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Author

Badders, Anne-Lancaster

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Les plis dans les puits: Identity and Narrative in Myriam Warner-Vieyra's *Juletane*

Anne-Lancaster Badders

Juletane by Myriam Warner-Vieyra is a novel about woman's alienation, a struggle against the textual diagrams and the representations imposed on the central characters of Juletane and Hélène. The power structures establish the relative power of the female as wife in Senegalese society according to her access to money, which then determines the type and size of space she may occupy. For both of the central characters, Juletane's journal with its clearly-defined spatial relationships acts as a catalyst. In writing the journal, Juletane begins to author her own existence through questioning "comment suis-je descendue dans ce puits de misère" (18); through reading the journal, Hélène reconstitutes her identity alongside Juletane's.

As the outside reader, we are brought to question cultural assumptions not just in Sénégal, but also in a broader context to which Hélène serves as a link. The destabilizing of the social paradigm occurs not only on a thematic level, but also in Warner-Vieyra's writing. The bifurcation of the speaking voice and the layers of memory create a text with many folds both between the voices and within each of them, a text which deliberately opposes itself to a linear narrative. Consequently, Warner-Vieyra and Juletane are new cartographers of textual space. What of Hélène? She is not the narrating subject of either text, she is only the "destinataire" of Juletane's and the central figure of the middle text. As I will show, the processes of reading and of writing women into texts are interdependent given Juletane's struggle with her interstitial position in society, thereby linking sexual, textual and social space.

Muslim society traditionally defines a woman as daughter, sister, wife and mother; therefore, Juletane is first and foremost Mamadou's second wife. She was briefly the preferred wife, but her intolerance of polygamy coupled with her inability to have children motivated Mamadou to marry yet a third wife who then became the privileged one. Her upbringing in Guadeloupe and her education in Paris did not afford Juletane an adequate understanding of the situation into which she was thrown. Her rank in the family thus fell to the lowest wife; this position determines her

physical space. At four feet by five feet, her room resembles a jail cell. The preestablished geography (de Certeau 122) of Mamadou's house makes the social structures appear repressive to both Juletane and to the reader. The power dynamics within the household are reflected in the diagram of the building shown in bits and pieces throughout the text and in the relative freedom the characters feel moving from one space to another. According to Claudine Herrmann in *Les voleuses de langue*, "l'espace est ... pour la femme, par définition, un lieu de frustration physique, moral et culturel" (150). Juletane maps the power dynamics out through a system of exchange.

Mamadou has access to every room in the house, and thereby addresses all space as public. Each wife fits into the diagram according to her relation to him. Ndèye, the favored wife, moves around freely, but never transgresses what she understands to be the space shared by Mamadou and his other wives. She alone eats with their husband, has her friends over, joins company in the living room, and goes out on Saturday nights. Awa, the mother of his children, sits in the courtyard with them, going into the kitchen only to cook the family meal. Juletane, the barren and crazy wife, spends the majority of her time in her room, alone. When she does transgress the borders—for example when she plays music in the living room—she infuriates Ndèye, who then breaks the records, symbols of Juletane's perceived freedom and youth in Paris.

In her article "Geographies of Pain," Françoise Lionnet suggests:

In this carcereal world, the women's activities as well as their thought processes are controlled and policed by structures of domination that involve complex networks of power vested primarily in the male characters, but at times reinforced by other female characters, such as Juletane's co-wife, Ndèye. (138)

In the frequent absence of the male figure, the authority is displaced onto Ndèye. Almost as payment, she expects money and jewelry from Mamadou, reminding him and the others of her favored position. "Que donne-t-elle en échange?" (36) Nothing. He married her out of vanity, because she was "très courtoise" (ibid.). She knows this and uses it to her advantage. She maintains her author-

ity throughout much of the book, until one day following Awa's death, Mamadou visits Juletane and says:

Ma vie jusqu'ici comblée, c'est la première fois que j'éprouve douleureusement mon impuissance. Je comprends, aujourd'hui, l'étendue du mal que j'ai pu te faire en t'abandonnant à ta misère moral. J'espère qu'un jour, tu me pardonneras. Que puis-je faire pour que tu me pardonnes?
(114)

She tells him to renounce Ndèye, the source of all of his problems. After this moment, Ndèye becomes more subdued, Mamadou having taken into account and acted upon the wise words spoken by the madwoman.

For the most part, Ndèye reinforces the "structures of domination." Upon her arrival at Mamadou's house, she asserts herself by doubly insulting Juletane. She refers to her as "la folle" and as a "toubabesse" (white woman). Openly labeling her as mad automatically silences Juletane's voice and sanctions others to ignore her. "The rantings of a madwoman are irrelevant. Her anger is impotent" (Usher 7). Ndèye's labeling asserts her own position and quells any possible threat her co-wife might pose to the household by "clearly positioning (Juletane) as Other" (ibid. 11). From Ndèye's perspective, Juletane seems strange for not having willingly accepted her role as co-wife. From then on, the gaze serves as a language of discourse between Juletane and her co-wives. Each look acts as an arrow, serving as a link between differently defined social spaces (between Juletane's room and the courtyard, for example).

Ndèye's use of the term "toubabesse" also underscores a process of assimilation which Homi Bhabha calls "Otherness," a term which she contrasts with "Other" (Bhabha 116). Juletane does not fit a simple model of post-colonial space; she is a woman from Guadeloupe educated in Paris and now living in Senegal. Not only does Warner-Vieyra give voice to the otherwise-silenced "Other," she also problematizes the Self/Other opposition by positing an "Otherness," neither Self nor Other, located within the splitting of colonial space. Through the repeated production of difference—what Bhabha also refers to as a double or hybrid vision—the creation of subjectivity in *Juletane* menaces the colonial, Manichean paradigm. Juletane, as part of Mamadou's household, is confronting this splitting of colonial space head-on. Juletane notes that

"jusqu'à ma rencontre avec Mamadou, j'avais donc vécu bien loin de tout écho colonial" (30). Her complete difference within society results, in part, from her Christian beliefs and her western education.

Hence the term "toubabesse"—symbol of Ndèye's attempt to force Juletane's assimilation with the colonizer—angers Juletane because "elle m'enlevait même mon identité nègre":

Mes pères avaient durement payé mon droit à être noire, fertilisant les terres d'Amérique de leur sang versé et de leur sueur dans les révoltes désespérés pour que je naisse libre et fière d'être noire. (79-80)

The double significance of Ndèye's use of "toubabesse" erases Juletane's personal history, both as a black woman and as a woman from Guadeloupe. Juletane considers her "identité nègre" inherent and essential to her being, the erasing of which effaces her physical presence, much like her name which she describes as "gommé sur le registre du temps" (13). The label also raises the problem that while Juletane received an education in Paris, she was not born in France. Despite outside attempts to clearly position Juletane as "Other," she resists through her actions and through her writing. Her writing positions herself at the crossroads of different cultures and different definitions of self.

Awa, fellow wife and mother of Mamadou's children, also reinforces the "structures of domination": "Pour elle, tout l'univers s'arrête à une natte sous un arbre et trois enfants autour" (17). She welcomes Mamadou into her bed and plays the role of the dutiful wife. "Que recevait-elle en échange?" (23) She receives very little, even though she merits more in the Muslim economy of marriage. As the mother of Mamadou's only children, she occupies their space, even in death. Moreover, she keeps the family together, serving as a buffer between Ndèye and Juletane. With the death of Awa and her children, however, the power relations between the wives become uncertain. Ndèye knows that Mamadou will marry someone else, someone younger and prettier who will also give him children. With the destabilization of the norm, Juletane cannot stand being alone in the house with her co-wife, thus accelerating her mental breakdown, albeit at her own hands, since she is in fact the one who poisoned Awa's children.

Juletane alone conceives of personal and private space, a conception which is reinforced by the descriptions of the opening and closing of the *volets* in her tiny room that open up onto the central courtyard. This public space serves as a focal point throughout the journal. Juletane must cross this courtyard to go to the kitchen, to go to the living room, or to take a shower: "Je me reveille en sueur. La chaleur est à son point culminant. Je vais à la fenêtre pour reprendre contact avec la maison" (37-38). She opens herself up for viewing (albeit minimally) when she stands at the window. Only during the early morning hours can Juletane pass from one space to another without being seen, while the public eye, represented by Ndèye and Awa, sleeps. "Ici, la solitude à deux n'existe pas, la famille est là, elle vous entoure, vous distrait, pense à vous, pense pour vous" (62). She seems on display when she writes, but her co-wives ignore her "mad" behavior.

Despite her frustration and the two opportunities presented to her, she doesn't leave; she believes she married Mamadou "for better or for worse." In addition, she has no other family; where would she go? What would be the point of returning to Paris by herself? She has no home. Evelyn O'Callaghan discusses the interdependence between the woman being oppressed and the structures that oppress her which act as "a kind of protective enclosure, calabash or cocoon, made up of layers of assumed roles and evasions, behind which the fragile self hides its vulnerability" (n. 15, 107). Juletane complicitly perpetuates her image as insane since it affords her the space and thus the power to limit and control her exchange with the family.

The opposition of the structures of domination and Juletane's Otherness are further evident in her actions. According to Foucault, madness implies an inability to produce language (*Madness and Civilization*). Juletane rarely speaks within the context of the events of the house, for she speaks French and cannot speak the national language of Sénégal. Her madness manifests itself outwardly in her violent acts which she uses instead of language to communicate her anger and frustration. The least of these acts is the tearing of a sheet into a million pieces, "la tête vide de toute pensée" (38), and throwing them out the window. Her gesture and accompanying laugh disrupt the established order of the courtyard and confuse Awa.

Her characterization as a “madwoman” provides a further key link to her control over self-definition and sexuality. At one point, Juletane is transported back to her island while taking a shower. “C’est la première fois, depuis que je suis ici, que je pense à mon pays d’origine; les souvenirs qui me viennent habituellement sont liés à ma vie en France” (59). Mamadou’s loud knocking and use of “folle” extract her from her dream. In response, she opens the door and lets him get a good look at her body, knowing full well what his intentions are (she is still young and attractive). Rather than invite him in, she fills her mouth with water and spits on him, then closes the door. In so doing, she claims control of her sexual space. From her mouth that has no access to language, the symbolic ejaculation signifies her *puissance*. Ever since the loss of her child and the beginning of co-habitation with Awa, and then Ndèye, she maintains her body as a private space, and thus sexually inaccessible to Mamadou.

Juletane begins literally to author her own existence by stealing the notebook of her co-wife’s daughter, Diary. In doing so, she appropriates the space of the school child to “disposer d’un support de réflexion” (18). This reflection becomes a site of the production of language, thereby unsilencing the madwoman. She effects an immediacy with the text by using the present tense, distinguishing between the transcription of events of her current condition and those of her past, as if to suggest she is experiencing the former, not writing them down. “La faim m’oblige à laisser un instant mes souvenirs. Je traverse la cour. Awa, assise sur une natte, sous le manguier, trie le riz en compagnie de Diary. Les deux autres enfants se disputent une mangue avec les mouches vertes. Ndèye n’est pas visible” (36). As she problematizes aspects of her life, she thinks and writes. “Je n’avais jamais imaginé que coucher ma peine sur une feuille blanche pouvait m’aider à l’analyser, la dominer et enfin, peut-être, la supporter ou définitivement la refuser” (60). Rather than acting like an automaton, or a cog in the machine of the household, she engages herself while writing, declaring her pain and writing out the thoughts and events that had been buried in the depths of her consciousness.

She self-consciously declares the desire to write, to fill the blank pages of the notebook, thus establishing herself as producer of a text. “J’ai subtilisé un cahier de Diary, la fille aînée d’Awa. C’était la seule façon pour moi de disposer d’un support de réflexion”

(18). The act of writing occupies her and turns the journal into a friend and a confidant. Her *ami*, gendered male, clearly replaces her husband, given Mamadou's lack of concern for her well-being and her idealized notion of a husband: "Il devrait être tout pour moi, moi tout pour lui, notre union aussi solide qu'une forteresse construite sur un rocher" (115). As she reaches the end of the notebook, Juletane amends her intentions: "Je dois achever mon journal, c'est le seul héritage que je lègue à Mamadou. J'espère qu'il le lira et comprendra combien il avait été éloigné de mon rêve" (130). Consequently, she transforms the text from a personal account into an *objet d'échange*. With the dual representation of the journal as object of exchange and as friend, the text becomes Juletane's own Diary, the only child that she could give to Mamadou. The journal would put substance back into her relationship with her husband, as it was when they were in Paris. Given the economy of the household, all marital relations are grounded in an exchange of money and goods for sex.

Mamadou is unwittingly complicitous in the destruction of the family. What had been an exchange of social relations in Paris becomes an empty exchange as Juletane refuses polygamy and becomes unable to have children. The emotional foundation of the family becomes secondary to the materialism, seen especially with Ndèye. Mamadou marries her not only out of vanity, but because within the Muslim economy of marriage he has the right to as many as four wives. This is yet one more occasion where he uses his supposed religious beliefs for personal gain. Juletane writes:

Chez ses parents, je le soupçonne de la même hypocrisie.
 Oui, tout n'est que façade, le plus important est de paraître
 riche, généreux, sobre, bon musulman, franc, bon époux.
 Alors qu'on est 'fauché', égoïste, alcoolique, menteur, qu'on
 ne se soucie jamais des enfants et des épouses délaissées.
 Seule compte la toute dernière, l'écervelée que l'on dit femme
 évoluée, que l'on couvre de bijoux. (53)

In Juletane's journal, this fetishism of material wealth is linked to the symptoms of alienation and to the crisis of defining oneself and one's relationship to one's culture. The loss of this connection to self and culture implies a loss of morality, a proverbial refusing of hospitality to strangers, and a permitting of the evil eye/I to catch up with one's life. Mamadou understands this when Awa and the children are dead, only then realizing the pain he has inflicted on

Juletane by ignoring her and her needs. Unfortunately, he dies before the exchange of the journal takes place, although it is questionable whether or not he would have been able to read and interpret accurately her disappointment with him. Her compatriot, H el ene, thus becomes the only possible *destinataire*. In that we, the outside reader, are put in the place of H el ene when we read Juletane's journal, Warner-Vieyra hopes that we will likewise be sympathetic to Juletane's situation.

Juletane breaks free of social constraints by appearing to be in a trance as she writes. She is *ailleurs*, a place where she does not endure the pressures of the dominant social paradigms, a place where she has power. While Juletane writes from her room overlooking the courtyard, she only vaguely watches what goes on beneath her and instead looks back on her life, both recent and distant. The journal begins: "N ee un vingt-cinq d ecembre, jour d'all egresse, dans un bourg d'une petite  le de la mer des Cara ibes, j'ai de ce fait  t e con ue une nuit de Car eme, dans une p eriod e de jeune et d'abstinence" (12-13). From the outset, the reader senses a fundamental tension in Juletane's identity: her conception during Lent—and the attendant implication that her parents did not respect their religious tenents—is at odds with her birth on a joyous holiday occasion, Christmas. This tension is duplicated in Juletane's description of her own name which is "gomm e sur le registre du temps" (13).

Ironically, Juletane marks the hours with each written entry into her private world, making the passage of time appear long and tedious. The use of the time-date stamp at the head of each journal entry suggests a linear mapping of time, each one announcing a new event that builds upon the previous one. This artificial codification of time structures not only the *cahier* but also her life. However, within each time-lined temporal "continent" linearity is not maintained due to associative jumps in time. Juletane, although obliged to enter each journal entry in a certain order, feels a certain liberation: "Je suis une  pave   la d erive dans le temps et l'espace" (109). In fact, Juletane's "madness" is what facilitates this extension beyond a linear narrative.

The reader is forced to jump-cut not just between varying temporal layers, but also between various diegetic strata. While Juletane's own journal occupies the narrative center of the book, Warner-Vieyra uses free indirect discourse throughout the length

of the book to help the reader see into the minds of the characters. This complex diegetic framework is most clearly seen inside the journal section where there are three layers. The first layer is the voice of Juletane, author of the journal. The middle layer shows a reader interior to the book, H el ene. Through direct discourse and an all-knowing narrator, we intermittently read H el ene's reactions to the journal and understand how the events inscribed therein relate to her own life. A neutral, extradiegetic narrative voice establishes the outer layer. While Juletane's and H el ene's stories are folded in on each other, thereby decentering the dominant narrative, Warner-Vieyra herself attaches the epilogue in order to bring closure to the journal since Juletane herself cannot. This last "authoritative" text, which also includes an epilogue, is thereby incorporated into the other two levels.

Like the various diegetic layers of the journal, time and geographic location are also split. This is indicated by three typographical islands which separate each temporal continent:

*

* *

They represent not just a passing from one voice to another or a jump from the present to the past, but also signify the three geographic places where Juletane has lived: Guadeloupe, Paris and Senegal. Further distinguishing the present of each character, each narrative voice has its own typographical setting. Through the temporal flux used in her journal, Juletane includes many events of the various stages of her life in the journal. Her life is reduced to eighteen days (during two of which she doesn't write at all) and 143 pages. She consequently performs an archeology of self by "letting the silence speak" (see Brandt). Juletane observes:

Apr es une bonne heure de r ev erie, je retrouve la r ealit e mat erielle de mon cahier. Ami et confidant. Gr ace   lui je d ecouvre que ma vie n'est pas bris ee, qu'elle  tait repli ee au-dedans de moi et revient, par grandes vagues  cumantes,  moustiller ma m emoire. (60)

At the end of Warner-Vieyra's work, the reader discovers that Juletane died shortly after completing her journal. She literally had come to the end of the *cahier*, having borrowed a few sheets of paper to finish it. The dual purpose of her writing was to create a friendly

sounding board and to establish a means of communication with her husband. Upon the death of her husband, she comes to terms with her definitive isolation in the world. "Me réveiller dans un autre monde où les fous ne sont pas fous, mais des sages aux regards de justice" (141). Her only hope lies in salvation and an afterlife.

Within the space of Juletane's life, the opening and the closing of the shutters symbolizes each coming to writing. The outside light literally allows her to see clearly, Mamadou having refused to replace the burned-out light bulb in her room. Juletane can close the shutters, thereby demonstrating her power within the diagram of the house, but the perpetual isolation, her self-imposed exile, exacerbates her "unstable" mindset and hence becomes a dual act of defiance and concession:

... closed space can function generally as both a positive and a negative image.... It is a trap which forces a confrontation with self, a confrontation often too painful to endure. It is a prison which is accepted and transformed by an effort of the woman's imagination into a refuge from a reality perceived as intolerable. (Wilson 49)

Does the closed space (both her room and the journal) act as a prison-turned-refuge? To treat the house as a prison reduces and denies the complexity of the power within the household and maintains the identity masks, rather than exploring what might lie underneath them. "Je retournerai m'enfermer dans ma chambre. Cachée derrière mes volets, je pus à travers les interstices suivre le déroulement des événements" (98-99, emphasis added). Even when she hides in her room, she can establish a clandestine link with the outside world through the interstices of the shutters. Similarly, through the interstices of her text—the written lines on the page—she communicates her life story. Juletane's act of writing definitively forces an inner confrontation which is perhaps too painful to endure. Her writing may in fact hasten the onset of her medical insanity, as shown in the episode where she throws boiling oil on Ndèye's face in revenge for her broken records.

The window thus becomes the link between social/physical space and private/textual space. In *Herself Beheld*, Jenijoy La Belle defines a window as "a double journey into the world and into herself" (7). Via the window of her *cahier*, Juletane, Hélène and the outside reader voyage through Juletane's past. A need to answer

the question "comment suis-je descendue dans ce puits de misère?" (18) motivates each temporal displacement. She returns to the reality of the present because of hunger, the need for more light to write by, Ndèye's raucous laughter, or a reflection on her life and the process of writing.

According to J. Michael Dash, "what underpins the literary imagination [is] a collective amnesia.... [C]ollective denial, a systematic camouflage, becomes a means of survival" (49) Juletane's writing allows her to resist this denial and, analogously, Warner-Vieyra's writing breaks free of the socially constructed amnesia brought upon the "indigène" by the colonizer and his bipolarizations. Juletane's socially defined powerlessness is found at the very basic point of her name: "mon vrai nom, je ne l'ai jamais connu, il a été gommé sur le registre du temps," suggesting that the root of her suffering lies in an additional injustice. To have a name, but to not know it alludes not only to anonymity but to a universality of her condition. Louky Bersianik takes the idea of collective amnesia one step further. She argues that women suffer from an "amnésie congénitale," a more insidious form of oppression (*Les agénésies* 5). Women need to rediscover their pre-history and rewrite themselves into the past. At the same time, they need to be aware of their current role in maintaining the dis-order. "Et peut on blâmer les Hommes de vous mentir? N'êtes vous pas complices de leurs mensonges, puisque vous avez accepté ce marché de dupes?" (*L'Euguélienne* 312). Juletane's inability to accept her role in this "marché" bewilders Awa. Like the mango tree in the courtyard, Awa spent considerable time helping her co-wife to blossom in her new position, all in vain. As the tree can no longer produce fruit following one spectacular harvest, Juletane no longer functions properly in the society after a brief attempt at assimilation.

Juletane's "assistante sociale," Héléne, offers her a solution to her problems of adjustment: repatriation to France. But with her immediate family dead and her Guadeloupe-Paris-Sénégal life voyage, where is her home? When Héléne returns to Mamadou's house for an answer, Juletane shuts herself up in her room, refusing to speak. Overwhelmed by her casework, Héléne leaves without giving Juletane another thought. Four years later, at the request of another social worker, Héléne returns to the islands to search for any surviving members of Juletane's family. Before the trip and prior to Juletane's death, the social worker gives Juletane's journal

to H el ene as an added motivation for her trip but instead of reading it, she puts it aside.

One day, years later and in need of a short break, H el ene picks up the journal without recognizing it. She discovers an intriguing text that previously "elle croyait ennuyeux" (15). Putting aside her metaphorical "chronom etre" (39), she relaxes, lets her hair down, and reads, despite the late hour. This serves as the opening moment of *Juletane*. H el ene is packing her belongings, by which she defines her space, preparing for the move to her fianc e's house. With a preference for traditionally ordered writing, H el ene begins as a conventional reader, assuming madness and womanhood make for inferior writing. The representations she struggles with in her own life are self-imposed reality buffers, to keep her from feeling pain or sorrow. The narrator describes her as pragmatic; she decides to get married not for love but because she wants a child, knowing that with the spouse she has chosen she will continue to maintain her independence. She even establishes a marriage contract in order to preserve her financial power. The marriage is based on the power of money, much like Mamadou's. Through her reading of Juletane's journal, she authorizes herself to remember her own childhood, when "la journ ee se passa sans que personne se pr eoccup at de sa dur ee" (42), much like the evening of the reading. "A travers les interstices" of Juletane's text, H el ene follows the events of her own life as well as those of Juletane's, compelling the outside reader to do the same.

The similarities between Juletane's and H el ene's situations create a negative *mise en abyme*; they are similar, but the women react differently. Juletane did not have a choice in leaving the islands; H el ene decides to leave after finishing her *baccalaur eat*. In another example, as H el ene empathizes with Juletane's pain, she remembers an equally painful experience of young love. Her first fianc e, Hector, with whom she was passionately in love, sent a friend to tell her he had just gotten married to a Frenchwoman whom he had gotten pregnant. He believed it to be the only "honorable" thing to do. She then closes herself off to the world for two days. Afterwards, she tells herself she will never allow a reoccurrence of this with any other man and establishes a block of ice around her heart. Juletane, conversely, never emerges from "le puits de mis ere" resulting from her husband's deception.

Whiskey and cigarettes punctuate Hélène's text and mark the passage of time. Rather than melting the ice, "le whisky, les cigarettes, les parties folles étaient une façon de s'armer contre la pitié, de faire son travail, sans montrer sa propre sensibilité" (102). The alcohol numbs her to the point of no longer knowing "où elle en était" (85). The arming of herself against her feelings creates a state of "zombification." Rather than emotionally experiencing the moment, she puts up a barrier—symbolized as a block of ice—between herself and the world. Too rooted in the mechanical progression of the future, Hélène denies herself and how she got to where she is today.

The reading of the journal transforms Hélène. The first cigarette signals pleasure, while a later one signifies a change:

Pour la première fois depuis de longues années, elle a sans contrainte cessé de brûler les étapes, de gagner du temps. Lire simplement une histoire vraie. Réfléchir, regarder en arrière, remettre en question son attitude habituelle. Elle découvre aussi qu'elle a une vie bien vide. (102)

She ceases to conceive of her life in a linear pattern, having been "très imprégnée du présent et délibérément tournée vers l'avenir" (39). Time changes shape when she relaxes and allows herself to float in a mixture of past and present, her life and Juletane's. The jumps from Juletane's present to Hélène's are made as the result of an evoked memory. She realizes the emptiness of her life due to her "chronomètre." After a while, "Hélène se sentait emportait comme un fétu de paille au grés du vent; tout son être vibrat" (105). Lévi-Straus's "Leçon d'écriture" or "Le son d'écriture" reminds us that the production of language produces resonance, either in the scratching of the pen or the vibrating of the vocal chords. Hélène's reading of Juletane's text posits itself as her own writing through her thoughts and reactions and by putting aside her "chronomètre." In the end, "le journal de Juletane avait brisé le bloc de glace qui enrobait son coeur" (142) and she cries. In the end alcohol coupled with the reading of the journal cause her to experience a cathartic release.

As Carol Boyce Davies and Elaine Savory Fido point out in their introduction to *Out of the Kumbia: Caribbean Women and Literature*:

The Caribbean woman's text is now being (re)written and in witnessing a literature in the process of becoming, the participating critic can only make tentative statements, mark and observe as she attempts to understand literature *in the process of unfolding*. (2, emphasis added)

I would argue that here "unfolding" means not just emerging, but also Be-ing, defining/existing independent of yet alongside the dominant discourse (Daly 98). Initially, *Juletane* presents itself as a private journal written by a woman, and read by yet another; the change in narrator shown by the switch in typeface. Instead, *Juletane* unfolds as a story of a female's position within the colonial discourse, especially that of the woman writer. Warner-Vieyra's text does not confine her. As a private form of writing, the journal format was one of the first acceptable forms of writing by women, a particularly appropriate place for a revisionist message. In *Writing Beyond the Ending*, Rachel Duplesis states:

When women as a social group question and have the political and legal power to sustain and return to questions of marriage law and divorce, the 'covert' status, and their access to vocation, then the relation of narrative middles to resolutions will destabilize culturally, and novelists will begin to 'write beyond' the romantic ending. (4)

Warner-Vieyra creates four endings: the end of *Juletane's* journal, the end of Hélène's reading, the epilogue that announces the end of *Juletane's* life, and the glossary which, while situated at the end, does little to bring the text to completion. Rather, it serves as a static reference point throughout the production of reading *Juletane*.

Warner-Vieyra's book reminds the reader that women have difficulty writing autobiographies because they are positioned in society as Others, unlike men who have access to the "I" (Felman 14). A woman needs to *become* her story through a dialogue with the Self as Other and at the same time reposition the Self in his/her-story. *Juletane's* rewriting of her life and Hélène's reconstruction of self through the act of reading exemplify this process. "Reading woman becomes a form of autobiography or self-constitution that is finally indistinguishable from writing (woman)" (Jacobus 945).

Unlike Virginia Woolf's model where a woman needs a room of her own and a key to lock the door, Warner-Vieyra's model suggests a duality, an opening up, while at the same time maintaining the issue of privacy in the act of production, a tension between

two opposing definitions that keep the writing faithful to the writer. Julietane and Hélène both sit in their rooms, alone. When someone interior to the story enters their space during the event, they push the person away. Yet as no author writes from a void or *table rase*, complete complicity with the status quo remains undesirable. Lionnet proposes that Warner-Vieyra demonstrates a narrative solution to the problem of political domination ("Inscriptions" 31). This domination resides not just in the oppression of the colonizer by the colonized, but also the domination of women in social, sexual and textual space.

Anne-Lancaster Badders is a doctoral student in French at the University of California, Los Angeles.

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