands were once British colonies, and the British influence is still a strong part of their cultural expression. Another major difference between the Caribbean region and its US counterpart is the absence of the racial tags to denote ethnicity. The Caribbean

represents a fusion of several races, yet no Caribbean national is hyphenated. Jamaicans are Jamaicans, Trinidadians are Trinidadians, and Cubans are Cubans.

Add to these fundamental differences the distinct musical heritage and the distinct cuisine, and one has to concur that the Caribbean is a cultural enclave, different from the culture of African Americans, or Hispanic-Americans, or Asian-Americans. As such, special attention needs to be given to Caribbean culture in order to help our Caribbean students as they struggle to find themselves.

### **Chapter Three: The ELA Classroom as a Place of Cultural Identity Reaffirmation**

*from Colonial Girls' School by Olive Senior*

So, friend of my childhood years

One day we'll talk about

How the mirror broke

Who kissed us awake

Who let Anansi from his bag

#### **Literary Study and Cultural Identity**

Many theories have been proffered to address the question of “how can we limit the impact of displacement, alienation, and anomie upon the identity of immigrants and other displaced peoples?” Again and again, however, it has been found that it all comes back to the idea that effective assimilation of a new culture requires immigrants to have access to their original culture. This then allows them to synthesize both cultures into a creolized version that is culturally healthy and allows them to maintain the important foundation stones of their personal and cultural identity, while building and expanding with new practices from their adopted culture.

This is especially true for immigrant students who, by virtue of their age and level of development, are still in the process of identity formation. For them, it is crucial that they be given access to the culture of their homeland, so that they may use this as an entry point into understanding and synthesizing the new culture. In her article “Postpositivist Realist Theory of Identity Expanding Notions of Gender in Teacher Education” Tonda Liggett opines that “the role of identity in the classroom cannot and should not be ignored; in fact, identity is a productive

means of entering and understanding other lives as we are empowered by them” (2). As it relates to the school environment, and the formal curriculum, in particular, the best place to do this is in the English Language Arts classroom.

Literature, and by extension literary studies, is important to the formation, reaffirmation, and expression of personal and cultural identity. In addressing the issue, Norton posits that “When readers read about characters that look like them and reflect their way of life, their self-identity is affirmed, and they get the message that their way of life is valued” (qtd. in Atkinson Smolen 17). Indeed, literature is a powerful vehicle through which people find themselves and reaffirm who they are. Literature helps us to find confidence in our place in this world, as well as to express to others our unique worldview. In short, as it relates to defining who we are as individuals, and who we are as cultural groups, literature is vital. It, therefore, makes sense to conclude that the literature studied by young adults within the school system is very important because it will help to shape their understanding of themselves and their environment.

For Caribbean immigrant students, this becomes even more important, as Caribbean literature can operate as a tool to help them as they navigate between two cultures, and as they set about carving their own place and identity in their new context. Lynn Atkinson Smolen argues that “readers naturally make connections between books and their own lives... [therefore] all students need to see positive representations of themselves and their cultures in literature” (Atkinson Smolen 2). If Caribbean immigrant students are exposed to a curriculum that does this, then their transition would be made easier, and much of the cultural identity struggle that so many experience would be alleviated.

However, a review of the English curriculum of most American school districts reveals a peculiar reality. The literature to which students are exposed is quite limited in its cultural scope

since it has been curated to focus on those cultures within the hegemonic structure aforementioned. Students are exposed to literature that is representative of a predominantly White, predominantly Euro-American origin. They study classical writers such as Shakespeare, Poe, Dickinson, and Wordsworth, and survey modern and contemporary writers such as Steinbeck and Lowry. This holds with the theory of postcolonial domination in which Britain, a powerhouse during the era of colonization, and the USA, a contemporary powerhouse of this era, enjoy superiority in the cultural representation of the middle and high school English curriculum. Of course, it must be acknowledged that, in response to protests from and continued discourse with 'minority' groups, effort has been made to achieve greater inclusivity, and to incorporate, though to a lesser extent, literature that is representational of African Americans, Hispanics, and Asians. As such, students also have access to writers such as Alice Walker, Sandra Cisneros, and Amy Tan. However, even with this attempt to foster a more multicultural approach to education, there is a glaring absence of Caribbean literary representation. If our students are to be able to utilize literature as a tool of identity reaffirmation, then the curriculum which governs their study must include representations of their culture.

### **Caribbean Voices in the English Language Arts Classroom**

Beyond the mastery of language components and key communication skills, the English Language Arts classroom ought to be a place of inquiry and exploration. It ought to be the place where students are able to connect with the world around them on a deeper, more analytical level, and in doing so, plumb the depths of their own identity. An English Language Arts syllabus that is culturally responsive enables this type of inquiry by introducing students to writers from various regions and cultures, and by giving them the opportunity to conduct cross-interrogations of key essential questions about life and society.

Having taught high school in the USA for several years now, I will concede that many syllabi already provide this opportunity. I have spent countless days with my high school freshman as we grappled with questions of culture, religion, gender, and identity in Afghanistan through the medium of our study of Khaled Hosseini's The Kite Runner. I have done the English Teacher happy dance when my high school juniors drew amazing parallels between the politics and intrigue in Shakespeare's Macbeth and the politics of their current American society. However, as fulfilling as these experiences have been, something is missing. What is missing is the opportunity for my students to take on the challenge of connecting their Caribbean identity to their current American context through the study of literature. If students were able to find themselves in the literature that they study, and if they were able to use this literature to articulate who they are and who they are becoming, then they would be better able to adjust to the change in their cultural landscape.

The question then becomes, how can we best incorporate Caribbean cultural representation in the English Language Arts classroom? I think that the best way to do this is to identify strong Caribbean voices that can act as ambassadors for the region. These writers should cover a variety of genres, hail from a range of islands, and focus on a multiplicity of issues. Chief among their concerns should be an interrogation of the colonial past upon the present, an exploration of the syncretism of practices and beliefs resulting from the fusion of various cultures at a time when the region was the crossroads of the world, and a celebration of the ingenuity and innovation of the people. Below, I have outlined some key Caribbean authors and poets whose work has been influential in presenting the culture of the region to the world, and who, I think, would be effective inclusions in the ELA curriculum.

## Michael Anthony

“My heart was burning for home. For a moment I felt like crying out, but at the moment of greater pain my mother's voice came back to me. It was as if she was here and talking, Stay and take an education, boy. Take it in, That's the main thing.”

— Michael Anthony, *The Year in San Fernando*

Michael Anthony is a powerful Trinidadian author whose novels focus on issues of racial and cultural identity and coming of age within the West Indies context. In his novels, he weaves features of the landscape and the culture into issues of growth and personal and social identity. Two of his novels that would add value for Caribbean immigrant students, as well as students who are not of Caribbean heritage, are Green Days by the River and The Year in San Fernando. Both novels are bildungsroman, and they both offer students the opportunity to examine their own identity formation in relation to the issues of family and love and maturity that the narrators face. Additionally, Anthony's focus on hybridity and multi-ethnicity would offer Caribbean students an entry point into conversations surrounding race and their place in the racial profile of the USA. In her article “Dougla, Half-dougla, Travesao, and the Limits of Hybridity” Jennifer Rahim argues that Anthony's writings “invite changes in attitude to race differences and representations of nationhood by appealing to existing interracial alliances that establish hybridity as a core feature of the cultural process” (3). In light of the fact that racial issues are a major aspect of the identity struggle that many Caribbean immigrant students face, a focus such as this would prove beneficial in helping them to articulate the multiplicity of their racial heritage as Caribbean nationals. It would also help their American classmates and teachers to better understand the nature of race and issues surrounding culture and maturity in the region.

## Merle Hodge

"So we stood and counted in unison to a hundred, or recited nursery rhymes about little Boy Blue (what in all creation was a 'haystack?') and about Little Miss Muffet who for some unaccountable reason sat eating her curls away."- Merle Hodge, *Crick Crack, Monkey*

Merle Hodge is another Trinidadian author whose work I think would be an excellent addition to the syllabus for any English Language Arts classroom in the USA. As a Caribbean author, she explores the issue of colonization and cultural appropriation. Her novel, *Crick Crack, Monkey*, does an excellent job of examining the impact of a foreign culture upon the identity formation of Caribbean children. Even though the main character, Tee, does not become an immigrant until the close of the novel, one may argue that her transition from her home in the country to live with her aunt in the city is reminiscent of the journey that Caribbean immigrant students took from their homes in the Caribbean to reside here in the USA. The resulting displacement and identity confusion that Tee experiences are also quite similar to the struggle that these students face. Martin Japtook, in his paper "Two Postcolonial Childhoods: Merle Hodge's *Crick Crack, Monkey* and Simi Bedford's *Yoruba Girl Dancing*", comments on Tee's experience, reiterating that

although Hodge's protagonist does not leave the West Indies (Trinidad) until the very end of the novel, she experiences a similarly jarring psychological alienation. Taken from her working-class aunt's home, she is "adopted" by a middle-class aunt whose ideas of culture, education, and socialization are rigidly Anglocentric. As a result, the protagonist is made to feel ashamed of anything that connects her to her folk heritage.

He goes on to explore the value of this text to study in the US context, arguing that it helps to answer questions of identity and maturity in relation to multiethnicity. He posits that Hodge's novel is "characterized by [its] focus on what happens to children when cultural definitions are

imposed through education, both social and formal, by the metropolis” (Japtook). In short, Hodge’s novel explores issues relevant to the Caribbean immigrant student caught in the throes of cultural identity confusion.

In his description of Tee on the eve of her emigration from Trinidad, Dr. Bill Clemente depicts her as “unsettled...--fraught with fissures, uncertain, conflicted about virtually everything--in flight from Trinidad and bound for England...perhaps half believing] that she will land in the Center, Up There, in that Land of Hope and Glory and Golden Gates, where people speak proper English” (Clemente). This description could be applied wholesale to the Caribbean immigrant student who has often heard so many stories of prosperity concerning the USA that it becomes a symbolic Promised Land where everything is golden, and everyone is better than who they are. A study of a text such as this would give these students a platform from which to voice these issues and to come to terms with their identity struggles. It would also provide insight for their classmates and their teachers who would be better able to understand some of the psychological issues with which they grapple.

### **Julia Alvarez**

“Schools provide safe spaces to talk about controversial issues, and literature presents characters portraying human experience in all its richness and contradictoriness”. - Julia Alvarez

Julia Alvarez is a prolific Dominican American writer whose novels and poetry serve to explore issues of immigration to the USA and the resulting impact upon the immigrant child. She has written countless novels that would offer Caribbean immigrant students the opportunity to explore ways in which they could navigate their own personal and cultural identity crises. In

addition to writing extensively about the Dominican Republic, she has also written about Haiti, thereby giving voice to the thousands of Haitian students sitting in our classrooms. In their paper “A Journey Home: Transnational Dominican American Identity in Julia Alvarez’s *How the García Girls Lost Their Accents*”, Bethany A. Dolman and Dr. Trenton L. Hickman postulate that part of the value of Alvarez’s novel is the opportunity that it provides for “immigrants to analyze their oscillation between cultures, articulate their perpetual movement and shed pre-formulated conceptions of national identity to freely define themselves and their new symbolic “home”. Marta Vizcaya Echano, in her thesis, describes Alvarez’s writing as “a series of tensions between the individual and the social, between one culture and another” (24). These are apt descriptions as Alvarez does focus on the cultural interchange that takes place when native culture comes into contact with that of the USA. Regardless of the fact that some of her writing has been perceived as explicit, and at least one school district has taken the step to ban How the García Girls Lost Their Accents from the classroom, I believe that Alvarez’s work would prove beneficial to the Caribbean immigrant student.

### **Claude McKay**

*from To One Coming North by Claude McKay*

At first you'll joy to see the playful snow,  
 Like white moths trembling on the tropic air...  
 And when the fields and streets are covered white  
 And the wind-worried void is chilly, raw...  
 Like me you'll long for home, where birds' glad song  
 Means flowering lanes and leas and spaces dry

As a representation of the Caribbean voice in the English Language Arts classroom, Claude McKay occupies a dual role. This, as many often think of him not as a Caribbean poet, but as an American poet and a leading figure of the Harlem Renaissance. The fact is, however, that McKay was born and raised in Jamaica and migrated to the USA in his early twenties. McKay may then be thought of as a symbol of successful identity adjustment post-immigration. His poetry evokes a sense of nostalgia for his homeland, while at the same time reiterating his commitment to and pride in his new home. His work is a bridge of sorts. Not only does it offer Caribbean immigrant students the opportunity to explore and discuss their cultural background, but it also provides a sense of commonality between them and their American counterparts for discussion into issues of equality and shared purpose.

Some other writers from whose work I believe that students would benefit include Jamaican born poet, Lorna Goodison, St. Lucian poet and playwright, Derek Walcott, and Barbadian writer Kamau Brathwaite. Like the other writers expounded on above, these writers all use their work to interrogate and celebrate the Caribbean cultural identity, and both Caribbean immigrant students, as well as their American classmates and teachers would benefit from being able to explore the rich depth of their writings.

## Conclusion

“Cow neva know di use a him tail, till him lose it”- Jamaican Proverb

The Caribbean proverb above alludes to that trait within human nature that causes us to underestimate the value of something until it is no longer available to us. Thinking back on my own experience as a Caribbean immigrant to the USA, I can say that this proverb applies to me based on the fact that, as I expressed earlier, I never fully appreciated the importance of my cultural heritage until I was no longer able to access it as readily as I liked. Similarly, many Caribbean immigrant students only feel the loss of their cultural heritage when they are far away from home and caught in the maelstrom of an identity crisis, trying to find themselves and define themselves in their new homeland.

We must provide these students with the assistance that they need to be able to reaffirm their sense of self, and the English Language Arts classroom is one avenue through which this is possible. Incorporating Caribbean cultural representation in the ELA classroom need not involve a lengthy or costly overhaul. All it requires is a desire to not only help our Caribbean immigrant students to learn how to better function in our society, but also a desire to open the doors of our classroom to the world. Once we are possessed of such a desire, resources to implement the incorporation of cultural markers will be found.

When we incorporate Caribbean literature into our English Language Arts classrooms, we are helping not only immigrant students, but we are also broadening the horizons of those students who have never been to the Caribbean. We are showing them another side of life and making them into even more well-rounded citizens. We are expanding their worldview. Isn't that the goal of education after all? To expand the worldview of the students who sit in our classrooms. Do we not strive to say that, when all our students leave our rooms, we have helped

to create global citizens of them all? If this is indeed our goal, then the decision to incorporate Caribbean cultural representation in the English language Arts classroom should be an easy one.

Works Cited

- Alvarez, Julia. *How the García Girls Lost Their Accents*. Chapel Hill, NC: Algonquin of Chapel Hill, 1991.
- Anthony, Michael. *The Year in San Fernando*. London: Heinemann in Association with Andre Deutsch, 1970.
- Ashcroft, Bill, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin. *Postcolonial Studies: The Key Concepts*. Routledge, 1998.
- Ashcroft, Bill, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin. *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-colonial Literatures*. Routledge, 1989.
- Atkinson Smolen, Lynn. *Multicultural Literature and Response: Affirming Diverse Voices*. Edited by Ruth A. Oswald, Libraries Unlimited, 2010.
- Barghūthī, Murīd, and Ahdaf Soueif. *I Saw Ramallah*. Anchor, 2003.
- Bennett Coverley, Louise. "Colonization in Reverse." Rt. Hon. Dr. Louise Bennett Coverley, <http://louisebennett.com/colonization-in-reverse/>.
- Clarke, Colin. "Colonialism and Its Social and Cultural Consequences in the Caribbean." *Journal of Latin American Studies*, vol. 15, no. 2, Cambridge University Press, Nov. 1983, pp. 491–503. Cambridge University Press, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0022216X0000081X>.
- Clemente, Dr. Bill. "The A, B, C's of Alienation and Re-Integration: Merle Hodge's Crick Crack, Monkey." <http://sincronia.cucsh.udg>. Peru State College.
- Cliff, Jimmy. *Many Rivers to Cross*. Trojan Records, 2003.
- Davis, Philip, and Bertha Schwartz. *Immigration and Americanization: Selected Readings*. *Compiled and Edited by Philip Davis Assisted by Bertha Schwartz*. Boston Ginn, [c1920]. *Internet Archive*.

Department Of State. The Immigration Act of 1924 (The Johnson-Reed Act). The Office of Electronic Information, Bureau of Public Affairs., 6 July 2007, <https://2001-2009.state.gov/r/pa/ho/time/id/87718.htm>.

Dolman, Bethany A., and Dr. Trenton L. Hickman. "A Journey Home: Transnational Dominican American Identity in Julia Alvarez's *How the García Girls Lost Their Accents*." *Brigham Young University Journal of Undergraduate Research* (2013): <https://jur.byu.edu>. Brigham Young University, 23 Oct. 2013.

Ellis, Carolyn, et al. "Autoethnography: An Overview." *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung / Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, vol. 12, no. 1, 1, 2011. [www.qualitative-research.net](http://www.qualitative-research.net), <https://doi.org/10.17169/fqs-12.1.1589>.

Fanon, Frantz. *Black Skin, White Masks*. Pluto, 1986.

Foner, Nancy. "The Golden Age of Immigration Is Now." *Gotham Gazette*, <http://academic.brooklyn.cuny.edu/history/burrows/NYC/Documents/Foner.htm>.

Garcia, Sandra E. "Hispanic Heritage Month: A Story That Can't Be Told Without Afro-Latino Roots." *Fox News Latino*. 11 Oct. 2011.

Gilpin, Lorraine S. "Postpositivist Realist Theory: Identity and Representation Revisited." *Multicultural Perspectives* 8.4 (2006): 10-16.

Gomez-Vega, Ibis. "'Hating the Self in the 'Other' or How Yolanda Learns to See Her Own Kind in Julia Alvarez's *How the Garcia Girls Lost Their Accents*.'" *Intertexts* 3.1 (1999).

Gordon, Beverly M., and Sonia Nieto. "Affirming Diversity: The Sociopolitical Context of Multicultural Education." *The Journal of Negro Education* 61.3 (1992): 440.

Hodge, Merle. *Crick Crack, Monkey*. Heinemann, 1981.

"Interview With Julia Alvarez." Interview. *National Coalition Against Censorship*, 29 Jan. 2008.  
[ncac.org/news/blog/interview-with-julia-alvarez](http://ncac.org/news/blog/interview-with-julia-alvarez).

Japtok, Martin. "Two Postcolonial Childhoods: Merle Hodge's Crick Crack, Monkey and Simi Bedford's Yoruba Girl Dancing." *Jouvert Journal of Postcolonial Studies*, vol. 6, no. 1–2,  
<https://legacy.chass.ncsu.edu/jouvert/v6i1-2/japtok.htm>.

Junot Diaz On "Becoming American." Interview by National Public Radio, 24 Nov. 2008,  
<https://www.npr.org/2008/11/24/97336132/junot-diaz-on-becoming-american>.

Kamugisha, A. "On the Idea of a Caribbean Cultural Studies." *Small Axe: A Caribbean Journal of Criticism* 17.2 41 (2013): 43–57.

Keyes, Elizabeth. "Race and Immigration, Then and Now: How to Shift to Worthiness Undermines the 1965 Immigration Law's Civil Rights Goals Tenth Annual Wiley A. Branton/Howard Law Journal Symposium: Civil Rights at a Critical Juncture: Confronting Old Conflicts and New Challenges: Essay." *Howard Law Journal*, vol. 57, no. 3, 2014  
 2013, pp. 899–930.

Kincaid, Jamaica. *Lucy*. Farrar Straus Giroux, 1990.

Liggett, Tonda. "Postpositivist Realist Theory of Identity Expanding Notions of Gender in Teacher Education." *Journal of Curriculum Theorizing*, vol. 26, no. 2, 2010, pp. 90–101.

Lorick-Wilmot, Yndia S. "Between Two Worlds: Stories of the Second-Generation Black Caribbean Immigrant." *Trotter Review*, vol. 22, no. 1, 2014, pp. 71–98.

Luis, William. "A Search for Identity in Julia Alvarez's How the Garcia Girls Lost Their Accents." *Callaloo* 23.3 (2000): 839–49.

Martin, Janelle. "Double Identity in Jamaica Kincaid's *Lucy*." *Explorations | Art and Humanities*, pp. 35–44.

Martin, Philip. "Trends in Migration to the U.S." *Population Reference Bureau*,

<https://www.prb.org/resources/trends-in-migration-to-the-u-s/>.

Matthews, Lear K., editor. *English-Speaking Caribbean Immigrants: Transnational Identities*.

2013. *rowman.com*.

McCabe, Kristen McCabe Kristen. "Caribbean Immigrants in the United States."

*Migrationpolicy.Org*, 7 Apr. 2011, <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/caribbean-immigrants-united-states-2009>.

McKay, Claude. "Flame-Heart." The Academy of American Poets, <https://poets.org/poem/flame-heart>.

McKay, Claude. "The Tropics in New York." The Academy of American Poets,

<https://poets.org/poem/tropics-new-york-0>.

McKay, Claude. "To One Coming North." The Academy of American Poets,

<https://poets.org/poem/one-coming-north>.

Mirabal, Nancy Raquel, and Edwidge Danticat. "Diasporic Appetites and Longings: An

Interview with Edwidge Danticat." *Callaloo*, vol. 30, no. 1, Johns Hopkins University Press, 2007, pp. 26–39.

Moya, Paula M. L. "Learning from Experience: Minority Identities, Multicultural

Struggles." *Choice Reviews Online* 40.01 (2002).

Plaza, Dwaine. "The Construction of a Segmented Hybrid Identity Among One-and-a-Half-

Generation and Second-Generation Indo-Caribbean and African Caribbean Canadians."

*Identity*, vol. 6, no. 3, Routledge, June 2006, pp. 207–29. *Taylor and Francis+NEJM*,

[https://doi.org/10.1207/s1532706xid0603\\_1](https://doi.org/10.1207/s1532706xid0603_1).

- Rahim, Jennifer. "Dougla, Half-Doogla, Travesao, and the Limits of Hybridity." *Anthurium*, vol. 7, no. 1, 1, University of Miami Libraries, Jan. 2010, p. 14. *anthurium.miami.edu*, <https://doi.org/10.33596/anth.147>.
- Schwarz, Henry, and Sangeeta Ray. *A Companion to Postcolonial Studies*. John Wiley & Sons, 2008.
- Senior, Olive. "Colonial Girls' School." *Poetry Archive*, <https://poetryarchive.org/poem/colonial-girls-school/>.
- Spence, Glenys P. "Colonial Relics: Unearthing the Lingering Tyranny of Colonial Discourse in U.S.-Caribbean Immigration Law and Policy." *Journal of Civil Rights and Economic Development*, vol. 26, no. 1, 2013 2011, pp. 127–52.
- Suleiman, M. (2000). Affirming diversity: The sociopolitical context of multicultural education, 3rd edition. *Multicultural Education*, 7(4), 44.
- "The Foreign-Born Population of the United States." *The Scientific Monthly*, vol. 8, no. 4, American Association for the Advancement of Science, 1919, pp. 380–83, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/7080>
- Thomas, Tania N. "Psychoeducational Adjustment of English-Speaking Caribbean and Central American Immigrant Children in the United States." *School Psychology Review*, vol. 21, no. 4, Routledge, Dec. 1992, pp. 566–76. *Taylor and Francis+NEJM*, <https://doi.org/10.1080/02796015.1992.12087364>.
- Tirolien, Guy. "Islands." *Barbados Poems And Poetry*, <https://barbados.org/poetry/islands.htm>.
- Vizcaya Echano, Marta. "Identity and Emigration in the Works of Julia Alvarez, Cristina García, Esmeralda Santiago and Maria Amparo Escandón." *Dissertation Abstracts International*, Section C: Worldwide, vol. 67, no. 2, 2006, p. 501–.

