

(RE)PROCESSING THE TRANSATLANTIC TRIANGLE: POSTCOLONIAL SOLUTIONS  
TO THE MEMORY OF SLAVERY FOUND IN THE WORKS OF ALEJO CARPENTIER,  
OUSMANE SEMBENE, AND MARYSE CONDE.

by

SARAH QUESADA

(Under the Direction of Doris Kadish)

ABSTRACT

My thesis addresses the memory of slavery in the Caribbean by analyzing the postcolonial solutions offered by the writings of Alejo Carpentier *El siglo de las luces*, and Maryse Traversée de la mangrove Condé, along with Ousmane Sembene's film *Ceddo*. My goal in revisiting the three axes of the triangle is to better understand how these nations appropriated a practice that would forever change the dynamics of the societies it involved. It analyzes how these authors intend to come to terms with the slave trade heritage, while grappling with questions of identity that result from such historical traumatism. Further understanding of this historical process might enable us to eradicate modern forms of discrimination, including slavery today; break away from the assumption that a "western solution" is the *best* solution; and accept the "other".

INDEX WORDS: slavery, postcolonial, triangle, literature, Caribbean, plantations, racism, discrimination, Enlightenment, abolition, negritude

(RE)PROCESSING THE TRANSATLANTIC TRIANGLE: POSTCOLONIAL SOLUTIONS  
TO THE MEMORY OF SLAVERY FOUND IN THE WORKS OF ALEJO CARPENTIER,  
OUSMANE SEMBENE, AND MARYSE CONDE.

by

SARAH QUESADA

B.A. Hope College, 2006

A THESIS Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the University of Georgia in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree

MASTER OF ARTS

ATHENS, GEORGIA

2010

© 2010

Sarah Quesada

All Rights Reserved

(RE)PROCESSING THE TRANSATLANTIC TRIANGLE: POSTCOLONIAL SOLUTIONS  
TO THE MEMORY OF SLAVERY FOUND IN THE WORKS OF ALEJO CARPENTIER,  
OUSMANE SEMBENE, AND MARYSE CONDE.

by

SARAH QUESADA

Major Professor: Doris Kadish

Committee: Lesley Feracho  
Timothy Raser

Electronic Version Approved:

Maureen Grasso  
Dean of the Graduate School  
The University of Georgia  
May 2010

## DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this thesis to my family who always encouraged me to aim high and reach for the stars. I dedicate this research to my mother, Margaret and father, Sergio, who reminded me that no matter what I decided, they would always be proud; to my sister, Mandy, who kept me company during difficult times when I needed to focus; to my brother Sergio for always giving me the most meaningful hugs when times were rough.

I also dedicate my thesis to all the wonderful people here and away that both listened to my ideas and concerns, and offered advice and encouragement along the way. My master's program has been one of the most academically rewarding short years of my life, and it was all made possible thanks to the wonderful faculty at the University of Georgia that worked with me.

I also dedicate this thesis to the peoples that have suffered from the impositions of Imperialists nations. I hope that with dialogue that my research may incite, that racism and discrimination can be eradicated in societies on which it weighs on. I dedicate my work to those that consider that the "oppressed" should "get over" their sense of victimization, and offer this work to them as an attempt to better inform them of the consequences of this mindset. I dedicate my work to Alejo Carpentier, Ousmane Sembene and Maryse Condé, for their meaningful and inspirational works and revolutionary spirits.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Without the guidance of Drs. Doris Kadish, Lesley Feracho, Luis Correa-Diaz and Jose-Luis Gómez-Martínez this work would not have been accomplished. I thank Doris Kadish for giving me invaluable resources at the beginning of my master's program, which made me aware of the issues I would become passionate about. I thank her for her most excellent and dedicated guidance and support. I want to thank Lesley Feracho for the time she spent with me, either helping me with my conference paper, thesis, or personal matters. I want to thank Luis Correa-Díaz for making me fall in love with poetry, and understand its prominent significance. I would also like to thank Dr. Gomez-Martínez for teaching me to think critically about Latin America and Caribbean progress, and helping me structuralize papers. I thank all these professors for inspiring me with ideas on which I would write about and would allow me to get accepted at high ranking institutions for my PhD. I would also like to thank all those wonderful people in the department; my friends, Gilbert Hall late-night study-partners, office-mates, and cohort for making these years memorable and academically-stimulating.

I have no words to express my gratitude to my family, Margaret, Sergio, Mandy and Sergi; and my partner, Kyle Williams who always inspired and encouraged me to give it all my very best.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....	v
INTRODUCTION.....	1
CHAPTER	
1 The Triangle’s first axis: the slave trade from the European point of view .....	9
The Origins of slavery and its justifications .....	10
How the 18 <sup>th</sup> century defends and “justifies” the trade .....	11
The 19 <sup>th</sup> century limitations on “solutions” .....	15
Slavery produces a complex, setbacks reinforce it .....	17
De Staël and Condé.....	20
Abolition setbacks /Hugo and Sembene .....	23
Emancipation’s implication in this history .....	27
2 The Triangle’s Spanish axis: Carpentier’s re-appropriation of the Century of Lights ...	29
El siglo: The Story .....	32
Esteban deglorifies Victor Hugues and the French Revolution.....	33
Revisiting 19 <sup>th</sup> century ‘racism,’ re-interpreting notions of ‘barbarity’ .....	36
Resistances: Rewriting, re-visiting views on <i>Marronage</i> .....	38
Creole resistance .....	42
An initial solution to memory .....	45

3	The Re)configuration of the second axis of the triangle: a complicit Africa in the transatlantic trade seen in <i>Ceddo</i> .....	47
	The film.....	49
	Slavery representations in <i>Ceddo</i> .....	51
	Rewriting history: <i>Ceddo</i> contests European myths of a weak Africa .....	53
	Appropriation of a past .....	55
	Women: essential for progress and nationalism .....	56
	Reconfiguration of History: a Project of a Nation .....	58
4	The Triangle's Final Axis: Condé faces the scars of slavery and empowers women in <i>Traversée de la mangrove</i> .....	61
	The story .....	62
	The colonizer faces the memory of slavery .....	64
	Denouncing Patriarchy and Racism: contesting slavery's consequences.....	67
	Female strength, as another solution.....	70
	Eradicating feelings of 'whitening' oneself, renewing (female) bonds.....	73
	Contemporary solutions to present-day problems .....	75
	CONCLUSION.....	76
	REFERENCES .....	82



































































































































































































