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Creolizing Place, Origin, and Difference: The Opaque Waters between Glissant and Irigaray

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Abstract

This article brings Édouard Glissant's theory of creolization into critical conversation with Luce Irigaray's sexuete difference theory and suggests creolization as a process capable of reconfiguring place and origin. Such a creolized conception, the article suggests, fissures narratives of legitimacy, possession, and lawful order, pseudo-claims utilized to dismiss antiracist protests. The article traces Irigaray's critique of woman as place and origin with her conception of the interval. It examines how Glissant's analysis of the womb-abys clarifies and strategically obscures racialization as an ongoing lacuna in Western thought. By deploying a rhizomatic network of relayed traces, the essay examines Glissantian notions of chaos, trembling, and detour to articulate sociopolitical movements that reveal and undermine the sexual economy of the neo-Plantation. Both thinkers, the author suggests, bring together place, origin, and movement to construct two radically different but strategically valuable theories that have yet to be put in a sustained, critical conversation. By positioning each theorist within their own framework, discourse, and socio-ethical concerns, the author offers ways that creolization and sexuete difference theory clarify issues contemporary American feminism tends to gesture toward as "intersectional" issues of gender, sex, and race.

In postulating sexual difference as the primary issue of the day, given its universal philosophical scope, Irigaray states, "The problem of race is, in fact, a secondary problem—except from a geographical point of view?" (Irigaray 1996, 47). In the statement that is also a question, readers understandably figure her as *counting* race as cultural diversity ranked greater or less than the project of sexual difference. It is the geographical point of view I query. I argue that movement with geography remains an underdeveloped point of analysis in her work whereby a reader may foreground how a hierarchical reading of sex, then race, inherently couples sexual difference as an offshoot of a Eurocentric location. Instead, I position movement and geography as mobile disruptors. I engage Édouard Gilssant's philosophical use of fragments, paradox, and detour¹ to refigure sexual difference and escape from the Oneness of antiblack representations of identity,² sex, gender, and sexuality. By bringing movement into conversation with sexual³ difference theory, I trace how race operates as an assumed stable category of cultural

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expression by which we order people via place and origin as signified by the womb. I argue that Glissantian notions of chaos, exiled wandering, and rejection of the universalism of origin reveal such orderings as local patterns. Instead, I analyze the location of places—pairing the double entendre of the sea (*la mer*) with the mother (*la mère*)—that confuse or paradoxically resist facile representation: void, nothingness, and abyss. By questioning the stability, representability, and universalism of place and origin, I trace a Black feminist critique of the profound, unexplored inversions of the Black mat(t)ernal in Irigaray's work that remain buried and suggest that Glissant's diversity of becoming via creolization intertwines particular, historical, and opaque locations of identity necessary to operate outside the discursive givens of how we figure or make sense of the material world. Such an intertwining thinks with (w) holes and substances, encountering unknown textures, and weaves a paradoxical composite of sex, gender, and race that clarifies Irigaray's and Glissant's murky collaborative potential.

I. Irigaray, Place, and Origin: The Womb and *La Mère*

According to Irigaray, to think one's origin, one must return to what signifies the place of origin in Western thought—the womb. Born into postwar Europe, her era's philosophical voices meditate on a declining continent wrecked by the violence of its capacity to dehumanize those labeled “other.” While reading the philosophical interlocutors her peers read, and reading her peers, she engages a unique analysis in which she inverts the scope of time, beginning with Freud and moving backward to Plato. Her specular trope is deliberately suggestive of a vaginal speculum, a device infamous for its perfection as it was horrifically tested on enslaved Black women, many of whom were tortured and died due to infections and the unsanitary and degrading conditions of forced experimentation. Although Irigaray powerfully captures the sexual subtending of speculative subjectivity beyond the grasp of Western philosophy's lens, she misses the overt racial legacy of the speculum itself. Specifically, she fails to analyze how metaphors like “dark,” “black,” and “abyss” signify the female sex as wanton in not only its failure to be the masculine Phallus but also to adhere to the conditions of Whiteness. As Frantz Fanon supposes, “In Europe, evil is symbolized by the black man” and while “the Jew is killed or sterilized . . . [t]he black man, however, is castrated” (Fanon 2008, 165; 140). The castrated black man is attacked at the level of his corporeality rather than his race, which means he is like a girl/woman with no/thing to see. I note that the ways colonizers invert masculine/feminine sexualities toward their labor-supply needs fray sexuation and the human/nonhuman divide. Irigaray's attention to the specular inversion misses the multiple ways by which the sexuation of people who are black (ened) and nativize(d) via the ontological void and assigned the moral shroud of evil—which being labeled sexually deviant, physically dis-abled exacerbates—may signal other ontological frames of living that better expose the way white phallogocentrism uses these people to sharpen its relief and, hence, the need for an epochal shift.⁴ One cannot map Black masculine and feminine onto a universal sexuation as both are voided into the darkness of the unseen, illegitimate, and irrational (and as such morally reprehensible) as they remain hypervisible. She fails to articulate how the project of sexuation relies on darkening as a necessary condition to reveal its failure to become. For example, in *Speculum*, she explicitly uses the subtitle “A Very Black Sexuality” (Irigaray 1985a, 66–73) without analyzing Western philosophy's conflation of lightness with being.⁵ As *Speculum* is an explicit analysis of Hegelian sexuation and Lacanian psychosexual

theory, she misses both theorists' racist underpinnings as she identifies their reliance upon a singularity of metaphysics that fails to attend to difference as difference. Her use of the abyss, vagina, womb, water, and air rely on dark or invisible conceptions—intended to subvert the form/matter binary and the gaze of Western empirical knowledge attainment—and remain a literal “black spot” in her vantage.⁶

What may be productive in her work, I suggest, is her shift—to pursue the dark places, the places where sight cannot locate what is, where silence indicates a residual echo of utterance yet to be deciphered, in the fluid rather than the solid materials of philosophy—leaves open an analysis of Black subjectivity as potently real and, importantly, unavailable for appropriation. By refiguring touch, smell, taste, and all the bodily sensations that actively tell us about the plurality of a vital world and how we ought to share it, I deploy Irigaray's work as an exposure of the Western reliance on visual hue and acknowledge writers such as Evelyn Hammonds, Denise Ferreira da Silva, Zakiyyah Iman Jackson, and Sylvia Wynter who interrogate how the essentialization of black(ened) people remains linked to racialized structures of sense-making. As many feminist readers know, Irigaray's robust critique of the universality of Western philosophy is to insist on *two* rather than One + One + One, a false diversity that remains bound to an orbital Sameness of the One. Sexuate difference, I suggest, is not an essentialization of women but pertains to a generative, anti-essentialist thinking about life and its unfolding fecundity and evolving difference.⁷ But the condition of greater diversity and more intricate difference is predicated on the existence of *at least two* (Irigaray 2001, 6), and her notion of two is founded on a postulated subjectivity that is uncountable and uncontainable (Jones 2011, 230–32). The immeasurable and incomputable posture of her difference offers those committed to theorizing beyond antiblackness a way to engage her work.

For Irigaray, the womb signifies the inversion of Plato's cave—one seeking enlightenment by returning to the passage and back to the source of darkness from which one began surrounded by fluids, a body within a woman's body (Irigaray 1985a, 243–47). Philosophy has signified the womb as a variety of motifs, including the *khôra*, the matrix of primordial beginning (Glissant 1997, 6; Irigaray 2012, 101). *Khôra* becomes an important conceptual term for both Plato and Heidegger, and it is Heidegger—and his engagement with the Greeks—that Irigaray chooses as one of her principal interlocutors. Although for Heidegger, it is the house of language that speaks to us and in its house we dwell—thinking we have built it—language conditions the human and their being, altering the one who builds. However, as with most houses, nostalgia is constantly lurking for meaning and being lost through time and the present moment that can never retrieve the past. Language remains a quintessential focus for Irigaray, but it is the nostalgia of the womb, the first dwelling she detects as the buried homage, a derelict and forgotten first place of elemental being that is prior to any built dwelling. She suspects that Heidegger's infatuation with language causes him to forget the condition of language itself—air (Irigaray 1999). In the human experience, air is first given in the dwelling of the womb through the elemental passage between mother and fetus. Irigaray suggests that Heidegger's remembrance of language through absence remains rooted in the earth, forgetting the relation of air and the invisible that is necessary for his *terre paternelle* dwelling. From the first air we receive via our mother to the first breath we take, we enact a process of birthing ourselves into being, says Irigaray (Irigaray 2017, 1). Her maneuver toward autonomy in one's birth, I read, is a deliberate move away from the discursive reduction of the female body. To birth oneself is to forge a new relationship not bound by nostalgia to the maternal body as object. In the

birthing process, the elemental connection—air and water—between mother and fetus circulates in the distinction of their relation. Under the logic of patriarchy and the psychoanalytic diagnosis of what ails Western culture and thinking, the child longs to return to a false Oneness, to occupy the maternal body as the last memory of shared elemental connection, hence the nostalgia for another womb (Irigaray 1993a, 50).⁸ The search for one's homeland is a search for *terre maternelle*, which remains buried under this signification of a static matter/mater(nal)/land quest.

The vaginal opening to the womb, according to Freud's analysis, can be likened to a black hole, nothing or "no thing" to see, a space of darkness not unlike the dark continent (Irigaray 1985a, 19), he analogizes. In Freud's conflation of the vagina, the dark continent, and nothing to see, we hear the psychoanalytic subtext of a woman's sexual organs associated with blackness, which signifies nothingness. Within this schema, woman as blackness has no past and functions as a place for the origin of man, an envelope for his becoming. The abyssal subjectivity of a woman reduces to a signification of water/glass/refraction (289)⁹ as the mother (*la mère*) is doubled by the sea (*la mer*), both reflections of man's trembling and nostalgia. Later, I return to this doubling of mother and sea with the abyss.

In examining how things exist—being or not being—Western physics and metaphysics, observes Irigaray, turn on Aristotle's sexualized and hierarchical metaphor that privileges masculine concepts of form over feminine concepts of matter. Within this system, Irigaray states, female sexuality appears only as an "undertone" (Irigaray 1977, 64) and a supposed lack of qualities that makes the female truly female. Irigaray paradoxically observes that within Aristotle's rendering, "Woman for her part remains in unrealized potentiality. . . . Or perhaps her form has to be seen—paradoxically—as mere *privation*? . . . She is *both one and the other*. . . . She is equally *neither the one nor the other*" (Irigaray 1985a, 165). Rebecca Hill observes how Irigaray's analysis renders woman as *both* potentiality and privation, thus violating Aristotle's principle of non-contradiction. As such, Hill observes,

She cannot be contained as the other (of the same) masculine cause. She exceeds the order of concepts; she cannot even be resolved to be or not to be. . . . In Irigarayan terms, woman-matter . . . are traces of what she calls the maternal-feminine, the obscured ground of metaphysics . . . irreducibly other to metaphysics . . . [and] cannot appear in Aristotle's discourse, since his thinking is predicated on her exclusion. (Hill 2014, 28–29)

It is the simultaneity of being and not being that confounds the binary opposition and still leaves woman without any specificity (formless privation and unrealizable potential).

Denise Ferreira da Silva counters that in the modern Western imagination, life has a positive value of (1) and blackness signifies no value (-1). However, blackness as matter without form (0) evokes an incalculable possibility:

As such, it marks an opposition that signals a negation, which does not refer to *contradiction*. For blackness refers to matter—as The Thing; it refers to that without form—it functions as a nullification of the whole signifying order that sustains value in both its economic and ethical scenes. (da Silva 2017; italics mine)

Da Silva offers several mathematical equations of blackness as negativity (-1) and without form (0) in order to indicate a representation out of Kantian determinacy and Hegelian dialectics. Instead, da Silva divides (1) life by blackness (0) to reveal a mathematical error. The error indicates why matter and blackness indicate a liberating connection; it is worth quoting da Silva at length:

I have chosen $\infty - \infty$ (infinity minus infinity) or ∞ / ∞ (infinity divided by infinity) to picture the result because it is undeterminable, it has no form: it is ∞ minus itself or ∞ divided by itself. It is neither life nor nonlife; it is content without form, or *materia prima*—that which has no value because it exists (as ∞) without form. . . . What I hope this move against determinacy—the very notion presupposed in the question that Black Lives Matter sets out to challenge—makes possible is an appreciation of the urgency of bringing about its dissolution. . . . That is, the category of blackness serves the ordered universe of determinacy and the violence and violations it authorizes. A guide to thinking, a method for study and unbounded sociality—blackness as matter signals ∞ , another world: namely, that which exists without time and out of space, in the plenum. (da Silva 2017)

Indeed, as Wynter suspects, Irigaray's maneuver to position sexual difference as capable of undoing such an ontological project ignores the power of race and the necessity of the "undertone" of blackness within its own schematic composition. In the epochal shift from the religious to evolutionary, secular, biocentric Man, "the primary code of difference now became that between 'men' and 'natives,' with the conditional 'male' and 'female' distinctions now coming to play a secondary—if nonetheless powerful—reinforcing role within the system of symbolic representations" (Wynter 1990, 358). Irigaray misses this shift of the sociogenic conditions of the symbolic, but her project is useful in that she theorizes mechanisms by which the plenum of matter (blackness) and the contradiction of potentiality and privation of matter (maternal-feminine) may engage the dominating determinacy and dialectical telos of Western philosophy. She uses two motifs: the negative and the interval; in this essay, I focus on the latter.

For Aristotle, Hill instructs that difference is primarily subordinate to identity, and differentiation signals only the identity of substance (Hill 2014). The interval functions as a threshold, a passage to figure an elsewhere outside of sameness—it does not escape phallogocentrism; it unravels an opening and possibility of place within place (Irigaray 1993a, 49). The locomotion to this interval's passage between and at play is *relation* moved by desire. Desire wants to overtake the other, and the interval protects what I read developed throughout Irigaray's oeuvre as a vertical (up-down) self-affection or even an auto-poiesis of one's own erotic desire. As woman has been without form, but a substance for form, a trace in the annals of philosophy, affection for the she/mater/matter who persists becomes the first gesture of becoming—the relation with one's own making that conditions other relations. This includes subjectivities of paradoxical positionality, being both and neither. All this requires a spatiotemporal threshold within/between from which difference as difference emerges. For Irigaray, relation brings the feminine-maternal out of its excessive elsewhere and locates a real that does not collapse within the form-matter binary. Irigaray's move, ostensibly, is to surpass the question of a clear metaphysics of being by prioritizing relation as a concept that precedes and exceeds the contradiction of both being and nonbeing that is woman's place in the system of Western ontology. Her dialectic is not one of contraries but of difference.

However, Wynter and da Silva delineate how blackness as matter without form affirms its own poiesis and poethics, and they with other writers signal a legacy whereby they decipher their own intervals of survival, identity, and thought without reference to White universality and its vice grip of reason (da Silva 2014; Wynter 2015). Evelyn Hammonds analogizes that black holes and their densities of matter confined to small spaces (which sounds much like the conditions blackened people in colonizing countries) are often construed as voids but give evidence of their emanating energy as they distort other visible bodies (Hammonds 1994). I turn to Glissant's work as an archetype of such work that creates an interval for blackness and the (w)holes in which Black lives converge with effects that matter for Diversity and the Whole-World.¹⁰

II. Glissant, Place, and Origin: The Womb-Tomb and *La Mer*

Édouard Glissant also returns to place and origin, specifically the island of Martinique and the *Antillanité* consciousness associated with a “people born of creolization.” Born two years before Irigaray, Glissant traveled to Paris, influenced by similar European thinkers to study with peers like Deleuze and Guattari, reading Plato and Hegel. Charles de Gaulle would label him a dissident and keep him under virtual house arrest, but he would later return to the city to work. Like his theory, his influences and those he influenced were multiple, including, importantly, the members of the Afro-Caribbean intellectual movement, in dialogue with Hispanophone, Lusophone, and Francophone, or Francographic (Little 2001) scholars, grappling with questions of memory and trauma, while forging new imaginations. They, too, are writing beyond a false binary that situates their work only in correspondence to European colonial hegemony. Glissant's contemporaries—Aimé Césaire, Frantz Fanon, George Lamming, Patrick Chamoiseau, Raphaël Confiant—query the fragmentary and overlapping stories of their origin without the guiderails of uniformity in the telling. The nostalgia and lack of nostalgia for Africa as a continent will be an ambivalent specter. Like Heidegger, languages—in their polyphonic and mixed varieties—will be analyzed as a diversifying force that co-constitutes subjectivity. With a plurality of origins, with trauma destabilizing any pretense toward memory-precision, Glissant's meditations on an abyssal subject double as a motif for what has been lost in the darkness of the boat amid the water and the incalculable of what is present in the fragmentary remainder.

Glissant uses several terms to signify a constellation of concepts meant to dislodge the “all-encompassing world of cultural Sameness” (Glissant 1989, 97) that courses through the neo-plantations of the Americas. They include *creolization*, *chaos-monde*, *Tout-monde*, *diversity*, and *Relation*. These terms, in various ways, signal breaks or fissured/fissuring islands of difference in identity, language, art, and thought that are multiplying and toward which the world is moving and of which each is necessary for world totality. He describes sameness as requiring “fixed Being” or “sublimated difference”; in contrast, he posits diversity as “becoming . . . accepted difference” (98) and “Immeasurability of immeasurability” (Glissant 2020a, 60). For Irigaray, an incalculable, asymmetrical two is the condition of a rupture with the One. For Glissant, diversity with its spatial immeasurability of depth and extension can fissure the solidity of Oneness.

The womb of Glissant's origin, he writes, begins in the Middle Passage, in the dark belly of a boat skidding through the amniotic waters of the Atlantic Ocean, extracted

from West Africa and willed into slavery by a unitary, European, atavistic culture. This womb of the boat becomes a tomb, dehumanizing death meant to cease the subjectivity of its captives. Instead, a “multiplicity of anti-slavery will” (Diawara 2011, 5) is born. The boat/womb/tomb is headed toward an unknown archipelago, an appearing of land, part of the world made possible by the surrounding water that constantly diffracts and shifts the geography and region; the sea is a liquid mass of movement signifying the speed, force, and unpredictability of the Whole-World. Like Irigaray’s analysis of *la mère/la mer*, the sea diffracts and refracts into a polyvalence of identity, obscuring origin and *terre paternelle*. Of the slave ship, he says, “This is where the peoples of the Caribbean are truly born, and all those transplanted peoples of African descent” (Glissant 2003, 111). To remix Irigaray’s notion of birth, these enslaved people did birth themselves into the world, but now they are in the belly of a horrific renaissance. Slave traders, functioning like antimothers—twisted midwifery doulas—by blood and water, attempt to rebirth humans into enslaved property. The boat cradles a process meant to torture and dehumanize. The passage, like a gestation cycle, has a finite period concluding with a cutting of the umbilical cord that connects one to former natality and identity.

The people on the boat are from two different waters: the Mediterranean and the Caribbean. Glissant characterizes cultures surrounding the Mediterranean as ones that concentrate, giving “rise to a universalizing expression of rationality or spirituality.” The Caribbean is, to them, a passage between the continent and the comparative “dust” of archipelagos, a one-way stream by which a culture can extend its monoculture. But for Glissant, the Caribbean is a diffracting place of Relation, of diversity, of multiple slipstreams that lead to new encounters that are possible when one leaves the continent-reality and experiences the archipelago-reality. To become aware of such a reality, a new kind of thought must emerge from what he calls continental thought, namely, archipelago thought. Continental thought, or *pensée continentale* is “heavy, dense, sure of itself, magnificent and sumptuous” (108). However, he lingers on the lacuna he finds in the aperture of the terrain that sustains his capacity toward *pensée archipelagique*—the capacity to think paradoxically in ways so one may wander the plantation of universality without getting lost within it (Glissant, 1997, 131). The precarious, insular certitude of continental mass makes it vulnerable to the fissures of the world’s archipelagos, rendering even the continent a cluster of archipelagos.

He describes archipelago thought as “the thought of the archipelago, of the set of islands, which is a fragile, fragmentary, trembling thought, unsure of itself, but which is . . . best suited by addressing today’s problems of the world totality” (Glissant 2003, 108). For Glissant the world’s totality qua continental thought is of the world as an unshakable unity. His version of totality is “multiplicity in totality is totally diversity,” and he counters that “the idea of totality alone is an obstacle to totality” (Glissant 1997, 192), undoing Hegelian totality. To think totality as total diversity requires a mode of thinking that Michael Wiedorn identifies as paradoxical thinking (Wiedorn 2018, 1–34) and suggests the paradoxical move is one Glissant, self-referencing his given name, deploys with slippery ease, gliding away from positivist statements while dropping them as renderings meant to release the poetics of philosophy, or philosophy as poetics. However, these glistening, slippery, poetic philosophical diversities are also not apolitical, which I return to in section III.

According to Glissant, the world is becoming more composite¹¹ and less atavistic, as local regions erupt like tiny archipelagos that yield unpredictable results beyond hybridity. In contrast, atavistic cultures rely on continental thought, he says, and are

decomposing while *creolization* is growing ever so tenderly (Glissant 2003, 113, note 2). As he describes it, creolization is a process that retains specificity of particulars while avoiding collapse into a universal global relation of identity. The risk for composite cultures is to shift their tenderness toward a nostalgia for the forms of legitimacy that atavistic cultures stake through *genèses* and filial succession—to seek the mater in matter. To think like an archipelago, one must leave the retrenchment of self-sufficient thinking, says Glissant, “but of relativity, the fabric of a great expanse, the relational complicity with the new earth and sea. It does not tend toward the One but opens out onto diversity” (Glissant 2008, 81).

For Irigaray, one fails to become lost in this diversity because one may return to the self and the interval safeguards subjects. For Glissant, aesthetics is the interval, the liminal space that is both paradoxically concrete and abstract, universal and particular, and by which the process of creolization shifts from a deconstructive move to an affirmation of identity without binary collapse. For Irigaray, sexuate difference is the anti-principle that reveals symmetries and asymmetries, the latter yielding far more fecund spatiotemporal multiplicities. For Glissant, Relation, that is, conceiving of diversity in its real and constantly changing presence, is the strategy by which the multiplicity of difference remains at play without collapsing into a false universal.

Such a diversity requires new modes of wandering, nomadic in the best sense. Glissant shifts the meditation on thinking and speaking away from the substance of thought and speech and toward its motion or movement. The accent is on meandering movement (*ex-stasis*, *marronage*, flight, escape) within a specific geographical zone that such a with-ing entails (Dash 1989, xli). I detail how movement with the geographical zone becomes a critical notion that directs and compels sociopolitical-ecological action.

III. Movement: Relation, Imaginary, and Chaos

In another essay, I detail the importance of oscillation (Zakin 2011),¹² rhythm, material circulation (Stone 2006),¹³ locomotion, and incalculable direction in Irigaray’s work (Kim 2022).¹⁴ This movement, I suggest, permits Irigaray to denote difference/sameness moments as real but uncontainable within stable categories like “woman,” given the voluminous force of flow/flux of sexuate difference. I note here how Irigaray’s notions of movement have relevant synergy with Glissant’s articulation of Relation. I include how his notions of *retour/detour* differ from other Afro-Caribbean thinkers and include how his nomadic detour advances an Irigarayan politics of difference.

Critical to Glissant’s deployment of the Deleuzian-Guattarian rhizome-relation trope is the notion of relay, or that which triggers rhizomatic movement. The relay oscillates between the particular and the universal, but its movement is not vertical; it is horizontal toward the O/other. To ensure the common good, distance between relations must be determined, and new zones of relation will be possible. Generalizations no longer hold as universally true, and yet, ethics persist. On what ground will ethics be forged? For Glissant, Relation will guide. He posits that Relation has a movement relative to other movements—“it is neither a restrictive dogmatism nor the skepticism of probabilist thought” (Glissant 1997, 134). Or, as he puts it, the totality of Relativity is not totalitarian, the mind engages relatively but is not bound by that relation. Situating Relation thus, he turns to an indeterminate telos of relativity bound to chaos. With chaos as its movement flow, relativity shifts from what a thing *is*, shifting away from a filial, linear orientation or mode of knowing, an obsession with the past, genealogies of knowing, and the origin of the universe, God, and humanity. Instead, he postulates *chaos-monde*,

a cultivation of curiosity about what we cannot contain or measure, the ungraspable, the circularity of the nomad as a kind of knowing. He offers trembling awe that shakes as the world vibrates, shifts, and quakes. He captures well the project of turbulence:

In expanse/extension the forms of *chaos-monde* (the immeasurable intermixing of cultures) are unforeseeable and unforetellable. We have not yet begun to calculate their consequences: the passive adoptions, irrevocable rejections, naïve beliefs, parallel lives, and the many forms of continuation or consent, the many syntheses, surpassing, or returns the many sudden outbursts of invention, born of impacts and breaking what has produced them, which compose the fluid, turbulent, stubborn and possibly organized matter of our common destiny. . . . Its beauty springs from the stable and the unstable, from the deviance of many particular poetics and the clairvoyance of a relational poetics. The more things it standardizes into a state of lethargy, the more rebellious consciousness it arouses. (138, 139)

Glissant notes how force moves in the world; sedimentation is merely a preparation for agitated eruption. Moving one piece in a linear logic that it will cause another action to be yielded is itself incomplete, as discernment of linear connections or calculation, in a Humean sense, slips away in the disorder that is already yielding new orders. In a clear nod to Daoist echoes, to erect is to begin to sink into the earth. He notes that the speed of chaos is increasing, and in its wake the chasm between poverty and privilege expands—thus, the need for Relation. Glissant explains relation as “the moment we realize there is a definite quantity of differences in the world. . . . we shouldn’t forget a single one of them, even the smallest” (Diawara 2011, 10). Relation functions as a strategy that sets to receive the totality of diversity in the world. In so doing, one calls into question the notion of universality and generalization as insufficient to portray the totality of the universe. Relation hedges the sublation of differences. I suggest that Relation makes it possible for people to receive differences from others, without assimilation or full comprehension of all that is between. The darkness in one’s self, and the murkiness between, he calls opacity, which functions to bring into focus the totality of the world, while leaving it beyond the scope of full comprehension. It is a paradoxical knowing/not-knowing that I detail later. With relation guiding, Glissant suggests how to move beyond alienation and exile without returning homeward or essentializing the human agent. He proffers detours in our thinking and political action.

Retour Detour

Glissant’s project traces movements whereby identity can be forged without a return (*retour*) to one’s origin. The abyss of the Middle Passage means one may not return to a supposed root identity, as that may not have been their origin. A “people born of creolization,” he suggests, have forged a new global project: relation identity marked by nomadic wandering (*detour*), an error in direction. John Drabinski skillfully traces the directional differences between Glissant, Aimé Césaire, and George Lamming, whereby all three shift the pervading condition of black alienation and exile. He notes that Césaire moves “homeward” toward the African continent of origin, and Lamming toward the European continent of existential experience, given the specificity of Black experience (Drabinski 2015, 139–63). Glissant, in contrast, begins with fragments to formulate islands of thought, seeming errors that lead to fissured and powerfully limited conclusions. The “error” plays with the French *errer* (to wander) and *erreur*

(error), implying a roving movement. Glissant's errantry is not aimless wandering but is interlaced, woven in a rhizomatic network—a carnival of movement. He writes, "The identities of human peoples today are relational identities—what I call rhizomatic identities, that is the root that digs down but that also extends its branches laterally toward other roots" (Glissant 2003, 112). Rhizomes establish a multiplicity of connections without killing what is around them in the way a unique root does, says Glissant. Errantry, a kind of skeptical, anarchist nomadism, moves in contrast to a settled (settler) society rooted in a totalitarian root system but is not necessarily its opposite. Instead of oppositions, the other affects the wandering (beyond the discover–domination encounter). He warns that the push toward a universal identity threatens the movement of errantry to become "bogged down, diluted, or 'arrested' in an undifferentiated conglomeration" (Glissant 1997, 142).

To describe how relation animates or orients this movement, I note Glissant's description that "people born of creolization" must work to reconcile the traces, breakages, and trauma of their past with their present and future political becoming. In *Caribbean Discourse*, Glissant suggests that two models emerge as forerunners for the action—*retour* and *detour* (Glissant 1989). *Retour* signifies a yearning to turn to a single fixed origin (root) and its associated static state of being. Glissant notes this phenomenon of reversion/return as typical of many exile or diaspora experiences. As a group, "people transhipped" from a root culture obsessively set their energy and economy toward transplanting the same root but in a new location. Nostalgia animates a recentering of the root mythos and ways of life, sacralizing pilgrimages back to their ancestral land—as if the new terrain, peoples, and adapted ways of life had never occurred—and effectively negating the process of relation. For a people enslaved and denied their artifacts of origin, their language, their creation stories, their filial bonds, the transmission of their histories, or customs, *retour* seems like a movement whereby agency is attained. However, as time progresses, distance and time make it too difficult to preserve this reversion; indeed, the culture and land have moved on too. The reversion is a memory of shadowy threads. The *retour* becomes a mirage in the desert, a false nostalgia that can never be attained, an obsession without satiation. For Martinicans migrating back to France (or other African groups returning to their natal colonizers), or "slavery in reverse," Glissant suggests that this reversion yields exiled alienation.

It is often only in France that migrant French Caribbean people discover they are *different*, become aware of their Caribbeanness; an awareness that is all the more disturbing and unlivable, since the individual so possessed by the feeling of identity cannot, however, manage to return to his origins. . . . and he will have to *migrate again*. (Glissant 1989, 23)

This realization of alienation Glissant productively shifts as a diversion, *detour*, a way out of exile. Ironically, the island of Martinique is itself a location of diversion for those whose origin was African, "a land of ghosts. . . . to manage to live in one's country, that is the where the hurt is deepest" (23). *Detour* is "the desire to acquire freedom in a place or medium other than your transplanted homeland" (Roberts 2015, 157). It is to escape within the terrain of slavery through a landscape (aesthetic agency with the fissuring land) of resistance.

Glissant offers several exemplars of political *detour*, including Marcus Mosiah Garvey, Garveyism, the Universal Negro Improvement Association and African Communities League (UNIA-ACL), and broader movements such as Césaire's

development of *négritude* and Fanon's revolutionary leadership in Algeria. Neil Roberts adds Trinidadian communist and Black feminist Claudia Jones to the list; Roberts's assessment of Glissant's use of political *detour* is worth quoting at length:

The rhetoric of political mobilization outside the confines of Western nation-states, education in a foreign land leading to consciousness of identity from your native land, reassertion of valuation of the racial self, and utilization of philosophical and political categories of the West to project back a critique of Occidentalism define political *detour*. (Roberts 2015, 157)

However, "diversion leads nowhere when the strategy does not encounter any real potential for development" (Glissant 1989, 23). For Glissant, diversion illustrates and establishes "the *landscape of a zone* shared elsewhere" (26; italics mine). It is important to delineate wandering in the land from the landscape. Glissant writes that the poetics of landscape is "the source of creative energy, is not to be directly confused with the *physical nature* of the country. Landscape retains the memory of time past. Its space is open or closed to its meaning" (150). The poetic functions like a Kantian transcendent idealism, meaning poetics reveals the field by which we perceive the natural, highlighting fixed thinking's saturation into the concrete. Glissant brings together poiesis and poetics to reveal a "poietic" scaping with the land: the land is not ours to dominate; we can only bear witness to the landscapes we make. For the diversion to be productive, to bring one into being and not reversion, a *retour* is necessary, but not as a return that is a longing for one's origin, "but a return to the point of entanglement, from which we were forcefully turned away; that is where we must ultimately put to work the forces of creolization, or perish" (26). To bring *retour* and landscape together, I suggest that Glissant's work brings creolized people back to the land of their exile but reveals the relay of aesthetic agency the land gives back to them, the ability to scape the land anew and rewrite a "poietic" in which the land's opacity yields coverage, flight. Glissant's poietics share the legacy of secretively telling the densities of matter and energy in the voids that colonizers cannot detect. Ecological action is now intricately connected to one's ability to engage *l'imaginaire* and tremulously scape the land by honoring its opacity as an enlivened chaos that demands our respect, not our domination.

I note the contrast between Glissant and Chris Bongie's approach to postmodern political action, where he suggests "the (dis)engagement of the postmodern" (Bongie 1998, 172). Celia Britton reads Bongie's stance as not a simple disengagement from ideology; "rather, it 'distances' it in a way that permits an ambivalent, problematizing, relativizing, skeptical disengagement with it" (Britton 2009, 4). Glissant shares this ambivalence but pivots back to it in a more affective manner. Glissant's strategy of creolization entails two salient points: a reversion to return to a point where one became entangled or a return to a place where one lost mobility. His dialectic oscillates between *detour* and *retour*, and the ambivalent distance is between the two points of wandering. If we return to his comment about the "deep hurt" he recounts living elsewhere in alienation, I read creolization as a process that helps recover mobility from the memory of immobile, restrictive sites of trauma locked away in one's body. Second, I read that integral to this critique are the land, the landscape, and the resources within this geographical zone, to re-geo-graph, or rewrite through the earth. The seed and the filaments, the landscape helps write what resistances and flights are possible, transforming the

categories of *natural* versus *forced* poetics away from a nature/antinature binary and toward his cross-cultural poetics.

The Creole language is a *detour*—a language, that is, a forced poetics, which he contrasts with natural and cross-cultural poetics. These linguistic offspring or filiations, he notes, patriarchal society deemed illegitimate. He describes pidgin from Creole as language without identifiable origin, which appears and disappears.

A pidgin language plays with elements of one language, and disturbs, them, lexically and syntactically. The principal characteristic of a pidgin form of communication is its aggressive treatment of language. . . . for example, in the language of rap music in the United States or the invention of dub poetry in Jamaica. (Glissant 2008, 82)

Creole and the bellicose emergent variants are filiations of unknown mother tongues that disappear under a system of legitimacy, dispossession, and conquests (Glissant 1997, 61). In contrast to creolized linguistic systems, law-and-order systems utilize one theological myth and one legitimate language to generate their people and secure their possessions. It is a legacy that Wynter traces back prior to 1492 as a “juro-theological legitimation” whereby in the wake of the Portuguese arrival in West Africa, thousands of enslaved West Africans would be transhipped. These acts would make colonial settlement possible and its new hierarchical social structure where African slavery exempted indigenous people from filling this bottom tier (Wynter 1995, 11). It is this force, from the slave ship to the plantation, from the fire of the sugar cane to the fire of concrete ghettoization, that Glissant suggests results in a series of diffracted sayings—where one cannot say things explicitly, so one must use ambiguous oral expressions, a discontinuity of proverbs, sayings, songs, and tales. Here we have meaning without explicit clarity, attempts to avoid the snare of beatings, lynchings, and “law and order” imposed on people for whom the system necessitates their dehumanization. He describes a way of speaking in sayings or “symbolic evocation of situations” as *detours* that yield a project of imagining and recreating from traces of memory, far removed from imperatives of ideology and systems of thought. He signals this creation from traces, seeking derelict clues, as the detour of *marronage*. Of this, he says:

Imagining from traces is a more difficult but more fruitful exercise than thinking by systems. It seems that the ancient *marronage*, which was the quest for new traces, is once again operating, for all of us. In other words, ambiguity, discontinuity, traces, and remembering, creolization, with its unpredictable results, are not signs of weakness. . . . They counter the massive assertions of thinking associated with Conquest. (Glissant 2008, 87)

I read Glissant’s work as a maneuver from victim to replete creative agent whose freedom is woven throughout a series of submarine networks (Glissant 2020b, 46). I read creolization as a process whereby one is transformed by taking the wreckage and shadowy threads, traces, and fragments of alienation and exile to reconceive the directionality of escape and flight. Specifically, he transforms immobility within/around the land and landscape into agency, whereby one regains the ability to intervene. The land and landscape are integral to human detour, and they serve as guides, motifs, and scratches of Levinas’s “said” without disclosing the “saying.” Rather than looking for an

idealized land or existential state, Glissant allows the memory and the geographical zone of the Caribbean to guide and structure his broadening of thought, speech, and action. The blurred lines between the poetic and the philosophical, the natural and the cultural, the legitimate and the illegitimate, make it impossible to detect or locate a singular agent from the land and landscape. In the next section, I detail the productive possibilities of Glissant's joining of the political, aesthetic, and ecological.

IV. Opaque Self-Affection and Ethics

Transparency, Glissant notes, is a way to create legitimacy and maintain the state-power apparatus. The counterweight to transparency that Glissant explores in his literature is the trope of the maroon, such as the character Longué and the play and irony of *Liberté* in his fictional piece *The Fourth Century* (Glissant 2001). Roberts astutely notes that through the story of Longué's genealogical *marronage*, the reader explores the zones of being and nonbeing that indicate why and how the conditions of opacity become a guarded refuge (Roberts 2015, 147–52). In *The Art of Not Being Governed*, James Scott details “shatter zones” of refuge, outside of state appropriation (Scott 2009). The state zones are coded as civilized: legitimate dwellings such as the plantation, the valley, and the institutions of statecraft. The state then renders legitimate labor as the system of enslavement and its intricate hierarchies of enslaved people and freed that serve the plantation and the security of the state and its power to appropriate. This state-system stands in contrast to the zones of nonbeing that the state depicts as barbaric, signaled by its illegitimate habitations: the mountains, marshes, mangrove swamps, and hills. The state codes illegitimate labor as that which secures life outside of enslavement, thus requiring these refuges to remain distant from statehood. Under the conditions of statehood, all is made transparent, living in approved dwellings where the population can be surveilled as remaining within the neo-plantation.

However, Glissant questions this all-insistent demand for clear transparency as legitimacy and moral surety meant to justify a defensive and empty humanism. He writes that Western humanity once studied the water to see a transparent reflection of its image; now they find an uneasy opacity. He declares, “There is opacity at the bottom of the mirror, a whole alluvium deposited by populations, silt that is fertile but, in actual fact, indistinct and unexplored even today, denied or insulted more often than not, and with an insistent presence that we are incapable of not experiencing” (Glissant 1997, 111). Opacity, a thick experience of the world, refuses to mirror the Western subject; the glass is fuliginous. Like an endangered species, “Opacity must be preserved,” he urges (120).

Glissant's words bear witness to a residual, latent fecundity in the water, an unrealized human dignity in the runoff of eroded rocks and soil, which drains into the lowest-lying water. The murkiest water is often, geographically, at the lowest point below the surface—the bottoms, the swamp, the delta, the ocean floor. Correspondingly, this altitude is also where many people and species, crowded out by borders of nation-state formation, private property, or fleeing from the label “property,” gather and have gathered to find a habitat that could shield and envelope them. I hear the political promise to “drain the swamp” that some US political figures currently herald as another way to terminate through eviction by any means necessary people and species the nation-state failed to extinguish. I suggest opaqueness, functions like Irigaray's notion of an envelope or interval, a threshold and hidden passage necessary to temper desire with relation. However, it is also more than Irigaray's conception of the

interval—an envelope made necessary because of the white desire for supremacy. Wetlands, lowlands, and other places of opaque water harbor fecund silt and valuable biodiversity. And they may also harbor disease, refuse, and fugitives trying to escape the law-and-order system of monolingual legitimacy—they are ordered and chaotic spaces.

Opacity seems profoundly connected to Glissant's consideration of world-chaos, one of the world iterations he describes in his oeuvre. In "The Black Beach," he describes a favorite shoreline, jagged black volcanic rock and an underground volcanic intercourse of fire, uprooted trees, and surging waters that seasonally destroys. However, at another time of year, the same space will become white sand and slackened sea. The sea will cyclically render order and chaos (Glissant 1997, 122). Glissant notes that difference thinkers have opened up the opaque and chaotic as a fertile space for racial and political justice. However, even difference and its constitutive aims can reduce, and he warns, "In order to understand and accept you, I have to measure your solidity with the ideal scale providing me the grounds to make comparison and, perhaps, judgement. I have to reduce" (190).

Whereas Glissant's earlier meditation on transparency and opacity centered on a critique of language, he shifts to the physical properties of things. Transparency, in this sense, is a reductive gesture meant to locate, calculate, and solidify our sociopolitical aims, particularly for groups Glissant recognizes as minorities. It is a teleological reduction that also removes the social-political horizon of opacity as a liberating movement that expands and flows with the people. Glissant argues for opacity and urges:

Agree not merely to the right to difference but, carrying that further, agree also to the right to opacity that is not enclosure within an impenetrable autarchy but subsistence within an irreducible singularity. Opacities can coexist and converge, weaving fabrics. To understand these truly one must focus on the texture of the weave and not on the nature of its components. (189)

I want to hang onto his attention to a textured weave, which I suggest is a way to formulate intersectionality. Threads, when woven, are stronger than their parts, and if we use striated, variegated, and smooth fabrics, still making space for holes, we create a texture that can amplify the strength of a single strand. Glissant gives a beautiful analogy for the skill required to weave differences together.¹⁵ Opacity is stronger when the textures are distinct but capably woven together. Glissant theorizes a Relation wherein opacities converge, coexist, and weave. This Relation is beyond facile bumper stickers or signs that extol "All are Welcome." From silt to fabric weave, Glissant uses strands and sediment to consider the texture, rather than the nature or essence, of minoritized groups. In this way, differences are "felt" rather than essentialized. To feel is to have proximity with what is being handled and to agree to such a touching. Acknowledging and navigating the distance between forms is a necessary ethical condition that must be realized before bringing strands together. By refusing the ocular as a point of knowledge, the darkness forces other senses to be engaged, which requires distance and proximity to be negotiated. Opacity is a way to protect the valuable knowledge, strategies, resistances, and subjective realms of those asked to smooth themselves into the placid reflection of colonial power.

V. Creolization and Sexual Difference

From a colonial perspective, the water surrounding these islands functions as a medium or way to access the lands and the people connected to them. The conquerors consider all these elsewhere lands to be resources available to advance the capitalist wealth of other nations. The project of sexual difference uncovers the sexual language of this plantation economy built on the sands and volcanic rock of the Antilles—we failed to consider the sea. In her work, Irigaray notes that both the sea (*la mer*) and the mother (*la mère*) function as places for the solid identity of a male subject, master of language, to appear and be surrounded, floated, and sustained. In *Ethics of Sexual Difference*, Irigaray suggests that woman becomes the place for place, like an invisible gravitational matrix (Murtagh 2019)¹⁶ surrounding, nourishing, and supporting the substance of the universe.

Key to the plantation as a place of domination is its monoculture of sexuate indifference of the One, and the sexed production of the One is constitutive to his power. To reveal the Oneness of the plantation, the critique of sexuate difference insists that we must uncover its sexuate condition(s) of being and becoming and its subsequent sublimation of all others. Sublimation, a concept typically associated with psychoanalytic theory, means to “divert or modify an instinctual into a culturally higher or socially more acceptable activity” (Lexico n.d.). An example might be to sublimate one’s libido into productive activities, such as cooking, art, or writing. The noun form is also of interest in Irigarayan work, as the term also relates to the notion of the sublime and indicates, from the vantage of chemistry, the point at which, when heated, something shifts from a solid to a gas and when cooled the reverse. To sublimate is to initiate a process yielding a purity of something morally or spiritually. In the realm of the One, Irigaray argues, the flesh/instincts/drive is what must be sublimated, vaporized, and overcome so the morally and spiritually pure, solid, One is culturally elevated. However, reading Freud, Irigaray notes, “It is assumed that woman, apart from a few exceptional individuals, has less aptitude than man for sublimation. That assumption is built into the very operation of sublimation, into its purpose, its conditions, its methods. . . . ‘femininity,’ even successfully achieved, cannot sublimate” (Irigaray 1985a, 123). To elevate oneself in the neo-plantation of the Americas, one must become a person capable of sublimation; one must become a “he.” Glissant acknowledges this blind assumption of “he-ness” when he writes, “blindness and compensatory *paternalism*—in short, the very elements present in any place, Caribbean or continental, that is part of the Plantation universe, possessing subject matter that lends itself to specificity as well as sublimation” (Glissant 1999, 96; italics mine). Composite people, he suggests, are also incapable of sublimating or masking their hybrid composition; they cannot yield a pure mythical pedigree of origin (Glissant 1989, 139). Glissant assesses the poet Saint-John Perse ambivalently as a *béké*¹⁷ who skillfully portrays the dense fecundity of all the island engenders, and yet agrees to sublimate Caribbean histories and natural singularities to the single History of the Logos because he is the inevitable exported product of the plantation-island (227–28). But with pointed political critique, Glissant argues that generalizing universality operates via the sublimation of “individual dignity based on the reality of private property. It is also the ultimate weapon in the process of depersonalizing a vulnerable people” (139). If Irigaray points us to the “she” incapable of sublimation, Glissant notes the Creole as her illegitimate offspring also without origin, incapable of sublimating instinct/drive/flesh. She is not in the abyss alone. But by pointing to the she in the abyss, it does not follow that sexuate difference theory must

reify this male/female binary; rather, it points to its power to obscure those backgrounded by the Oneness of the foreground. For the sea is the womb-tomb that holds the bodies of the enslaved thrown overboard, a sunken memorial that continues to cry out against the sublimating project (not location) that is the West. However, Valérie Loichot notes that Glissant shifts from memorializing the many by saying the name of only his mother—"Adrienne Marie Euphémie" (Loichot 2013, 1028).

Max Hantel evocatively traces Glissant's language of the slave boat as "a womb abyss" (Hantel 2014). He observes the necessary relationship between the slave economy and the reproductive control of the female body, literally the womb, as another way slavery unequally values certain bodies. Irigaray notes the corporeal naturalization of women's labor as reproductive in "Women on the Market" when she writes, "A socio-cultural endogamy would thus forbid commerce *with* women. Men make commerce *of* them, but they do not enter into any exchanges *with* them" (Irigaray 1985b, 172). Irigaray fails to analyze how racism legitimizes white supremacy, which renders Black lives a commodity in a white, capitalist, global economy. Still, her analysis helps specify the ontology of the Same at work in the market. According to Irigaray, markets value things according to their ability to move goods and resources for the Self-Same. With an intersectional point, Hantel returns to Irigaray's infamously read statement: "the problem of race is, in fact, a secondary problem—except from a geographical point of view." Often read as a hierarchical statement that race scores lower than sex, Hantel reframes the statement:

Her point in this context means one cannot struggle against the Manichaeism of racial difference without simultaneously attending to sexual difference. It is not a question of prioritization for its own sake, but an ontological argument showing the way the suppression of sexual difference to an economy of the One is the "unknown infrastructure" upholding the violently demarcated boundaries of other socio-cultural differences. To fight against racial difference in a manner that replicates the patriarchal order's suppression of feminine desire (in this case, the reduction of the female body to its reproductive capacity in the service of maintaining the plantation system) cannot create a radical new mode of collective life. (Hantel 2014, 12)

Indeed, it is the replication of another violent order that I read Glissant so apt to undo in re-geo-graphing the French language, his oscillating movement between root and rhizome, his collapse of errantry and exile, and his opaque chaos. Glissant's movement reframes Irigaray's evolutionary momentum of sexual difference, enabling the fragmented, paradoxical knowing of creolized people to fissure continental thought and protect the opaque spaces critical for sexuate subjects to return to themselves. His work is racialized as it theorizes relation beyond not-being. And it is ethical in that it asks people to relate to the Thought of the Other and to move toward the Other of Thought, which is to act. He writes, "That is the moment I change my thought, without renouncing its contribution. I change, and I exchange. This is an aesthetics of turbulence whose corresponding ethics is not provided in advance" (Glissant 1997, 154–55). In sum, I read in these words Glissant's permission for us to live our ethics in murky, chaotic, oscillating, and yet critically engaged thought-action with the other. This interval strengthens the weave of difference.

Notes

- 1 Glissant uses multiple terms that form a constellation of meaning and are each distinct. I encourage readers to review the glossary of terms on the official website dedicated to his work (Céry n.d.).
- 2 I acknowledge thinkers who informed me to conceptualize racial representations beyond binary opposition (Spillers 1987; Wynter 1990; Winant 2000; 2015; Jackson 2018).
- 3 Throughout this essay, I use sexual difference to express how most readers understand Irigaray's work and "sexuate" to indicate her clarifications of the expression. See Jones 2011, 161, 183–84, 187–89, 194–95, 198 to differentiate Irigaray's move from sexual to sexuate difference.
- 4 Irigaray's first and second phases articulate a de(con)struction of a universal Western way of life and thought and the advent of another, a speculative trope of imagined possibility for the subjectivity of others outside the One. In this specular move, her interests align with people proposing the existence and flourishing of humans and more than humans outside the house of White supremacy (Bollinger 2007).
- 5 For example, Immanuel Kant associates the concentration of visual hue with nonbeing (Jackson 2018, 626).
- 6 It is beyond this article's scope to underscore fully the force of blackness and sexuality in sexual difference theory. I refer the reader to the powerful critiques by Sylvia Wynter, Mary K. Bloodsworth-Lugo, and Zachiyah Iman Jackson (Wynter 1990; Bloodsworth-Lugo 2007; and Jackson 2018).
- 7 I do not read her work on sexuation at the level of antimisogyny or even a feminist project (she does not call herself a feminist). Instead, Irigaray's work critiques at the ontological level, at life itself, and how humans perceive life through a mono-sexuation of difference. Reading her this way is not a feminist analysis of gender, but an unsettling of gender, a deconstruction of the fluid genres out of which gender becomes solidified (Irigaray 1993b), and the necessary conditions of reality that must be speculatively supposed in order to herald such a reckoning of diverse fecundity and jouissance.
- 8 The interpretation of a child returning to their mother's womb as a false nostalgia is the vantage point of one who is not colonized. The point of entanglement as the experience of children taken forcefully from their mothers underscores the ongoing legacy of forced separation between BIPOC children and mothers.
- 9 She notes that wives and mothers, under Freudian analysis, were often diagnosed with frigidity—the freezing of the water turned to ice reflecting the image of the Father, thus flattening the woman into a mirror to reflect the male speaking subject of Lacan's framework.
- 10 I use the terms *Diversity* and *Whole-World* in the sense that Glissant uses them in his later work.
- 11 The translator notes Glissant's choice of the word *sabir* to denote the multiplicities of French morphed from the notion of a singular lingua franca. *Sabir* is a language mix of Arab, French, Italian, and Spanish elements used in the Levant and Mediterranean basin, implying that composite systems such as these represent the scattered seeds of French where creolization infuses the hybridity.
- 12 Zakin 2011 explains how "being-two" in Irigaray's work is characterized by an "incessant oscillation between the essentialism of a rigid identity and the laissez-faire contingency, independent of any determining essence."
- 13 Stone 2006 takes on the charge of essentialism and uses the phenomena of rhythm and fluidic circulation to posit a metaphysics of realism whereby temporal movement informs and constitutes nature as an unfixated force.
- 14 I argue that constitutive of Irigaray's work is an incalculability of movement, direction, and telos.
- 15 The feminist implications of the notion of weave are greater than the capacity of this article to develop fully. Still, I gesture toward the sociopolitical correlations that weaves signal, which include Black hair, braiding, indigenous weaves of baskets and art, and the woven seeds enslaved women hid in their hair as the last ecological remnants of their natal lands.
- 16 I am grateful to M. D. Murtagh's work introducing me to the concept of the gravitational matrix as analogous to Irigaray's conception of an extendable matrix in *Ethics of Sexual Difference* (Murtagh 2019).
- 17 "Creole word originally to designate the white planters but not also any of their (white) descendants in Martinique" (Wing 1997, xxi).

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