

Universal Journal of History and Culture

Vol. 2, No. 1, 17-31, 2020

Research Article

ISSN: 2667-8179



# Colonial Attempts to Control and Overcome Nature in *Prospero's Daughter*

Cengiz Karagöz

Namık Kemal University, School of Foreign Languages, Tekirdag, Turkey

ckaragoz@nku.edu.tr, ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7564-3815>

**Received:** 24 January 2020, **Accepted:** 31 March 2020, **Online:** 24 April 2020

## Abstract

Elizabeth Nunez is a postcolonial writer whose writings centre on such subject matters as racism, gender, colonialism and identity that often concern the setting of America and the Caribbean islands. Her novel *Prospero's Daughter* pieces together a variety of subject matters that incorporates master-slave relationship, oppression and intersection of race and social status in the Caribbean. It is also possible to treat the novel with reference to nature and what it inspires for the white man and the native people. The author unfolds the white man's presumption that nature acts as a source of disease and evil and assumes the role of an enemy that operates against him. For the white man, animals in Trinidad as in other tropical lands also pose threat because of their potential to poison and sting. According to the colonial mindset, nature in the island needs to be controlled and civilized by altering its flora through botanic gardens. In the novel, the garden stands for the colonial ambition to defy nature with the help of certain devices which can preserve plants inside from harsh climate conditions outside. The garden becomes the symbol of taking possession of the island and is reflected as a space in which the Western political, temporal and spatial norms are pervasive.

**Keywords:** Elizabeth Nunez, Colonialism, Nature, Plants, Botanic Garden

## Introduction

Colonialism might be accepted as a period in which the Oriental societies were exposed to harsh devastation in many aspects. Psychological and cultural destruction of once-colonized nations is still prevalent although it has been argued that it is possible to recover. The evident damage upon the Oriental world cannot be confined to the native people. The Western countries were also intensely solicitous about nature and plants in the Oriental lands.

The discourse of British colonial policy and modern scientific thinking was based on the binary oppositions such as “wild and tamed, enraged and docile, slothful and disciplined, productive and primitive, superstitious and scientific nature and culture” (Kavita, 2004, 22). Nature in the native land was not independent of being classified as an uncivilized entity. According to the colonial narratives, the white master “brought order to a chaotic and threatening tropical landscape peopled by ecologically profligate natives” through science (Kavita, 2004, 17). Without the intervention of the white colonizer, nature posed a threat to the civilized Western world in its original form because it harboured an obscure and gloomy side. The Western civilization treated nature in several respects by identifying it not only with virginity, purity and barrenness which have a tendency to be developed but also with chaos, disorderliness; “a wilderness, wasteland, or desert requiring improvement; dark and witchlike, the victim and mouthpiece of Satan as serpent” (Merchant, 2005, 21). Thus, it was the duty of the colonialist nations to save nature in the Oriental territories from remaining in a wild, uncivilized and unproductive existence by improving it.

What lies behind such a logic dates back to the Cartesian philosophy of Descartes which claims that the capacity of human reason turns man into a powerful and free person who can render everything in nature knowable and calculable owing to mathematical method (Gandi, 1998, 35-36). Mathematical thinking takes several theoretical precepts as its starting point and aims to apply them to each variety of beings in the world, but it ignores multiplicity and attempts to order or discipline multiple various species in nature (Gandi, 1998, 36). This means restructuring of nature by reducing natural varieties to standardization and ignoring their different inherent features.

According to the colonial outlook, nature had to operate in favour of the imperialist interests, so it needed to be controlled, coerced and disciplined in order to yield the necessary product for the colonialist powers (Adams, 2003, 43). Colonialist and capitalist ambitions “transformed land and soil from being a source of life and a commons from which people draw sustenance, into private property to be bought and sold and conquered; development continued colonialism’s unfinished task” (Shiva, 2014, 105). Although land and soil as part of nature belonged to the colonized societies, this fact was overseen by the Western countries. The colonial powers were of the opinion that “the land” that the native society populated was “empty” and not anyone’s homeland; therefore, it was necessary “for the new colonial masters to establish their political hegemony over these nations and their territory in order to use the colonies ‘productively’ for the development of industry in their own countries” (Mies, 2014, 150). Nature was transformed into a mechanism which would become a profitable instrument regardless of harming the ecological balance.

In colonial period, botany as a scientific area developed and “enabled cultivators to identify, name and classify specimens, and it allowed them to experiment on unfamiliar flora for their medicinal, edible, aesthetical, or commercial characteristics” (Fleischer, 2016, 292). Rather than being seen as part of nature, plants only became means of scientific experiments and gaining wealth. The “imperial botanic gardens” gained prominence in colonial period and enabled plants to be transferred across the world and cultivated for scientific purposes, which meant “altering the patterns of world trade and increasing the plant energy, and human energy in the form of underpaid labor” (Brockway, 1979, 450). Gardens expressed broad implications for the course of commerce and added considerably to intensification of colonial ambitions. (Tigner, 2012, 159) claims that:

Gardens had traditionally been symbolized as microcosms of the world; however, with the burgeoning of English colonialism, gardens became material microcosms, composed of the actual plants originating from the four corners of the world. Imported horticulture in this period was a luxury, desired both for beauty and for rarity; as exotic commodity obtained primarily for aristocratic and wealthy middle-class consumption, botanical trade required the commercial scaffolding of empire.

In England, gardens became sites in which upper-class members enjoyed their aesthetic sides and such people displayed their wealth and status. Thus, English botanic gardens appealed both to visual pleasure through rare and exotic plants and to the rapid increase of England’s imperialist attempts.

In the light of such truths, the novel *Prospero's Daughter* by Elizabeth Nunez will be evaluated. This study attempts to figure out the outcome of colonialism as regards the relationship between man and nature by handling the narrative. The tropical climate, plants, animals and garden are components of nature which would offer us an insight into the essence of the discussion.

### **A Brief Commentary on Elizabeth Nunez**

Being brought up in Trinidad and then studying and settling in America, Elizabeth Nunez remarks that “education” in Trinidad built upon the conviction that Western values deserve esteem whereas what belongs to Africa needs to be viewed as worthless (Nunez, 2007, 210)(Nunez, 2007: 210). In her essay, she continues to underline that she began to question the colonial values which

point out the backwardness and savage nature of Africans and achieved in discovering her real self as an Afro-Caribbean female through producing literary works after she had met her mentor John Oliver Killens (Nunez, 2007, 211-212). Her experience reveals much about intricacies of her psychological and cultural identity due to her association with the Caribbean, Africa and America. This explains why her novels are set in the Caribbean and America and narrate the painful experiences of mainly Africans though the reader may witness the presence of other ethnic and interracial origins.

It is a common tendency in her novels that racial roots of her characters can range between “the indigenous Native Americans (Warao, Carib, and Arawak)” and “the Asian descendants of indentured servants” (Creque-Harris, 2011, 86). Nunez juxtaposes “Ibo and Yoruba-derived Obeah” as the spiritual heritage of her ancestors and the persistent impacts of “the Roman Catholic Church” inheriting from the colonial West (Creque-Harris, 2011, 86). As a result, the Caribbean becomes a place in which racial and cultural origins could merge with each other so deeply that it may be difficult to figure out the complexity of attachment to any fixed pattern. Although race is often the factor which determines the social status in the Caribbean, racial barriers can sometimes be collapsed by means of interracial marriages. For instance, in *Prospero's Daughter*, Carlos is a mixed-race slave whose mother is white and whose father is a black African.

The novel *Prospero's Daughter* is re-written and appropriated version of Shakespeare's *The Tempest* in which Dr. Gardner represents Prospero whereas Carlos assumes the role of Caliban and Gardner's daughter Virginia is the symbol of Miranda, Prospero's daughter (Albritton, 2006, 218). The plot of *Prospero's Daughter* revolves around a variety of subject matters such as the relationship between colonialist white people and colonized black ones, racism, racial stratification in the social and political life, gender issues and oppression in the Caribbean islands. Carlos is a half-caste slave who is accused of attempting to rape Virginia, the daughter of Peter Gardner, an English doctor, who escapes from England to the island Chacachacare because of his illegal medical attempts. Chacachacare is a small island near Trinidad in which only lepers, apart from a few healthy people, inhabit. Mumsford, an English assistant of a commissioner of police in Trinidad, investigates the crime of rape. At the end of the narrative, it is understood that Carlos is innocent and he and Virginia love each other while Dr. Gardner is the real rapist.

## Nature, Animal, Plants and the Garden in *Prospero's Daughter*

The novel *Prospero's Daughter* requires a close reading of nature and the colonial policy by making references to animals, plants, weather conditions, climate and the garden. The writer imparts in an explicit manner the perception that white characters such as Mumsford and Dr. Gardner have pessimistic views on nature which they suppose denotes menace in physical and spiritual terms, peril, gloom and disease whereas black characters, especially Carlos's father, lean toward the idea that nature deserves love and respect rather than undue intervention by human beings.

Mumsford as a white person who lives in Trinidad seems to feel distressed and gloomy by colour in nature and little animals like reptiles. In the novel, it is told:

He was here, on this mix-up, smothering, suffocating, sultry island, on this stifling, god-forsaken, mosquito-ridden, insect-infested, sweat-drenched outpost, with its too, too bright colors, its too, too much everything: too much rain in the rainy season, too much sun in the dry season, too much blue in the sky, too much green in the grass, too much red in the creeping flowering plants, too much turquoise in the sea, too much white on the sun (Nunez, 2006, 10)

The island is infested with mosquito and insects. In addition, weather conditions are expressed with adjectives such as “smothering, suffocating, sultry” which show that the island nearly chokes him. He feels that he cannot breath smoothly. The tropical climate seems to be far from being mild; rather, it stands out with its extreme rain and sunlight as well as humid air. The weather conditions cause him to be a physical and nervous wreck. Correspondingly, his psychology deteriorates. Colours of nature also make him anxious and bothered because of their extreme tones. There is no mild transition between shades of colour in the nature of the island. Each colour reflects bright shades exceedingly. The lack of any light colour can be seen as a sign of darkness and uncivilized nature.

The author emphasizes the difficulty of going into the bathroom at night due to a large number of little creatures such as reptiles and insects. It is related in the novel as follows:

This was not a place, Mumsford had discovered, where a man could go to the lavatory in the dark. In the daylight, spiders, lizards, centipedes, water bugs, cockroaches hid in

the crevices near the pipe in the bathroom, but at night, they were everywhere ... (Nunez, 2006, 13)

Mumsford feels the same discomfort not only when he is outside but also when he is at home. When darkness descends, little creatures as part of nature infest his house and causes him to feel insecure and uneasy. Wild nature goes beyond the frontier between his private life at home and outside. Likewise, when he enters the bathroom to have a bath, he hears the sound of something that falls to the ground in the bathroom that is “larger and uglier than a water bug, six inches long, with a multitude of feet” (Nunez, 2006, 13). “It was the two fangs - he was sure they were fangs-jutting out of its head” which make him run out of the bathroom with fear (Nunez, 2006, 13). His gardener tells him it was a “millepatte” which is “a kind of scorpion” in the island, and Mumsford understands the following fact: “if it had stung him, he would have been in the hospital burning with fever. He could have died” (Nunez, 2006, 14). Mumsford faces the risk of being stung and killed by a reptile or insect at home. He has no knowledge about every species of reptiles and insects and their potential dangers for his life. He sees new species that he is not familiar with. He is not sure about whether their sting could cause a fatal disease or not.

Even while sleeping, his struggle against nature persists. He has difficulty in sleeping owing to the attacks of mosquito. The author recounts:

The mosquito buzzed past his head again and lit on his neck, sinking its probes deep into his flesh. He bounded up on both feet in his bed, flailing his hands in the air... he felt the sting of the mosquito bite and he was bitter again, cursing the bad luck that had brought him here, to the tropics... (Nunez, 2006, 91).

He cannot fulfil his daily needs without struggle and risks as he is under risk of being stung at any moment. Not being able to sleep soundly at night impels him to regret settling on the island. As well as nature outside his home and the bathroom in which little creatures are rife, nor can his bed provide him with any relief and security.

Nunez suggests the ways in which the ocean and its related parts are accepted as a terrifying creature. To illustrate, the writer narrates: “The Dragon’s Mouth. It was the channel that connected the Atlantic Ocean to the Gulf of Paria” (Nunez, 2006, 26). The channel bears the name of a huge creature which is evocative of horror, rage, ferociousness and savagery. The author keeps on telling:

'The Dragon teeth,' the boatman shouted from the back of the boat. 'The first two big teeth call Monos and Huevos. The last one I taking you to is Chacachacare. Is a boca in the space between each teeth. The water bad there. It rough. He have four mouth, the Dragon.' (Nunez, 2006, 26).

Islands are resembled to the dragon's teeth. Water which flows towards the ocean almost fosters angry waves. The ocean signifies "vastness," "the unknown," boundlessness and threat (Tuan, 2013, 55). "Uncanny stillness is one extreme of the ocean's moods" whereas "the other extreme" side surfaces when "the ocean roars - its waves rise and crush like an enraged beast" (Tuan, 2013, 57). As a result, the ocean or the sea is far away from being steady and orderly. It tends to act in an uncontrollable and chaotic manner. As it lacks any course of logic and order, it might be really impossible to anticipate when it will cease to be silent and will act with ferocity and violence.

The second part of the narrative is narrated by Carlos. Carlos is the half-caste son of a white woman and a black African man. After his father and mother die, he continues to stay in his parents' house in Chacachacare with a black servant and her daughter, Mariana. One day, a storm strikes the house which then turns into ruins. After Dr. Gardner escapes from England with his daughter and settles in Chacachacare, he finds them helpless near the collapsed house. The idea of taking possession of the house comes into Gardner's head. He decides to dispossess them of the house and enslaves them. Then, he claims that the house belongs to him although he has no justifiable right to do that. Dr. Gardner resolves to uproot all the trees that Carlos's father planted and grew, and he does so until all the trees are cut down and not any tree remains as Carlos mentions: "... not the coconut tree, the breadfruit tree, the chataigne tree, or the avocado tree, not one of the fruit trees, neither the plum, orange, grapefruit, sapodilla, soursop nor the two mango trees that were in our yard" (Nunez, 2006, 11). In order to destroy all the tree in the yard, Gardner concocts the following excuse: "Fruits attract flies and bats. Flies and bats carry disease. Disease will kill us" (Nunez, 2006, 111). Gardner sees plants and trees of the island as a means of spreading disease. Doing away with all the trees that Carlos's father grew in the yard serves two purposes for Gardner. The first one is concerned with setting ground for growing his own plants and flowers. He desires to make the soil an empty space for his ambitions. He states "Ah, but the flowers I am going to grow won't get diseased ... Not like your flowers." (Nunez, 2006, 111). The second purpose is most probably to remove the vestige that has remained from Carlos's father and sever his connection both with his father and with his ancestors because his father's knowledge of trees and plants has passed down



from elder ones for generations.

The novel offers the primary distinction between Gardner and Carlos's father in terms of their approach to nature. Carlos's father as a black African does not display any struggle against nature and not regard it as the source of evil and disease. This may be discerned out of the way he built his house. The house does not provide any shelter for family members in case of a wind since the aim of his father is not to be protected from harsh weather conditions; instead, he wants the house to be filled with air from the outside and not to have any barrier between the inside and nature outside. Carlos relates this as follows:

Air flowed equally through all the rooms, for my father had a carpenter cut into the top two feet of the wood panels separating each room and carve out flat sculptures of birds and flowers. My father wanted to remind us that the island where we lived belonged first to the flora and fauna we found here. It was this effort he made to teach me love and respect nature that was the cause of most of our problems after the storm. The wind had been able to sweep unhampered through room after room, tunneling through the spaces in the carvings, dumping debris everywhere (Nunez, 2006, 113).

Carlos's father aims to bring nature into the house by engraving figures of birds and flowers on wood panels, and thus allowing inadvertently the storm circulating freely through holes of figures on wood panels between each room. The storm demolishes the house after passing through each panel. Since he thinks that nature is sacred and venerable, he does not consider it necessary to take precautions in case a storm strikes the house. For many Oriental nations, "soil" and "earth" are commonly accepted as sacred, so they cannot function as a place that one can buy, sell, conquer and exploit (Shiva, 2014, 105). "Soil" represents "the womb not only for the reproduction of biological life but also of cultural and spiritual life; it epitomizes all the sources of sustenance and is 'home' in the deepest sense" (Shiva, 2014, 102). The same view could be said to be true for nature as nature encompasses both soil and what lives on it. That's why, Carlos's father tries to design his house in such a way that makes it interwoven with nature.

A similar example might be given from the stance of Carlos's father on animals that are part of nature and its landscape. Carlos says: "My father was a lover of nature. More than anything, he loved the sea. What he loved best was its vast openness, the seemingly infinite stretch of water, canopied by an equally endless sky" (Nunez, 2006, 120). Such an unbounded space of the sea and



the sky does not evoke the feelings of gloom, anxiety and fear in him; rather, that landscape arouses his feelings of admiration and excitement. Furthermore, Carlos emphasizes: “I remember that he taught me not to fear the iguana or the horsewhip green snake, or the white-tailed night jar that made hooting sounds in the night and used to frighten me” (Nunez, 2006, 122). He sees even reptiles as members of nature that do not need to be scared even though they are cold-blooded animals which can sometimes be dangerous for humans. Carlos continues to mention: “Then, puckering his lips, he would whistle, each time a trill so distinct that the bird he imitated would respond, and no other: a yellow keskidee, a gray long-tailed mockingbird, a yellow-headed green parrot” (Nunez, 2006, 122). Carlos points out his father’s ability to communicate with birds in a such way that is specific to each species. Not remaining unconcerned with his calls, birds also respond to him by their idiosyncratic singing. Far from perceiving nature as the source of evil, danger, gloom and disease, his father is so intimately intertwined with nature that even birds suppose his imitation of their singing as real. Moreover, Carlos relates how his father never allows him to put birds in a cage: “I wanted to put it in a cage, to keep it in my room, to have it sing for me, but he never allowed it. ‘All living creatures desire freedom,’ he said. ‘The bird will die if it cannot be free.’” (Nunez, 2006, 142). His father implies that one should not shape nature according to his own profits and desires. Animals need to live freely as independent of human beings’ intervention. He does not approve of disciplining, controlling and restricting nature because balance in nature can be spoiled if its operation is intervened in.

Carlos conveys Dr. Gardner’s attempt to rebuild the house that is intended for defying nature. To illustrate, Carlos recounts: “The year before, Gardner had installed air-conditioners in his and Virginia’s bedrooms, in the drawing room, and in the dining room” (Nunez, 2006, 186). Gardner aims to prevent the flow of hot temperature outside from passing through the house by using air conditioners. The temperature inside the house conflicts with the hot weather outside, which means that air-conditioners serve to challenge nature by generating cold temperature inside. Regarding the conflicting weather conditions inside and outside, Carlos states: “Birds often flew into the house through an open window, but they always flew out as quickly, sensing the difference in the air, the turgid stillness uninterrupted by even the merest ripple of a breeze...” (Nunez, 2006, 141-142). As soon as birds enter the house, they recognize artificial weather inside which unsettles them and urges them to return to natural temperature outside. They discern that there is no air flow through the house even when windows are open because of air conditioners that disrupt natural flow of air from the outside into the inside. Industrial development and machinery have caused people to

turn themselves away from contacting directly with nature and have paved the way for domination, manipulation and destruction of nature (Mies, 2014, 137). As the Western man has used machinery in order to intervene in nature, his alienation from himself and nature has been intensified to such a degree that technological devices have transformed him into a mere destroyer of nature (Mies, 2014, 137). Thus, air conditioners may be considered to symbolize machines, like other tools, which are produced by the colonizer with the aim of defying nature, but which enlarged the distance between Gardner, like other white men, and nature. Gardner becomes so alienated from himself and nature that he turns into a mechanical being whose purpose is to control and resist it.

Gardner decides to construct a growing house in which he could grow special plants and in which he could develop weather conditions which are appropriate for such plants. It is told in the novel: “‘Too much sun,’ he grumbled. ‘When I build the growing house, this won’t happen... Can’t leave them here. Plants need light, but not this burning sun... That’s why I need the growing house. Understand?’” (Nunez, 2006, 152).. He finds the temperature excessively hot in the island, so he desires to decrease and adjust it to the need of plants in the garden. Carlos tells: “He didn’t wait for an answer. ‘The windowpanes. You asked about the windowpanes. They are for the roof of the growing house. To control the temperature’” (Nunez, 2006, 152). The windowpanes refract the sunlight and keep temperature under control inside the growing house. Similarly, Garden also tries to challenge the weather in the island when it does not rain as Carlos puts: “Gardner did not wait for rain. He stored his rainwater. Created it, my childish mind once fantasized, awed by all that green in front yard, even in the dry season” (Nunez, 2006, 174). Gardner makes the weather rainy in the garden by collecting water and then using it for irrigation. As a result, Carlos becomes staggered by green plants that can be grown in the dry season. Gardner tries to overcome nature by setting up weather conditions that are totally different from those outside the growing house in the island. The aim of Gardner seems to be to civilize nature in the island and control weather conditions that might appear immoderate and unruly to him. It is told in the novel: “Rain made flood. Drought dried grass and sucked moisture from fruit. But on his land the grass was green; flowers blossomed in the dry season” (Nunez, 2006, 73). For Gardner, rain, drought and sunlight need to be subdued in accordance with the Western logic and science.

The novel uncovers Gardner’s tendency to identify nature with an agency which always produces disease and threatens humans and plants. For example, Carlos states:

‘Disease!’ he would shout. Nature was the enemy, and here in the tropics nature

threatened to destroy us. At times I felt we were at war: nature on the one side and art on the other, the interventions Gardner used to suppress what he called "nature's insidious power" (Nunez, 2006, 131)

Serving for Gardner as his slave and being influenced by Gardner's colonial logic, Carlos has the impression that there is an everlasting fight between human beings and nature. Nature possesses an unseen disposition to harm people through diseases and brings out only destruction. Likewise, it is conveyed in the novel: "Nature to him was a traitor, bringing disease to roses in bloom, blight to crops before harvest. Cancer to humans" (Nunez, 2006, 73). Gardner is of the opinion that nature also ruins plants and agricultural products and reduces land to wilderness or a barren place.

The reason why Gardner associates nature with disease might be attributed to researches and medical writings which discuss the role of weather and environmental conditions in the emergence of diseases in Oriental lands. For example, as (Lind, 1788, 8-9) claims in his research book, it is commonly accepted as regards "Europeans" as "victims to the intemperature of foreign climates" that "nineteen in twenty have been cut off by fevers and fluxes: these being the prevailing and fatal diseases in unhealthy countries through all parts of the world". What nature in Oriental territories generally possesses is that "the water in marshes, ditches, or standing pools has become putrid as animal and vegetable matter decays under the heat of a tropical sun, producing poisons that are absorbed into the air, which reaches a high level of toxicity" (Bewell, 1999, 38). Such findings and arguments were most probably spread in European countries, which prompted their citizens to be anxious about the potential of contracting a fatal disease through a direct contact with nature in tropical lands. This explains why Gardner always feels under risk in the island and tries to bring nature under his control.

The novel draws attention to the concept of botanic garden and its implications for Dr. Garden. Carlos states that Gardner sets up a garden behind the house in order to implement his "idea of paradise" and reconstruct "his England" (Nunez, 2006, 149). Underscoring the function of the garden for Gardner, Carlos informs: "The garden he was constructing was a laboratory, he said. He was a scientist, not a common gardener. When he was finished, the world would see flowers that a man could only dream of now" (Nunez, 2006, 151). Gardner builds the garden for his experiments of botany and scientific research that concerns the growth of rare flowers. Carlos makes a mention of Gardner's ambition to grow uncommon hybrid species of plants as follows: "He specializes in grafting. He likes splitting the seeds of plants and implanting the seeds of other plants inside them.

He likes binding cuttings of live plants from different genera. His interest is cross-pollination. His grass does not need watering” (Nunez, 2006, 87-88). His exceptional plants seem to challenge nature in that they do not need the help of weather conditions in the island. Besides resisting the weather conditions, Gardner also aspires to alter the flora of the island by growing new species which are not found and grown there.

Gardner’s obsession with the garden project may be explained in relation to the role of botanic gardens in British colonialism. Unlike other European countries, Britain assigned an exceptional meaning to the garden for the reason that it designated allocation of a territory for the ownership of the English colonizer; that is, since it was impossible to enclose all of the remote places through frontiers, erection of a garden in a colony within a limited area added up to capturing and owning the whole space in a concrete and apparent manner (Seed, 1995, 29). Then, Gardner’s attempt to possess a garden represents possession of the soil as it is not possible to enclose its every piece with fences and grow plants in each square. Gardner demonstrates that he is the owner of the island by stealing the house from Carlos and building a special garden behind the house. Allocating a small proportion of the island to his colonial policy may be claimed to be equal to dominating every piece of the island. Patricia Seed argues that “the colonists were metaphorically plants in relation to the soil, and hence their colonial settlements were referred to as plantations” (Seed, 1995, 29). This thought might be said to hold true for Gardner in that he possibly associates himself with plants that he grows in the garden. After cutting down plants and trees that belong the local flora in the island, he achieves in disengaging Carlos’s ties from the ancestral roots when it is taken into account that meanings attached to certain trees or plants are a legacy that dates from the distant past and ancestors. While striving to produce new plants and enable them to take roots in the local soil, Gardner metaphorically plants himself and his colonial project deeply and firmly in the colonized island.

Apart from encompassing a physical activity, constructing a garden could also be “linked to other means of ordering life: codifying and ritualizing social time and space, creating political orders and social hierarchies...” (Stewart, 1998, 111). The garden that Gardner erects seems to underpin those perceptions. For instance, in the garden, hierarchical relationship between Gardner and Carlos attracts notice in a visible way. Carlos serves the colonial ambitions of Gardner by helping him building the garden and carrying the required tools to grow new plants and flowers. Carlos is the slave whose sole duty is to fulfil what Gardner orders. This hierarchy is symbolized by taxonomy of plants according to the colonial mindset as well; that is, whereas new flowers Gardner plants occupy

a higher status because of not belonging to the local flora, other plants outside the garden do not fall under the species of valuable ones as Gardner includes them within the category of those that carry disease and are a product of the harsh weather conditions in the island. Political side of the garden is predicated upon the colonial policy of Gardner which is bound up with conducting scientific experiments with the aim of inventing new species of plants that can survive the local conditions.

Being confined to a specific area, gardens are spots in which temperature and water are adjusted to the purpose of growing plants and in which special plants are grown irrespective the garden's position, climate and season by making "nature" inside "immutable over time and space" (Fleischer, 2016, 291-292). Gardner forges time within time, space within space and season within season after he builds the garden. In every respect, nature developed in the garden is in contradiction with nature in the island. The sunlight, rain and temperature cannot pervade the garden as Gardner has designed it so that it can be protected from the weather conditions outside. Time and season are interwoven with each other for the reason that plants wither and lose their green blades when time reaches the dry season. However, the garden becomes a site where green and colourful plants grow even though time shows the contrary season in the island. Gardner enables the garden to have a temporal-spatial mechanism which is different from that outside. In other words, Gardner exerts himself to the utmost to engrave the Western civilization on the tropical land by inserting his conception of time and space into the island by means of the garden.

## **Conclusion**

Nunez unfolds the white man's conception of nature by portraying animals, plants and climate in a pessimistic and daunting way. Nature is reflected as a being which needs fighting and the source of disease. However, the author exposes the approach of the black man towards nature by underlining especially Carlos's father love and respect for nature. When it comes to the white man, it might be observed that Mumsford frequently feels uneasy and threatened by the frequent emergence of reptiles and little animals like spiders whenever he goes to the bathroom and lavatory. Even at nights, he cannot have a sound sleep because of attacks of mosquito. The tropical climate and weather conditions impair his health through excessive degrees of rain, temperature, moisture. Likewise, Dr. Gardner cheats Carlos out of his house and claims possession on the house. Gardner embarks on cutting down all the trees and plants that Carlos inherits from his father. Gardner reconstructs the house in a such way that cuts it off from the outside tropical climate by means of air conditioners.

He strives to forge different temperature inside the house and resist nature in this way. He also builds a botanic garden behind the house by using windowpanes and storing water for irrigation. Again, his aim is to prevent the tropical climate from permeating the garden and control weather conditions inside it. With the assistance and service of the slave Carlos, Gardner attempts to grow new plants and flowers through transplantation and grafting. These plants do not need the intervention of the tropical climate, but can grow without rainwater and excessive sunlight. Therefore, the garden becomes a scientific laboratory for Gardner in terms of providing him with appropriate space and opportunity to grow rare plants that could be exhibited and benefited for the British imperial project. Gardner regards nature in the island as an enemy that has to be controlled and thinks that it always causes fatal diseases.

## References

- Adams, W. M. (2003). *Nature and the colonial mind. in decolonizing nature: Strategies for conservation in a postcolonial era* (W. M. Adams & M. Mulligan, Eds.). London: Earthscan.
- Albritton, L. (2006). Review: *Prospero's daughter* by Elizabeth Nunez. *Harvard Review*(31), 218-220. Retrieved 2020-01-11, from [www.jstor.org/stable/27569268](http://www.jstor.org/stable/27569268)
- Bewell, A. (1999). *Romanticism and colonial disease*. The United States of America: The Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Brockway, L. (1979). Science and colonial expansion: The role of the British Royal Botanic Gardens. *American Ethnologist*, 6(3), 449-465. Retrieved 2020-01-06, from [www.jstor.org/stable/643776](http://www.jstor.org/stable/643776)
- Creque-Harris, L. (2011). The route of spiritual prowess in the novels of Elizabeth Nunez. *CLA Journal*, 55(1), 86-110. Retrieved 2019-05-12, from [www.jstor.org/stable/44394386](http://www.jstor.org/stable/44394386)
- Fleischer, A. (2016). *Gardening nature, gardening knowledge: The parallel activities of stabilizing knowledge and gardens in the early modern period, in gardens, knowledge and the sciences in the early modern period* (H. Fischer, V. R. Remmert, & J. Wolschke-Bulmahn, Eds.). Switzerland: Springer International Publishing.
- Gandi, L. (1998). *Postcolonial theory: A critical introduction*. Australia: Allen and Unwin.
- Kavita, P. (2004). *Civilizing natures: Race, resources, and modernity in colonial South India*. New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press.
- Lind, J. (1788). *An essay on diseases incidental to Europeans in hot climates. With the method of preventing their fatal consequences* (4th ed.). London: Murray.
- Merchant, C. (2005). *Reinventing eden: The fate of nature in Western culture*. London and New York: Taylor and Francis e-Library.

- Mies, M. (2014). *White man's dilemma: His search for what he had destroyed. In ecofeminism* (M. Mies & S. Vandana, Eds.). London and New York: Zed Books.
- Nunez, E. (2006). *Prospero's daughter*. New York: Ballantine Books.
- Nunez, E. (2007). Banquet address on the theme of the CLA conference: Religion and spirituality in literature. *CLA Journal*, 51(2), 206-220. Retrieved 2018-02-05, from [www.jstor.org/stable/44325419](http://www.jstor.org/stable/44325419)
- Seed, P. (1995). *Ceremonies of possession in Europe's conquest of the new world, 1492- 1640*. The United States of America: Cambridge University Press.
- Shiva, V. (2014). *Homeless in the Global Village. In ecofeminism* (M. Mies & S. Vandana, Eds.). London and New York: Zed Books.
- Stewart, S. (1998). Garden Agon. *Representations*(62), 111–143. Retrieved 2018-01-05, from [www.jstor.org/stable/2902941](http://www.jstor.org/stable/2902941) doi: 10.2307/2902941
- Tigner, A. L. (2012). *Literature and the renaissance garden from Elizabeth I to Charles II*. England: Ashgate.
- Tuan, F. (2013). *Romantic geography*. The United States of America: The University of Wisconsin Press.