

ABSTRACT

Chameleon: Authorial Subversion and Character
Survival in Mayra Montero's *Del rojo de su sombra*,
Patrick Chamoiseau's *Texaco*, and Raphaël Confiant's *Mamzelle Libellule*

Warrick Guyan Lattibeaudaire

This treatise probes doubling, camouflage, and ambivalence in Patrick Chamoiseau, Raphaël Confiant, and Mayra Montero's respective diegetic texts: *Texaco*, *Mamzelle Libellule*, and *Del rojo de su sombra*. Chief Caribbean animal metaphors, Anansi and Rabbit, fail to adequately capture these three fundamental attributes in authors wrestling with colonisation's aftermath. These writers skilfully praise and undermine, while living off, the coloniser. In proverbial language, they daringly "stay pon/ on Cow back and cuss/ curse Cow." The carrot-and-stick approach to Cow evokes the colour-shifting chameleon—a fabulous, camouflaging, enemy-rerouting African trickster lizard—chosen as dissertational cynosure for succeeding where Anansi and Rabbit fail. Metaphorically, chameleon's camouflage constitutes any signification-occulting rhetoric by authors. On the character level, those who mimic and outwit oppressors to survive resemble chameleon. In a nutshell, then, chameleon's colour alternation, for figuratively and ably capturing authorial ambivalence towards oppressor and oppressed, renders the lizard suitable as rhetoric for subversion and character survival around the thematics of Caribbean language, race, and sexuality.

Postnegritude legend, Édouard Glissant, proposes 'the detour,' which grounds chameleon's rerouting camouflage. To contextualise obscure meaning, another Glissantian term, *opacité* or density in expression, suffices. In light of Caribbean hegemonic power relations, Postcolonialism intersects Postnegritude. Accordingly, mimicry from Homi Bhabha, Postcolonial intellectual, importantly anchors chameleonic simulation.

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