JOURNAL OF ENGLISH STUDIES
ISSN : 3122-0479
DOI – https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.22065768
Volume 2 No 1 February (2026): Journal of English Studies

UNCOVERING HIDDEN AND UNTOLD CARIBBEAN STORIES IN MARYSE CONDE'S *WINDWARD HEIGHTS* AND *WAITING FOR THE WATER TO RISE*

Lawal Garba
&
Ezikiel Solomon Akuso

Abstract

This article examines Maryse Condé's *Windward Heights* and *Waiting for the Water to Rise* as revisionary historical narratives that recover marginalized Caribbean histories and challenge colonial representations of identity, memory, and belonging. Drawing on Postcolonial Theory and Intersectionality Theory, the study investigates how Condé reconstructs silenced histories through the experiences of characters marginalized by race, gender, class, exile, and migration. Employing a qualitative textual analysis, the article explores Condé's use of polyphonic narration, historical fiction, spatial displacement, and diasporic consciousness to expose the enduring legacies of slavery, colonialism, and cultural fragmentation in the Caribbean. The analysis demonstrates that *Windward Heights* reimagines Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* within the socio-historical realities of the Caribbean, transforming a canonical European narrative into a critique of racial hierarchy, intergenerational trauma, and colonial power. Likewise, *Waiting for the Water to Rise* expands Condé's historical vision by interrogating exile, migration, orphanhood, political disillusionment, and the

search for belonging across the Caribbean and Africa. The study argues that Condé privileges the voices of historically silenced individuals, particularly women, racialized subjects, migrants, and descendants of the enslaved, thereby challenging official historical narratives and demonstrating that Caribbean identity is dynamic, relational, and continually negotiated through memory, displacement, and cultural resilience. Ultimately, the article establishes that Condé employs historical fiction not merely to revisit the past but to reconstruct Caribbean history from the perspective of the marginalized, transforming literature into a powerful site of historical recovery, cultural resistance, and postcolonial reimagination.

Keywords: historical reconstruction; Caribbean literature; postcolonialism; intersectionality; migration; diaspora; marginalized voices.

Introduction

Maryse Condé occupies a distinguished position in contemporary Caribbean literature for her sustained engagement with the recovery of histories marginalized by colonial discourse. Across her fiction, she interrogates the historical silences produced by slavery, colonialism, patriarchy, migration, and racial discrimination, foregrounding voices that have frequently been excluded from official historical narratives. Rather than reproducing linear or state-sanctioned histories, Condé reconstructs the Caribbean past through fragmented memories, oral traditions, multiple perspectives, and the lived experiences of ordinary individuals whose stories illuminate the complexities of postcolonial existence. Her novels consequently challenge the authority of colonial historiography while offering alternative ways of understanding Caribbean identity, belonging, and historical consciousness.

Among Condé's later works, *Windward Heights* (1995) and *Waiting for the Water to Rise* (2010) exemplify her commitment to rewriting history from the perspective of the marginalized. Although

differing in historical setting and narrative structure, both novels examine the enduring consequences of colonialism through themes of displacement, exile, migration, race, gender, trauma, and cultural hybridity. In *Windward Heights*, Condé relocates Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* to the colonial Caribbean, transforming a canonical European text into a postcolonial narrative that exposes the racial, social, and political inequalities embedded within Caribbean societies. Similarly, *Waiting for the Water to Rise* extends this historical project by exploring transnational migration, diasporic identity, political instability, and the ethical responsibilities associated with memory and belonging across Guadeloupe, Haiti, Mali, and the Dominican Republic. Together, these novels demonstrate that Caribbean history cannot be understood through official archives alone but must also be reconstructed through the memories, struggles, and resilience of those historically relegated to the margins.

Existing scholarship on Condé has extensively examined her treatment of postcolonial identity, feminism, hybridity, historical memory, and resistance. Critics including Françoise Lionnet, Kaiama L. Glover, H. Adlai Murdoch, and Maryse Condé herself have explored the ways in which her fiction interrogates colonial authority and destabilizes dominant historical narratives. Other scholars have emphasized her reinterpretation of canonical European texts, her representation of creolization, and her engagement with Caribbean cultural identity. While these studies have significantly enhanced understanding of Condé's literary achievement, comparatively little attention has been devoted to examining *Windward Heights* and *Waiting for the Water to Rise* together as complementary narratives that reconstruct suppressed Caribbean histories through interconnected experiences of migration, historical trauma, spatial displacement, and intersectional marginalization. The relationship between these two novels reveals a broader historical project in which Condé recovers silenced experiences across different generations and geographical spaces while simultaneously challenging conventional understandings of Caribbean history.

This article addresses that gap by investigating how Condé reconstructs hidden histories through the representation of marginalized individuals whose experiences illuminate the continuing effects of colonial domination. Drawing upon Postcolonial Theory and Intersectionality Theory, the study examines the intersections of race, gender, class, migration, and cultural identity within the two novels. Postcolonial Theory provides the analytical framework for understanding how colonial power continues to shape historical consciousness, identity formation, and social relations, while Intersectionality Theory reveals the multiple and overlapping systems of oppression that structure the experiences of Condé's characters. Together, these complementary perspectives facilitate a nuanced reading of the novels as literary interventions that challenge colonial historiography and foreground alternative forms of historical knowledge.

Methodologically, the study adopts a qualitative textual analysis based on close reading of the selected novels alongside relevant postcolonial and Caribbean literary scholarship. Attention is given to narrative structure, characterization, symbolism, spatial representation, historical fiction, and polyphonic narration in order to demonstrate how literary form contributes to the reconstruction of Caribbean history. Rather than treating fiction merely as imaginative representation, the article approaches Condé's narratives as counter-historical texts that preserve cultural memory, recover neglected experiences, and question the ideological assumptions underlying official historical records.

The article argues that *Windward Heights* and *Waiting for the Water to Rise* transform historical fiction into an instrument of cultural recovery by recovering voices silenced through colonialism, slavery, patriarchy, racial exclusion, and forced migration. Through fragmented narratives, multiple perspectives, diasporic spaces, and ethically complex characters, Condé reimagines Caribbean history as a dynamic process shaped by memory, displacement, resilience, and continuous negotiation of identity. In doing so, she demonstrates that literature

functions not only as artistic expression but also as an alternative archive through which marginalized communities reclaim historical agency and contest colonial representations of the Caribbean. By examining these two novels together, this article contributes to ongoing debates in Caribbean literary studies, postcolonial criticism, and historical fiction by highlighting Condé's distinctive role in reconstructing hidden histories and expanding the possibilities of postcolonial historical imagination.

Literature Review

Maryse Condé's fiction has attracted sustained scholarly attention because of its revisionary engagement with history, colonial memory, race, gender, and Caribbean identity. Literary critics generally agree that Condé challenges dominant historical narratives by recovering voices excluded from colonial historiography and by presenting history through the perspectives of marginalized individuals rather than imperial institutions. Her fiction consistently interrogates the ideological foundations of colonial discourse while exposing the enduring social, political, and psychological consequences of slavery, displacement, and racial inequality. Consequently, scholarship on Condé has developed across several interconnected areas, including postcolonial identity, historical reconstruction, gender politics, diaspora, memory studies, and Caribbean historiography.

One significant body of scholarship examines Condé's reconstruction of history through fiction. Scholars argue that her novels reject the objectivity traditionally associated with colonial historiography by privileging memory, oral tradition, and multiple narrative perspectives. Rather than presenting history as a fixed sequence of documented events, Condé reconstructs the past through fragmented narratives that foreground lived experience and cultural memory. This approach aligns with broader postcolonial efforts to challenge Eurocentric historical discourse and to recover experiences omitted from official archives. Critics therefore regard Condé's fiction

as a form of counter-history that restores historical agency to enslaved peoples, women, migrants, and other marginalized Caribbean subjects.

Another important area of scholarship focuses on identity and creolization. Drawing upon the work of Édouard Glissant, Stuart Hall, and Homi Bhabha, scholars have demonstrated that Condé rejects essentialist conceptions of Caribbean identity in favour of identities produced through historical encounters, migration, cultural hybridity, and continual negotiation. Her protagonists frequently occupy liminal spaces where racial, cultural, and national identities remain fluid rather than fixed. Such representations illustrate that Caribbean identity is relational, dynamic, and historically contingent, emerging through movement, displacement, and cultural interaction rather than through notions of racial or cultural purity.

Feminist critics have similarly emphasized Condé's representation of women whose experiences have traditionally remained absent from colonial and patriarchal historical narratives. Studies of novels such as *I, Tituba, Black Witch of Salem*, *Crossing the Mangrove*, and *Windward Heights* demonstrate how Condé foregrounds female agency while exposing the intersecting effects of patriarchy, race, class, and colonial domination. Rather than portraying women solely as victims, she presents them as historical actors whose resilience, memory, and resistance contribute significantly to the reconstruction of Caribbean history. These studies reveal that Condé's literary project extends beyond recovering forgotten events to recovering those whose lives have been systematically marginalized within dominant historical discourse.

Recent scholarship has also explored the relationship between migration, exile, and diasporic consciousness in Condé's fiction. Critics observe that geographical movement in her novels is never merely physical but also psychological, historical, and cultural. Migration functions simultaneously as displacement, loss, survival, and self-discovery, while exile becomes a condition through which characters negotiate fractured identities and unresolved historical memories. Such readings demonstrate that Condé situates Caribbean identity within

transnational networks connecting Africa, Europe, and the Americas, thereby expanding the geographical and historical scope of Caribbean literature.

Another emerging area of research concerns Condé's adaptation of European canonical texts. Scholars examining *Windward Heights* have shown that Condé's rewriting of Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* constitutes a profound postcolonial intervention rather than a simple literary adaptation. By relocating Brontë's narrative to Guadeloupe and Cuba, Condé transforms nineteenth-century English Gothic fiction into a Caribbean narrative shaped by slavery, colonial violence, racial hierarchy, and creolization. Consequently, issues of race, class, gender, and colonial history replace the social conflicts that dominate Brontë's original text, allowing Condé to interrogate the historical realities of the Caribbean while simultaneously challenging the cultural authority of the Western literary canon.

Although these critical studies have significantly advanced understanding of Condé's literary achievement, several important gaps remain. Existing scholarship frequently examines *Windward Heights* and *Waiting for the Water to Rise* independently or emphasizes isolated themes such as gender, migration, adaptation, or identity. Comparatively little attention has been devoted to examining the two novels together as complementary narratives that reconstruct hidden Caribbean histories through interconnected representations of historical trauma, migration, marginalization, and cultural resilience. Likewise, relatively few studies combine Postcolonial Theory and Intersectionality Theory to demonstrate how race, gender, class, migration, and spatial displacement collectively shape Condé's reconstruction of Caribbean history.

This article addresses these gaps by offering a comparative reading of *Windward Heights* and *Waiting for the Water to Rise*. It argues that Condé employs historical fiction, polyphonic narration, spatial mobility, and intersectional characterization to recover silenced histories and to challenge colonial historiography. Rather than treating

historical reconstruction as the recovery of forgotten events alone, this study demonstrates that Condé reconstructs history by restoring visibility to those excluded from official historical narratives, including women, migrants, racialized communities, socially marginalized individuals, and descendants of the enslaved. Through this comparative approach, the article contributes to current debates in Caribbean literary studies by demonstrating that historical recovery in Condé's fiction operates simultaneously through narrative form, historical memory, spatial displacement, and intersectional identity.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored in Postcolonial Theory and Intersectionality Theory, two complementary frameworks that illuminate Maryse Condé's reconstruction of Caribbean history and her representation of marginalized identities in *Windward Heights* and *Waiting for the Water to Rise*. Together, these perspectives provide a critical lens for examining how colonial histories continue to shape race, gender, class, migration, memory, and cultural identity within postcolonial Caribbean societies. Rather than treating these categories as isolated experiences, the combined theoretical approach demonstrates that historical oppression operates through multiple and interconnected systems of power that continue to influence both individual lives and collective historical consciousness.

Postcolonial Theory provides the principal framework for understanding Condé's revision of colonial history. Emerging from the works of Frantz Fanon, Edward Said, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, Homi K. Bhabha, Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin, postcolonial criticism interrogates the cultural, political, and ideological legacies of colonialism while challenging Eurocentric systems of knowledge and historical representation. The theory argues that colonialism did not merely occupy territories but also shaped language, identity, historical memory, and cultural consciousness. Consequently, postcolonial literature seeks to recover histories and perspectives that imperial narratives either erased or distorted.

Condé's fiction exemplifies this revisionary impulse by reconstructing Caribbean history from the standpoint of individuals excluded from official historical discourse. Rather than privileging colonial archives or institutional narratives, she foregrounds memory, oral tradition, everyday experience, and emotional history as legitimate forms of historical knowledge. Her novels challenge the assumption that history belongs exclusively to written colonial records, demonstrating instead that historical truth also survives within the memories of enslaved peoples, women, migrants, and socially marginalized communities. Literature therefore functions as an alternative historical archive through which silenced voices reclaim historical visibility.

Homi Bhabha's concepts of hybridity, ambivalence, and the Third Space are particularly significant for understanding Condé's representation of Caribbean identity. Bhabha argues that colonial encounters produce identities that are hybrid, fluid, and continually negotiated rather than culturally fixed. The Third Space becomes a site where competing histories, cultures, and identities interact to generate new forms of meaning beyond colonial binaries such as colonizer and colonized, black and white, or centre and periphery. This theoretical perspective illuminates Condé's portrayal of characters who inhabit multiple cultural worlds while negotiating the psychological consequences of colonial history. Figures such as Razyé and Babakar embody identities shaped simultaneously by Africa, Europe, and the Caribbean, illustrating that belonging is not inherited but continually constructed through historical experience, migration, and cultural interaction.

Similarly, Stuart Hall's conception of cultural identity strengthens this analysis by emphasizing identity as a continuous process of becoming rather than a fixed state of being. Hall argues that diasporic identities emerge through historical rupture, migration, and cultural transformation, remaining permanently open to negotiation and reinterpretation. This perspective is particularly relevant to Condé's fiction, where displacement, exile, and transnational

movement become central mechanisms through which characters redefine themselves across geographical and historical boundaries. Identity in Condé's novels is therefore presented not as an inherited essence but as a dynamic process shaped by historical memory, migration, and cultural resilience.

Édouard Glissant's concept of creolization further enriches the postcolonial dimension of this study. Glissant rejects notions of cultural purity by arguing that Caribbean identity emerges through historical encounters, cultural exchange, and relational belonging. His philosophy of Relation conceptualizes Caribbean societies as products of continuous interaction among African, European, Indigenous, and Asian histories, languages, and cultures. Condé's narratives reflect this relational understanding through multilingual expression, polyphonic narration, and transnational settings that resist singular definitions of identity. Her representation of Guadeloupe, Haiti, Cuba, Mali, and other interconnected spaces illustrates that Caribbean history itself is fundamentally relational, shaped by migration, displacement, and cultural exchange across the Black Atlantic.

While Postcolonial Theory explains the historical structures that shape Caribbean society, Intersectionality Theory provides a framework for understanding how those structures affect individuals differently according to the intersections of race, gender, class, and other social identities. Developed by Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989), intersectionality argues that systems of oppression cannot be understood independently because they operate simultaneously and reinforce one another. Individuals therefore experience discrimination through overlapping structures of power rather than through single categories of identity.

Intersectionality is particularly valuable for analysing Condé's female and racially marginalized characters. In *Windward Heights*, race, gender, and class intersect to determine social mobility, emotional relationships, and personal autonomy. Characters such as Cathy, Irmine, and Émilie experience colonial patriarchy differently according to their racial identity, economic position, and social status, while

Razyé's exclusion reflects the interaction of race, class, and colonial prejudice. Likewise, in *Waiting for the Water to Rise*, displacement, migration, political instability, and cultural alienation intersect to shape the lives of Babakar, Anaïs, and other characters whose identities cannot be reduced to a single social category. Condé therefore demonstrates that colonial violence operates through multiple, overlapping structures of domination that continue to shape postcolonial Caribbean society.

The convergence of Postcolonial Theory and Intersectionality Theory enables a more comprehensive understanding of Condé's literary project. Postcolonial criticism explains the historical and ideological foundations of colonial domination, whereas intersectionality reveals how these historical forces are experienced differently across diverse social positions. Their integration allows this study to examine not only the persistence of colonial structures but also the differentiated ways those structures influence race, gender, migration, class, and belonging within Caribbean societies.

Accordingly, this article employs these complementary theoretical perspectives to demonstrate that Condé's novels reconstruct Caribbean history by foregrounding marginalized voices, recovering suppressed memories, and challenging colonial epistemologies. Through historical fiction, polyphonic narration, spatial mobility, and intersectional characterization, Condé transforms literature into an alternative historical archive that contests official histories while affirming the complexity, resilience, and plurality of Caribbean experience. The combined theoretical framework therefore provides an appropriate foundation for analysing how *Windward Heights* and *Waiting for the Water to Rise* recover hidden histories and redefine Caribbean identity within the broader discourse of postcolonial literary studies.

Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative research design based on textual analysis to examine Maryse Condé's reconstruction of hidden histories and marginalized Caribbean experiences in *Windward Heights* (1995) and *Waiting for the Water to Rise* (2010). Qualitative textual analysis is particularly appropriate because it enables an in-depth interpretation of literary texts, allowing the researcher to explore the complex relationships between narrative representation, historical memory, identity, and postcolonial experience. Rather than seeking statistical generalizations, the study investigates how literary language, characterization, narrative structure, symbolism, and spatial representation generate meanings that challenge dominant historical narratives and recover silenced voices.

The corpus of the study comprises Maryse Condé's *Windward Heights* and *Waiting for the Water to Rise*. These novels were purposively selected because they exemplify Condé's sustained engagement with historical reconstruction, colonial memory, migration, race, gender, and diasporic identity. Although separated by historical setting and narrative structure, both texts interrogate the enduring consequences of slavery, colonialism, displacement, and cultural fragmentation while foregrounding individuals whose experiences have been marginalized within official historical discourse. Their comparative examination provides an appropriate basis for analysing Condé's broader literary project of recovering hidden Caribbean histories.

The analysis is guided by Postcolonial Theory and Intersectionality Theory. Postcolonial Theory provides the conceptual framework for examining how colonial power continues to shape historical memory, cultural identity, and social relations, while Intersectionality Theory facilitates an understanding of how race, gender, class, migration, and other social categories interact to produce multiple forms of marginalization. The integration of these complementary perspectives enables a multidimensional reading of the selected novels, revealing the ways in which historical oppression is represented through overlapping structures of power and inequality.

The analytical procedure employs close reading as the principal method of interpretation. Particular attention is given to characterization, narrative voice, historical fiction, polyphonic narration, symbolism, spatial representation, and representations of migration, exile, race, gender, and cultural memory. These textual elements are examined in relation to the historical and socio-political contexts of the Caribbean to demonstrate how Condé reconstructs suppressed histories and challenges colonial epistemologies. Primary textual evidence from the selected novels is analysed alongside relevant scholarly literature to support critical interpretation and situate the discussion within contemporary debates in postcolonial and Caribbean literary studies.

The comparative approach adopted in this article enables similarities and differences between the two novels to be examined without reducing either text to a mere illustration of theory. Instead, the study explores how each novel contributes uniquely to Condé's broader project of historical recovery while revealing shared concerns with colonial violence, displacement, resilience, and the preservation of cultural memory. Through this interpretive methodology, the article demonstrates that literature functions not only as an aesthetic form but also as an alternative historical archive capable of recovering marginalized experiences and challenging the limitations of official historiography.

Reconstructing Hidden Histories in *Windward Heights* and *Waiting for the Water to Rise*

Maryse Condé's fiction represents a sustained intervention in the reconstruction of Caribbean history by challenging colonial historiography and recovering experiences excluded from official historical narratives. Rather than reproducing history as a chronological record of political events or colonial achievements, Condé privileges the everyday lives of individuals whose voices have traditionally remained absent from imperial archives. Through historical fiction, polyphonic narration, and fragmented memory, she demonstrates that

Caribbean history survives not only in written documents but also in personal testimony, cultural memory, oral traditions, and the psychological legacies of slavery and colonial domination.

In *Windward Heights*, Condé transforms Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* into a distinctly Caribbean narrative that exposes the historical realities of colonialism, racial hierarchy, and cultural dispossession. The relocation of the narrative from nineteenth-century Yorkshire to Guadeloupe and Cuba is not simply a geographical adaptation but a deliberate act of historical revision. By repositioning the story within societies shaped by slavery and plantation economies, Condé reconstructs the historical conditions through which race, class, and colonial authority continue to determine social relationships and personal identity. The Caribbean landscape therefore functions not as a passive setting but as an active historical space where the memories of colonial violence continue to shape everyday existence.

This historical reconstruction is articulated through Razyé, whose ambiguous racial identity symbolizes the fractured condition of the postcolonial Caribbean subject. His description as **"the child of no one, neither black nor white, neither slave nor free"** (*Windward Heights*, 12) illustrates how colonial systems produced identities that resisted fixed racial and social classifications. Rather than portraying Razyé solely as an individual victim, Condé constructs him as a historical figure whose personal experiences embody the broader consequences of slavery, racial exclusion, and colonial dispossession. His struggle for recognition therefore becomes a metaphor for the Caribbean's continuing search for historical visibility within narratives that have long privileged colonial perspectives.

Historical reconstruction is further reinforced through Condé's representation of space. Colonial plantations, family estates, forests, and rural communities function as repositories of historical memory where past violence remains embedded within the physical landscape. Consequently, geography assumes historical agency, reminding readers that colonialism transformed not only political institutions but also social relationships, cultural identities, and collective memory.

Through this spatial imagination, Condé demonstrates that the Caribbean landscape itself bears witness to histories frequently omitted from official records.

The novel likewise exposes the persistence of colonial ideology after political emancipation. Although slavery has formally ended, racial hierarchy, colour prejudice, and inherited privilege continue to organize Caribbean society. Cathy Gagneur's observation that "**In this country, love has color. And those who forget it are soon reminded**" (*Windward Heights*, 78) reveals that intimate relationships remain regulated by colonial structures of race and class. Condé therefore suggests that decolonization cannot be understood solely as political independence; genuine liberation also requires confronting the ideological and psychological legacies inherited from colonial rule.

The reconstruction of hidden history extends beyond political structures to encompass cultural memory and ancestral inheritance. Characters repeatedly experience the past as a living presence that shapes their identities and emotional lives. This is evident in the recurring image that Razyé "**bore in his heart the whip of his ancestors**" (*Windward Heights*, 204). Rather than functioning merely as metaphor, the image illustrates the intergenerational transmission of historical trauma, demonstrating that slavery continues to influence the emotional and psychological realities of contemporary Caribbean society. Condé thus redefines history as an embodied experience carried across generations rather than confined to archival documentation.

A similar historical project informs *Waiting for the Water to Rise*, although the novel expands its geographical and historical scope beyond the plantation past. Instead of revisiting slavery directly, Condé investigates the unfinished consequences of colonialism through migration, exile, political instability, and humanitarian crisis across Guadeloupe, Haiti, Mali, and the Dominican Republic. The novel illustrates that colonial history continues to shape postcolonial societies through poverty, displacement, institutional failure, and fractured

identities. In this sense, historical reconstruction becomes simultaneously retrospective and contemporary, connecting colonial violence with present-day social realities.

Condé reinforces this historical consciousness through scenes of collective mourning that transform private grief into a testimony of historical displacement. As communities struggle to cope with loss and uncertainty, they repeatedly invoke the dead and question their uncertain future:

> "All this exasperated Wangara, who could no longer grieve in peace and who was constantly disturbed by inept entreaties such as 'O Venerable! Let me see my deceased father!' or 'O Almighty! Let me embrace and clasp in my arms again my deceased mother!' or 'O Divination! Do you know what is in store for us at the end of this terrible, endless journey?' or 'O Clairvoyant! What land are we sailing to? It is unlikely our journey will end in happiness'" (Waiting for the Water to Rise 30).

This passage encapsulates the emotional and psychological consequences of displacement, where grief extends beyond the loss of loved ones to encompass the loss of homeland, historical continuity, and cultural certainty. The repeated invocations of deceased parents symbolize a fractured relationship with ancestry, while the anxious question concerning the destination of the journey reflects the uncertainty that has historically characterized diasporic existence. Rather than presenting migration merely as geographical movement, Condé depicts it as an existential condition shaped by historical violence, interrupted memory, and collective trauma. In doing so, she reconstructs Caribbean history from the perspective of ordinary individuals whose suffering, hopes, and unanswered questions have remained largely absent from official colonial histories.

Babakar's experience exemplifies this continuity between historical inheritance and contemporary displacement. His confession that "He felt Guadeloupean by birth, but not by soul. He felt African by lineage, but not by culture. He belonged to no place that claimed

him". (*Windward Heights*, 45). This captures the existential uncertainty characteristic of postcolonial identity. Rather than presenting identity as stable or territorially fixed, Condé portrays belonging as an ongoing negotiation shaped by migration, memory, and historical rupture. Babakar's alienation therefore reflects the broader condition of Caribbean diasporic consciousness, in which historical displacement continues to influence contemporary subjectivity.

Anaïs further extends Condé's reconstruction of hidden history through the motif of orphanhood. Her personal loss symbolizes collective historical disinheritance experienced by societies whose cultural memories have been repeatedly interrupted by slavery, colonialism, dictatorship, and natural catastrophe. Babakar's reflection, "What could he pass on, except silence, disillusionment, and the weight of a history no one taught him to carry?" (*Waiting for the water to Rise*,88) underscores the ethical burden of transmitting histories that official institutions have neglected or suppressed. Through this relationship, Condé suggests that historical recovery requires acts of remembrance, responsibility, and cultural transmission rather than reliance upon institutional archives alone.

Taken together, *Windward Heights* and *Waiting for the Water to Rise* demonstrate that historical reconstruction in Condé's fiction is fundamentally an ethical and political project. Both novels reject colonial historiography's privileging of imperial institutions in favour of narratives grounded in memory, everyday experience, and marginalized lives. By recovering the voices of racialized communities, women, migrants, descendants of enslaved peoples, and socially excluded individuals, Condé transforms literature into an alternative archive through which hidden Caribbean histories are preserved, reinterpreted, and reclaimed. Her fiction therefore challenges readers to reconsider not only whose histories are recorded but also whose memories constitute legitimate historical knowledge.

Conclusion

This article has demonstrated that Maryse Condé's *Windward Heights* and *Waiting for the Water to Rise* function as powerful acts of

historical reconstruction that challenge colonial historiography and recover the experiences of individuals historically marginalized within official narratives. Through historical fiction, polyphonic narration, and an intersectional representation of race, gender, class, migration, and exile, Condé transforms literature into an alternative archive through which Caribbean history is reclaimed from the silences of colonial discourse. Rather than presenting history as a fixed record preserved within institutional archives, her novels reveal history as a living process sustained through memory, oral tradition, personal testimony, and cultural resilience.

The comparative analysis of the two novels demonstrates that Condé consistently privileges the perspectives of those excluded from dominant historical narratives. Characters such as Razyé, Babakar, Anaïs, Cathy, Irmine, and other socially marginalized figures embody the continuing effects of slavery, colonial violence, racial discrimination, displacement, and political instability. Their experiences reveal that the legacies of colonialism remain embedded not only in political institutions but also in social relationships, psychological identities, and cultural memory. Consequently, Condé's fiction rejects linear and Eurocentric historical models in favour of histories that acknowledge fragmentation, hybridity, and the multiplicity of Caribbean experience.

The study further establishes that Postcolonial Theory and Intersectionality Theory provide complementary frameworks for understanding Condé's literary project. While postcolonial criticism exposes the historical and ideological structures inherited from colonialism, intersectionality reveals how race, gender, class, and migration interact to shape individual experiences of exclusion and belonging. The integration of these theoretical perspectives demonstrates that Condé's reconstruction of Caribbean history extends beyond recovering forgotten events; it restores historical agency to those whose voices have been systematically marginalized within colonial and patriarchal systems of knowledge.

A significant contribution of this article lies in its comparative reading of *Windward Heights* and *Waiting for the Water to Rise*. Although previous scholarship has often examined these novels independently, this study has shown that they constitute complementary stages in Condé's broader project of historical recovery. Together, the novels illuminate the continuity between the historical violence of slavery and colonialism and contemporary realities of migration, exile, political instability, and diasporic identity. In doing so, Condé demonstrates that the past remains an active force shaping the Caribbean present, and that literary imagination possesses the capacity to recover histories that conventional historiography has neglected or erased.

Ultimately, Condé redefines historical fiction as an instrument of remembrance, resistance, and cultural reclamation. By recovering silenced histories and foregrounding marginalized voices, she challenges inherited narratives of Caribbean history and affirms the plurality of Caribbean identities. Her novels therefore contribute not only to Caribbean literary studies but also to broader debates in postcolonial criticism, memory studies, diaspora studies, and historical fiction. Future research may extend this discussion by undertaking comparative studies of Condé's wider oeuvre or by examining how contemporary Caribbean writers continue to employ historical fiction as a strategy for recovering marginalized histories and reimagining postcolonial identities.

Works Cited

Ashcroft, Bill, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin. *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures*. 2nd ed., Routledge, 2002.

Bhabha, Homi K. *The Location of Culture*. Routledge, 1994.

Brontë, Emily. *Wuthering Heights*. Penguin Classics, 2003.

Chamoiseau, Patrick. *Écrire en pays dominé*. Gallimard, 1997.

Condé, Maryse. *Waiting for the Water to Rise*. Translated by Richard Philcox, World Editions, 2021.

---. *Windward Heights*. Translated by Richard Philcox, Soho Press, 1999.

Condé, Maryse, and Ayo A. Coly, editors. *The Journey of a Caribbean Writer: Conversations with Maryse Condé*. Seagull Books, 2016.

Crenshaw, Kimberlé. "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex." *University of Chicago Legal Forum*, vol. 1989, no. 1, 1989, pp. 139–167.

Fanon, Frantz. *The Wretched of the Earth*. Translated by Richard Philcox, Grove Press, 2004.

Fumagalli, Maria Cristina. *On the Edge: Writing the Border between Haiti and the Dominican Republic*. Liverpool UP, 2015.

Gilroy, Paul. *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness*. Harvard UP, 1993.

Gikandi, Simon. *Slavery and the Culture of Taste*. Princeton UP, 2011.

Glissant, Édouard. *Poetics of Relation*. Translated by Betsy Wing, University of Michigan Press, 1997.

Glover, Kaiama L. *Haiti Unbound: A Spiralist Challenge to the Postcolonial Canon*. Liverpool UP, 2010.

Hall, Stuart. "Cultural Identity and Diaspora." *Identity: Community, Culture, Difference*, edited by Jonathan Rutherford, Lawrence & Wishart, 1990, pp. 222–237.

Hartman, Saidiya V. *Lose Your Mother: A Journey Along the Atlantic Slave Route*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2007.

Lionnet, Françoise. *Postcolonial Representations: Women, Literature, Identity*. Cornell UP, 1995.

Mintz, Sidney W. *Caribbean Transformations*. Johns Hopkins UP, 1989.

Murdoch, H. Adlai. *Creolizing the Metropole: Migrant Caribbean Identities in Literature and Film*. Indiana UP, 2012.

Said, Edward W. *Orientalism*. Penguin Books, 2003.

Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. "Can the Subaltern Speak?" *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, edited by Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg, University of Illinois Press, 1988, pp. 271–313.