

Abstract

This thesis engages with Wilson Harris's vision for the Caribbean in light of the processes of land settlement, appropriation, genocide and slave trafficking that have historically denied the region's population of human identity. Concerned primarily with Wilson Harris's first four published novels, *Palace of the Peacock* (1960), *The Far Journey of Oudin* (1961), *The Whole Armour* (1962), and *The Secret Ladder* (1963), which were then grouped together and republished as *The Guyana Quartet* (1985), the study of this quartet also focuses on Harris's critical essays, most notably "The Amerindian Legacy" (1990). Firstly, this thesis situates Wilson Harris within the context of postcolonial thought and Caribbean literature in the 20th century. Then, it focuses on the remnants of colonial conquest that appear continuously in Harris's four novels under the repeated motif of pursuit. By exploring the presence of Jungian thought in Harris's fictional writing and critical writing, as well as the immanent ontology of the Caribbean that underpins the author's vision, the thesis draws out Harris's response to the cycle of persecution that he believes to stagnate the Caribbean. Harris's mythopoetic revisioning of Caribbean identity in *The Guyana Quartet* proposes a form of rebirth that transforms the dialectic between pursuer and pursued, all the while bridging the absence of history in the Caribbean. Previous scholarship has viewed Harris's fiction as difficult to align with postcolonial theory, in accordance with Harris's own perception of his writing. Given the dominant focus on the power of poetics and Harris's universality of the imagination, the praise of Harris's mythopoetics has perhaps overlooked the lack of exploration of female figures in *The Guyana Quartet*. Taking into consideration the weight of scholarship on Harris's re-imagining of the Caribbean, this thesis questions *The Guyana Quartet*'s depiction of women within its revised, myth-making Caribbean consciousness and offers an understanding of Harris's work that adopts Gilles Deleuze's concept of time in contrast to

previous readings of the singularity of Harris's poeticist, mystical and idealist Caribbean imaginary.