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THE REJECTION OF PATRIARCHY AND COLONIALISM IN JAMAICA KINCAID'S ANNIE JOHN AND LUCY

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ABSTRACT

The relationship between mother and daughter is at the center of Jamaica Kincaid's literary production. The Antiguan author, who is a naturalized American, portrays a mother figure seeking to instill the values of the metropolis in an eponymous character who wishes to let go of parental authority, particularly in Annie John (1983) and Lucy (1990). In these two novels, the protagonists stand out for their refusal to accept the principles of patriarchy and colonialism most often conveyed by the mother. This project draws on Black feminism as advocated by scholars such as bell hooks, as well as postcolonialism, to show that women of African descent face many barriers stemming from sexism, racism, and discrimination based on social rank. It is structured around two parts. The first deals with the conflict between mother and daughter, which refers to the relationship between the metropolis and the colonized country in Annie, John and Lucy. The second analyzes the heroine's revolt against the rules laid down by the (white) man in the two chosen works. Jamaica Kincaid thus depicts a complex relationship, marked by affection and rejection, whose main point of contention remains the omnipotence of patriarchal and colonial values in the space inhabited by a Caribbean woman wishing to forge an identity free of any external constraints.

Keywords: Patriarchy, Colonialism, Bell Hooks, Jamaica Kincaid, Annie John, Lucy, Mother-daughter Relationship.

1. INTRODUCTION

The attack on patriarchy and colonialism is at the heart of Jamaica Kincaid's (1949-) novel. The Antiguan author, who became a naturalized American, makes it the keystone of the plot in a large part of her rich literary production. It materializes above all through the relationship between the main character and his mother. Already, Kincaid's first collection of short stories, *At the Bottom of the River* (1983), remains an incursion into the psychic and dreamlike universe of a girl shaken by the maternal domination she wishes to get rid of. However, it is in *Annie John* (1985) and *Lucy* (1990) that the novelist castigates unequivocally the forms of pressure exerted by patriarchy and colonialism on her eponymous heroines. The two works are considered by several critics to be two sides of the same story, a position that the author refutes in an interview with Allan Vorda (70). *Annie John* and *Lucy* are a continuation only because they relate events related to Kincaid's life. Thus they are imbued with a strong autobiographical content even if they are more in the tradition of the Bildungsroman, according to Louis Caton in his article, “Romantic Struggles: The Bildungsroman and Mother-Daughter Bonding in Jamaica Kincaid’s *Annie John*(125). Like Jamaica Kincaid, Annie and Lucy are Antiguans. They stand out for their desire to free

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themselves from maternal influence in a land where, according to Irline François in "The Daffodil Gap: Jamaica Kincaid's *Lucy*", the mother symbolizes the values and structures of the metropolis as well as the feminine mores embodied by the Victorian cult of femininity (80). The maternal figure seeks to tame her daughter, to instill in her attributes that are not conducive to her development, to the point of triggering the wrath of the main character who does not intend to remain under the yoke of multifaceted oppression.

The centrality of the mother-daughter relationship, dominated by the tendencies of an oppressive discourse in the work of the Antiguan novelist, justifies the choice of the following subject: the rejection of patriarchy and colonialism in the *Annie John* and *Lucy* by Jamaica Kincaid. It is a project that, basically, studies the points of discordance between the eponymous protagonist and the maternal authority and the refusal of the Caribbean woman to follow the diktat of the (white) man. This question has given rise to several criticisms. Giselle Rampaul likens it to a relationship between the colonized territory and the colonizing nation, in her article 'The West Indian Child as Subject/Object: Interrogating Notions of Power in'*Annie John*"'. The mother, she maintains, wants his child to be in tune with societal conventions and to persevere in school, an institution that extols the merits of the settler (157). Dans "Motherlands and Other Lands: Home and Exile in Jamaica Kincaid's *Lucy* and Paule Marshall's *Praisesong for the Widow*", Kattian Barnell evokes the subject and associates it with the problem of the native country and exile, linked, in turn, to that of alienation and marginalization (453). Gary Holcomb addresses it in his article, "Travels of a Transnational: Sexual Migration in Kincaid's *Lucy*". He sees in it a depreciation of the maternal portrait suggesting anything but a celebration of black women as a collective force (296). Meanwhile, in "Jamaica Kincaid's Writing and the Maternal-Colonial Matrix", Laura Niesen De Abruna likens it to a metaphor reflecting the alienation of the girl in the face of an insular culture completely dominated by the imperialist power of England (54). Colena Gardner-Corbett, in "Escaping the Colonizer's Whip: the Binary Discipline", also focuses on the main character's belligerent protest against the colonialist conformity developed through British colonization (175).

What the aforementioned works have in common is their emphasis on the interactions between the mother and the central character. This is why the present study is a contribution to the critical impetus aimed at identifying the different implications of the relationship between the maternal figure and her daughter in Kincaid's fiction. It stands out, however, by the exploitation of this conflict in *Annie John* and *Lucy*, through a comparative approach, and dwells on the mother's desire to tame her child and the young Caribbean woman's refusal to remain under the influence of very restrictive rules.

Why does the maternal authority want to inculcate in her daughter the customs in force in the native land? Which institutions defend the subjugation of the female character in *Annie, John, Annie* and *Lucy*? How does the eponymous heroine react to the factors contributing to her enslavement? Does she succeed in cutting the link between her and the woman who gave her life? These are all questions that will guide the current analysis. To answer this, the argument will draw on feminist literary criticism as defended by theorists such as bell hooks who, in *Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center*, defines the women's liberation movement as follows:

> Feminism is a struggle to end sexist oppression. Therefore, it is necessarily a struggle to eradicate the ideology of domination that permeates Western culture on many levels as well as a commitment to reorganizing society so that the self-development of people can take precedence over imperialism, economic expansion, and material desires (24).

For an effective struggle, feminism must be inclusive. We must fight against any discourse aimed at enslaving women. This type of feminism was born out of the dissatisfaction of African

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American women with the demands of their white counterparts who tend to focus only on sexism. It is for this reason that Alice Walker, as a leading figure in Womanism, campaigns for greater involvement of black women in feminist debates. His famous sentence, in his book, *In Search of our Mothers' Gardens: Womanist Prose*The "Womanist is to feminist as purple to lavender" (xii) is a call for the inclusion of all female voices. Myriam Chancy adds in *Searching for Safe Spaces: Afro-Caribbean Women Writers in Exile*, by affirming that this school of thought goes beyond the United States and is also concerned with other countries where members of the diaspora reside African (13). Resorting to such a philosophy will make it possible to demonstrate that the actions of the eponymous character against the mother are a way for her to eliminate all the obstacles that hinder her emancipation.

The mother-daughter relationship will also be read from the perspective of postcolonialism defined by Ato Quayson, in *Postcolonialism: Theory, Practice or Process?*, as follows:

> A possible working definition for postcolonialism is that it involves a studied engagement with the experience of colonialism and its past and present effects, both at the level of ex-colonial societies as well as at the level of more general global developments thought to be the after-effects of empire. Postcolonialism often also involves the discussions of various kinds, such as those of slavery, migration, suppression and resistance, difference, race, gender, place, and the responses to the discourses of imperial Europe such as history, philosophy, anthropology and linguistics […] (2).

Postcolonialism is interested in the past and present effects of imperialism, as a political enterprise, and those of the oppressive discourse that underlies it. It gives a central place to the oppression of human communities because of their race and/or cultural belonging. This dimension of postcolonialism is verified in Jamaica Kincaid, more precisely, through her portrayal of the heroine's interactions with her mother.

In the context of this study, the argument will be based on the hypothesis that, faced with the resolution of the maternal authority to indoctrinate her daughter, to make her a submissive woman, the two central characters of the novels *Annie John* and *Lucy*consummate the divorce from the native country to forge an identity free of any external pressure. Annie and Lucy reject the pressures caused by the (white) man and strive to no longer depend on others to exist.

The discussion that follows is based on two major axes. First, the conflictual relationship between the eponymous character and the mother figure will be studied. Second, the analysis will focus on the revolt of the main protagonist against the oppressive arsenal established by patriarchy and colonialism.

2. THE CONFLICTUAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE EPONYMOUS CHARACTER AND THE MOTHER FIGURE

In *Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center*, bell hooks develops an important aspect of her approach to feminism. The black theorist argues in this regard: "By repudiating the popular notion that the focus of feminist movement should be social equality of the sexes and emphasizing eradicating the cultural basis of group oppression, our own analysis would require an exploration of all aspects of women's political reality" (25). Hooks puts white feminism on trial, whose diagnosis does not include some of the fundamental causes of the victimization of black women. It is this formal defect that the African-American seeks to correct. Any theoretical attempt to denounce the ills of women must incorporate into its agenda a fierce fight against racism and the lack of resources due to discrimination based on social class.

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The opinion of hooks, above, is well understood by Jamaica Kincaid. In *Annie John* and *Lucy*, the novelist represents the interactions between the maternal character and the eponymous heroine to highlight the discourses and institutions that contribute to the enslavement of the Caribbean woman. Thus, the relationship between mother and daughter is marked by antagonisms. It is especially marked by the desire of the mother figure to raise her child according to the colonialist precepts in force in the Caribbean. The mother initiates, moreover, the divorce from the heroine of*Annie John*, when the eponymous character reached the age of puberty. Wanting to wear, as usual, the same cloth that gave her life, the self-diegetic narrator is rebuffed in these terms: "Oh, no. You are getting too old for that. It's time that you had your own clothes. You just cannot go around the rest of your life looking like a little me."' (Kincaid, 1985:26) The words of maternal authority and the brutality with which they are spoken are more than a surprise to the girl (Kincaid, 1985:26). This is the beginning of a separation that is again depicted in Kincaid's second novel, except that, as Laura Niesen de Abruna notes, it is, this time, enlivened by Miss Annie's eldest daughter, and finds expression in Lucy's refusal to open the letters sent by the mother (55).

However, from one novel to the next, the cause of the conflict between the two protagonists remains similar. In *Annie John*, she becomes more precise, when Gwen's friend is sent to tutors who are supposed to teach her better rules of life (Kincaid, 1985:27-8). Once informed of her insubordination, the mother's reaction is a trigger in relation to the next course of events (Kincaid, 1985:28). The stage is set and the confrontation between the two protagonists is inevitable, given that the young lady does not accept to be circumscribed by values that do not promote her well-being. Annie would have preferred not to distance herself from the maternal character, like Lucy who thinks she is identical to her Miss Annie (Kincaid, 1990:130). The mother, however, has another project in mind. She plans to train her daughter for her future married life by managing her own house. Annie John admits to being surprised by this change (Kincaid, 1985:28-9).

In the Caribbean, the education of the girl aims to make her a respected young lady in her community. The Antiguaise has her destiny already mapped out. She must become a housewife and excel in this function. Society does not leave him an alternative. This is far from pleasing the narrator of Kincaid's first novel, whose bitterness finds its most resounding echo in Lucy. Her parents' preference for her younger brothers disgusts Lucy (Kincaid, 1990:130). Miss Annie and her husband do not harbour any grandiose dreams for her. Peggy's friend is treated as an extra; it does not exist. It is up to male children to occupy the public sphere, to decide the fate of the community. The au pair is hurt by such a speech.

Jamaica Kincaid lays bare the flaws of patriarchy that grants more advantages to men. It could not be otherwise, if we are to refer to Paula Cooey's definition of the term, dans “Emptiness, Otherness, and Identity: A Feminist Perspective” :

> As the word *patriarchy* denotes, the fathers rule the system. Just as arche or “rule” assumes difference in rank; so *pater* or “father” presupposes sexual difference. The chief characteristic all ranks hold in common, irrespective of all other differences, is that within the designation of class, ethnicity, or creed a woman's status, power, and authority, indeed her identity as a woman, derive from affiliation with a man of the same rank according to whether he is her father or husband… (10).

Patriarchy privileges the man. The father is the head of the system for the simple reason that his sex differentiates him from the woman. This gives precedence over any other and gives it the right to legislate. The woman, on the other hand, has no merit of her own. Its value is defined in relation to its attachment to a man. It is relegated to the background, and its daily

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concerns reflect a division of labour established on the basis of gender separation. Her male partner, as a self-proclaimed master, has more rights than she does. He has primacy over everything and his judgment is set up as law. In this, patriarchy is an apology for phallocracy.

Examples where Jamaica Kincaid Attacks patriarchy are multiple. In *Annie John*, the author satirizes the mode of operation of a system that is based on social stratification based on sexism, through the story of the heroine and her playmate. By meeting Mineu, a young boy she used to play with as a child, Annie remembers her then-classmate's insistence on always playing a central role (Kincaid, 1985:96). Mineu's posture is ironic in many ways and remains a metaphor for the behavior of man in society. As always, the status of women is degraded, she is a spectator or even an element of pure scenery in a parody performed by two children. This provides information on an essential principle of patriarchy: it is a set of ideals cultivated in the individual from an early age. As a result, at the beginning of the second chapter, "*The Circling Hand*In the same book, Annie states that every morning her father bathes in cold water. The girl is not entitled to the same privilege, because of her gender (Kincaid, 1985:13).

The Caribbean woman is in a painful state. Because of a system hostile to equal opportunities, its only source is to be under the influence of a man who exploits it. Lucy explains the situation, referring to his parents (Kincaid, 1990:126) ; Their marriage is not an idyllic union. The narrator reports that her late father's conquests were so considerable that the patriarch did not know the total number of children he had with his mistresses (Kincaid, 1990:80). It is this exploitation of women that the heroine of Kincaid's novel deplores. Lucy and Annie share their hatred of patriarchy. Their relationship with the mother is affected. They blame her for sacrificing her own happiness for that of her husband (Kincaid, 1990:127).

The conflictual relationship between mother and daughter also appears at another level. Truly *Annie John* and *Lucy* are a critique of colonization. Kincaid acknowledges this dimension of his work in his interview with Allan Vorda. She announces that she has represented in her novels the relationship between Europe and the Caribbean : “I’ve come to see that I’ve worked through the relationship of the mother and the girl to a relationship between Europe and the place that I’m from, which is to say, a relationship between the powerful and the powerless” (55). The admission of the Antiguan has led many critics to read her novels from a postcolonial perspective. For example, Giselle Rampaul focuses on the interactions between mother and daughter in that they symbolize the link between the colonizing West and the Caribbean seeking to free itself. The heroine is under the tutelage of maternal authority. She benefits from an illusion of control over her actions, since she is defined by an adult perspective (156). She is a self-diegetic narrator, who has grown up, who retraces her childhood. On the other hand, his character can only be judged by understanding his relationship with the mother. The girl is not an independent entity in the novel and her insurrection precipitates her nervous breakdown (157). Exile does not allow him to claim an identity free of corruption, as Kincaid says in his conversation with Vorda (55). Rather, it confirms a striking fact in the story. The Mother Figure, Source of Culture, is at the centre of the plot and continues to influence his daughter (Rampaul 158).

In Jamaica Kincaid's work, a salient feature of the mother remains her fierce role in defending and propagating the opinions of the metropolis, since patriarchy replaces colonization within the family, as Gary Holcomb claims (300). This statement is corroborated by Irline François who emphasizes: “Given the fact Jamaica Kincaid grew up in a colonial context completely dominated by the metropolitan dictates inculcated by the mother, her own is viewed as an instrument of patriarchy, a phallic mother" (79). The critics' opinion testifies to the discord between mother and daughter. It perfectly illustrates the opposition between two ideological positions. That of the maternal protagonist is based on the submission of the woman

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for the benefit of society, and that of her child lies in the desire to forge values free of any male influence. Annie John, for example, wants to have a voice in a male world while her tutor expects her to be totally obedient (Kincaid, 1985:88).

This reading is shared by Keith Byerman, in "Anger in a Small Place: Jamaica Kincaid's Cultural Critique of Antigua", lorsqu'il déclare : "While the mother in fact encourages individuality only within cultural norms (it is accepted that Annie John would perform domestic tasks, for example), the daughter responds by seeing her mother as Other, as erstwhile friend who somehow has betrayed her" (97). In the mother's understanding, identity is conceived in the patriarchal cultural sphere, unlike the daughter who wishes to free herself from the dictatorship of man. The friend of yesteryear is, therefore, seen by Annie as a threat to her emancipation.

The aversion to maternal authority is further treated in *Lucy*. The conflict between the Antiguan and Miss Annie is the result of a difference of views. The mother, because she embodied the feminine ideal in a neocolonial environment, thought she had to decide on the future of the daughter, in order to facilitate her social integration. This pushes Lucy to harbor a certain resentment towards her. The heroine is angry with her mother for what she represents. Miss Annie is at the service of the metropolis, while Lucy hates colonization, especially its cultural impact on the Caribbean. Moreover, his relationship with his employer is affected by his repulsion of any form of oppression. She reacts violently when Mariah shows her, for the first time, a garden where daffodils grow. Because she was forced to memorize a long poem about these flowers during her childhood, she comes to associate them with the cultural degradation of which she and her sisters are victims.

Laura Niesen de Abruna confirme le symbolisme derrière les jonquilles de la sorte : "The flowers, which do not grow in the Caribbean, are symbolic of the many ways British culture had been forced on the young women in Antigua(58). These plants do not exist in the Caribbean represent Western cultural imperialism. This explains the virulent reaction of Mariah's employee, once, in front of them. The white boss falls into ecstasy, while Lucy feels bitter (Kincaid, 1990:30). There are two opposing perspectives. While for Mariah the landscape in question evokes the idea of exquisite beauty, Lucy's interpretation is at an advanced level. The panorama in front of the narrator illustrates the deceit of the colonial enterprise, a criminal system adorned with the most ostentatious effects in order to better exploit the subjugated peoples. The Caribbean woman is the polar opposite of her boss. It despises Western values and its fierce defenders, hence its declared position of revolt against patriarchy and colonialism.

3. THE HEROINE'S REVOLT AGAINST THE OPPRESSIVE ARSENAL ESTABLISHED BY PATRIARCHY AND COLONIALISM

The black theorist, bell hooks, believes that if feminism is to succeed in its fight against sexism, it must oppose the underlying factors that favor any coercive discourse. The African-American says:

> The foundation of future feminism struggle must be solidly based on a recognition of the need to eradicate the underlying cultural basis and causes of sexism and other forms of group oppression. Without challenging and changing these philosophical structures, no feminist reforms will have a long-range impact (31).

Hooks believes that feminism cannot continue to generalize women's concerns by focusing only on gender discrimination. Their racial background and social position are determining factors in the way they are treated by society and must be taken into account in the fight for the emancipation of all women.

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The questions raised by bell hooks are raised by Jammaica Kincaid in *Annie John* and *Lucy*. The refusal to conform to the established order, this desire to exist, first of all, by and for oneself, is an unavoidable problem in the novel of the Antiguan woman. This is the reason why the eponymous character of*Annie John* trampling on everything that has to do with societal rules. Annie goes against his mother's wishes. She plays marbles, and her union with her friend, Gwen, is interpreted in various ways. It is possible to see a homosexual inclination on the part of the two protagonists. Their cajoleries accompanied by shudders comfort the idea of a sexual attraction between the two young girls (Kincaid, 1985:50-1), even if Kincaid rejects such a reading, during his interview with Vorda (65).

However, there is in Annie's actions a manifest desire to always thwart her mother's project. His association with the character called "the Red Girl" (Kincaid, 1985:54) is further proof of this. The Red Girl leads a lifestyle that her friend would have liked to have: she only washes and changes her dress once a week and only so that her grandmother can see her. Her mother hardly forces her and, in this, she embodies an ideal so prized by the heroine (Kincaid, 1985:57-8). This is why Louis Cato, analysing this singular character, states: "This gritty, outcast Red Girl conflicts with almost everything that Annie's organic bond with her mother offered..." (131) Through the character called "the Red Girl", Kincaid turns all social differentiation based on sex upside down. Annie's friend climbs trees to perfection (Kincaid, 1985:56). She seduces the narrator with her imposing physique (Kincaid, 1985:57) and its masculine features, after Colena Gardner-Corbett (177). Nevertheless, Keith Byerman is right to say that Annie does not want to be like her (97), given that their companionship is short-lived. The Antiguan woman puts an end to their secret meetings (Kincaid, 1985:70), when her mother surprises her with a marble in her hand (Kincaid, 1985:70) and following the onset of his menstruation.

The heroine of*Annie John* hates any oppressive speech. His hatred of subjugation is felt throughout history. She doesn't want to be a nurse (Kincaid, 1985:130) nor is marier (Kincaid, 1985:136), two practices that will inhibit his skills. *Annie John* is then an attack on the fundamental principles of patriarchy. The work is part of the tradition of the Bildungsroman, a subgenre from Germany, whose paternity is attributed to Goethe and which stages a "confrontation of the hero with his environment", according to Jost, François, in « La tradition du Bildungsroman. » (99). However, we are talking here about a black heroine. Jamaica Kincaid proceeds to an appropriation and subversion of a literary subgenre traditionally attributed to man (Cato 133). In other words, while some commentators argue that female characters cannot acquire their identity through a literary quest, because of its patriarchal underpinning, (132) the novelist thinks the opposite. She used a model reserved for her male counterpart and successfully adapted it to the female cause.

The confrontation between the maternal authority and the central character is continual in *Annie John*. The mother reproaches the daughter for her behavior, which she considers frivolous. The term "" (Kincaid, 1985:102) that she uses to admonish Annie following her encounter with Mineu has quite a meaning, according to Holcomb (305). To ensure its survival, the patriarchal system forges labels against rebellious people, in this case certain categories of women, who risk being depreciated in their society, in case they decide not to follow the rules enacted, but Annie's reply is the mark of an individual who is not ready to give in: 'As if to save myself, I turned to her and said, "Well, like father like son, like mother like daughter."' (Kincaid, 1985:102) While Annie John verbally defies her mother, Lucy espouses the identity of the "slut", in order to escape the control of maternal authority. His exile in New York can be likened to a project to re-evaluate the myth of the traveling hero.

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In the story of L'Antiguaise, Paul Gauguin embodies the archetype of the metropolitan tourist in search of reinvention. Mariah's employee discovers the French artist thanks to her boss (Kincaid, 1990:95). She identifies with the French painter by the quasi-resemblance of their stories. Both of them, at some point, left their regions to meet a better destiny. In his interview with Allan VordaKincaid tells how this correlation between the main character and Gauguin came to him: "I hesitate to say that I identify with this man. I must say as I was writing parts of *Lucy* I was reading one of his journals called *The Intimate Journals of Paul Gauguin*. I found it a great comfort. He was very selfish and very determined (…)" (73). Lucy nevertheless notices a significant difference between herself and the artist (Kincaid, 1990:95). Because of his gender and its origins, the heroine does not enjoy the same privileges as Gauguin. As a result, she dismantles the model of the adventurous white artist, displaying, in turn, a sexuality that the system seeks to contain (Holcomb 300). At the age of fourteen, she begins to discover a sexuality that is still not understood, by frequenting Tanner (Kincaid1990:43) and another boy whose mother and his mother are in the same congregation (Kincaid, 1990:50).

In the United States, Lucy indulges in unbridled libertinism. She leads a very active sex life without any attachment to her lovers. What Rosamond King, in "Sex as Rebellion: A Close Reading of *Lucy* and *Brown Girl, Brownstones*", It is akin to a will to be for and by oneself (371), since love limits the Caribbean woman in her intention to remain autonomous. The daughter exists through her submission to a mother or through her companionship with a man. The heroine rejects both options. She uses sexuality as a weapon, multiplying lovers so that none of them exerts authority over her. Miss Annie's daughter is aware of the revolutionary dimension of sexuality. It is a way for her to attack the institutions that have deprived her, for a long time, of the exquisite pleasures that her body could feel. The narrator has no regrets and lets her mother know this in a letter, following the disappearance of her father (Kincaid, 1990:127). She is angry with Miss Annie who sacrificed her happiness for the benefit of the man's. Lucy chooses to be an immoral woman to question the validity of a societal organization aspiring to enslave a free member of the community, in addition to vehemently denouncing the injustice felt. Woman, she believes, should not bear the weight of humanity or cease to exist for the survival of the species.

In Kincaid's fiction, the eponymous character rebels against the two institutions that hinder his emancipation. Lucy and Annie revolt against patriarchy and colonialism. As an illustration, Annie John is at the head of a gang made up of seven of her friends who, every Friday night, instead of going home, meet at the level of a cemetery dating from colonization, to talk and indulge in games that are not very modest, some of them come and go on the tombs. The white cemetery becomes a space where young girls express their insurrection in the face of Western symbols, a place where activities, forbidden in school and society, are given free rein (Kincaid, 1985:50). By desecrating the sepulchers, the main character and his troop refuse to be subjugated. Their ease in the action perpetrated is synonymous with a strong determination in their rebellion. It is only when Miss Edward surprises her schoolgirls that the encounters end (Kincaid, 1985:80-1). Annie will again incur the wrath of her tutor by disfiguring the image of Christopher Columbus on his history book. She justifies her act by her dislike of the explorer (Kincaid, 1985:77).

The contestation of colonialism is also a theme in *Lucy*. The young heroine, then fourteen years old, refuses to sing the British patriotic anthem in front of a bewildered tutor (Kincaid, 1990:135-6). As time passed, his antipathy towards all enslavement became more and more intense. That's why, Lucy wants to mark his difference from Mariah, because of the binary divisions that govern societal functioning, according to Edyta Oczkowics, in 'Jamaica

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Kincaid's *Lucy*: Cultural "Translation" As a Case of Creative Exploration of the Past'. Oczkowics révèle :

> The binary divisions of center-margin, self-other, good-evil, white-black–the so-called "Manichean aesthetic" that Frederic Jameson sees as characteristic of post-colonial societies and their literatures–are particularly evident in Lucy's perceptions of her American present.[1] By the way these binaries traditionally define Lucy's ethnicity/ race, gender, and occupation/class, they also inscribe her into the American society as the marginalized "other" before she even reaches the country (144).

In North America, Lucy is perceived as an intruder. Even if she wanted to integrate into white society, there would be factors blocking her assimilation. She is a young black damselfish, native to the Caribbean and recruited by a white employer. While it is true that Mariah wishes to be closer to her (Kincaid, 1990:41) despite social cleavages, the protagonist does not accept any compromise in the face of patriarchy and colonialism.

4. CONCLUSION

In *Annie John* and *Lucy*The Jamaica Kincaid depicts the relationship between the maternal character and the eponymous heroine to castigate the oppression caused by patriarchy and colonialism towards the Caribbean. The conflictual relationship between the two protagonists can be explained by the mother's desire to transform her daughter into a submissive young lady and the Antiguan woman's rejection of any discourse that is not favourable to her emancipation. Annie and Lucy challenge maternal authority, presented as the henchman of a power erected by the (white) man in order to perpetuate the oppression of women. They consummate the divorce from their mother, choosing to revolt against the coercive rules in force in the Caribbean and the West. This means that, in both stories, the self-diegetic narrator opts to be an outcast in the eyes of her community, deciding to become freer in her choices. The author, Jamaica Kincaid, positions herself as a true defender of the women's cause. It lays bare the flaws of patriarchy and colonialism both thematically and formally, with the use of the Bildungsroman in *Annie John* and the deconstruction of the myth of the travelling hero in *Lucy*. The objective is to depict the struggle of the Antiguan woman who does not compromise in the face of adversity, despite the constraints of patriarchy and colonialism.

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