

JEAN RHYS AND PHYLLIS SHAND ALLFREY:
THE STORY OF A FRIENDSHIP

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Jean Rhys and Phyllis Shand Allfrey are unquestionably Dominica's foremost twentieth-century writers. The island - small and densely forested, sparsely populated, and relatively isolated throughout most of its history - has nonetheless produced a number of writers of note, among them the critically-neglected poet Daniel Thaly. Of these, only Rhys and Allfrey have enjoyed careers - literary in the case of Rhys, political and literary in Allfrey's - that have warranted the attention of an international audience.

The coincidence of Rhys and Allfrey's birth in the same remote colonial outpost has led scholars to focus on comparisons between the two. This comparative emphasis, however, has led to some notable misunderstandings about the links between these two very different women. The misconceptions stem from an emphasis on the superficial similarities between the two: the fact that they were both white Dominicans separated by barely a generation who established themselves as writers in England in the middle decades of the twentieth century and who are best known as authors of two novels - *The Orchid House* and *Wide Sargasso Sea* - which explore the interconnections between gender, race, and the remnants of plantation society in the West Indies. These resemblances, promising as they appear at first sight, yield little when measured "against the real life."¹ Rhys and Allfrey, despite surface similarities, were as different in their approaches to writing, their political stances, their understanding of the complexities of race and colonialism in their home island, and their formulations of their West Indian identities as any two writers could be. They can be seen, indeed - if compare them we must - as examples of the polarities of literary and political responses to being women born to the Creole elite of the West Indies around the turn of the twentieth century.

The stress on the similarities between them, moreover, coupled with Rhys's higher profile as a writer, has led to Allfrey's reputation as a writer being subsumed under Rhys's shadow, from which Allfrey only emerges as a lesser Rhys, a sort of Rhys manqué. Scholarship on Rhys is extensive and varied, encompassing some thirty books and more than one hundred articles - and in the context of our discussion here, mostly independent of comparisons to Allfrey. Rhys, as a writer straddling the English/West Indian/female/ feminist traditions, has been the focus of substantial international scholarship. Allfrey, on the other hand, has no writerly identity other than as a Caribbean writer, and is therefore by definition a more marginal figure. Her literary production, moreover, was more limited than Rhys's: one published novel, a handful of short stories in print, numerous unpublished short stories, four published but unavailable collections of poetry, and fragments of three unfinished novels. Scholarship on Allfrey amounts to one book (a literary/political biography) and some twenty articles (only a handful of which focus solely on her work). The bulk of the criticism on her work consists of essays focusing on white Caribbean writers (and thus seen in connection to Rhys) or establishing comparisons between her work and that of Rhys, comparisons which consistently underscore the latter's superiority as a writer.²

Comparing the two, however, is akin to seeking connections between the proverbial apples and oranges, prompting questions about whether anyone would have ever linked them in any way if not for the accident of their having been born in the same small obscure colony. Even as Dominicans they belonged to different generations - separated as they were by almost 20 years (Rhys was born

in 1890, Allfrey in 1908). Rhys, in fact, left Dominica for England the year before Allfrey was born. And the Dominica of Rhys's childhood had undergone profound changes by the time Allfrey reached her adolescence. The lavish beauty of their home island would provide a long-lasting bond between the two women, but the social landscapes that informed their writing were quite different.

The Dominica of Rhys's memory was a place of almost other-worldly beauty haunted by zombies, loup-garoux, and blood-sucking soucristants. It was a Dominica seen through her eyes as a mosaic of impressions of light and shadow, filtered through the senses. A hypersensitive child and adolescent, Rhys's world was both melancholic, wondrous nature and nightmarish, lurking menace. Unlike Allfrey, who was always intensely, vitally interested in the political and social affairs of the island, Rhys seemed not to connect her father's political and economic activities, his deep involvement in colonial affairs, with the nature of the society that surrounded her. There is very little evidence that she thought about her world politically; she appeared instead to accept the tensions and hierarchies of her island society as unquestioned essences. Lacking a social, political, or economic context through which she could make sense of her world, it loomed before her as arbitrary and senseless.

Allfrey, in turn, was always to write about her Dominican childhood and adolescence in a light, playful tone - not for her the somber descriptions of a haunted childhood we find in *Smile Please*. Hers was, despite her father's return from World War II suffering from the after-effects of a severe case of shellshock, the relatively happy childhood of which we find echoes in *The Orchid House*. In the early decades of the twentieth century, Roseau was but a provincial village in a small and rather underdeveloped island, but Allfrey and her three sisters never lacked companionship or amusement. Their circle of friends was small, but it provided a tightly-knit community with many friends their age and abundant home-spun entertainment - garden parties, outings to the Trafalgar Falls, dinner parties followed by concerts, "fun-and-frolics" organized for charity, and regular visits to her grandfather's modest lime estate at St. Aroment, the site of his botanical experiments. There was but one thing separating this provincial upbringing from that of any small English village, and that was the racial divisions and concomitant tensions of a former slave society.

Rhys's feelings about race were "complicated."³ She had invested black people with a gaiety and ease that made them seem vital and substantial in comparison to her own self-perceived ghostliness. They "belonged" to the landscape in ways she, and other whites by extension, would never belong. But this very vitality and connection to the island threatened her, making her aware of their power. In blacks she sensed a raw power tempered by gaiety and warmth; in the growing colored elite she recognized a hatred even more menacing, since they belonged to a class poised to replace whites in the power hierarchy of their small colonial enclave.

Rhys's apprehension about the racial and class animosity she sensed around her was deepened by her uneasy relationship with her nurse Meta, a brooding, resentful servant who terrorized the young, sensitive girl. Meta frightened her with tales of ghostly apparitions, blood-sucking fiends, and poisonous stinging insects threatening to drop on her at any moment. She was physically as well as emotionally violent, and her presence loomed menacingly over Rhys, even after her departure from the household. She would never escape the fear Meta had instilled in her: "Meta had shown me a world of fear and distrust, and I am still in that world," she wrote in *Smile Please*.⁴

Allfrey's beloved nurse Lally was a woman altogether of a different sort. A devout Methodist who brought to her charges, the four Shand daughters, the calm assurance that came from strong religious faith, she was Allfrey's bridge to the

black and colored society of her home village. She would in time emerge as the narrator of *The Orchid House*. Like her fictional alter ego, the real Lally had "come fresh from Montserrat in [her] middle years [and was] an English Negress and proud of her skin, not Frenchy and Catholic and boasting of a drop of white blood." Lally, whose position in the household was more that of a family friend than that of a servant, remained with the family for twenty-five years, and was throughout Allfrey's childhood and adolescence her emotional anchor in a home often troubled by her father's emotional crises. As Allfrey's confidante and her mother's "mainstay," Lally played a pivotal role in the young woman's emotional development; the level of Allfrey's emotional identification with her old nurse often outweighed the bonds that tied her to her own mother. Allfrey would often refer to her as "the linchpin of my life."

Despite her awareness of the animosity many Dominicans felt towards the white elite to which she belonged, Allfrey grew up with a deep sense of connection to her island. The Shands of Antigua were conservative in matters of race, and Francis Shand (Allfrey's father) sought to keep his four daughters separated from the black and the poor. But their concerns with the preservation of racial hierarchies notwithstanding, they were West Indians through and through, proud of old Caribbean roots dating back to 1644, intimately connected through kinship and friendships to many other families, white and colored, in neighboring islands. The Nichollses of Dominica, to whom Allfrey's mother belonged, on their part, were a family particularly disposed to compromise, to meet Dominica on its own terms, accepting with resigned tolerance when their members gave up the privilege of whiteness to marry into colored or black families. Rufus - a character in *The Orchid House* based on Allfrey's uncle Ralph Nicholls, the father of nine legitimate colored children and a number of illegitimate ones - is, for all his mercenary pragmatism, portrayed as almost radical in his contempt for conservative racial notions. "After all," Allfrey writes, "white liberal-minded people merely talked against the color bar, Uncle Rufus had taken practical steps to break it down."⁵ The alienation assumed to be the shared outlook of white West Indians throughout the region was not a part of the Nichollses - and consequently of Allfrey's - life. Allfrey had also imbued from both Shands and Nichollses a highly developed, intrinsically-Victorian sense of obligation to her home island, which the socialist training of her young adulthood would help transform from its conservative, paternalistic roots into a political agenda for socialist change. This sense of *noblesse oblige* became her protection against alienation. She would always see herself as a "Dominican of three-hundred-years standing despite [her] pale face," and always felt that her family's deep roots in the Caribbean made her a "true West Indian," and "the first Dominican."⁶

When Rhys left Dominica in 1907 the planter society and colonial elite of her childhood seemed still firmly entrenched, although the anxiety and disaffection that clouded her perception of Dominican society had their roots in an instinctive awareness of their being threatened from within. By the late 1920s, on the eve of Allfrey's departure for the United States, the large estates that had dominated the principal river valleys were idle and reverting to bush; they could provide little or no employment, and much of the land was parceled out to tenants. In the last decades of the nineteenth century, as the large, white-owned estates were abandoned and white families lost the prestige that accompanies wealth, power had begun to shift into the hands of the colored middle class. Dominica had never, in any case, partaken of the legendary riches spawned by the West Indian plantation economy. Its white community, unlike that of other Caribbean islands, had always been small and generally not very wealthy. The island's planter class was rooted in small estates dependent for their labor on a black population accustomed to a greater degree of independence than in other islands. There had been before emancipation, large settlements of free black and mulattos who owned land or lived as squatters on abandoned or

neglected estates. By 1907, the year Rhys left Dominica for England, the year before Allfrey's birth, white families - by which I mean those who were not connected by birth or marriage to the rapidly-growing colored elite - were rapidly disappearing. There were then on the island, according to Hesketh Bell, the Dominican administrator, no more than one hundred purely English (that is, white) people, although "the proportion of well-to-do people of light colour and good education was steadily increasing."⁷

Both Rhys and Allfrey would write about the maze of color and class that characterized Roseau society. Not surprising, since racism permeated life in the small town. Allfrey, who would always insist that she had never harbored any racial prejudice as a child, was nonetheless keenly aware of its existence around her. Lorna Robinson, a contemporary of Rhys and a good friend of Allfrey's in her old age, recalls how, although she frequently saw the Williams family and later the Allfrey girls in church every Sunday, they had "kept to themselves," as then "black and white did not mix."⁸ In church they could not have mixed, even if they had wished to, as the Anglican church was divided into two parts; one for the whites in front, one for the blacks at the back, with an open space between them. At the end of the service blacks and whites went out separate doors. "I don't think anybody minded this or even noticed it," Rhys wrote in *Smile Please*. "I certainly didn't. It had always been so, it would always be so, like the sun or the rain."⁹ But the fact is that they did mind, and Allfrey's awareness of the Dominican black and colored population's resentment of things-as-they-were was indicative of a precocious class and race awareness that stood in sharp contrast to Rhys's less developed political consciousness. The fact is that whites, black, and colored in Roseau lived in a never-ending ritual of power plays: whites tried in subtle and unsubtle ways to maintain their supremacy; blacks struck back by mocking whites.

The mockery could be unsettling. James Anthony Froude - while on the visit to the West Indies he recounts in his (in)famous defense of British imperialism, *The English in the West Indies or the Bow of Ulysses* - alludes to it in his description of his arrival in Dominica: "Two tall handsome girls seized my bags, tossed them on their heads, and strode off with a light step in front of me, cutting jokes with their friends; I following, and my mind misgiving me that I was myself the object of their wit."¹⁰ Rhys was conscious of the mockery; it had left her with a keen sense of alienation from Roseau society, a feeling of not belonging that she would articulate in story after story of disconnection and unease. The Shand girls, as most whites in Dominica, were frequently the object of teasing; but they were Nichollses at heart, and had learned at a very young age to take it in their stride. Rosalind, Allfrey's youngest sister, recalled distinctly how she and her sisters were once followed down the street by a group of young black children taunting them, telling them that their hats looked like chamber pots. They disregarded the mockery - although they refused ever to wear the hats again. Besides, as a family, they knew that the lines between black and white were not that firmly drawn. Rosalind would always reply to any inquiries about the family's whiteness with her own question: "After three-hundred years in the West Indies, who knows?"

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Despite the many possible links between them, Rhys and Allfrey's paths would not cross until 1936, when the two met in England. Rhys was fresh from her first visit to Dominica since her departure in 1907; she had returned home as the author of three novels and could have basked in her success as a writer, but she had been unhappy in Roseau, and the reencounter with the island had brought back her insecurities and paranoia. Allfrey, in her turn, had just settled in England after six unsuccessful years in the United States. She had lived through the Great Depression in Buffalo, New York, where her husband

Robert had been employed on and off as an engineer, and where her two biological children, Josephine (Phina) and Philip, had been born.

Before her visit to Dominica, where she heard of her fellow Dominican in London, Rhys had known nothing of Allfrey. Allfrey, on the other hand, had always been curious about Rhys, whom she had heard described at home when she was still a child as the "rather fast" Lockhart girl who "had let down the Williams family by her life as a stage chorine and a wanderer in Europe."¹¹ Later she had heard Rhys described by her family as "[t]hat woman who writes those terrible books."¹² She had read Rhys's *Voyage in the Dark* while in the United States, and had been impressed by the simplicity of its prose, despite its being "a horrible book for a young girl to read. . . Her style was so pure but she wrote about impure things."¹³

Rhys's initial impulse to write had come from her perception of writing as a means to dispel the sadness of her life of alienation from her home island: "I had found out that writing poetry took away sadness, doubled joy and calmed the anxious questioning feeling that tormented me then."¹⁴ Allfrey's own literary aspirations, in evidence since her early teens, stemmed from a different perception of the native isle. "The Lost Island" - Allfrey's first publication, a short story for children published in the English magazine *Tiger Tim's Weekly* when she was twelve - tells of a young girl who finds a treasure to save her father from ruin and the loss of their house, and already points to the concerns with class, race, and colonialism that will be foremost in her writing. Educated at home, by tutors fortuitously well-versed in contemporary literature - the Anglican rector, Martin Turnell, who tutored her in several subjects, would go on to an academic career as a literary scholar - Allfrey had a more thorough literary education than would have been expected given the scarcity of resources in such a small and relatively isolated colony. (Allfrey's parents, being solidly Anglican, considered the convent school Rhys had attended - the only socially acceptable school on the island - unsuitable for their daughters. Frequent contact with the children's Catholic friends, they claimed, had left them unimpressed with the quality of their schooling.) They were fortunate indeed to have found a number of brilliant and somewhat eccentric tutors for their daughters who could provide glimpses of a world of creativity outside the small confines of their island. Turnell, for example, introduced Allfrey to Alain-Fournier's 1913 novel *Le Grand Meaulnes*, a text that would have a profound influence on her writing. In addition, Dominican poet Daniel Thaly was a family friend with whose work Allfrey was intimately familiar; his writings, full of evocative images of the Dominican landscape, provided early models for her poetry, and echoes of his work will always be evident in her poems and prose. Allfrey thus understood at a fairly young age the European context in which Rhys's early writing developed, while remaining keenly aware of an emerging Dominican and West Indian literary tradition.

When Rhys and Allfrey met, Rhys was living in a small flat at Paultons Square in Chelsea with her second husband, Leslie Tilden Smith, a one-time literary agent.¹⁵ Rhys had been for many years in a steady decline into chronic alcoholism that often interfered with her writing. What we know of her relationship with Allfrey during their acquaintance in London comes chiefly from what little of their correspondence has survived and from Allfrey's guarded accounts of their relationship as offered to journalists and scholars who made their way to Dominica after Rhys's death to inquire about her West Indian roots. Allfrey came to know Rhys well, but could rarely be drawn into discussing what she had learned about her friend's struggles with alcoholism, marriages, motherhood, and the law. She would often speak of her great admiration for Rhys's beauty and elegance - unmarred in her eyes by her alcoholism and difficult circumstances - and for the courage with which she battled adversity.¹⁶ Even towards the end of her life, when pressed for an opinion on her friend, she volunteered very little, despite a growing impatience about the

constant comparisons between the two of them. Of their relationship during the early years of their friendship she would admit that she found Rhys to be rather moody, "with outbursts of bad temper."¹⁷ Allfrey spoke often of a wonderful ballet party Rhys arranged for her eighteen-year old daughter Maryvonne in 1938, and liked to tell the story of what happened when once, during one of her visits to Rhys's flat, she had asked her "how were the white people now in Dominica."¹⁸ Allfrey, conscious of the profound changes undergone by Dominican society since their childhood, replied that they were now "of the common variety, the Smiths and the Browns," and Rhys, incensed by the remark, had told her that she, too, was a Smith, and then refused to speak to her for the rest of the visit. Allfrey, who had been invited to dinner, had to cook the meal.

In March of 1941, Rhys was in desperate straits, living in "dreary digs" in Norwich.¹⁹ Her marriage to Smith was collapsing, and her daughter Maryvonne, then twenty-one, who had been staying with Jewish friends in Holland when the Nazis invaded, had disappeared. It was at this juncture that Rhys, already distraught and suicidal, learned of the death of Lancelot Hugh Smith, her greatest love. She turned to Allfrey for help, and the latter, through her broad network of altruistic, generous leftist friends and acquaintances, contacted an idealistic clergyman from Norfolk whom she had met a year or two before, the Reverend Willis Feast. Feast agreed to help. He visited Rhys, arriving during an air raid, and invited her to stay with his family in his country vicarage in the village of Booton. Rhys accepted the invitation, too much in need of help to see the unsuitability of a vicarage as a home. The stay bordered on the disastrous.

Rhys and Allfrey maintained a casual, occasional correspondence during the war. Rhys's letters have not survived; but a handful of Allfrey's notes remain among Rhys's papers. They speak of Allfrey's singleminded commitment to her political work during the war; they also invariably contain some reference to Dominica. Allfrey would complain to Rhys in 1941 that Edenbridge, a small cottage in the Sussex countryside she and her husband had rented, "has no water to wash in now and the mosquitoes sting like Dominica!"²⁰ She wrote of being awfully tired "from working hard and trying to give myself out in small portions to committees and people and god knows what. And holding my breath over Leningrad as I did over Madrid, only with more hope." But her concern over the issues looming large was tempered by her enjoyment of the political *commesse* (the Dominican word for "to do"): "The Communists collected £1,250 at a street meeting last Sunday," she writes with obvious glee. "Agreed the smart alecs are frights - I endure them in a surprisingly Christian way - hangover from the Anglican Church Roseau?"

There was a factor, quite apart from their shared connection to Dominica and their having belonged to the same narrow social circle in the West Indies, that must have contributed to their friendship - they were both known for their startling honesty, their incapacity for prevarication even when it may have saved them from disapproval and judgment. It was a trait more tempered in Allfrey than in Rhys - the younger woman had learned the pitfalls of complete candor in a politician while remaining, in her private affairs, "admirably true to herself."²¹ But it established a connection between them that reached beyond their shared Dominican roots and which may account for Rhys's talking "more openly" to her "young friend" from Dominica "than to most people."²² There was also a certain degree of "heroine worship" in Allfrey's fascination with Rhys, which had its touch of the allure of the forbidden. Allfrey was at heart solidly respectable, despite evidence of a passionate sensuality that surfaced occasionally - she is known to have had at least two discreet but lingering affairs during her long marriage - and which she (almost) always managed to stifle. What she had heard of Rhys's life of bohemian abandon had the appeal of the suppressed side of her own nature. Allfrey was also, at heart, a committed social worker and at times liked nothing better than having talented, gifted

friends-in-need for whom she could muster comfort and assistance. Many of them paraded through her apartment in Fulham, lingering long after having overstayed her husband Robert's welcome. Rhys, talented, in need of help, and a Dominican to boot, was a godsend.

Throughout the war, Rhys and Allfrey were joined in their grief over their separation from their children. Maryvonne's disappearance had pushed Rhys into the nearly suicidal state from which Allfrey had attempted to extricate her. For the duration of the war, Rhys would live in constant anxiety about her daughter's fate. She knew that, if she was still alive, Maryvonne and her father (Rhys's ex-husband Jean Lenglet) were in constant danger because of their involvement in the Resistance. Her anxiety would not be relieved until she heard directly from her daughter in 1945. Allfrey, in turn, had chosen to remain in London during the Blitz, but had sent her children to the safety of the Maine countryside to stay with friends from her days as a governess in New York. The separation had left her "bereft." It troubled her to learn that her young son could not remember that his real mother was in England and, as the years of separation mounted, she anguished over ever seeing her children again. In 1941 she had written to Rhys that she "miss[ed] her children so much that [she] could not write to them anymore."²³ She would not see them again until 1946.

As England-based West Indian writers, Rhys and Allfrey moved in very different circles. Rhys, in fact, seemed to move in no circle at all. She never maintained very solid connections to London literary life, but at least during the years of her relationship with Leslie Tilden Smith she had lived in or near London.²⁴ Smith, whose career had revolved around publishing, had had friends among writers and editors; Rhys's isolation during the thirties, therefore, had been "self-imposed, and it was not complete": she had enjoyed brief friendships with Evelyn Scott, Peggy Kirkaldy, Eliot Bliss and Rosamond Lehmann. After Smith's death in 1945, however, she had stopped writing, and as she lived now away from London, she dropped her contacts there, becoming increasingly more isolated until it became generally believed that she was dead.

Allfrey's literary connections, on the other hand, were inextricably linked to her political work. Shortly after arriving in London she had found employment as a personal secretary to Naomi Mitchison, the radical aristocrat and Fabian socialist known for her historical fiction and political activism. Their meeting had marked Allfrey's initiation into grassroots politics; Mitchison introduced her to the local branch of the British Labour Party and the work of the Fabian Society. During World War II, Allfrey worked as a welfare officer in Fulham, one of the hardest-hit districts of London during the Blitz, and had established a communication network with Dominicans in England, gathering clothes for those arriving in the winter, helping them find employment, housing, and often-needed medical assistance, lending her Fulham flat for weddings, reunions, and meetings, learning first-hand of the often desperate conditions of the migrating laborers of Dominica and other West Indian islands. This knowledge, together with her long apprenticeship in grass-roots politics with the Labour Party in Fulham and the growing network of friends and acquaintances in the House of Commons she had secured through her connection with Mitchison, would prove invaluable in her efforts to found the Dominica Labour Party in the early 1950s. Mitchison also introduced her to the editors of *Tribune*, the newspaper of the Labour Left which published Allfrey's poetry and fiction throughout the war.

Allfrey's lifelong pride in her connection to *Tribune* during the war serves as a gauge of the political opinions that sustained a lifetime of work. The newspaper was committed to a radical socialism bent on "shaking capitalist society to its foundation," grounded on the conviction that "the values of capitalist society are profoundly evil and therefore must be profoundly

changed."²⁵ The editorial policy fiercely supported the belief that only socialism could "ensure the enlargement of freedom of the individual and his or her enjoyment of the beauty and all the best things in life"; and that a socialism that spurned, or neglected to protect, freedom of thought, speech, and association was "no Socialism at all." The paper lashed out against the Conservative Government's repressive policies in the West Indies, India, and colonial Africa, its failure to address the problems of unemployment and hunger at home, and its lack of concern for the needs and rights of women and children. Regular contributors to the literary pages - Allfrey's literary contacts, some of whom she counted as friends - were such writers as Mitchison, Stevie Smith, Arthur Calder-Marshall, Alex Comfort, Julian Symons, Elizabeth Taylor, Rhys Davies, Daniel George, Inez Holden, and George Orwell, who became literary editor in 1943. After the war, through her connection with the Fulham Library's Readers' Circle, she developed acquaintances with Walter Marsden, the poet John Betjeman, C.P. Snow, and his wife Pamela Hansford Johnson. The most important of these friendships was that of A.E. Coppard, considered by many to be England's best twentieth-century short-story writer - a man many years her senior with whom Allfrey almost certainly had a long-standing love affair. In the 1950s, Allfrey had started reading her work in the BBC program "Caribbean Voices," becoming acquainted with a brand-new generation of West Indian writers and their work: Edward Brathwaite, Samuel Selvon, C.L.R. James, George Lamming, Albert Gomes, and Derek Walcott, among others.

The war years were the only time in Allfrey's life when her writing and political activism were so clearly intertwined. The 1940s was, consequently, her most creative and productive decade, during which she wrote most of her forty-odd short stories, the poems included in *In Circles* (1940) and *Palm and Oak* (1950), and significant portions of the manuscript that would become *The Orchid House*. The contacts she developed through *Tribune* helped her place her short stories in some of the best London magazines and journals of the period: *The Windmill* published "A Talk on China," an autobiographical tale chronicling her work on the Aid-to-China campaign, and "The Tunnel," a lightly-somber satire of the "ravens and vultures" who controlled British industry; "Breeze," a tale of her childhood in Dominica, appeared in *Pan Africa*, as did "The Objective," the story behind her sister Marion's marriage to Dominica's Administrator. "The Raincoat" was published in the prestigious literary pages of *The Manchester Guardian*. She assiduously sent copies of her published work to Rhys, as she did to many of her friends and acquaintances.

Allfrey's most successful fiction, if judged from the point-of-view of its acceptance for publication, was that firmly centered on her West Indianness and hence marked by what was otherwise her marginality. In the mid-1940s, when West Indian fiction was not well known - and fashionable only to the extent that it was regarded as exotic - her choice of subjects, the literary themes that were so closely dependent on her childhood in Dominica, and her peculiarly colonial sensibilities, gave her some literary visibility while still marking her as an outsider, a writer on the periphery. The authenticity of her West Indian voice contributed significantly to the moderate success of *The Orchid House* which, when published in 1953 to encouraging reviews, was quickly translated into French and picked up by Dutton for publication in the United States. The manuscript of her second novel, *Dashing Away* - which chronicled her life of political activism in Fulham and her romantic liaison with A.E. Coppard - would be rejected by Constable in early 1954 precisely on the strength of its not having a West Indian setting.

After the war, Allfrey, engrossed in her political work, saw less of Rhys. They corresponded sporadically but their lives followed very different paths and they lost touch in the early fifties. These were the years of Rhys's deepest obscurity; they were also the years of Allfrey's most intense political work while in England. As the decade opened, Allfrey seemed "pulled between the role

models of Virginia Woolf and Beatrice Webb," one an exacting craftsman known for the "intense excitement and effort" she put into her work, the other, with husband Sidney, a pioneer in British social and economic reform and a leading spirit of the Fabian Society. Allfrey favored Webb's role, while yearning for Woolf's meticulous attention to technique and total dedication to her art, attributes she also admired in Rhys. But Allfrey was very unlike Rhys when it came to the value she placed on writing: she could not distance herself from life - and life always meant politics. "She had politics in her veins" and an overpowering need to be "a part of everything" that ran counter to a writer's thirst for isolation.²⁶ And she held everyone to the same standards - even her admired friend Rhys. On one occasion she had reproved a friend, "a completely apolitical fellow whose loves were theatre and film, for preferring art to life."²⁷ Thus the impact of her disappointment over the rejection of *Dashing Away* would be felt immediately in her throwing herself wholeheartedly into her political work and social activism. Politics, not literature, she felt to be her true calling - "Politics ruined me for writing,"²⁸ she would wistfully write in her poverty-stricken old age - and she allowed the ill-fortune of "Dashing Away" to thwart her as a writer. The book would not ever be sent to another publisher, and except for her autobiographical work about her Federation experiences, *In the Cabinet*, and a handful of short stories and poems, her writing would never again rise to the level of her best work in the 1940s and early 1950s. In 1953, in pursuit of her political work, Allfrey returned to Dominica, and the only evidence of any contact between her and Rhys after that date - until they renewed their correspondence in 1973 - was Allfrey's report of having sent Rhys a copy of her novel *The Orchid House*, just after it was published in August 1953.

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The years between the end of the war and the publication of *Wide Sargasso Sea* in 1966 were the years of Rhys's deepest obscurity; her biographer, Carole Angier, called them "The Lost Years." In 1947, two years after the death of Leslie Tilden Smith, she had married Leslie's cousin George Victor Max Hamer, and the relationship had initially promised the calm and stability she needed to resume her writing. But it was not to be. Soon Rhys found herself struggling with alcoholism, psychiatric instability, and several arrests for misdemeanors. Hamer was arrested and convicted for fraud, and sentenced to two years in prison. After his release they struggled for years against crippling poverty and isolation.

But after several disastrous years of penury and deprivation, by 1953 Rhys was back in touch with her literary friends in London, discussing the resumption of her writing. It was during one of her visits to London that she again saw Allfrey, who was then both full of excitement about the forthcoming issue of *The Orchid House* (she would send Rhys a copy of the book upon publication) and distraught about her son Philip, whose psychological problems would within months lead to a diagnosis of schizophrenia and a lifetime commitment to a psychiatric institution. Among those Rhys contacted was Selma Vaz Dias, who had a few years earlier written a dramatized version of *Good Morning, Midnight* meant for radio broadcast. But in 1953 it all came to nothing - yet again - and she once again disappeared, this time into Wales and later Bude, in Cornwall, where she wrote the first part of *Wide Sargasso Sea*. The writing of the novel would take another nine years, but the broadcast of *Good Morning, Midnight* in 1957 brought her the professional encouragement and offers for publication of her new work that would serve as the needed encouragement for the writing of *Wide Sargasso Sea*. Moreover, she had the constant support and reassurance of her friend Francis Wyndham and her editor Diana Athill, and had established some new connections - professional and personal - ready to assist her despite her frequent moodiness and at times erratic behavior.

The success of *Wide Sargasso Sea*, published in 1966, brought Rhys what had eluded her for most of her life - some degree of financial ease, the approval and recognition of friends and readers, and widespread, enthusiastic critical acclaim. Soon there were offers to reissue her earlier novels and she was busy completing work set aside in favor of *Wide Sargasso Sea* and beginning new projects, like her incomplete autobiography, *Smile Please*. In the years following her triumph with *Wide Sargasso Sea* she published two collections of short stories, *Tigers Are Better-Looking* (1968) and *Sleep It Off Lady* (1976). Her reputation grew steadily in the years before her death, and to the extent that she could enjoy happiness, she did. But her work on *Smile Please* brought her back to her Dominican past, and that past was mired in unhappiness. "Digging out [the autobiographical material she had earlier written in preparation for *Wide Sargasso Sea*]," Carole Angier wrote in her biography, "she was rediscovering how far back her unbelonging went."²⁹ The resumption in 1973 of her correspondence with Phyllis Allfrey, of all her friends the one who wholeheartedly believed in her belonging to Dominica, fortuitously reconnected her to her home island and her past in the last years of her life.

Allfrey, meanwhile, had returned to her home island in 1953 at a critical juncture in its political history. A new constitution had granted universal adult suffrage in 1951, but there were no political parties in place, no effort had been made to organize the electorate, and elections continued to be dominated by the "mulatto gros bourg." Immediately after her return she gravitated to the Dominica Trade Union (DTU) as the ideal vehicle from which a political party - Dominica's first - could emerge. She and DTU president Christopher Loblack, a local mason she had met in London in 1949, began traveling to near and remote villages, explaining to gatherings of DTU members and supporters the manifest advantages of allying themselves to a Party committed to furthering the worker's socio-economic agenda.

The Dominica Labour Party was officially launched on May 24, 1955. Its socialist platform would dominate political life on the island until 1980, when a second party Allfrey had helped found, the Dominica Freedom Party, came to power. From 1955 to 1957 (when the Party participated in its first general election), Allfrey dedicated all her time, resources, and strength to increasing its membership. This required exhausting treks across muddy paths and impassable roads to reach small villages where she would tirelessly explain the rudiments of democratic, parliamentary politics, and would encourage the peasantry, in speeches peppered with patois, to join the Party's struggle to change Dominican politics. She is credited by political friends and foes alike with having almost single-handedly educated the Dominican peasantry in the principles of democracy.

Allfrey, a committed Federalist, eagerly welcome the inauguration of the West Indies Federation in 1958. She believed wholeheartedly in the benefits it would bring to the "smiders," the small islanders who could benefit the most from a closer association with the more prosperous and economically-developed islands like Jamaica and Trinidad. In the first Federal elections, she was elected by an overwhelming seventy-seven percent of the vote as one of the two Dominican representatives to the Federal Parliament, and became Minister of Social and Labour Affairs, the only woman and the only white in the Cabinet.

Her years in the Federation led to the sacrifice of her literary career. Her journals and appointment diaries show tireless activity on behalf of the Federation - speeches to women's groups (a favorite activity where she would promote her feminist ideals), schemes to improve health, employment, and housing, a keen interest in the welfare of children, travels to the Independence celebrations in Nigeria, and to an International Labour Organisation conference in Geneva where she joined the first walkout in opposition to the racist

policies of the South African Government. The collapse of the Federation in 1962 was a blow that she felt with bitterness to the end of her life.

In 1962 Allfrey returned to Dominica from Trinidad, where she became editor of the *Dominica Herald*. With elections forthcoming in late 1962 and her Party's victory assured, it was expected that Allfrey, as founder, president, and political leader of the Party, would become the island's next Chief Minister. But an editorial in the *Herald* critical of the Labour government's tax on banana exports led to her controversial expulsion from the party, an expulsion widely believed to have been racially motivated. Bitter about her ouster from the party she had founded, in 1965, she and her husband began publication of an opposition paper, *The Star*, which was to become the government's severest critic. Allfrey created a poetic persona, Rose O (a pun on Roseau, the island's capital), through which she would echo the people's anger and impatience with the Labour government's growing disregard for democracy and the law. In 1968, in an effort to silence her and the other two local newspaper editors, the government passed the Seditious Publications Act, which opened the way for criminal prosecution of newspaper editors who printed articles critical of government policies. Allfrey helped channel public outrage against the Act into the foundation of the Freedom Party, which eventually elected Eugenia Charles as Chief Minister in 1980.

§ § §

It was during Allfrey's years of most intense work on behalf of the Freedom Party that Allfrey and Rhys renewed their friendship. Throughout the years of silence, Allfrey had not forgotten Rhys. In May of 1967 she had reviewed *Wide Sargasso Sea* in the *Star*, calling the book the "strange flowering blossom of a late-flowering tree," stemming from two of Rhys's "great and enduring obsessions - love for the island and the injury which men can inflict on women."³⁰ (Rhys was not a feminist, Allfrey argued elsewhere, but she was "intensely independent and championed womanhood when it was degraded or ill-used by man; she hit back with the most marvelous derision."³¹) Of *Wide Sargasso Sea* she wrote in her review:

Jean Rhys has betaken herself through this inspired medium into emancipation times, and thereby her third obsession - the love-hate between coloured and white people, engendered in her memory of childhood nostalgia - takes first place in the Jamaican opening chapters of the tragic tale. But ... and let us be realistic, perhaps it is because we know how much she is bound to Dominica in dream, myth and reality ... the Jamaican days and events, wildly dramatic as they are in scene and scope, do not grip a Jean Rhys fan as much as the Dominican days of Part II: that exquisite nightmare of cruelty, mésalliance, and the beauty of natural surroundings. The writer's observation of scene, servants and the helpless onslaught of mania is infinitely moving, and although this book is not in tightness and construction the best of her works, it is still a marvelous book by Jean Rhys, a song by the late-singing nightingale, causing one reader at least to lay it down and turn at once to Matthew Arnold's poem "Philomena" in *The Oxford Book of English Verse*. That poem epitomizes the life and work of Jean Rhys far better than any reviewer's words can do. "Hark! from that moonlit cedar what a burst!/What triumph! hark - what pain!"³²

In a recording for Radio Three of the BBC in 1981, Allfrey would reiterate her preference for the Dominican sections of the novel. "My impression is that really it's all about Dominica and the Jamaica part seems, not unreal, but it seems like superimposed Dominica to me, except that the people, the unkind

servants and so on, are not like our people."³³ When Rhys moves to describe the Massacre/Mahaut district of Dominica, then it becomes "very real indeed." Asked then if the island "still resembled the enchanted place that Jean Rhys knew as a child," Allfrey had replied that the landscape was very much as Rhys had known it: "The hills, blue and green, are still so incomparably beautiful. If you had been able to see this morning's dawn, it was a marvelous morning and still is a gorgeous day, you'd have thought you understood Jean for her obsession."

Rhys's obsession with Dominica, presented so vividly and movingly in *Wide Sargasso Sea*, had nonetheless its humorous side, which surfaces again and again in her correspondence with Allfrey. "I'm sure you can guess that I would love to come back to Dominica, and think of it constantly" she wrote in reply to one of Allfrey's frequent entreaties. "You are quite right: I ought to die where I was born."³⁴ But, she did not quite see how it could be managed. She was still "a bit shakey" after a fall, and "don't laugh - I am afraid of cockroaches and other insects. I know this will sound ridiculous but it dates from long ago. However nice people were, I couldn't expect a bodyguard to kill every cockroach, could I? But I still think of it, and try to plan some way of doing more than thinking." Dominica's vibrant greenery, as any visitor soon discovers, teems with insects: beetles, butterflies, labelles, roaches and waterbugs seem to multiply at will. It is not the place for anyone with a hint of an insect phobia.

The many years of silence separating the two writers had not diminished Allfrey's admiration for Rhys as a person and a writer. As editor of the *Star*, Allfrey lost few opportunities to remind her readers that in Rhys they had a Dominican of whom to be proud. She often decried in the newspaper the fact that the Roseau Library had no copies of her work. (They were also not available in any of the Roseau shops which occasionally sold books and magazines.) In "Most Famous Dominican," a piece for the *Star* Allfrey printed in January 1968, five years before she resumed her correspondence with Rhys, she had summarized the salient facts of Rhys's career, defending "her right to be called a Dominican," a constant theme of hers when writing about Rhys. Rhys was, like herself, a Dominican "born and bred," "the fifth generation born out here on [her] mother's side," just as she had written in *Voyage in the Dark*. And even though she had left the island at the age of sixteen, "all her books have at times a strong yearning towards the island."³⁵ (Allfrey, when making any reference to Rhys's work, always assumes an autobiographical connection between author and text.) Some months later she reprinted Rhys's story "Again the Antilles" in the *Star*.³⁶

In February 1973, taking advantage of a visit from a group interested in filming Rhys's *Wide Sargasso Sea*, Allfrey wrote to her old friend after a silence of almost twenty years. "Many times I nearly lifted pen to paper to write you a note of joy [on the success of *Wide Sargasso Sea*]," she wrote, "but I believe it was that very success which put me off - was afraid you would think I was one of those acquaintances who just bask ..."³⁷ Her news, after such a long silence, summarized the essentials: her daughter Josephine (Phina) was in Africa, she and her husband had adopted three children, all "absolutely rewarding"; she had made "the fatal mistake" of getting involved in island politics and becoming a Federal Minister, being left "stranded and deposed" when that "scheme" broke up, and now owned "this little paper ... non-profitable but a useful vehicle and weapon, though it kills us with hard work." Nothing was said about her son Philip's continued confinement in the mental institution he had entered in 1953, although Rhys was one of the few people familiar with the sad story of Philip's schizophrenia.

Rhys did not receive the letter until the team returned to England in March. She replied immediately, "delighted" to have heard from Allfrey again after so many years.³⁸ She was living then in a "pretty cottage" at Cheriton Fitzpaine where it was "Too quiet!" but had London holidays which she enjoyed,

and was "[k]eeping her fingers crossed" about the film, feeling pleased that some of it was being shot in Dominica. (A film of *Wide Sargasso Sea* would not be made until 1993, however, and would not be filmed in Dominica as she had hoped.) To Allfrey's suggestion that she return to Dominica Rhys replied that "to come back and lay my bones where I was born [was] a splendid lovely idea and I wish I could but whether it'll be possible I'm not sure. We'll have to see. Perhaps."

Thus they would start a casual, sporadic correspondence that lasted until Rhys's death in 1979, and became her link to Dominica in her final years, helping "to keep fresh in [Rhys's] mind the singular ambiance of Dominican life."³⁹ Allfrey would send the weekly edition of the *Star* with personal notes tucked between the pages; Rhys replied in brief wry and self-deprecating notes that attested to their closeness and rapport despite the many years of separation. At times the feelings transcended words. "Dear Phyllis," Rhys once wrote at the end of one of her notes, "this humdrum letter is not at all what I am really thinking. You will probably guess that. But anyway it's to send you my very best love."⁴⁰ Often, Rhys's fancy would touch Allfrey's life in unexpected ways. At one time she had written to acknowledge receipt of several copies of the *Star* - "I do like to read the Dominica news" - and had enclosed a check for an amount she hoped would cover the cost of a subscription. "If any cash to spare," she had added "do buy a bottle of champagne, wish me luck."⁴¹ Rhys came to rely on the arrival of the *Star* and would grow anxious when there were any delays, often worrying about not having paid the cost of the subscription (despite reassurances from Allfrey that there was no need for her to do so), sometimes growing nervous about Allfrey's health.

Shortly after they resumed their correspondence, Allfrey had written a short poem dedicated to Rhys, "The Child's Return," built upon a line in one of Rhys's letters about coming back to "lay her bones in Dominica." It read partly thus:

And one dark day I'll board a boat
 When I am ready to die.
 The timbers will creak and my heart will break
 And the sailors will lay my bones
 On the stiff rich grass, as sharp as spikes
 By the volcanic stones.

Rhys had quickly replied with her thanks, wishing "something like that could happen."⁴² Strangely enough, she had added, years before she had written a poem about going back to Dominica, which she had titled "Return." In her poem she was dead "but only know it when no one recognizes or sees me." She had written it at Maidstone, just days before leaving her "horrible rooms" and gone to live "at quite a nice pub called The Ropemaker's Arms. As soon as I unpacked I realized that I'd left the poem behind and flew back to rescue it." But it had been thrown away and "though I've tried over and over again to rewrite it I've never been able to do so." The lost poem may have planted the seed of one of her stories, "I Used to Live Here Once."

From mid-1974 through the summer of 1975 the correspondence between the two friends focused on Dominica's threatened rain forests and the political instability of the West Indies. The passion for Dominica's natural beauty was one the two friends had always shared, as evidenced by its prominence in both *The Orchid House* and *Wide Sargasso Sea*. In the mid-1970s, coinciding with the period of Rhys and Allfrey's renewed friendship, the Dominican government had begun to explore an agreement with British timber firms for the exploitation of the island's forests. Alarmed into immediate action, Allfrey and her husband Robert had joined a small group of conservationists in founding the Dominica Conservation Society with the immediate goal of creating a Dominica National

Park to protect the forests from commercial exploitation. Allfrey's credentials as a conservationist were of long standing: the 1955 Dominica Labour Party Constitution had included a clause pledging the party to work towards the conservation of "the natural beauty of Dominica." She had frequently written on conservation issues in the *Star* and had co-authored (with her husband) a manifesto for conservation on behalf of the Society, *The Threatened Forest*. "Let nothing disturb the whole ecology of such a marvelous small land," they had written, "or Dominica's national park, flanked by acres of stripped hillsides, will within less than twenty years be only a 'scientific memento.'"⁴³

Allfrey's letters to Rhys during this period have not survived. But to judge by Rhys's responses, they appear to have focused on her dread of the economic development threatening to destroy the forests. She almost certainly sent Rhys a copy of the Society's manifesto. Rhys's own letters reveal her growing anxiety about the destruction of a natural beauty whose memory had sustained her creativity. Throughout 1974 and 1975, with the forests at serious risk, Allfrey fought fiercely to assure their safety, transferring her sense of urgency to Rhys, who seemed often despondent, fearing that they were "up against complete indifference."⁴⁴ She was nonetheless eager to find avenues to bring attention to the situation. Displaying a degree of fervor uncharacteristic of her at this period of her life, when she was plagued by illness and occasional accidents, she sought help from a friend, Francis Wyndham, then a young writer for the *Times*, to help her in seeking a publishing venue for an essay by Robert on the threat to the forest in the London press. This would be by far the most intense period of correspondence between the two friends, with Rhys's letters arriving every ten to fourteen days during the summer of 1975, as compared with the more characteristic rate of a letter every six to eight weeks.

Rhys, by nature and experience apolitical, seemed drawn during this period to political conditions in the West Indies. They were, for one, featured prominently in the copies of the *Star* she received weekly from Allfrey. She had also heard from a woman in Grenada about that island's situation under Eric Gairy and felt that what was "happening in the smaller West Indian islands [is] a great pity ... and the fact that no one protests or cares is just as bad."⁴⁵ For months she kept a steady pressure on Allfrey "to write what is really going on for it needs saying badly."⁴⁶ "[D]o try & write an article that will stress the other side of West Indian politics. Tell your stories," she exhorted. She was becoming so passionate about the issue that she felt that perhaps friends like Wyndham thought her prejudiced. She had told him that most of what was said about the West Indies "both past which I know a bit & present which I guess at, is simply not true."⁴⁷ In England, people "believe all manner of things [about the West Indies] which aren't true at all and seem to regard the truth as something of a joke. I can assure you that I have had lots of people here who are utterly astonished that I am not as black as coal - in fact they don't believe it. I don't know whether it's more funny or more sad."⁴⁸

Rhys's discussions of West Indian politics in her correspondence display her political naïveté. Although concerned about the situation in Grenada under Gairy and the threat to the forests in Dominica, it is the latter issue which draws her passionate involvement. The complexities of party politics were beyond her interest, although she tried, for Allfrey's sake, to do what she could to help. In 1976, when Dominica's Chief Minister, Patrick John (of the Dominica Labour Party), announced his plans to seek independence from England, Allfrey sought Rhys's help in swaying public opinion in favor of the plan proposed by the Freedom Party, to which she belonged. The Government wanted independence as of November 1977; the Freedom Party favored the holding of a general election before its declaration. The opposition supported a republican system of government with a President elected by ballot, an Assembly of thirteen members elected to represent the single-member constituencies, and an additional eight to be elected on the basis of proportional representation. The Labour

Party favored an Assembly of twenty-one elected members plus nine nominated members, five chosen by the government and four by the opposition. Having failed in garnering any support for their position from the Colonial Office, the Freedom Party mounted a public campaign designed to build up opposition to independence in the form sought by the Government, insisting on a delay of at least six months "in order that the full implications of independence could be explained to the people."⁴⁹ Believing that the prestige of her name would add weight to the Freedom Party's petition, Allfrey asked Rhys to sign it. "Jean Rhys is a completely non-political person," she underscored in the *Star*, "so Dominicans will realise what a great gesture her signature is. We thank her."⁵⁰ Privately, Rhys wrote to tell her that she had "signed a thing about the referendum" and hoped "it does some good... [but] it all seems a terrible muddle, and there's a bit of muddle here too if it comes to that. I'm afraid I just drift along and try not to think about it."⁵¹ Independence was finally approved in July 1978 in the form sought by John's government.

Allfrey's faith in the power of Rhys's name to impact public opinion in Dominica was itself touchingly naïve. Few Dominicans remembered Jean Rhys in 1976; fewer still had read any of her works. Allfrey's confidence in the prestige of her name and position as powerful to sway Dominican voters stemmed more from her own wishes to validate Rhys's position among those she felt were her true people than from any objective assessment of the real state of affairs in the mid-1970's. Ironically, Rhys's fortunes in Dominica would rise only after her death; the arrival of various scholars seeking information and insight into Rhys's work did more to give prominence to those places and families associated with her than any effort of Allfrey's to keep her friend's name fresh in the minds of the readers of her *Star*.

It wasn't for lack of trying, as Allfrey would take any opportunity available to feature Rhys in the pages of her newspaper. In January 1977, when she received from Rhys a copy of her new collection of short stories, *Sleep it Off Lady*, she acknowledged it in an open letter in the *Star*. "My dear Jean," she wrote, "[o]f course I love [your book], as I love everything that is yours, that is you. And I think of how many thousands of people in the world just know the name Dominica because of you.... Robert and I thank you for going on writing, and writing so wonderfully."⁵²

But 1977 year would be a difficult year for both women - a harrowing one for Allfrey - and their correspondence would be sparse. Rhys herself had been ill off and on in the early months of the year and had not been able to write without assistance. She could dictate brief notes for a secretary to type, but it was clear from her notes to Allfrey that she was finding this method of communication frustrating. And in April, Allfrey received the devastating news that her daughter Phina, who had been living in Kenya, had died in a car crash in Botswana, where she was on holiday with her fiancé and her twelve-year-old son from her first marriage. She had been crushed under the car, dying of multiple internal injuries. Allfrey was devastated, utterly distraught by the loss of a child on whom she had placed so many of her hopes for continuity after Philip's diagnosis of schizophrenia. As a result, she withdrew into the deepest depression she would ever know. A note about Phina's death appeared in the *Star*, and Rhys wrote in May, very briefly - perhaps too briefly - expressing how "so very sorry" she was to hear of Phina's death, before moving on to describe her "muddled" affairs and her having signed the petition on independence.⁵³ Allfrey did not reply, as she had not replied to anyone who had written to express their sympathy to her and Robert after hearing the sad news. For many months, friends and acquaintances found it difficult to approach her; she could seldom be brought to speak of Phina again.

Allfrey's husband Robert and Robbie, the youngest of Allfrey's two adopted Carib sons, had taken over the production of the *Star* in the months following

Phina's death, but they had been unaware or had forgotten about Allfrey's habit of sending a copy to Rhys every week and none had been sent since April. By September, not having received the *Star* for many months, Rhys wrote, agitated with worry. "I'm getting rather anxious about it, or have you just got tired of sending it to me?"⁵⁴ Concerned that perhaps she should have contributed something for all the copies Allfrey had sent her, she said she would call at the London address on the paper and find out how she could send money out of England to her. "It's stupid but I imagine all sorts of things may have happened so anyhow do send a postcard or something to let me know how you are."⁵⁵ It wasn't until December that Allfrey finally acknowledged the many notes of sympathy they had received in a brief duplicated letter accompanied by a handful of quotes describing Phina's beauty and brilliance, a copy of which went to Rhys. To a friend she would write much later that "a black depression [had] settled in me ... because of the total loss of Phina. I just seemed to lose everything, even my confidence."⁵⁶ Her only comfort would come through her resumption of her writing, and she would seek to give vent to her grief in a new book, "In the Cabinet," which was to be "half about Phina, and also about [herself]."⁵⁷

Some months after Phina's death Allfrey met an American scholar, Elaine Campbell, who would do much to assure the reissue of *The Orchid House* after almost three decades out of print. Campbell was visiting friends in Dominica when she was taken to meet Allfrey. They had had a brief conversation about her work and the burdens faced by women writers. When she returned to the United States, Campbell had approached Dutton, Allfrey's American publishers, and her agents at Curtis Brown to inquire into the possibility of a reissue of the novel. She exhorted Allfrey to make progress on "In the Cabinet," republish the two volumes of poetry she had published in the late 1940's and 50's, *Palm and Oak* and *In Circles*, and gather her short stories in a collection. In her zeal, she had even visited Rhys in England and persuaded her to write a preface for *The Orchid House* in the event of it being reissued. The proposed preface and Rhys's deteriorating health would be the focus of the correspondence between Allfrey and Rhys for 1978.

In 1978 it would be Allfrey's turn to worry about her friend's long silences. The start of the year had not been "very lucky" for Rhys, as she had "stupidly" fallen and had been in a nursing home for some time. After her return home she had been "comme si, comme ça," but was nonetheless making progress on her autobiography, the text that would be published posthumously as *Smile Please*.⁵⁸ "I've found it difficult to do for it is long ago, longer even than you will remember. I don't want to argue neither do I want to be too dull so it's a balancing act." Progress would be hampered by increasingly frequent bouts of ill health that required her to return to the nursing home. In March 1979 she wrote that she had been ill again, "cracked up a bit."⁵⁹ She was supposed to rest for several months, but "if possible" she would try to write "something as a preface" to a hoped-for reissue of *The Orchid House*. She expected to travel to London in "two or three weeks and it goes without saying will do all I can for the book. I have a copy of it and I am taking it to London with me and am sure I can get it read by André Deutsch. Also, I will talk to Diana Athill and she may be able to give good advice....I do wish your book the best of luck."⁶⁰

But Rhys would finish neither her autobiography nor her promised preface to *The Orchid House* for she died in May. Allfrey and her husband learned of her death through Lennox Honychurch, a young friend who had done his apprenticeship as a writer and historian in the *Star*. Usually they listened to the BBC news and News about Britain, but on Wednesday mornings they listened to DBS (Dominica Broadcasting System), "trying to find out what imbecility the Government of Dominica was up to," and had missed the notice about their old friend's death.⁶¹ Honychurch, knowing how close she had been to them, had driven over to tell

them. It had hardly come as a surprise, Allfrey wrote later, since she was eighty four [Allfrey placed Rhys's birth in 1895, by this account] and had been so ill for so long. But it was to her, as she wrote to an old friend, "a serious loss": "For so many years we had been correspondents - I simply put 'slips' into *Stars* (she adored the poor little *Star*, it kept her in touch;) and she wrote (until lately when a secretary typed) in her huge distinctive hand. The last loss was - she was going to write a foreword for a reissue of *The Orchid House*. The last letter I had from her told me she was wondering what to say. I replied 'say I was a West Indian writer who went back home.'"⁶²

In the months following Rhys's death Allfrey wrote a "tribute" to her friend that appeared in *Kunapipi*. The short essay traced her admiration for Rhys as a writer to her first encounter with *Voyage in the Dark* while Allfrey lived in the United States. What Allfrey admired in Rhys, as she had never tired of saying and would reiterate in this short piece, was the older woman's single-minded commitment to her writing. It stood in Allfrey's mind as emblematic of what she herself - torn as she had been between writing and politics - had been unable to do. Inspired by Rhys's dedication to writing despite setbacks and illness, she had in 1973 (shortly after they resumed their correspondence), published *Palm and Oak II*, a selection of her favorite poems from *In Circles*, *Palm and Oak*, and *Contrasts* - collections she had published many years before - to which she added a handful of new poems. In her isolation in Dominica, away from frequent interaction with other writers and still deeply involved in politics and in the publication of the *Star*, however, it had been difficult to sustain her renewed interest in writing. But in the wake of Rhys's death, impelled by a need to bequeath a legacy to Dominica through her writing - finally acknowledging that politics had brought only perishing triumphs - she was eager to return to fiction. With her daughter Phina gone, her path to "prolongation," "legacy," rested on the literary work she had almost completely set aside when she became a Federal Minister.

In the late 1970's, coincidentally, interest on Caribbean women and their writing was on the rise, and Allfrey's role as one of the "founding mothers" of women's literature in the region had begun to be recognized, bringing a trickle of scholars to Dominica seeking insights into her work, very much as Elaine Campbell had done. Many of these, like *Kunapipi* editor Anna Rutherford and her colleague Kirsten Petersen, had come seeking insights and information on Jean Rhys after their friendship had come to light following Rhys's death. Others, like noted Guayanese writer and literary critic Arthur J. Seymour, visiting Dominica for a series of lectures in 1978, would go away from their visits convinced of the wealth of ideas and talent she had yet to offer to a Caribbean readership were she to resume her writing. Seymour wrote to her admiringly upon her return to Guyana, urging her to write:

You were a name on a page. You were the most mature creative example of the White West Indian that I knew. I had read of your novel in the pages of Ken Ramchand's book, but I had never seen the book itself. So it was a great event to see you, read your poems, run my editorially-trained eye swiftly over your short stories in the magazines you showed me and hear you articulate your thoughts on Daniel Thaly and Jean Rhys. The world of which you spoke is a world that is being lost completely and unless you recount it, however succinctly, it will be no more.⁶³

Encouraged by Seymour, and having received a couple of "nice critical write-ups" in *Kunapipi* and Donald Herdeck's *Caribbean Writers*, Allfrey had resolved to write a new version of "In the Cabinet," a fictionalized rendering of the autobiographical narrative about her days as a Federation Minister she had begun while still in Trinidad, the federal capital, which she intended as a tribute to her late daughter Phina. But the resumption of her writing career

was not without its difficulties. Her primary obstacle, as it had been since her return from Trinidad, was the *Star*, and through it the public role in Dominican affairs that had become "such a part of her identity."⁶⁴ The paper was her little "sling shot," and although she acknowledged that it "slowed down her creative writing" she could not bring herself to give it up, even though by 1978 it was hardly worth it financially. (The paper would not cease publication until early 1982.) The *Star* kept her in politics, and it seemed indeed that politics had "ruined her for writing." She was also doubtful as to whether any new creative work would indeed guarantee her a place in the new Caribbean literary "establishment." She aspired to a triumph equal to that of Rhys's *Wide Sargasso Sea*, while knowing deep in her heart that any such triumph would have to come to her not in England, but as a West Indian writer in the West Indies. Though she had no identity as a writer other than that of a West Indian, she doubted whether she would be accepted as such by fellow Caribbean authors so seemingly focused on race. As a white West Indian writer she felt as displaced as she once had felt as a West Indian writer in England.

In 1979, shortly before Rhys's death, Allfrey had reviewed the then current issue of *Caribbean Quarterly*, a collection that brought home with full force the extent to which race, though not necessarily racism, permeated every aspect of Caribbean literature. The volume included Jamaican novelist John Hearn's short story "Snow Virgin," "Sea Grapes," by Derek Walcott, and works by "nearly all the fine names of good West Indian writers" - Martin Carter, Samuel Selvon, Slade Hopkinson, Wilson Harris, and Edward Brathwaite - and was "thick with ideas which open up gates to works which are only half-known in some cases, throughout our islands."⁶⁵ But its many negative references to V.S. Naipaul's work on the subject of race left no doubt of the closing of ranks against non-black writers. She was troubled by the volume's continued emphasis on blackness as the only possible source of West Indian literary authenticity. In her isolation in Dominica, with her contacts with other writers limited to an occasional letter from authors she had known in the past, like C.L.R. James, Rhys, or Brathwaite, she had been oblivious of the extent to which racialist approaches had dominated theoretical and critical discussions of West Indian literary developments. Now for the first time in her life she began to acknowledge her whiteness as a problem. "I sigh, thinking how during Federal days I believed that the West Indies could be the best small nation of mixed people in the world. After all, I have been here for 356 years (since Thomas Warner came). Then I strolled to the Trinidad Library and found my one novel on a shelf for 'white people's fiction.'"⁶⁶

Even nature seemed to have conspired against the resumption of her writing. In August 1979, just a few months after Rhys's death, Dominica was devastated by Hurricane David, one of the most destructive storms to hit the Caribbean region in decades. Allfrey's home was nearly destroyed and her few possessions were sodden. Months of scarcity and deprivation followed. Everyone was poorer, there was no electricity, no telephone service, no cooking gas. Debris lined the street for months. Rhys's daughter Maryvonne, upon hearing the news, had written to Diana Athill in London asking her to send Allfrey £200 from her mother's estate.

Progress on "In the Cabinet" was hampered by ill-health, accidents, and financial hardships. Allfrey's heart was not in it, although a measure of literary enthusiasm would return occasionally when she had a request for the reissue of some of her old work, or when scattered articles appeared about her work. The greatest boost was the reissue of *The Orchid House* by Virago in 1982. When Allfrey received her first copies of the new edition in January 1982 she was thrilled. The much-anticipated event enlivened a period of her life when she was "down and out," and lifted her depressed spirits.⁶⁷ The triumph of seeing the novel reissued was marred, however, by her discomfiture when she read the introduction and found that from its opening paragraph it was built on

establishing comparisons between her and Rhys. Virago's decision to publish the novel owed much to Elaine Campbell's efforts, for which Rhys had paved the way by bringing the novel to the attention of Francis Wyndham and Diana Athill, and Allfrey had been exceedingly grateful. But now she found herself "most distressed" ("rather excited," as one friend described her) at being again placed under Rhys's shadow, her own career presented, in her view, as an appendage to Rhys's stellar success with *Wide Sargasso Sea*.⁶⁸

Despite her affection for Rhys, comparisons between the two had become wormwood to her. Allfrey felt that as a Dominican writer she had come first - her own *The Orchid House* having been published a good thirteen years before *Wide Sargasso Sea* - and was miffed by being forced into the shadow of one whom she had loved dearly but whose life had fallen short of her own ideal of a "real" life immersed in the events of the world and their island.⁶⁹ She came to feel that "she had come first and Jean had gotten all the praise."⁷⁰ (Interestingly enough, Allfrey always made an implicit distinction between Rhys as a Dominican writer, with an inalienable right by birth and circumstances to be called so, and herself as a Dominican and a West Indian writer. She never extended "West-Indianness" to include Rhys, establishing a clear line of demarcation between their different identities as writers.) She believed, moreover, that Rhys had "borrowed" elements from her work. She would insist that she had "pinched" character names from *The Orchid House* (Christophine and Baptiste), and would tell a friend, Pierrette Frickey, during one of her visits, "over the usual tea and crumpets," that Rhys had unconsciously taken passages from her novel. Asked whether she had ever mentioned this to Rhys, she replied that "she would have done so, but did not want to hurt her."⁷¹

There are indeed numerous similarities between the two novels - the character names Allfrey often mentioned (Christophine, particularly, as it is the name of a fruit and not usually considered a proper name), the central role played in each by the childhood nurse, the lavish descriptions of an overwhelming and often threatening landscape, the estate house as a focal point of each tale, among others - that justified Allfrey in feeling piqued when she heard Rhys's work lionized by the many admirers who wrote or visited with numerous inquiries about Rhys and very few about herself. It was Allfrey's opinion that the historical perspective of *Wide Sargasso Sea* - the setting in the post-emancipation period and the nuances of Rhys's understanding of the growing power of the mulatto middle class, primarily - had either come from their many conversations about the political developments in the West Indies or directly from Rhys's reading of *The Orchid House*. It is not that she considered *The Orchid House* a better novel than *Wide Sargasso Sea*; this was never her claim. But that she wished her influence on Rhys's *Wide Sargasso Sea* to be acknowledged.

Moreover, she felt that her own political and writing career had had such breadth, that she had risked and lost so much in pursuing her dream of being of service to the Dominican people, that in the years following Rhys's death she had come to resent the frequent inquiries for information and insights into her old friend's career while no interest was expressed in her own work. More often than not she would leave letters unanswered - Rhys's biographer Carole Angier had to appeal to Allfrey's friend Polly Pattullo to get a reply - and would greet visitors politely but reticently. Some friends came to feel that "the worst thing anyone could do was to compare her to Jean Rhys."⁷² Those interviewers who succeeded in eliciting the most information about her relationship with Rhys were, not surprisingly, those whose interest was in her own career and writings, like Pattullo and Pierrette Frickey.

Grateful as Allfrey was for Campbell's efforts to get *The Orchid House* reissued, she saw the comparisons to Rhys in almost every review of the novel as stemming primarily from her introduction. Rory Barnes, in *The National Times*,

made much of the comparison, concluding that *The Orchid House* was not another *Wide Sargasso Sea*, "but given the pure genius of Rhys' shimmering masterpiece, this is hardly devastating criticism."⁷³ *The Bookseller* acknowledges the book's original publication in 1953 but still goes on to describe it as "strongly evocative of *The Wide Sargasso Sea* by her friend and compatriot Jean Rhys."⁷⁴ Even when not dwelling on the Rhys connection, the early reviews were distasteful to her. The brief uncredited note that appeared in the *Sunday Times* was, as the friends who sent it on to her called it, "rather unpleasant." It was not a review in any sense of the word as it contained no comment on the novel itself other than a perfunctory allusion to Rhys's work. It described Allfrey as having been left "broke" by the closing of the *Star*, and intimated that the publication of her novel "may improve her finances, which have never recovered from a hurricane in 1979."⁷⁵ Allfrey, the anonymous writer underscored, "speaks with the Cheltenham accent of a vicar's wife, except that she says 'man' at the end of every sentence, like a Jamaican dope-smuggler." She was gratified to learn that J.S. Arthur, an old friend from the British High Commission, had brought the novel to the attention of Princess Margaret during a visit to Barbados - he had reminded the Princess that she had met Allfrey on board ship at the Independence celebrations in Dominica, having met her previously at the Federal inauguration - but even privately she could not escape comparisons to Rhys. "Both my wife and I think it is every bit as good as Jean Rhys," he wrote, "in fact I would say rather better - the most enchanting work I have read in a long time."⁷⁶

Rhys's shadow loomed over the last remaining years of Allfrey's life; but less and less ominously as her own career - particularly her political career - began to gain merited recognition. In April 1982 Polly Pattullo, then an assistant writer for London's *Observer Colour Magazine*, wrote to propose a visit for an interview about her political and literary work. Pattullo had come across a reference to her political and literary work in Gordon Lewis's *The Growth of the Modern West Indies* and had just finished reading *The Orchid House*, which she had found "truly beautiful." Her interest in the Federation, and her genuine understanding of the older woman's curious mixture of idealism and pragmatism, led to an outpouring of information and insights when the visit finally took place in 1984. For many years Pattullo's published interviews and articles would remain the most revealing and informative sources on Allfrey's life and career. Allfrey's gratification was enhanced by this being the first request for an interview she had had in years that did not revolve around Jean Rhys. A few months earlier Allfrey had been quite interested in a request from an assistant editor at the *Times Literary Supplement*, to provide a few pieces for the *TLS*, only to be sorely disappointed at the first book they asked her to review - Selma James's *The Ladies and the Mammies: Jane Austen and Jean Rhys*.⁷⁷

During this period Allfrey also befriended Pierrette Frickey, a literature professor at West Georgia College whom she met in 1983 while Frickey was visiting Dominica researching an essay on Rhys. Frickey had been taking a jeep tour in the mountains when she had seen "a very thin and fragile-looking woman with the bluest eyes, her lovely white hair pulled in a chignon," walking along the road.⁷⁸ She had known at once that it was Allfrey, about whom she had heard often and whose novel she had read, and who, overjoyed at the prospect of company and conversation, had invited her to the millhouse nearby for the first of many chats during which they drifted from one subject to the other: from her goat Doudou to the merits of taking baths among the ferns in the waterfall in front of her millhouse; from Allfrey's belief that Rhys had "stolen" the character of Christophine from *The Orchid House* to her admiration of Rhys's "superb craftsmanship" as a writer. During the last year of Allfrey's life, Frickey, together with Elaine Campbell - whose essay on the works of Allfrey, Rhys, and Elma Napier appeared in *World Literature Today* in 1984⁷⁹ - and Pattullo, whose insightful article on Allfrey's Federal career appeared in 1985 in the *Observer*⁸⁰ - reawakened Allfrey's hopes that the political and literary

careers for which she had endured poverty and deprivation would at long last be recognized.

The moderate attention and recognition Allfrey received in her last years for her political and literary work reconciled her with the memory of her old friend Jean Rhys. Resentment, if resentment there had been, had stemmed from things foreign to their friendship. There had never been jealousy and competition between them while Rhys was alive. Quite the contrary, Allfrey had always felt the deepest pride in Rhys as a writer and a Dominican, as her frequent efforts to maintain Rhys's name alive in the minds of the readers of the *Star* had demonstrated. The essence of their friendship, indeed, had been their shared ties to Dominica, and their awareness of being two very different people and by extension, very different writers. When Allfrey had written about Rhys after the latter's death, she had titled her short piece, "A Tribute." Then, her admiration had been untainted by the tensions over the comparisons between the two that had surfaced relentlessly after Rhys's death. And untainted it was again in 1984, when Allfrey was asked to select for publication two poems of hers to be included in *The Penguin Book of Caribbean Verse*. Of the many poems she had written over her lifetime, Allfrey chose for what would be her last published work during her lifetime, "Love for an Island," the poem that encompassed her overpowering love for her native island, and "The Child's Return," the poem she had written in 1973 for her dear and much admired friend Jean Rhys.

Notes

¹ The phrase is used by Elaine Savory, quoting from Mrs. [A.C.] Carmichael's *Domestic Manners and Social Conditions of the White, Coloured, and Negro Population of the West Indies* (London: Whittaker, Treacher, and Co., 1833) in an unpublished paper "Measuring Against the Real Life: Whiteness as Unquestioned Essence in Mrs. Carmichael's *Domestic Manners* ..." To be included in the collection *Women at Sea: Travel Writing on the Margins of Caribbean Discourse*, Margarite Fernández Olmos and Lizabeth Paravisini-Gebert, editors.

² See for example Elaine Campbell's introduction to the 1982 edition of *The Orchid House* (London: Virago); Campbell's "Literature and Transnational Politics in Dominica." *World Literature Written in English* 24:2 (1984): 349-359; Ramabai Espinet's "Adieu Foulards, Adieu Madras: The Place of the Euro-Creole Woman Writer With Particular Reference to the Works of Jean Rhys and Phyllis Shand Allfrey." Ph.D. dissertation, University of the West Indies, 1993; Elizabeth Nunez-Harrell's "The Paradoxes of Belonging: The White West Indian Woman in Fiction." *Modern Fiction Studies* 31:2 (1985): 281-293; and Evelyn O'Callaghan's "The Outsider's Voice: White Creole Women Novelists in the Caribbean Literary Tradition." *Journal of West Indian Literature* 1:1 (1986): 74-88.

³ Carole Angier, *Jean Rhys: Life and Work* (Boston: Little Brown & Co., 1991), 13.

⁴ Jean Rhys, *Smile Please: An Unfinished Autobiography* (New York: Penguin, 1988), 31.

⁵ Phyllis Shand Allfrey, *The Orchid House*. Introduction by Lizabeth Paravisini-Gebert (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1997), 153.

⁶ Phyllis Shand Allfrey to Elaine Campbell, n.d.

⁷ Hesketh Bell, *Glimpses of a Governor's Life: From Diaries, Letters and Memoranda* (London: Sampson, Low, Marston & Co., Ltd., 1936), 25.

⁸ Interview with Lorna Robinson, 10 August 1993.

- ⁹ Rhys, *Smile Please*, 88.
- ¹⁰ James Anthony Froude, *The English in the West Indies or the Bow of Ulysses* (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1888), 144.
- ¹¹ Phyllis Shand Allfrey, "Jean Rhys: A Tribute," *Kunapipi* 1:2 (1979): 23-24.
- ¹² Polly Pattullo, "Phyllis Shand Allfrey Talking with Polly Pattullo." In *Writing Lives: Conversations Between Women Writers*, edited by Mary Chamberlain (London: Virago, 1988), 227.
- ¹³ Pattullo [1988], 227.
- ¹⁴ Quoted in Angier, 23.
- ¹⁵ See Angier, 419, 369.
- ¹⁶ See Pierrette Frickey, "The Dominican Landscape: In Memory of Jean Rhys," *Jean Rhys Review* 3:1 (Fall 1988): 2-3.
- ¹⁷ Frickey, 2-3.
- ¹⁸ The anecdote is told in the article by Frickey quoted above (4-10).
- ¹⁹ See Angier, 420.
- ²⁰ PSA to JR, 19 September 1941. All quotations in this paragraph are from this letter.
- ²¹ Interview with Adèle Olyphant Emery, 6 September 1991.
- ²² Angier, 420.
- ²³ PSA to JR, 19 September 1941.
- ²⁴ See Angier's discussion of Rhys's isolation in the work cited above (436-437).
- ²⁵ Douglas Hill, ed. *Tribune 40: The First Forty Years of a Socialist Newspaper* (London: Quartet Books, 1977), 7-14.
- ²⁶ Interview with Arnold Active, 6 July 1991.
- ²⁷ Dilys Henrik Jones to Lizabeth Paravisini-Gebert, 29 May 1993.
- ²⁸ Pattullo, 230.
- ²⁹ Angier, 595.
- ³⁰ Phyllis Shand Allfrey, "Review of *Wide Sargasso Sea*," *Star*, 13 May 1967, 4.
- ³¹ Phyllis Shand Allfrey, "Jean Rhys: A Tribute."
- ³² Allfrey, "Review of *Wide Sargasso Sea*."
- ³³ "Jean Rhys: 'I'll Have to Go on Living ...'" Recorded on 15 April 1981 for Radio Three, British Broadcasting Corporation.

- 34 JR to PSA, n.d. (believed to have been written in the Fall of 1973).
- 35 Phyllis Shand Allfrey, "Most Famous Dominican." *Star*, 20 January 1968, 6, 14.
- 36 Jean Rhys, "Again the Antilles." *Star*, 15 March 1969, 2.
- 37 PSA to JR, 8 February 1973.
- 38 JR to PSA, 23 March 1973. All quotations in this paragraph are from this letter.
- 39 Elaine Campbell, "From Dominica to Devonshire: A Memento of Jean Rhys." *Kunapipi* 1 (1979): 7.
- 40 JR to PSA, n.d.
- 41 JR to PSA, 23 March 1974.
- 42 JR to PSA, 16 May 1973. All quotations in this paragraph are from this letter.
- 43 Phyllis Shand Allfrey and Robert Allfrey, "The Threatened Forest," unpublished manuscript in the Allfrey Archives.
- 44 JR to PSA, 28 June 1975.
- 45 JR to PSA, 10 July 1975.
- 46 JR to PSA, 4 August 1975.
- 47 JR to PSA, 25 October 1975.
- 48 JR to PSA, 25 October 1975.
- 49 Liverpool, N.J.P., "The Politics of Independence in Dominica," *Bulletin of Eastern Caribbean Affairs* 4:2 (1978): 20-23.
- 50 Phyllis Shand Allfrey, "Jean Rhys Signs Petition." *Star*, 1 April 1977, 1.
- 51 JR to PSA, 14 May 1977.
- 52 Phyllis Shand Allfrey, "Book Review: *Sleep It Off Lady*." *Star*, 28 January 1977, 6.
- 53 JR to PSA, 14 May 1977.
- 54 JR to PSA, 30 September 1977.
- 55 JR to PSA, 30 September 1977.
- 56 PSA to Elaine Campbell, n.d.
- 57 PSA to Elaine Campbell, n.d.
- 58 JR to PSA, 4 September 1978.

- 59 JR to PSA, 3 March 1979.
- 60 JR to PSA, 3 March 1979.
- 61 Allfrey, "Jean Rhys: A Tribute."
- 62 PSA to Adèle Olyphant Emery, 6 June 1979.
- 63 A.J. Seymour to PSA, 6 July 1978.
- 64 PSA to Elaine Campbell, n.d. All quotations in this paragraph are taken from this letter.
- 65 Phyllis Shand Allfrey, "Review: *Caribbean Quarterly*." *Star*, 2 February 1979, 4.
- 66 Allfrey, "Review: *Caribbean Quarterly*."
- 67 Interview with Patricia Honychurch, 10 April 1995.
- 68 Interview with Patricia Honychurch, 10 April 1995.
- 69 Interview with Lennox Honychurch, 11 April 1995.
- 70 Interview with Polly Pattullo, 12 April 1995.
- 71 Frickey, 6.
- 72 Interview with Polly Pattullo, 12 April 1995.
- 73 Rory Barnes, "The Orchid House." *National Times*, 15-21 August 1982.
- 74 *The Bookseller*, 6 February 1982.
- 75 "Indomitable in Dominica," *Sunday Times*, 11 April 1982.
- 76 J.S. Arthur to PSA, 2 March 1982.
- 77 Holly Eley to PSA, 19 October 1983.
- 78 Frickey, 5.
- 79 Elaine Campbell, "Literature and Transnational Politics in Dominica." *World Literature Written in English* 24:2 (1984): 349-359.
- 80 Polly Pattullo, "Phyllis Shand Allfrey's 'Caribbean Chronicle.'" *Observer Magazine* (July 1985): 22-25.

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