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Everyday Movements of Errantry examines Édouard Glissant's theory of errantry, defined as sacred wanderings which result in the development of relational identities, as a means of diminishing Othering practices that occur across various aspects of identity. Though scholars of Caribbean literature have long examined errantry in spatial practices, such as migration, exile, and displacement, my approach focuses on errantry perceived in embodied, everyday movements in the texts *Midnight Robber* by Nalo Hopkinson, *A House for Mr. Biswas* by V. S. Naipaul, *The Dragon Can't Dance* by Earl Lovelace and Opal Palmer Adisa's *It Begins with Tears*. Each text provides a different view of power relations, whether in power, subjugated, or fluctuating, which informs a character's use of Othering practices. I analyze these texts' micro-narratives to uncover everyday movements of errantry, which, I argue, inform characters' identity constructions as members of various racial, classed, gendered, and sexual groups. I contend that as characters' micro-movements bring them into contact with their Other, practices of Othering diminish as a character's errantry increases. With the diminishment of Othering practices, characters develop relational identities, which are pluralistic in nature. I argue that these small-scale embodied movements of errantry operate to perform and to secure pluralistic identities for Caribbean subjects, influenced by both their root cultures and new interrelations with Others.

EVERYDAY MOVEMENTS OF ERRANTRY

by

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To D. G. Haradon,
for first inspiring my love of writing.
You are here with me in these pages.

APPROVAL PAGE

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION: ERRANTRY'S ROLE IN DIMINISHING OTHERING

This project sparked into existence during a presentation of my article, “Alice’s Struggles with Imperialism: Undermining the British Empire through *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*,” where I discussed Alice’s role in helping further anti-imperialistic ideals in Britain through childhood indoctrinations. During questions, a woman stood and with disdain stated, “But Alice is white.” I responded with a statement about the colonization of Ireland and Dodgson’s intended audience. But I began at that moment considering the power dynamics between community’s insiders and outsiders and how some people in society assume abilities, experiences, and beliefs based on specific aspects of identity, even when discussing children’s literature. My subsequent research in postcolonial studies, specifically into Caribbean theorists and literatures, led to my interest in Othering and ways of diminishing its attitudes. Far before Brexit and Trumpism foregrounded this issue, Othering practices caused concern. Now, as Western societies become frighteningly divisive and tribalistic, Caribbean theorists provide an indispensable lesson on gaining better Relations.

My research into diminishing Othering begins with the concept of errantry, most notably used by Édouard Glissant in his text, *Poetics of Relation*. In essence, Glissant argues that through the practice of errantry individuals gain fuller identities, which are not only based on their roots but also their Relations with Others. Glissant states that this

Relational identity, and I would add viewing the world from a Relational stance, develops individuals' capacities for dialectics, relying on both dialectic's connotations of discussion and tension. Relationally, individuals gain the ability to engage in discussions of tension-filled topics, resulting in growth and social harmony. Glissant's concept of Relations which stems from one's errantry, can become a method for diminishing Othering. As I analyze identity evolution and Othering behaviors, my use of Glissant's errantry focuses on dialectical tensions visible in individuals' micro-movements. Communities may engage in errantry as they move or relocate (such examples could be read during specific moments in both Nalo Hopkinson's *Midnight Robber* and V.S. Naipaul's *A House for Mr. Biswas*); however, deciphering communal motivations and any resulting communal identity shifts becomes problematic with a theory accentuating diversity and particularity. For this reason, I reserve references to errantry for individuals and not groups.

Errantry, as defined by Glissant, is "wandering but with a sacred motivation" (Wing 211). He begins his scholarship stressing the "wandering" as individual movements. Glissant states that during nomadic times the concept of errantry stressed personal adventure and physical advancement, not a culturally fixed origin: "The root is not important. Movement is" (14). Therefore, the cultural center and periphery remained equivalent because the conquerors were the moving, transient root themselves. They brought rootedness with them as they moved into different locations. Empires, conversely, stressed the concept of rootedness as nation-states developed and became consumed with separating themselves based on a single, unique root. As the various

empires wandered into other countries, they advanced an understanding of a centered culture and the desire to be rooted or connected with that center, developing a category of Other. Whereas the wanderings in prior times did not involve the denigration of conquered people, since the times of empires, societies have relied on their “wanderers” or explorers or tourists to represent the root and belief in the singular correctness of their societal ways. Upon reading Glissant, I asked; what happens if the root is not statically identified with the nation-state, but people instead search for relations with the Other? What happens when people stop trying to conquer the Other?

These answers rely on an understanding of the characteristics of what Glissant calls root identities. The root, as we know it today, begins in Western countries after “movement becomes fixed and nations declare themselves in preparation for their repercussions in the world. This fixing, this declaration, this expansion, all require that the idea of the root gradually take on the intolerant sense” (Glissant 14). Glissant’s concept of the root is as an arboreal, or an intolerant, overtaking stalk, which destroys all around it. The root fixes itself to a piece of land, intent on not budging, not allowing space for anything else that is not of itself. It claims this space of land and then prepares “for [the world’s] repercussions” in doing so. The root knows there will be repercussions that require defense as the rooted becomes more intolerant. Glissant finds that those people who begin with a rooted identity, only know one way of life, one set of customs, and one belief system. Glissant states that a rooted identity contains four aspects: its origin story or founding episode, the filiation of said episode where children become indoctrinated into a culture (Glissant maintains this encompasses a “hidden violence”

towards other cultures), a legitimizing claim of the “entitlement” to land which becomes a territory, and, finally, the projection of this legitimate existence onto other territories (Glissant 143). A root identity, then, is what one has been taught about how and why one lives and occupies a specific space. These aspects of rooted identity become applicable even when discussing individuals and individual micro-movements. As a root identity begins understandings of life, religion, and country, specific actions must be taken to move to a relational identity, where a root identity’s tendencies towards intolerance and static beliefs transform into constructive circulating beliefs about diverse cultures, including the initial rooted culture. Instead of being a universal framework, Glissant’s stated elements of root identity initiates commonalities between people that can be built upon towards relational identities. Additionally, Glissant does not state when individuals originate the transformative movements to gaining a relational identity. These phases of identity construction remain specific and particular.

As readers may guess, errantry becomes the mode of moving from root to relational identities. Errantry, however, cannot simply be wandering movements. Ian Baucom, in *Specters of the Atlantic: Finance Capital, Slavery, and the Philosophy of History*, defines a movement’s errancy specifically as “not as mistaken” (312). He instead insists that it includes the questioning and imagining of multiple entanglements and relations between spacetime, where one is “in imaginative flight across the world” (Baucom 312-13). Baucom and Glissant both reject the common usage of errancy as to be in a state of erring. They do not view errantry/cy as a mistaken journey but prefer to complicate ideas of erring by incorporating entanglements for some higher or better

result. Baucom, specifically, sees errancy as culminating in the questioning and imagining of the entanglements of histories and cultures, which imagines errancy as an entanglement of time and space. As errantry/cy cannot be an example of erring or a mistake, errantry theory instead calls upon an analysis of sacred wandering. Perhaps the inclusion of the sacred is wholly brought forth from the use of errantry in medieval studies to describe the adventurous wanderings of a knight, searching for a quest. While these searches for quests were often at the behest of a monarch, as well as funded by the throne, they do not adequately represent the degree of intolerance that often resulted from colonizing acts, which becomes the historical and cultural basis for Glissant's aspects of rooted identity. Regardless of origin, Glissant's text specifies the quest as motivated by a desire for better Relations and understandings of the Other. The wandering of the individual, when not attached to empire building but focused on improving connections across differences, takes on a sacred quality.

Through errantry, an individual can gain a relational identity. However, while still striving towards this identity, Glissant uses the term Relations with a capital R, to describe how the self and Other (with a capital O) become entangled in a relationship that is fraught with both conflict and benefit. Glissant's notation names and calls out the Relation between the individuals responsible for Othering. He does not outright blame the Othering individual for the negative consequences of such practices; however, his action in capitalizing Relations highlight the historical relationships between groups and the denigrating outcomes that an individual, community, and people endure when Othered. For readers, these histories are directly linked to the specific relationship where

Othering takes place. Glissant argues that to end Othering we must attend to the Relations between people(s) and the complexities of them. Relations are most visible during moments of errantry, as people struggle with their root identity and strive to gain a relational identity. Glissant refers to “*errance*, its ending linked for the contemporary reader with deconstruction’s validation of *différance*” (Wing xvi, italics in original indicating the original French). French word *errance* connotes difference, purposefully used to de-associate ideas of errantry from being errant, a mistake, or an error. Instead of denigrating difference, errantry works with moments of difference, not only accepting or tolerating it but celebrating difference as a means towards greater understanding and identity-building. Analyzing these valid moments of difference as one navigates Relations results in diminished Othering and relational identities.

Relational identities are comprised of four similarly originated aspects of a root identity. In the place of a world creation or founding story, relational identities are founded through the “conscious and contradictory experience of contacts among cultures” which errantry instigates (Glissant 144). Further, it is not reinforced generationally through filiation, but in the “chaotic network” of additional Relations. In terms of land and legitimacy, relational identities do not “devise any legitimacy as its guarantee of entitlement, but circulates, newly extended” and do not “think of a land as a territory from which to project toward other territories but as a place where one gives-on-and-with rather than grasps” (144). Accepting different cultures where one is able to not judge nor attempt to change those cultures, or a culture’s use of land, allows identities to circulate through cultural beliefs, constantly extending themselves and their constructs.

Through this process, one “gives-on-and-with” the various cultural practices becoming relational. It remains important to note that one’s root identity does not disappear, but also becomes incorporated into a relational identity as one of many experiences.

Reading Glissant’s *Poetics of Relation* as a theory of errantry, I rely on a translated edition by Betsy Wing. Some scholars reject the concepts of World Literature as a discipline if translation is used because certain moments remain untranslatable, as Emily Apter argues in *Against World Literature: On the Politics of Untranslatability*. Apter insists that translations too often “fall prey inevitably to the tendency to zoom over the speed bumps of untranslatability in the rush to cover ground” (3), thus not only losing portions of an author’s message, but also prompting questions of what aspects of literature matter and what can be left out. Other scholars, such as Wai Chee Dimock in “Literature for the Planet,” argue for translation and transference as de-nationalizing acts. The translations of literatures allow for global transit; in Dimock’s example these are resistant concepts useful to combat totalitarian governments, which “extends, triangulates, and transforms” literature’s meanings (Dimock 177). I find this side of the translation argument most congruent with Glissant’s desire for errantry. Glissant argues that the prior colonizing nations transferred their literature in particular to their colonies as a way to reinforce colonial ideals of superiority, using language as a universal “with the aim of providing legitimacy to the attempt at domination” (28). These roles of literary influence have since, however, drastically changed, with the movement of literature from the “peripheries toward the Center” and later from “periphery to periphery” (Glissant 29). These movements occur as translations are constructed and literary transference ensues.

Literature's global transit provides not only a de-nationalizing, but also a de-centering of knowledge and power.

My analyses of errantry are located completely in literary analysis. While I believe Édouard Glissant meant his theory of errantry to be philosophical, he began with the importance of errantry in literature in his *Poetics of Relations*. Glissant found that a root identity begins with language, specifically “linguistic intransigence” that enforces a sense of monolingualism (15). However, through epics which stress errantry and often exile, such as the Old Testament, the *Iliad*, the *Chansons de Geste*, the *Aeneid*, and the African epics, he finds the “great founding books of communities” (15). Glissant, thus, begins examining the paths to community through errantry and exile as described in literature, finding that “these are books about the birth of collective consciousness, but they also introduce the unrest and suspense that allow the individual to discover himself there” (15). The ties between errantry and the struggle of root and relational identities, including micro-level issues such as personal senses of belonging, are experienced in literature. Glissant states that “the thought of errantry is also the thought of what is relative, the thing relayed as well as the thing related. The thought of errantry is a poetics, which always infers that at some moment it is told. The tale of errantry is the tale of Relation” (18). The wandering travels that comprise errantry must be told as this is one way to bring about Relation in those who have different experiences. The relating and relaying of story can assist in diminishing practices of Othering. This is the value of errantry for conscientious readers. Relating cultural aspects literarily can help in bringing different peoples together; however, it can also assist in the Othering of people through

perpetuating stereotypes and generalizations. The need to look at particulars, even in literature and literary characters, remains a strong demand of errantry theory.

I ground my analysis in Caribbean literature since it epitomizes the ability to theorize while still maintaining the importance and strength of particulars. My reasoning moves outside of the tertiary fact that Glissant is from Martinique. I find the Caribbean as an archipelago space provides a rare outlook about Relations with Others. Many Caribbean theorists detail this unique space and its influences on ideas of coexistence, conviviality, and syncretism. In *The Repeating Island*, Antonio Benítez-Rojo states, when describing the repeating island motif, that the mega-archipelago is repeating in some histories and experiences, but that each copy is different because of the particulars that hold some bridging connections. His theories of syncretism and supersyncretism do not establish signifiers of sources separately but as coexisting within the same system. Through syncretism, Benítez-Rojo stresses that there is no center or boundary limits in the Caribbean; no island can claim to be the original from which the copies are made. While theorizing about the Caribbean and its creation as a space for literature and theory, Benítez-Rojo widely makes space for the particulars of each island nation. They are thus both the Caribbean, drawing a singular strength, and individual Caribbean islands, celebrating differences amongst them.

While Benítez-Rojo looks at the celebration of differences between Caribbean nations, Paul Gilroy's *Postcolonial Melancholy*, drawing from his work defining *The Black Atlantic*, discusses issues of conviviality when re-located in the prior colonizers' world. *The Black Atlantic* discusses the instabilities and mutability of identities that arise

with movement, conjunctions, and relocation as well as patterns of movement which transform and relocate individuals. However, Gilroy maintains that these patterns have been marked between specific nations. While he seems to positively define a space as the Black Atlantic, which still maintains a rhizomorphic, fractal structure, in *Postcolonial Melancholy* he adds the importance of not only remembering imperialistic and colonial histories but also the importance of continuously acknowledging them and working through the emotions that arise with such a history. The once productive term conviviality, defined as “the processes of cohabitation and interaction that have made multiculture an ordinary feature of social life in Britain’s urban areas and in postcolonial cities elsewhere” (Gilroy xv), now has negative connotations. Gilroy sees such differences leading to more hatred. He claims that to live a convivial existence results in feelings that “to have mixed is to have been party to a great civilizational betrayal. Any unsettling traces of the resulting hybridity must therefore be excised from the tidy, bleached-out zones of impossibly pure culture” (125). Attempts towards Bhabha’s hybridity, or conviviality, or coexistence, must maintain a continuous attention to colonization’s past histories and the atrocities inflicted on millions of peoples.

Postcolonial Melancholia reminds readers that when theorizing about spaces, people must also attend to theories of time. Removing time and the struggles over these multiple histories allows for nationalism and the division of identities, as seen in Glissant’s root and relational divide.

Glissant’s errantry and striving for relational identities is one means of coming to what Parrotta calls coexistence. Priya Parrotta, in *The Politics of Coexistence in the*

Atlantic World: The Greater Caribbean, pulls the discussion away from the prior colonizers' worlds and locates the process of coexistence with the Other as a strength in the Caribbean islands. She emphasizes how due to "creativity, contestation and coexistence" the Caribbean can strengthen the conversations taking place around coexistence (Parrotta 5). Parrotta's text details the benefits Caribbean literature holds in discussions of coexistence and syncretism, which revolve around not only remembering but using the multiple tumultuous histories throughout the Caribbean. She specifies

Coexistence is not only about tranquility, nor is it only about the excitement, the rumble, the tempest, that comes from people of diverse histories and backgrounds coming into contact with one another. On the contrary, coexistence is...the meeting of these two sensibilities. Productive turbulence and necessary peace. It is an open question, and a tantalizing promise. (Parrotta 6)

For Parrotta, when individuals do not reject history or actively forget it, the turbulence that comes with different histories, even different sides of a history, produces a "tantalizing promise." Parrotta sees this productive turbulence stemming from colonization and exploitation of the islands that are now "a crucible for some of modernity's most luminous displays of creativity" (6). Undeniably, some of the most influential theorists, powerful artists, and compelling storytellers come from the Caribbean. In these texts, readers find that "its people and ecosystems have produced scenarios of coexistence in which each generate their own unique set of observations and insights. We would all do well to respect the details of these stories, and learn from their trajectories" (Parrotta 6). Once again, Parrotta emphasizes the particulars of each individual storyteller and their particular observations and insights. These will certainly

not all meld together, but as Parrotta stresses the remembrance of histories remains key for coexistence with the Other. She stresses the role of Caribbean literature and Caribbean theorists in providing living paradigms that allow for moments of harmony and moments of useful upheaval in ideas and beliefs. It is these moments, both of harmony and useful upheaval, that errantry endeavors to initiate for the purpose of gaining better Relations and diminishing Othering.

My addition to the above conversations, and my intervention into errantry's theory specifically, is twofold. First, past scholarship primarily defines Others and Othering through national or racial lenses. Glissant theorizes errantry with the beginnings of empire building as nations began to cross into other areas, claiming those lands as their own and depositing imperialistic/colonizing attitudes. While Othering as a concept started in Critical Race Theory about racial Othering, with the expanse of "culture" into multiple fields, it has been used to analyze multiple identity attributes. Some people from different classes are unable to fathom each other's experiences and backgrounds. Some people of different genders, or different views of what constitutes a particular gender, are prone to acts of naming for the purposes of ridiculing and disparaging certain actions and beliefs. Some people of different sexualities, or different views of appropriate sexualities, cannot tolerate sexual views that do not align with their own experiences and beliefs. These inabilities to consider difference as constructive spaces for identity growth and knowledge results in Othering. For this reason, I examine these multiple ways of Othering and errantry's role in diminishing the practices of Othering. I begin my project with acts of racial Othering and progressing to examine economic Othering in V.S.

Naipaul's *A House for Mr. Biswas*, gendered Othering in Earl Lovelace's *The Dragon Can't Dance*, and sexual Othering in Opal Palmer Adisa's *It Begins with Tears*.

My second intervention into errantry theory concerns motivation. Glissant states that the motivation for one's errantry is specifically to better Relations. However, in much literature, while errantry's end results are better Relations, seldom is this the initial goal. Instead I find that through characters' wandering movements, the larger effects of improved Relations are achieved though rarely sought. My analyses, for this reason, seek errantry with a personal sacred, driving purpose. As my analyses also specifically investigate moments of embodied errantry, where macro themes are present but not the focus, my turn to personal motivations for errantry seems most appropriate. Thus, Tan-Tan's motivation for errantry in Nalo Hopkinson's *Midnight Robber* is her personal survival as a fugitive through unknown terrain, but her errantry ends with diminishing racial Othering that occurs between herself, as a tallperson, and the douen people.

Moving Glissant's argument to consider personal motivations also moves my focus from macro-level errantries to analyzing moments of micro-level, embodied errantry. To attend to Glissant's definition including sacred motivation, I turn to Gabrielle Jamela Hosein's argument, in "Caribbean Feminism, Activist Pedagogies, and Transnational Dialogues," about agency, the erotic, and the sacred and the de-centering of authority that disrupts boundaries. Her text merges ideas of everyday movement with cultural politics, including the erotic, resistance, and politics of difference, which relies on various symbolic codings of everyday movements. Hosein provides insight into what is considered "sacred" at a micro-level, including the sacredness of gaining agency,

equality, and education. Reading my texts with an attention on the micro-narrative, I focus on characters' everyday movements. Through these movements I find the sacred motivations of: freedom for bodily survival and agency, unsettling static boundaries between class identities, embodied knowledges of belonging, and finding acceptance of one's sexuality and one's sexual past. Each of these motivations become sacred for the individual as they progress the characters' developments into dialectical Relations with Others. I find these personal motivations in agreement with Glissant's appeal for the sacred to drive errantry, not only because they develop into such for the characters, but also because they cultivate the characters' agency and personal valuation of Others. These micro, personal motivations are often the catalysts behind a character performing or experiencing Othering, as well as overcoming Othering attitudes.

Outside of medieval studies, the term errantry is only used theoretically in describing movement at macro-levels in postcolonial studies. Errantry is defined and used by Glissant and Baucom to better understand and theorize the movement at macro-levels, specifically migration, exile, displacement, and the Middle Passage. Movement at these macro levels have been extensively covered, as evidenced in the subfields of migration theory and diaspora studies. For instance, Chris Bongie's *Islands and Exiles* explains the place of exile as not consolidation but the (con)fusion of the many different locations which all have varying amounts of influence, similar to Homi Bhabha's conception of the "third space" of cultural hybridity. Douglas Massey's *Worlds in Motion* & Stephen Castles & Mark Miller's *The Age of Migration* both discuss the problems occurring in migration studies as different types of migration become more common. Elizabeth

DeLoughrey's *Routes and Roots: Navigating Caribbean and Pacific Island Literatures* provides a look into tidalectics, highlighting space/time, as the original transoceanic diaspora and a counter-narrative to filial rootedness. These four examples of macroscalar theories each hold a focus on forms of errantry, space, and time and the conflation of them. Sarah Phillips Casteel's "The Language of Landscape: A Lexicon of the Caribbean Spatial Imaginary" argues for the combination of macro and micro-level understandings by urging a dialectical comprehension of place and displacement, deepening Glissant's definition of errantry as purposeful wandering concurrently taking place in individuals' lives, just as feelings of place and displacement connect and influence each other. In my dissertation, my chapters consider micro, embodied errantry, even though the macro topics of exile, migration, neocolonialism, and modernization surround them, often being the source for the characters' encounters and errantry with the Other. My research indicates that as long as errantry's motivation remains sacred, the reasoning can be personal. The moments of errantry need not be analyzed at a macro level; in fact, the diminishment of Othering occurs when one engages with, and participates in, errantry on an embodied level.

This micro focus is consistent with many spatial theorists. In Edward Soja's *Discovering Thridspace: Journeys to Los Angeles and Other Real-and-Imagined Places*, he argues for a thridspace, or lived space, where spaces of representation embody complex symbolisms. These symbolisms are usually coded and thus understood by members of a particular society; however, some symbolisms are considered uncoded as the processes of reading, identifying, and comprehending the codes are not always

present. My project incorporates distinguishing certain spaces of representation, such as Aldrick's corner hangout or the bush where Tan-Tan finds herself exiled to, and some of the coded and uncoded symbolic movements in literature which allow characters to depict lived space and the positions they negotiate in these lived spaces. I find that moving through lived space and the negotiations of those spaces as one interacts with the inhabitants compels a diminishment of harmful practices when encountering differences. Soja further maintains that it is in seeing spatiality as an inclusive and flexible politics of re-location that culture, identity, and politics combine for practical resistance that increases individual agency and informs a new cultural politics of difference. His politics of re-location necessitates the type of movement that Glissant describes as errantry. Through errantry, we find a way of literarily "seeing" space's transformation into a flexible, inclusive world that celebrates difference. While Soja begins with a macro theme of resistance that results in an individual benefit, I find that through everyday movement of errantry, the micro results in the greater benefit for the macro.

Similar to my proposed trajectory, Doreen Massey in *For Space* begins with the micro as informing macro as she argues that an important aspect of spatial theory considers a population's every day, seemingly mundane, activities and movements. Literarily, an author's diction, chiefly the chosen action verbs, indicates these sometimes tedious, repetitive actions in the text's micro-narrative. Massey points out that one should reflect how these daily cultural practices influence that population's understandings of their location, the larger world, and their place in that world. To this I would add an understanding of their relationships with others in that world. Only through such

concerns can one begin to comprehend the power relations that occur between various cultural participants and institutions particular to a specific place. I draw on this concept, that microscale actions and interactions of individuals inform larger macroscale cultural relations and power dynamics throughout literature, by concentrating on micro-narrative and genre usage which apprise cultural relations and power relations. In considering daily activities, perhaps no smaller movement or activity exists than the movement of an individual body: the everyday repetition of placing one foot in front of the other. In the micro-narrative, readers often gloss over verbs, such as “walk” or “went,” instead of viewing them as purposeful moments of everyday errantry. However, the ability to move bodies is perhaps one of the greatest freedoms and moments of agency that one controls. Through the ability to transport bodies from one location to another, individuals gain agency over location, meaning they gain the choice of location, while being able to factor in the sociopolitical and cultural power relations that reside in the politics of place that Massey speaks about. As Mr. Biswas moves, both his body and his possessions, from house to house and job to job, his errantry reveals the power relations he inhabits and more. Looking at illustrative representations of everyday movements show how these moments connect with concepts of errantry in multiple delineations, including the politics of class and stasis in Mr. Biswas’s case.

Literary representations allow us to study the place (both the setting and the encompassed power relations) and its surrounding details as well as the specific practices to examine which movements become coded as errant. While I overwhelmingly agree with Glissant and Baucom that errantry is not mistaken movements, in my chapters I do

attend to everyday movements that discuss matters some consider errant. For instance, my fourth chapter discusses Othering of sex workers, adulterers, and sexual assault victims. For some readers, an understanding of these sexual actions as errant informs their Othering and results in an Othering reader response. Only through encouraging errantry in readers through sudden generic shifts do authors combat these responses. I believe that errant, as to err, is already present in the sense of wandering movements meant to challenge Othering. Negative rooted beliefs about the errant ways or identities of Others lead to Othering practices. Those holding power in society have laid out what is or is not supposed to be done in a plethora of situations. This is the case with Tan-Tan's Othering of the douen people, Mrs. Tulsi's Othering of Mr. Biswas, Aldrick's Othering of Sylvia, and Kristoff Village's (as well as readers') Othering of Monica. Utilizing errantry contests such ideology and allows these characters and authors to redefine what was coded as errant. Errantry shifts power so that prior errant acts transform into Relational identities that devalue the acts of Othering.

My dissertation, "Everyday Movements of Errantry," comprises four chapters, each addressing examples of Othering that occurs either between races, classes, genders, or sexualities in Nalo Hopkinson's *Midnight Robber*, V.S. Naipaul's *A House for Mr. Biswas*, Earl Lovelace's *The Dragon Can't Dance*, and Opal Palmer Adisa's *It Begins with Tears*, respectively. My focus navigates not only between these identity aspects but also examines the power relations that make Othering possible. I begin my first chapter, "Tracing Errantry: Tan-Tan's Paths through Racial Othering in *Midnight Robber*," by analyzing the racial othering that occurs between New Half-Way Tree's new inhabitants,

called tallpeople, and the planet's indigenous peoples, named douens by the first settlers because of their appearance. Tan-Tan, even as a child, enjoys a power position as a tallperson: the group who defines the boundaries between people and spaces, including the indigenous peoples being labeled as inferior beasts. Utilizing Critical Race Theory's insights on the practices of naming, exoticism, and storytelling, as well as the Akan theory of sankofa, I explore how Othering is manifested in children and how Othering can lessen as one wanders through unfamiliar communities. Tan-Tan proceeds through three exiles, first to New Half-Way Tree, then from the tallpeople's villages, and finally from the douen community. Analysis of the text's micro-narrative demonstrates how the use of words and actions combine in the doctrinaire of children into rooted identities. Tan-Tan accepts and begins Othering douen people as inferior and negatively different through her rooted cultural norms.

However, as Tan-Tan's errantry begins, her root no longer influences her viewpoints in the same manner, and she begins to see the douen people as equals and more advanced than her in numerous abilities. She must fight for her survival from the tallpeople with the help of her Other. Tan-Tan's power position switches when her errantry takes her to the unfamiliar territory of the douen community. She experiences Othering, as many douens reject her presence. This chapter highlights the importance of recognizing and celebrating racial equality, which Tan-Tan finds through African diasporic philosophies and related Caribbean folklore. Language, and the struggles of comprehension, as Tan-Tan moves through her errantry, also facilitate her diminished Othering. Hopkinson formats the female douens' language in bold with asterisks.

Incorporating Black Feminist theory in analysis establishes Hopkinson's formatting as a technique to combat essentializing female identities and experiences. The negative differences between the characters transform into celebrated and valuable traits necessary during Tan-Tan's third exile in the bush with Abitefa. Tan-Tan's errantry takes place in her unfamiliar movements as she wanders through unknown environments and languages with her Other, leading her to a relational identity. As seen in *Midnight Robber*, through the microscale movements of an individual surrounded by the macro theme of exile, as a character's errantry increases, her Othering decreases.

While chapter one considers Othering from an initial position of power, in chapter two I analyze Othering from the position of subjugation. Chapter two, "Tracking Stasis: Developing Mr. Biswas's Classed Identity in *A House for Mr. Biswas*," investigates Othering between economic classes, alongside the macro-theme of migration's influence on the second and third generations of indentured servants from India. I utilize a Marxist theoretical base that evolves to allow for cultural specificities, such as the Caribbean histories of colonization, slavery, and indentured servitude and Caribbean experiences with neocolonization. Through a specific Marxist lens, I examine the idea of economic and physical stasis as a motivation for Mr. Biswas's micro-movements, as he wanders through various houses and jobs in rural Trinidad and Port of Spain. Mr. Biswas experiences Othering from a young age from his relatives who view his family's lack of wealth as his defining identity characteristic. This Othering action defines his root identity as belonging to the laboring class, which entails a traveling, mobile quality to secure employment. Unlike Tan-Tan who is forced into errantry through exile, in Mr.

Biswas's errantry, he purposefully rejects his rooted identity and strives for stasis. Caribbean scholars extensively theorize about the positives of stasis as a mean of rootedness. However, this rootedness differs greatly from Glissant's definition of a rooted identity. For Caribbean scholars, rootedness engages an individual in multiple cultural traditions informing identity construction and providing a sense of belonging. This desire for stasis and rootedness in Indo-Trinidadian culture motivates Mr. Biswas's errantry.

Mr. Biswas, although in a subjugated position, practices Othering as a strategy of confrontation, in Foucault's terms. Turning to reciprocal Othering acts provide Mr. Biswas with a form of resistance against the Othering he encountered as a child and young adult. However, through his errantry he encounters his Others in ever-increasing ways and discovers Othering will not enable him to achieve his goal of stasis. I find that Mr. Biswas's micro-movements increase his errantry and bring him closer to his Other, and his Othering begins to diminish. This is particularly evident as his modes of transportation evolve, from walking and bicycling to owning an automobile, which allows him greater mobility and places him in a power position over his movements and his long-desired stasis. The emphasis on micro-movements spread to Mr. Biswas's figurative language as he utilizes the idea of "paddling one's own boat" as a recurring means to own power over his movements, including those resulting in failure. With an increase in his power position, Mr. Biswas's movements exemplify errantry as they wander back and forth between various houses and his original point of familial exodus.

My analysis further includes V.S. Naipaul's book covers of the multiple editions of *A House for Mr. Biswas* that are in print, which illustrate an errantry of their own and

emphasize Naipaul's stress on stasis and location. My analyses of the images move from examples of possession and a welcoming promise of wealth to uninhabitable wilderness and an amalgamation of inside/outside spaces. The images' colors, object placements, foliage and sight lines reveal moments of errantry as Mr. Biswas moves between spaces. Through the images and location names of where Biswas lives at various times, his positions in different classes and his changing views towards Others become visible, diminishing as his errantry increases. Mr. Biswas ends in Sikkim Street, connoting a sense of "paradise" in northeast India, gaining partial stasis. More importantly, through errantry, Mr. Biswas has gained an identity comprised of acceptance of his rooted past and an embrace of his relational identity based on better Relations with his Others.

Chapter two focuses on Othering from a subjugated position; conversely chapter three, "Circling Belongings: Aldrick's Plural Masculinities in *The Dragon Can't Dance*, considers a fluctuating gendered power position and errantry's role. Scholars in Caribbean masculinity studies have long theorized about the effects of colonization on masculine identity constructions, where the hyper-masculine man was previously viewed as most common due to comparisons with the colonizer. Now, however, scholars, such as Linden Lewis and Keith Nurse, push for a more holistic view of masculinity based on numerous circumstances, only one of which is the prior relationships with colonizing nations. Nurse argues, in "Masculinities in Transition: Gender and the Global Problematique," that masculinity is fluid and changeable, whereas masculinism is an ideological hegemonic and static belief that continues to construct masculine domination of feminine bodies. Nurse views Caribbean masculinity originally defined according to

this traditional Western masculinism. My analysis of Earl Lovelace's *The Dragon Can't Dance* follows Nurse's premise where I investigate Aldrick's masculinity and the reasons for his fluctuating masculine identity.

In the novel, Aldrick's masculinity as well as his micro-movements take a circular route. His masculine identity changes through three constructions, hegemonic, hyper-masculine, and non-hegemonic, as he wanders through four specific locations or activities. He begins in a hegemonic gendered position of power practicing non-movement and embracing non-possession. However, he rejects this position as 'mas, or masquerade, when it fails to provide a recognition of personhood and resistance. His frantic dragon dance during the two-day Carnival festival fabricates personhood, symbolized by his dragon costume that he remakes each year, just as it fabricates errantry. His time at Carnival is not an example of errantry, as defined by Glissant, as there is no true wandering, but instead the expected movements of his annual dragon dance. Rejecting Carnival's space as one of a false social change, Aldrick begins his errantry in a circular motion, wandering to the corner hangout of "hooligans," where he embraces the label of hyper-masculinity. Through a reading of Toni Morrison's *The Origins of Others*, I find the community's discursive practices of labeling Aldrick and the other man as hyper-masculine results in an Althusserian hailing of the men who merely loiter on the corner, effectively transforming them into hyper-masculine representations. These hyper-masculine identities now exhibit desires for violence and danger, where there previously were none. Aldrick's errantry increases as he and the other men circle the city square, ahead of the police force, and eventually enact a crime. Yet, atypical of

hyper-masculinity, Aldrick's increased errantry leads to a diminishment in the Othering of women and non-hegemonic men. Through the ensuing trial, Aldrick is driven to a non-hegemonic masculine position through incarceration and the language of law, beginning his movement "down the hill." This phrase connotes both his new power position, but also his movements after his release of literally moving down Calvary Hill into Port of Spain to find his new life. Although confined in prison, Aldrick's errantry continues as he wanders alone after losing his comrades. The other men shun him as he transitions from a hyper-masculine identity to a non-hegemonic identity. He experiences Othering through their shunning as well as through the incarceration process where Others attempt to administrate and govern his identity in order for it to be molded into a mirror image of their own.

Through these three masculine spheres, either the Othering of women or non-hegemonic men occurs at Aldrick's hands or he experiences Othering directed towards him. The fluidity of gender positions, and the power positions that come with them, provides a sense of errantry as do Aldrick's physical circling through his community as he searches for masculine belonging. At the end, he has experienced three different masculine constructions due to his errantry and discovered a plural masculinity that evolves according to his environment and his communal needs. Each prior location provides a new understanding of his current Other and as his errantry increases, even though in a circular motion, his Othering diminishes.

My final dissertation chapter, "Generic Errantry: Diminishing Sexual Othering in *It Begins with Tears*," evolves from the previous three chapters and considers authorial

movement through genres. While not typically considered as a power position, authorial movements in texts and through genres perhaps affect readers on the greatest levels. As readers experience unfamiliar or uncomfortable topics and structures, readers' perceptions become malleable. In Opal Palmer Adisa's work, I see her stylistic movements through six distinct genres in a single work as exemplifying errantry. I analyze Adisa's ability to thwart traditional patriarchal narrative modes by weaving through these genres, exemplifying postcolonial Caribbean literature's ability to decolonize the novel, as explained by K. Anthony Appiah in "Cosmopolitan Reader." While I do not argue about the plausibility of "cosmopolitan" individuals, his stance on readerships of world literatures helps to inform my chapter. Adisa's generic errantry, as she wanders back and forth between genres, confronts the reader's Othering of female sexual experiences, specifically as the novel details Monica's experiences with sex work, adultery, and sexual assault. Beginning with dramatic labeling, Adisa positions readers in familiar acts of Othering sexual differences. However, through generic errantry, Adisa challenges traditional institutions of patriarchy, such as religion and literary history, and their doctrines regarding Othering sexuality.

For instance, I find that Adisa's use of mythology combats a traditional Christian view of sexuality. Placing Devil and She-Devil as the Priest and Priestess of Eternal Valley, she employs a religiosity that mixes Christianity, Obeah, and Myal. Her mythological sections occur unexpectedly and seem disconnected to her prose sections. However, the sections highlight the normalization of sexual encounters that take place in Adisa's prose as well as celebrating relationships and love as the characters struggle

through issues such as adultery. Religion's historical stance against women and in the silencing of sexual assault victims is critiqued as Adisa includes a personification of Silence. (Time is personified later in an oral storytelling episode, effectively tackling two issues of sexual assault.) With Foucault's understanding of multiple silences, Adisa's text challenges governmental silencing of women as well as religion's use of silence. To further question religion on sexuality, the mythology segments transition from distinct separate sections to being incorporated into her prose as she leaves off her delineation markers and as she writes about the spiritual entity, River Mumma. This decision moves the religious realm away from those in Eternal Valley and to the direction of the local village priestesses and seers, who emphasize communal responsibility, acceptance, and love of all aspects of being, including one's sexuality. I find that Adisa's use of mythology, as she wanders into it seemingly randomly, results in readers reconsidering preconceived notions about sexuality.

Besides prose and mythology, Adisa incorporates the genre of poetry most often, stressing the importance of female community. Her use of poetry, however, becomes expected as she places a poem before each part of the novel. Utilizing abstract free verse, Adisa tasks readers to connect the greater sexual themes to the poems. The errantry of these poems rests more in the narrative surrounding the poems than in their appearance in the novel. At times, the poems connect to sections prior to them; and, at other times, the connections are not so apparent. The unexpected wandering of relevance, as well as the poems' abstract natures, purposefully provides time to readers as they engage with the poems. The stress of female community, responsibility to that community, and overall

acceptance helps to diminish the Othering of Monica's sexual actions. Adisa's generic errantry disrupts the reader's expectations and experiences, moving readers away from silencing actions and into appreciations of communal healing.

My dissertation ends with a brief conclusion where I summarize errantry's role in diminishing Othering along racial, class, gendered, and sexual identity aspects. While I believe Glissant intended his theory of errantry as a literary theory, he also expanded his work into personal lives and philosophy. With this expansion, my conclusion investigates the theoretical use of errantry in varying texts. In particular, my project will proceed from literary text to visual text and analyzing performance art as texts. This is congruent with recent research on Glissant and errantry. A current art exhibit, titled *Lydia Cabrera and Édouard Glissant: Trembling Thinking*, takes place at the Americas Society. It considers the prominent ideas of Cabrera and Glissant while contemporary artists display works influenced by their ideas of identity, alongside is a video, "Édouard Glissant: One World in Relation," and a catalogue essay by the curators. With the turn of errantry into visual arts, I locate a prior art exhibit, *En Mas': Carnival and Performance Art of the Caribbean* held during the summer of 2017 at the DuSable Art Museum in Chicago, IL, to be a prime site for investigating moments of errantry. The exhibit provided physical artifacts and still pictures or videos of festival demonstrations. Many of these displays underscored the concepts of errantry along with issues of class, gender, and power relations, specifically "Invisible Presence: Bling Memories" by Ebony G. Patterson, "Positions + Power" by Marlon Griffith, and "Inside-Out, Outside-In" by John Beadle. While these exhibits document specific festival processions that occur, typically, once a

year, I argue that such exemplify everyday movements of errantry in two distinct ways. First, the processions' sacred motivations are to combat everyday inequalities in class and gender relations. Second, the processions themselves are composed of the everyday movements of walking, marching, and protesting. Analysis of these visual texts confirm that Othering diminishes as a festival procession includes more micro, everyday movements of errantry. Whether analyzing literary micro-narratives and characters' micro-movements or individuals' micro-movements in performative texts, the application of Glissant's concept of errantry illuminates everyday movements' power to challenge Othering attitudes and transform identities from those rooted in static cultural beliefs to Relational identities focused on the benefits of continuous cultural contacts.

CHAPTER II

TRACING ERRANTRY: TAN-TAN'S PATHS THROUGH RACIAL OTHERING IN *MIDNIGHT ROBBER*

‘Oonuh tallpeople quick to name what is people and what is beast.’ (Hopkinson 92)

Upon first meeting Chichibud, Nalo Hopkinson’s douen character reminds readers of the lingering presence of racial slurs and old-world science, like those demonstrated in the case of Sara (Saartje) Baartman, where diverse physical traits are used to label groups. Discussions of the act of Othering typically begin with discussions of race and the historical Othering that has occurred between racial groups. As apparent in Chichibud statement, racial Othering comes too quickly to people and is reinforced at young ages through language patterns, such as naming. The larger questions I explore in Hopkinson’s *Midnight Robber* is first how racial Othering is taught and, perhaps more importantly, how it is unlearned. Analyzing processes of errantry in Hopkinson’s novel illuminates how individual body movements reflect, and then re-inform, larger social issues revealed during racial interactions. Hopkinson’s novel addresses the racial interaction of Othering as well as how to diminish Othering through Glissant’s theories on building better Relations. Analyzing Tan-Tan’s errantry through the novel as she traverses multiple spaces exemplifies errantry’s role in better Relations with Others.

Focusing on errantry in Hopkinson's *Midnight Robber* involves spatial theories, specifically scholarship on movements and embodiment, and racial theories, explicitly drawing on Critical Race Theory's (CRT) concepts of Othering and storytelling.

Hopkinson, a Jamaican-Canadian author, published *Midnight Robber* in 2000 as her second novel and combines multiple genres, including speculative fiction and folklore, while emphasizing the protagonist's body movements through various spaces. As speculative fiction's popularity rises, many scholars discuss how Hopkinson depicts technology, globalization, modernity, high/low cyberpunk, and postcolonial cybernetics, particularly in *Midnight Robber*.¹ A few scholars combine these focuses with analyses of racial issues and bodies, such as the absence or vanishing of the black body in the science fiction genre and its importance in speculative fiction (Boyle) and the production and labor of black female bodies and the Caribbean's place in globalization (Fehskens).

Additionally, scholars have focused on racial issues and the history of slavery, specifically the revictimization of assault through community disregard which mirrors slavery (Crosby) and the effects of migration, slavery, and colonization on conventional gender roles including motherhood (Anatol). In relation to spatial theories, Myriam Moïse's "Diasporic Caribbean Women Transcending Dystopian Spaces and Reconnecting Fragmented Identities in Nalo Hopkinson's *Brown Girl in the Ring* and

¹ See Ingrid Thaler's chapter "A Better Future?: Ambiguity, Cyberpunk, and Caribbean Syncretism in Nalo Hopkinson's *Midnight Robber*," Eric D. Smith's "'The Only Way Out is Through': Spaces of Narrative and the Narrative of Space in Nalo Hopkinson's *Midnight Robber*," Leif Sorensen's "Dubwise into the Future: Versioning Modernity in Nalo Hopkinson," and Uppinder Mehan's "Postcolonial Science, Cyberpunk and *The Calcutta Chromosome*."

Midnight Robber" discusses dystopia in relation to diasporas and displacement. However, whilst Moïse sees the novel as exemplifying the transcendence of dystopian spaces in a way that allows the protagonist to reform fragmented identities and gain power and selfhood (82), I emphasize the protagonist's transforming motive and Relations as she traverses multiple spaces. The bush in New Half-Way Tree provides, not a dystopian space, but rather a space of safety, knowledge, and growth, which Tan-Tan's physical movements through the space reveals. Nalo Hopkinson's *Midnight Robber* relays the processes and results of bettering Relations through Tan-Tan's micro-movements, which embody a personalized errantry.

My project diverges from Édouard Glissant's original use of errantry in *Poetics of Relations* to better encapsulate how Relations influence errantry by examining the protagonist's initial motivation. *Poetic of Relations* stresses that when "a search for the Other" motivates errantry and creates better bonds with Others, then "uprooting can work toward identity" (Glissant 18). However, in my experience with literature, neither "a search for the Other" nor better bonds are the motive. While errantry often ends with better Relations with the Other, the holistic, altruistic desire to gain better Relations with the Other, that Glissant discusses, seldom motivates movements. Instead I find that an individual's wandering movements achieve improved Relations even though characters rarely seek out such benefits. I find that personal motivations remain key in literary texts, which coincides with Glissant's findings: he states, "this thought of errantry...was disguised 'within' the very personalized adventures" of traveling the world as a "passionate desire to go against a root" (14-15). Characters now demonstrate a semi-

return to Glissant's recognition of the old explorers' necessity of errantry to go against the root. Some characters' errantry is motivated by desires of personal growth or betterment, personal safety or retirement, or personal survival or fulfillment. Far from looking for adventure, some of these personal motivations deal with physical needs as well as satisfying emotional and/or mental desires. Instead of specifically searching out land or resources for a nation, individualized needs lead a person on a wandering path away from their root.

For Tan-Tan, personal survival motivates her errantry, specifically her "passionate desire" to "go against" her root: her father's power and the tallpeople like him who aim to punish her according to blanket rules without any empathetic exceptions.² Briefly, *Midnight Robber* traces Tan-Tan's three exiles as she endures abandonment, on-going physical and sexual assault, homicide, and persecution, most of which occur while she is pregnant with her father's child. Tan-Tan navigates literal alien territories and becomes an adult as her fugitive trackers (her stepmother, Janisette, and the town sheriff, One-Eye) constantly throw her into contact with unknown situations, places, and people. Tan-Tan reaches for her youthful lessons about Caribbean folklores and knowledges as she seeks survival and ends up gaining better Relations with her Others also. Tan-Tan's errant flights from her persecutors are less about going against her society and more about finding safety in what Gloria Anzaldúa calls the borderlands: places that exist between cultures, and whose benefits and hardships become

² The term "tallpeople" is used throughout the paper as this is the term the douen people use throughout *Midnight Robber*. Because my analysis focuses on better Relations with the douen people, the use of their lexicon seems most appropriate.

contradictory through the tricky navigations of diversity and other complexities (1). Tan-Tan's movements precisely position her in a cultural borderland. Tan-Tan's motivations for escape and survival, and her resulting errantry and Relations, are clearest in four distinct, narratively microscale spaces: 1) in the tallpeople's village of Junjuh, 2) on the run with Benta and Chichibud, 3) in the Daddy Tree community, and 4) in the bush with Abitefa. These four places demonstrate that Tan-Tan's Relations with Others progress from harmful relationships to diminishing Othering, while still maintaining aspects of difference, as her errantry increases.

New Half-Way Tree's borderlands influence what 'Relations with the Other' entails for Tan-Tan. Her Relations can be broken into two parts: the root and the Other. For Tan-Tan, her root is her father, Antonio, and the rest of the tallpeople communities. This root places her in a position of power. Tan-Tan is Afro-Caribbean and the daughter of Toussaint's former mayor; as his only child, she has been surrounded with money, servants, and cutting-edge technology (Hopkinson 4-6). In Toussaint, her closest companion is Eshu,³ an implanted, god-like internal internet connection that links every person on Toussaint to the Nansi Web.⁴ As a child, Tan-Tan possesses everything, including all knowledge at her fingertips with just a word. Tan-Tan's privilege extends

³ For more information about Eshu and how West Africa and African diasporas influence his characterization, see Boyle's "Vanishing Bodies: 'Race' and Technology in Nalo Hopkinson's *Midnight Robber*"

⁴ Originally from African (Akan/Ghana) folklore, Nansi derives from Anansi, who is the mythological god of stories, but is often taken to be the spirit (and trickster) of all knowledge or wisdom. Emily Zobel Marshall explains Anansi's origin as religious in Asante, where he bridges the gods and the humans, but political in Jamaica, representing the plights and cunning of enslaved Africans without religious connotations (37-38).

beyond her possessions to her actions. The first view of Tan-Tan, the young, privileged child of the mayor, shows her dangerously climbing high in a julie-mango tree in her backyard in Toussaint, pretending to be the Robber Queen (Hopkinson 13-14).⁵ Instead of reprimanding her for disobeying her Nursie, her father indulges her desires, commenting on her prettiness and her “back-talk” (14). Although it appears Tan-Tan holds an amount of power over her father, Antonio later manipulates her in “climbing the Half-Way tree.” Unbeknownst to Tan-Tan, this action is actually a dimensional planetary shift to the planetary penal colony called New Half-Way Tree. Tan-Tan erroneously ends up “climbing the Half-Way Tree” with Antonio as he tries to escape judgment for murdering his wife’s lover and remain free in a different planet in their multi-dimensional universe (19). Antonio confirms his root status, not only because he is Tan-Tan’s father, but also due to the amount of power and control he maintains. Antonio leaves the “choice” up to Tan-Tan whether to come with him or not; however, as a child, she has no true power or agency over her father as he manipulates her emotions. He pressures Tan-Tan into the action as a demonstration of her love for him and choosing to stay with him instead of her mother: “‘you want to come with me, right?’ ‘Yes, Daddy.’ She didn’t understand, but she wasn’t going to make him leave her again” (71-72). Trying to gain control over her movements, young Tan-Tan allows someone in a powerful root position to dictate her errantry, and the climbing of New Half-Way Tree begins her errant movements. Quite typical of young children, she erroneously blames herself for her

⁵ N.A. Pierce argues this moment demonstrates Hopkinson’s splitting of temporality, as the novel addresses Carnival as both a temporal holiday but also as a “lasting cultural construct which influences the everyday” (212).

parent's separation and her father's temporary absence. And, moments later, Antonio states, “Is a big chance I taking for you, doux-doux” (Hopkinson 72), confirming Tan-Tan’s responsibility and fault. This reinforces Tan-Tan’s internal blame as he affirms that the need for the dimensional shift is due to her desire to be with her father. So, while Tan-Tan is a child of a powerful man, and thus having more power than many others, she at the beginning of the novel is just a child, whose father manipulates her errantry.

Her additional privilege becomes more explicit as Tan-Tan reaches the extraterrestrial planet of New Half-Way Tree and meets Chichibud. After the planetary shift, Tan-Tan can only access her past knowledge as she begins her new life, understandably, frightened. Anzaldúa states that while frightening and uncomfortable, “living on borders and in margins, keeping intact one’s shifting and multiple identity and integrity, is like trying to swim in a new element, an ‘alien’ element” including “an exhilaration in being a participant in the further evolution of humankind, in being ‘worked’ on” (1). Tan-Tan is just a child when she encounters the “alien” planet and inhabitants, but Anzaldúa illuminates the excitements possible for Tan-Tan’s future adulthood as she travels through the new planet with the indigenous character, Chichibud, as her guide (and future friend). However, her relationship with Chichibud begins negatively because of her knowledge from stories and her own assumptions. Upon seeing Chichibud, the helpful douen who will be their guide, Tan-Tan “screamed and jumped behind Antonio” (Hopkinson 91). Even though many Caribbean nations have differing folklores about douens, the novel relays Tan-Tan’s knowledge that the douen people are deceased children, who died before proper christening, and came back with their bodies

on backwards. This provides a physical manifestation of their impious status. Now as spirits, or jumbies, they trick children into following them into the bush to die (Hopkinson 93). Thaler comments on speculative fiction's use of popular African or African diaspora figures, "offering rich material for analyzing the interdependencies of tropes and literary traditions that frequently cross the color line in both directions" (2). In the case of Tan-Tan and douens, this crossing and interdependencies of knowledge traverse planets and the indigenous inhabitants, immediately setting the douen people as the Other, as named and categorized by the tallpeople. For example, Tan-Tan describes Chichibud physically as "strange" (Hopkinson 91), a "creature," "shaped funny," "ugly," with "goat feet," "jokey-looking," who "bobbed...like any lizard" (92). These descriptive words place Chichibud as the Other to the physically normalized beings like Tan-Tan who were exiled from Toussaint, while also suggesting that the douens are mischievous or nefarious.

Not only Tan-Tan brings in assumptions of douen people; Antonio stereotypes them as well. His first statement to Tan-Tan implies a deserved mistrust: "'We don't know nothing about this beast'" (Hopkinson 92). Chichibud quickly points out his Othering action: "'Beast that could talk and know it own mind. Oonuh tallpeople quick to name what is people and what is beast'" (92). Far from being a discussion of speciesism, Chichibud is pointing out an issue of colonization. Graham Huggan and Helen Tiffin tackle the issue of ecocriticism and speciesism in *Postcolonial Ecocriticism: Literature, Animals, Environment*, highlighting the complexities of subalternity during struggles of agency, specifically during the written images and histories of subaltern peoples. These

power struggles become visible in multiple literary genres to create Huggan and Tiffin's categorization of postcolonial ecocriticism. Hopkinson's novel suggests that the indigenous, "alien" creatures share traits, enabling them to be "typed" as "people." Rather than anthropomorphizing the alien inhabitants or creating racist animal/human linkages (as Huggan and Tiffin warn against), Hopkinson vividly points out the damaging assumptions made when one group encounters another group with dissimilar physical appearances. Not as animals or beasts to be controlled or owned, the douen people in Hopkinson's novel remain consistently the indigenous, albeit alien to those in power, inhabitants of the planet. As such, the douen people are not written as subaltern; they have voices in their daily decisions and long-term goals. The agency the douen people practice includes the ability to leave new arrivals in the bush to find their own way. They do not have to guide the tallpeople or accept their items as payment. Douens negotiate their price for their services, as demonstrated when Chichibud refuses a pen as payment from Antonio (Hopkinson 93). New Half-Way Tree's indigenous peoples possess intelligence and agency equal to the exiled Toussaint people. They prove later to be an innovative and industrious people, living in thriving communities hidden from the tallpeople. Only their appearances and additional senses set them apart from the tallpeople.

However, because Antonio describes them as beasts, Tan-Tan follows her root's example, taking on her father's expression a few moments later when she thinks he will begin fighting with the douen. She cheers the idea that Antonio would poison Chichibud because it "would serve the nasty leggobeast right" (Hopkinson 99). Tan-Tan's use of a

Jamaican slang terms to refer to out of control animals (or sometimes promiscuous women) echoes Antonio's language patterns and stereotypes. The echoing of language demonstrates how Othering is learned primarily through parental figures at a young age. Toni Morrison, in *The Origins of Others*, discloses that "one learns Othering not by lecture or instruction but by example" (6). Antonio certainly never lectured Tan-Tan on how to treat Chichibud; there was no time for such instruction. However, children repeat their guardians' word choices and speech patterns, even though they are sometimes uncertain of the full meanings or backgrounds of statements. If parents rely on stereotypes to make decisions and Othering language to promote themselves, then children will as well. Tan-Tan develops her root identity through Antonio's examples, which in turn he has learned through his relations in Toussaint.

Glissant further explains how generational Othering occurs. He points out that a root identity is founded by three distinct ideas; beginning with an origin

in the distant past in a vision, a myth of the creation of the world; [then it] is sanctified by the hidden violence of a filiation that strictly follows from this founding episode; [and finally it] is ratified by a claim to legitimacy that allows a community to proclaim its entitlement to the possession of a land, which thus becomes a territory. (Glissant 143)

Hopkinson accentuates the origin story right before Tan-Tan and Antonio arrive in New Half-Way Tree in the folktale "How Tan-Tan Learn to Thief." In this tale, Tan-Tan and Antonio hold the rank of Queen and King; Tan-Tan arrives to clean up the Earth after its inhabitants have died due to the pollution; Kano Tabo loses contact with them and they are stranded on Earth starving; Tan-Tan learns to kill (or thief away someone's life) in

order to survive (Hopkinson 78-90). Through folklore and personal paradigms, Antonio and the other inhabitants of Toussaint taught Tan-Tan the lessons of her root identity, visible through her language and actions, including her place in the creation story which is above Others' places. She, like most children, learn techniques of Othering and labeling from filiation. Their primary root of parents and the parents' cultures pass along ideas of legitimacy and entitlement. Following Glissant's ordering, Tan-Tan's root identity solidifies as soon as she believes she holds a claim to the new land over the others who live there. When that occurs, New Half-Way Tree will become renamed as a territory of the new tallpeople.

Antonio's examples reinforce the lower status of the douen people along with the imperialistic tradition of (re)naming. Chichibud explains the use of "douen" because that "Allyou call we so. Is we legs" (Hopkinson 95). The douens are named such because there are tallpeople folklore stories about people who have a similar physical appearance. Even through the folkloric douen characters share only one similar trait, the entirety of the folklore is placed on the douen people in New Half-Way Tree. Anne McClintock argues that "the desire to name expresses a desire for a single origin alongside a desire to control the issue of that origin. But the strategy of naming is ambivalent, for it expresses both an anxiety about generative power and a disavowal" (28-29). The tallpeoples' naming reveals their desire to control the bush and its indigenous inhabitants; additionally, the tallpeople further Other the local people by choosing the name of a feared folklore spirit. Fear, anxiety, and the need for power cause the tallpeople to reach for a familiar frightening figure to forever label the douen people. The negative

stereotypes attach themselves to an entire people, all due to the perceived Otherness of someone's legs, while denying them their own names and histories. The douen people as the root's Other is established through the tallpeople's actions and words. Tan-Tan's Relation with the Other begins negatively as she begins using stereotypes and labels arising largely from fear of an unknown space. This fear dissipates as Tan-Tan's trust in one group diminishes and is built in another. In the next four spaces, Tan-Tan's motivations for her errantry are still tied to her own survival and wellbeing, but as her errantry moves her farther away from her root, Tan-Tan's fear lessens, her trust grows, and her Relations with the Other increase.

The Tallpeople Village of Junjuh: Othering and Exoticism

As Tan-Tan grows up in Junjuh, she experiences more and more the Othering of the douen people and how they are treated as inferior to humans, largely because of their appearance. In this space, Tan-Tan does not move; she demonstrates no errantry. Thus her Othering diminishes only slightly as she attempts three distinct approaches towards building relations with unknown people. First, Tan-Tan attempts the application of Toussaint's lessons of equality, then moves to following the cultural beliefs of Junjuh, to finally exoticizing the Other. The one time she stands up for Chichibud after hearing him address tallpeople as "boss" and "master," Tan-Tan argues, "'He not your boss, Chichibud.' She repeated her lesson exactly as Nanny had sung it to them in crêche: '*Shipmates all have the same status. Nobody higher than a next somebody.*' You must call he 'Compère'" (Hopkinson 121, italics in original). As Tan-Tan followed Chichibud

through the bush to find the safety of Junjuh, she began listening to his lessons about survival. As Antonio continuously illuminated his ineptness in tasks of safety and protection in this new environment, Tan-Tan developed a fondness for the one who provided such necessities, even though she still categorizes him as not a person, but a creature of the alien planet. Unfortunately, Tan-Tan only performs this act of stated equality once as the tallpeople around do not allow Chichibud to respond. They “burst out laughing” at Tan-Tan and question her about whether Chichibud is human (Hopkinson 121). Tan-Tan answers in the negative but is “doubtful” in her response. Tan-Tan’s doubt shows her struggles in reconciling her original thoughts about the douen people along with her current feelings for Chichibud. Regardless, the men seize on the opportunity to “teach” Tan-Tan the ways of this new planet, stating blatantly that Chichibud is not their equal. Tan-Tan leaves the exchange feeling “stupid” (121). Tan-Tan, as a child, learns Othering based on appearance through the actions of the tallpeople. Using her father’s and these men’s actions as examples, and using their words as evidence of correctness, Tan-Tan is instilled with an Othering outlook towards the douen people. Instead of focusing on the intelligent aspects of the douens’ actions, she has learned now through multiple examples to only focus on their appearance and how their unique speech sets them apart from the exiled tallpeople.

From these examples, Othering the douens quickly becomes nearly second nature to Tan-Tan’s thinking. However, the novel carefully points out that her thoughts are planted by the surrounding adults as they have enormous influence and do not change or move themselves. In Junjuh, Antonio takes on a new partner, Janisette, who becomes

Tan-Tan's stepmother, Janisette has lived on New Half-Way Tree longer and takes it upon herself to remind Tan-Tan of the inappropriateness of having Chichibud inside the house and to not call him 'mister' (Hopkinson 137, 139). Tan-Tan's attempt to remain polite to everyone becomes a contention in the household as Janisette does not consider Chichibud a part of "everyone." Through Tan-Tan acquiescing to seeing Chichibud in the backyard, she begins to accept and adhere to the cultural beliefs of Junjuh as it is the only knowledge she has since her errantry has not yet started. While Tan-Tan does not like Janiesette, she does befriend and trust Aislin, the town's doctor. She stresses to Tan-Tan that douens are "simple people" who "did everything with their hands and never thought to advance themselves any further" (139). Because of the closeness of their relationship, Tan-Tan will begin her errantry with Chichibud with specific beliefs about the douen people's lack of sophistication and ability. Aislin's belief that the douen cannot progress definitionally Others them when contrasted with the tallpeople's growing steel and foundry industries. Many of the exiled tallpeople spend their time attempting to recreate their lives in Toussaint, or at least gain back some of the ease they left. The them-us dichotomy becomes reinforced as the tallpeople believe that these attempts at creating an "easier" life makes them better and more advanced than the "simple minded" douen people. Glissant maintains that the "us identity" "consolidates itself implicitly at first ('my root is the strongest') and then is explicitly exported as a value ('a person's worth is determined by his root')" (16-17). Tan-Tan's value becomes automatically linked with her belonging to the tallpeople group as a better group. Chichibud and the douen people are not in the "us identity." And by not belonging to the root of tallpeople, their values

have already been judged as less than and weak by the Junjuh inhabitants. Tan-Tan buys into these cultural beliefs because they are so widely agreed upon by the tallpeople she knows and so frequently espoused in matter-of-fact statements.

Although Tan-Tan follows the Othering culture in Junjuh, Chichibud becomes her friend, which dictates that she must devise a way for both her root's superiority and her friendship to coexist. In response, Tan-Tan's Othering of the douen people shifts into exoticism, where her group remains superior in thought and advancement to Chichibud's group; but, as a friend, Tan-Tan can learn and care about certain aspects of Chichibud's culture and family as long as her superiority remains. Pramod K. Nayar defines exoticism in postcolonial studies as the consumption of any aspect of an Other's culture as a difference that informs and maintains hierarchies and control (76-77). The colonizers, typically, "discovered," captured, or killed the colonized object of consumption for transportation back to museums or facilities that enabled people in the colonizer's homeland to safely view the exotic, primitive, or dangerous Other.⁶ The taking of interesting, different objects back to the colonizers' lands frequently allowed those objects to be scrutinized and discussed as identifiable "differences," which fed superior mindsets and maintained colonizing actions.

In Caribbean culture, a prime object of consumption was religious practices. Olmos M. Fernández and Lizabeth Paravisini-Gebert detail the consumptive attitudes and actions towards religions like Obeah in *Sacred Possessions: Vodou, Santería, Obeah, and*

⁶ Sara (Saartje) Baartman being the most famous case of exoticism of the female black body. See Christina E. Sharpe's *Monstrous Intimacies: Making Post-Slavery Subjects* and Rachel Holmes's *African Queen: The Real Life of the Hottentot Venus*.

the Caribbean. While outsiders viewed the religious practices as dangerous, often too threatening to behold in situ, the talismans that obeahmen/women or Voudou priests/priestesses used in ceremonies were thought safe enough to export and observe, if not own. The distance diminished the danger. Tan-Tan's hearing about obeah practices are safe enough to view in the village of Junjuh, where she is surrounded by her root. Her exoticism of the douen women (called hinte) begins after Chichibud explains the "magic" in their homemade items:

On the days that Chichibud appeared in Junjuh Town with his cow-sized packbird Benta, people would mob him to see what douen woodwork he was carrying. When Tan-Tan was little Chichibud had told her that tallpeople couldn't help but like douen makings; it was because the douens had worked obeah magic upon the wood. (Hopkinson 152)

Although the tallpeople believe they are superior in advancements like metalworking, they allow the douens to excel at woodworking, but only with the additional placement of "magic" onto the items. While the tallpeople do not believe in the "douen's magic," they allow children to hear the douens' stories of magic because it demonstrates a cultural belief system that the tallpeople consider inferior and primitive. Only through acts which confirm the tallpeople's inferior/superior belief system, which maintain their superiority, will the tallpeople accept the douens' woodworking skills as better than their own. To further the story of the obeah magic, Chichibud announces that the hinte are the magical douens: "'the woman-them does work obeah into them as they painting them. Is for so the patterns come in like they alive'" (152). The "alive[ness]" of the hinte's paintings are explained through obeah, with the women as the wielders of such power. Obeah is a term

for a spiritual practice that merges multiple African traditions, including those from the Igbo tribe in Nigeria and Akan-speaking populations (Ruckers 40). Monica Schuler stresses that in the 18th century, the Obeah man [or woman] may have been more accurately portrayed as a priest instead of a magic person (383). But as they were thought to be at the center of many slave revolts and as they held a profound influence over enslaved people, their unfamiliar rituals and herbs and powders marked them as sorcerers. Chichibud describes this “magic” to entertain a young girl, without the intention of supplying an object of exoticism, yet for Tan-Tan it becomes his mysterious wife’s defining characteristic. Without learning more about obeah or meeting Chichibud’s wife, Tan-Tan views her as magical and exotic. The hintes’ exoticization creates another form of Othering. They do not have individual identities; they are unknown except through stories about their magical abilities. Tan-Tan must move past exotic views of the Other because these flawed knowledges, particularly about the hinte, accentuate the divide between douen people and tallpeople.

While learning to Other, categorize, and exoticize the douen people, Tan-Tan’s movements are sparse. Between the ages of seven and sixteen, she stays relatively close to her root community and listens to them and the “knowledges” they pass down to her. During this time, her knowledge base becomes set. Tan-Tan’s errantry, however, resumes at the age of sixteen, when she can “legally” gain a mate and move into her own place. At the eve of her birthday and her adulthood, she secretly plans on leaving the community to run away to Sweet Pone with her best friend and future partner, Melonhead (Hopkinson 163-66). Tan-Tan’s plans of errantry to reject her root community enrage

Antonio and he resumes physically and sexually assaulting Tan-Tan. Tan-Tan's adulthood commences with her rejection of Antonio's actions as she defends herself as an adult and kills Antonio (Hopkinson 168). This action transitions her from an accepted member of Junjuh to a persecuted individual. Explicitly, Tan-Tan's narrated next movements mark the beginning of her errantry as she kills Antonio, the largest root influence in her life. When Melonhead joins the group who searches for her, Tan-Tan realizes she no longer belongs to Junjuh or perhaps any tallpeople community, which results in a profound break with her root identity as she tries to survive and begin her errantry.

Because survival motivates Tan-Tan's errantry, she needs allies. Chichibud arrives shortly after Antonio's death and urges Tan-Tan's movement into the bush: “we must move now. One-Eye rules don't have no mercy. Murder will swing you from the hanging tree” (Hopkinson 169). Several micro-narratives during this moment highlight her motivations. The first movement of her frightened flight entails a change of clothes: “struggle[ing]” into new clothes with “shaking” hands, “pulling” on a new skirt and tearing off her old one and “let[ting] it fall” (169). Tan-Tan’s body is unstable and hurried; her bodily movements arise from fear and confusion. Her movements show that while knowledgeable of how to dress, her body and emotions wander and struggle. Tan-Tan is dazed after the attack, especially by killing her father. However, for Tan-Tan this daze only partially prompts her struggle; her actions also are forceful and aggressive in turn as she “pulls” and “tears,” finally “letting” the last immediate, physical evidence of her attack “fall.” Tan-Tan’s purposeful, aggressive movements towards her ripped and

bloody clothing—the evidence of her abuse—shows her disdain for her abuse, and it also shows her taking an active role in her response to it. She is not a passive victim of abuse but one who pulls, tears, finally letting the evidence fall away from her onto the floor where she steps over it and walks out of the house. While Tan-Tan’s shaking and struggling movements show signs of emotional wandering, her decisive, aggressive actions show signs of purposeful movement. The combination of the moment becomes her first steps in errantry. Tan-Tan will survive her attack and her persecution as she will take the necessary movements, wandering yet purposeful, to survive.

Tan-Tan’s active response positively motivates her errantry for survival, however, her next movements belie the degree of confidence portrayed in those actions.⁷ Chichibud must “bundle her out of the house, talking soothingly to her the whole time” (Hopkinson 170), trying to get her to act as if no great atrocity just occurred. When told to get into Benta’s basket, Tan-Tan mentally responds, “she could do that. She could follow an order...Tan-Tan climbed into the panier...Her body hurt. She waited for whatever it would please Chichibud to do next” (170). Her decisiveness previously seen in her pulling and tearing and discarding of garments vanishes. Tan-Tan returns to an uncertain, wandering state of being. Surprisingly, the motivation behind her wandering emotional state is not her violent rape, but her remembrance of stabbing her father and the loss of her root. She only fleetingly acknowledges the “hurt” of her body. The rest of Tan-Tan’s mind repeats some reiteration of “Daddy dead” and “she killed him” (169-71). The death

⁷ For further information on trauma studies, experienced uncertainty, and dissociation, see Doris Brothers’s “Trauma-centered Psychoanalysis: Transforming Experiences of Unbearable Uncertainty,” which also details denials and dualities in trauma victims.

of her father, as her root, creates an emotional devastation for Tan-Tan as she remembers his actions of rape and her actions of killing. This devastation results in her physical movements becoming wandering. She has no desire or ability to control or direct her own movements. Glissant's first mention of errantry stresses the importance of a lacking root: "Roots make the commonality of errantry and exile, for in both instances roots are lacking. We must begin with that" (11). In a literal sense, Glissant's statement is obviously true; however, exile often includes an additional desire for the roots that one was forced, in one way or another, to leave. Exile's connection to roots explain Tan-Tan's constant return to thoughts about her father. While she rejects aspects of her root, it remains all she has known for the last nine years. Due to her traumatic experiences, both her rape and her father's homicide, Tan-Tan literally wanders emotionally and physically to begin her errantry and her exile from the tallpeople village.

Exile with Benta and Chichibud: Transitioning from Othering

Transitioning away from Othering during her exiled time requires a change in Tan-Tan's thinking about herself and the douen people. Tan-Tan must relearn about the douen people in a non-evaluating, trusting way. She must turn away from ethnocentric ideology of superiority and accept the practices and knowledges of her Other as equal. As she resides in the complete control of Benta, her trust seems forced, except towards the end when she begins to enjoy herself. These turns are first narrated through Tan-Tan's physical positioning as she begins to listen to and accept new knowledges. Later, these mental turns are demonstrated in her bodily micro-movements.

Benta and Chichibud change into Tan-Tan's protectors as she becomes a fugitive exile. Being alone with them also results in Tan-Tan's mental transition from Othering the douen people to beginning to build Relations with them, which Hopkinson symbolizes through Tan-Tan's physical positioning. Tan-Tan's physicality demonstrates her mental turn through postcolonial theories of Sankofa. Riding Benta (Chichibud's packbird), Tan-Tan keeps her head down and holds on tight as they race through the fields into the bush (Hopkinson 170-71). Tan-Tan is completely in the hands of Chichibud and Benta and can only control the positioning of her head and the strength of her grip. Although only Tan-Tan flees from the law, Chichibud and Benta realize their dangerous yet necessary positions in helping her run. Specifically, Benta's movements change from her customary greeting to purposeful and determined as she "races," trying to beat the spread of knowledge of Tan-Tan's actions (170). Tan-Tan's fugitive race into exile, complete with hushed hiding from search dogs, mirrors black histories of slavery and escaping unjust laws in Tan-Tan's errantry. Marlene Allen highlights how Hopkinson has all New Half-Way Tree inhabitants "recaptur[e] aspects of the Afrocentric culture that they left behind on Earth" in order to survive confining lives and gain empowerment (76). During Tan-Tan's errantry, Hopkinson draws upon lessons and knowledge-bases that center African and African diaspora experiences, which Tan-Tan learns as she transitions away from Othering the indigenous inhabitants. Chichibud and Benta also transition from the Other into wise sages who remind Tan-Tan of these knowledge-bases as her physical position continues to change as well.

As the group moves through the bush, Tan-Tan's wandering sense of the space specifies her personal changes. As Tan-Tan leaves the tallpeople villages, Benta climbs to the tree canopy to hide from the search party (Hopkinson 172). Tan-Tan is unfamiliar with this new, higher viewpoint of the bush, but this unfamiliarity is positive. Although discussing cityscapes, Michel de Certeau asserts that a change in viewpoint allows for a different reading of a space, specifically the separation from the everyday "enunciation of walking" that places the self as a voyeur and an outsider (99).⁸ The everyday, mundane aspect of walking that de Certeau speaks of was visible when Tan-Tan moved about Junjuh; however, as soon as her perspective changed to a higher vantage point, Tan-Tan has a different view of not only her surroundings but also her life and life choices. For Tan-Tan this unknown sense that stems from a separation from her everyday becomes apparent as Benta and Chichibud take her away from Junjuh and all that is familiar. Chichibud clearly states that her world will change through this journey:

‘Oonuh tallpeople been coming to we land from since, and we been keeping weselves separate from you. Even though we sharing the same soil, same water, same air. Tonight, that go change, Tan-Tan...you go have to come and live with we douen. You go find out things about we that no other human person know, starting tonight.’ (Hopkinson 173)

Tan-Tan first learns that even though the douens view the relationship as "sharing," they have also found it necessary to keep their homes separate. The separation from the

⁸ A similar argument could be made in V.S. Naipal's *A House for Mr. Biswas*, when considering Mohun's new mobility and changed outlooks after he receives, first, a bicycle and, later, an automobile. Mr. Biswas's social mobility and errantry will be the focus of chapter two.

tall people that the douen people maintain now will become a refuge for Tan-Tan. de Certeau emphasizes the need for the moment away from everyday “enunciations” to lead one to be a “voyeur and outsider.” Being in the outside position proves positive in diminishing Othering actions that stem from living in positions of power. Tan-Tan, although a child, has previously been more powerful than Chichibud and the other douen people. Now she must stand aside and watch to learn the skills necessary to survive. Living with the douen people and learning from them will certainly place Tan-Tan in both of these subordinate positions.

With the change in vantage points, Tan-Tan’s viewpoints must alter; but these alterations become focused on her mental views of Others, specifically her internal understandings and knowledge of the douen people. Glissant argues that “uprooting can work toward identity, and exile can be seen as beneficial, when these are experienced as a search for the Other...prompting the knowledge that identity is no longer completely within the root but also in Relation” (18). Glissant’s use of the capital ‘R’elations becomes more complicated here; once one is Othered and forced to live among their Others, the histories of mistreatment and inferior/superior relationships cannot be erased or forgotten. However, Glissant argues the importance of bettering these Relations so that one’s identity can be whole. For once Othering takes place and these Relations are established, each side’s identity must include an accounting of such history. Glissant states that “identity is no longer completely within the root but also in Relation” (18), mandating a reckoning with Othering histories. Tan-Tan must learn from her Other and the Relation that improves with personal interactions once she releases control and

thoughts of superiority. The douens, specifically Chichibud and Benta, transform from aliens or folkloric children-stealing spirits to sage, supportive sankofa guides. Applying Akan philosophy to Caribbean speculative fiction highlights the focus of many Caribbean authors. Sankofa, in particular, provides a message of hope and transformation, but with the necessity of specific movements and actions. This advice then become available to be not only beneficial but transformative, yet only with work and acknowledgement towards one's past. For many Afro-Caribbean and African-American citizens, the recognition, reparations, and reconciliation with slavery's traumatic histories remain a focal point.⁹ Sankofa works with these histories, through the emphasis on learning and remembering one's ancestry, and then moving forward with the past knowledge alongside.

Sankofa is a communicator of Akan philosophy,¹⁰ and the word “sankofa” itself has a “conventional translation of ‘go back and fetch it,’ ‘return to your past,’ and ‘it is not taboo to go back and retrieve what you have forgotten or lost’” (Temple 127). Importantly, each of these translations focus on an individual’s micro-bodily movements. The movements needed to retrieve forgotten cultural elements result in the larger figurative meaning, where sankofa is the belief that before moving forward, individuals must remember where they came from. Though the sankofa communicator holds a fairly

⁹ When the past histories concentrate on the transatlantic slave trade and its resulting racism, scholars, such as Temple, often clarify the term as diasporic sankofa.

¹⁰ Temple stresses the importance of discussing the Adinkra language system (used by the Akan tribe in Ghana) as “communicators” and not as symbols. “In a very simplistic association, when we describe something as a symbol, we identify a very basic relationship of a material object (a writing, drawing, or shape) to something invisible or abstract. A symbol’s character is basic and mathematical. In contrast, a communicator offers the interchange of ideas, knowledge, wisdom, and philosophy” (Temple 130).

limited space in Akan philosophy, Christel Temple argues that the African diasporic communities tap into this communication of history and remembrance, because “its wisdom offers a solution to reconstituting the fragmented cultural past” (128). While often not analyzed spatially, the sankofa communicator stresses the importance of space and time through its many literary connections and its visual depictions. Sankofa expressly explores the fluidity and plurality of both space and time, while accentuating micro-bodily movements. For instance, the poem “Sankofa” by Albert W. Kayper-Mensah illustrates the importance of the past, present, and future for every person.

*That bird is wise,
Look. Its beak, back turned, picks
For the present, what is best from ancient eyes,
Then steps forward, on ahead
to meet the future, undeterred. (Kayper-Mensah 4, italics in original)*

The bird’s body ties the past, present, and future together. Unwilling to leave wisdom behind before moving forward, the bird selects the best parts from the past according to what it knows from the present. The bird makes the best choice it can with the information it knows today. With such knowledge and wisdom, the bird can confidently step forward and move into the future. However, without the past to bring with it and without the present making the selection, the bird would be immobilized, forever going back and forth between the past and present and never moving forward. In order to move on from traumatic experiences, whatever they may be, one must choose, according to what one knows today, pieces from that past which will provide beneficial wisdoms in the future; then one must take a step forward, leaving the remaining aspects of the past behind.

Along with stressing time, “Sankofa” stresses movement as well. The poem’s authoritative statement to “look” combined with the actions of “turned,” “pick,” and “steps forward” demonstrate movement’s necessity to remember the past for the benefit of the future. While the poem’s speaker dictates “look” to the reader, because of the spacing where “look” falls under “the bird,” it appears that the wise bird is also dictating the action to the reader. As the wise bird, “look[s]” and “turn[s]” to “pick” up the ancestor’s best, the reader is being dictated to do so as well. Only by following the wise bird’s example and then moving forward “undeterred” can one decisively walk to the future. Time and spatial movements merge in Alfred Kofi Quarcoo’s understanding as he stresses the balance between movement and attending to the past: he states that “Indeed there must be movement with the times but as the forward march proceeds, the gems must be picked up from behind and carried forward on the march” (17). We see that actions are necessary to benefit time, but also that time moves as well with the repetition of “forward” and “march.”

While literary representations of sankofa, like Quarcoo’s poem, emphasize movement and the positives of moving aspects of the past into the future, the communicator is also static in time and space as an Adinkra pictorial image, as shown below in figure one. The static image additionally advantages an understanding of sankofa as a timeless application. Regardless of where Tan-Tan mentally is in her life’s timeline, a turn to sankofa and her past benefits her present and her future. The static body position also is noted for the precision and control needed of one’s body. The bodily positioning of this image demonstrates sankofa’s two key components: the backward turn of the head and the foot pointed forward. Tan-Tan, during her Relations with Chichibud and Benta,

embodies these two components simultaneously three times. The three instances can each be read as corresponding to a different goal of diasporic sankofa.



Figure 1. “Sankofa” Adrinkra Pictorial

First, Tan-Tan embodies sankofa as she follows Chichibud in the bush during her arrival on New Half-Way Tree when a mako jumbie appears. When Tan-Tan and Antonio first arrive on New Half-Way Tree, Antonio allows the fire to extinguish, resulting in a mako jumbie attacking their camp. During the mako jumbie attack Tan-Tan freezes, positioned “with one foot pointed in front of her and her head twisted back...She shook with the effort not to turn her head [front] to the sound [of the mako jumbie] ... Her neck ached in its twisted position, her poised foot was cramping” (Hopkinson 111-12). Through Tan-Tan’s positioning, Hopkinson draws attention to the connections between her novel and the African diaspora. During the first episode where readers see the form of sankofa, the author stresses the hardships of holding the position. Tan-Tan’s physical hardships of

holding the position combine with the difficult goal of the African diaspora to symbolically gesture to “returning to the source” or taking “psychological steps towards Africanness” (Temple 128). For Tan-Tan this return is especially difficult as she left Toussaint at a young age and now only has her father for guidance. Sankofa, at this early time, reminds Tan-Tan to use her past in Toussaint as her future’s guidance, dealing with the tallpeople and the douens. Sankofa’s form appears with Chichibud first as he is the first representative of the douen people. Chichibud exemplifies the wise bird who guides Tan-Tan through even the difficult, static position of sankofa. This guidance and wisdom of equality, such as stated in Tan-Tan’s speech about shipmates, comes from these psychological steps that Tan-Tan takes as she listens and follows Chichibud’s directions and remains facing him instead of turning into the danger the mako jumbie symbolizes. As the novel progresses, Hopkinson further stresses that the links to one’s African past must not be forgotten.

During Tan-Tan’s fugitive journey, she embodies sankofa again when Benta carries her. First as the group originally hears the hunting dogs, the narrator comments, “Tan-Tan had seen animals that the Junjuh pack had torn apart. It was too much to deal with. Dumbly, she twisted back to look at Chichibud” (Hopkinson 171). Tan-Tan’s “twisting back” to Chichibud signals her literally turning and winding her body, seeking emotional and mental comfort from her friend. Reaching for her memories of Chichibud saving her in the bush during the mako jumbie attack corresponds with the second goal of diasporic sankofa, which entails remembering both positive and negative histories, specifically recalling the “legacy of natural cultural behaviors documented in its early usage by enslaved Africans who came to the Americas and in later usage, possibly, through epic

memory” (Temple 128). Hopkinson’s brief lines connect enslavement, memories, and sankofa. The hunting dogs recall the horrors of slavery and the “retrieval” of captives who escaped from plantations. With the parallel of slavery recognized, a reader may also see the comforts of language, religion, and philosophies that enslaved Africans carried with them and found in African communicators, such as sankofa. Remembering home, especially when shared with fellow enslaved individuals, creates comforting behaviors during horrific moments when circumstances seem, as Tan-Tan feels, “too much to deal with” alone. As Tan-Tan retains nothing from Toussaint, she turns towards the next familiar person who previously helped her through difficulties: Chichibud. Even though Chichibud was Othered, and the douen people were exoticized by Tan-Tan, he is now the closest thing she has to a companion. They share a means of communication as well as numerous experiences and moments of friendship. Chichibud represents the comfort that captured people found in their shipmates who shared some portion of history, whether it was a shared language, religion, or livelihood. The associations between Tan-Tan’s fugitive exile and escaping enslavement, combined with Hopkinson’s storytelling, resonate with scholars and learners of CRT who “draw on a long history that includes slave narratives, tales written by black captives to describe their condition and unmask the gentility that white plantation society extolled” (Delgado and Stefancic 38). The long history of storytelling and counternarratives provide an epic memory for individuals to draw from later. Since One Eye’s unjust and unforgiving laws in Junjuh Town mirror those that occurred on the Caribbean and United States’ southern plantations, Tan-Tan’s story is the counternarrative to the injustice she would have endured had she remained in Junjuh. In the past, the

counternarratives of African captives necessarily defied the stories and “History” once told about slavery and “runaway” slaves by an unjust society. The “unmasking,” as Delgado and Stefancic state, essentially provide another view of these events. Tan-Tan must escape to tell her story as a counternarrative to what will be told by One Eye and Janisette. The remembrances of escape and the lessons learned from remembering the past, especially attending to the power of counternarratives, move histories forward into the future. This forward motion with the attention to one’s past is precisely the lesson of sankofa.

Diasporic sankofa’s third goal incorporates a resistance against placing complete importance in one History and a corresponding relevance of African knowledges that are found in counternarratives and epic memories. Temple states that sankofa combines “resistance with respect to rejecting Eurocentric language and world views and insisting on relevance of African conceptual possibilities” (Temple 128). Holding a philosophy of sankofa entails the rejection of many Eurocentric notions, for instance the hierarchies of languages as well as singular notions of History. By rejecting these world views, sankofa places an equal importance on African concepts as well. The resistance and rejection then seize a space for African theories and beliefs. The third instance of Tan-Tan’s sankofa positioning takes place as Chichibud swears Tan-Tan to secrecy about the douens’ homeland, lives, and knowledges. Tan-Tan

twisted round to look at his silhouette, crouched on Benta’s back in the clotting dark... ‘When you take one life, you must give back two. You go keep douen secrets safe? You must swear’...Tan-Tan bowed her head and accepted the obeah that Chichibud had just put on it. ‘I swear, Chichibud.’ (Hopkinson 173-74)

Chichibud's demand to give back two lives after killing Antonio stays with Tan-Tan throughout the novel. Tan-Tan accepts the obeah axiom and swears her secrecy, highlighting the continued influence of a spiritual obeah in the diaspora and the significance of remembering and honoring African heritages. As Crosby points out, "Hopkinson's blend of historicity, African diasporic folktales, and speculative fiction creates worlds that acknowledge the past while developing and interrogating the present and future" (188). Tan-Tan, perhaps unconsciously, considers multiple histories and influences from Toussaint, Junjuh, and the douen community that direct her paths. Through the obeah curse that she accepts, she and the douens reject the irrational punishment of Junjuh Town and hold onto their own sentencing conventions. Tan-Tan's change in body positions symbolizes the rejection of one set of laws and the embracing of rational ones. She literally twists her body to change her focus and direction to Chichibud, which figuratively moves her viewpoint to that of the douen people's and removes her previous trajectory of following the tallpeople. The change in positions also changes her mental position and viewpoint of the douen people.

Tan-Tan develops positive associations with the Other through her and Benta's interactions, as Hopkinson echoes Black Feminist theory in Benta's character and actions. For instance, Benta shatters the belief that she is only a packbird; instead Tan-Tan learns the other woman can fly:

she puff[s] her chest in and out repeatedly, then start[s] to beat her wings, hard and fast. They were shadows whipping through the dark. And they were growing. The wings that Tan-Tan had always believed were clipped were filling out, getting long and strong. (Hopkinson 174)

Benta's strength, previously hidden from view just as her wings were, becomes apparent. Instead of being "clipped," grounded, or weakened, Benta has the power to carry two individuals on her back along with a panier basket and a saddle. Benta's wings—her vehicle to flight, which separates her mobility as special—are "hard and fast," connoting aggression as they "[whip] through the dark" able to combat any "shadow[y]" danger if the need arises. Benta's movements transform her into a character of strength and action. Carla Freeman argues against how women are viewed in Barbados by outside companies; when in truth "the portrait of West Indian femininity that emerges from a wide range of sources related to Afro-Caribbean culture...are portraits of strong, resilient, resourceful, and hardworking matriarchs" (107). Hopkinson writes Benta with the aspects of the Barbadian matriarch who wields such strengths and resilient elements; Benta will only use or show her physical strengths when she deems them necessary. While she was previously viewed as Chichibud's pet, she is his wife (a hinte) and the stronger, wiser, and more determined of the two. Tan-Tan evolves to see Benta as she is instead of basing her knowledge off the tallpeople's assumptions about the douens' packbirds.

The tallpeople marginalize the hinte based on incomplete information, which grant the hinte more power overall. Tallpeople label douen women as magical because they think they have never seen them before. Rose Brewer, in "Theorizing Race, Class and Gender: The New Scholarship of Black Feminist Intellectuals and Black Women's Labor," views the negotiations of having agency in one's everyday life while remaining marginalized in social structures as one of the most challenging issues facing women of color (32). The agency of the hinte is unmistakable in their communities, however, they

remain marginalized by the tallpeople. The hinte have been viewed and heard, just never listened to: “All the hinte, the douen women, speak. Just not among tallpeople is all. Them want to keep them secrets” (Hopkinson 182). The women have chosen a method of speech based on the marginalization felt in the social structures outside their communities. bell hooks states, in *Talking Back: Thinking Feminist, Thinking Black*, how in black communities, women’s “voices can be heard. Certainly for black women, our struggle has not been to emerge from silence into speech but to change the nature and direction of our speech, to make a speech that compels listeners, one that is heard” (6). Although it is the hinte’s choice to not speak to tallpeople, this decision was based on tallpeople’s prior actions towards the male douens. Based on the derogatory way the tallpeople speak and interact with the douen men, the hinte have wisely decided to remain secret although still present. It is then a big decision for Benta to reveal herself to Tan-Tan, and through their first few exchanges, Tan-Tan learns that hinte are physically stronger than the douen men. When Tan-Tan is brought to the Daddy Tree, Benta protects her and challenges the douen men. As the men back down, crouched low, hands empty and held out in open view, Chichibud explains, “trust Benta to keep you safe, Tan-Tan. Woman is something else to deal with, oui?” (Hopkinson 181), and later that “is only a madman would face down a hinte” (197). While still a patriarchal society, the douen people maintain a closer equality between genders. Hinte are physically stronger than men and, therefore, seen more often as the protectors of their families. The hinte, although marginalized by the tallpeople, hold a more powerful position in their own communities. Negotiating with the douen men for silence in the tallpeople villages, the

hantes gain power. Allowing the tallpeople to believe they are unintelligent packbirds, the hante gain information while controlling the amount of information known about them.

Carole Davies, in *Black Women, Writing, and Identity: Migrations of the Subject*, lists using silence as a type of control and an example of one's authority over oneself and one's story. Benta, along with the other hante, deem secretiveness as necessary to their survival. At one point, they may be willing to share their stories and experiences more widely.

As they fly, Tan-Tan becomes at ease instead of labeling Benta as the Other. She begins to trust Benta, believing she is safe in her care. Leaving the root of the tallpeople behind:

The wind sang past Tan-Tan's face. The breeze blew away her tears. The cold, crisp air cleared a little of the fog from her brain. Tan-Tan the Midnight Robber was soaring out above her kingdom, free from thought, nothing to fear. *Sweet chariot, time to ride.* She laughed out loud. But the wind blew the laugh from her mouth and carried it away. (Hopkinson 175)

While the wind removes her laugh, it also affirms a blessed moment, moving towards a sense of salvation, as she rides the "sweet chariot" away from the pain she knew from her root. Trusting in Benta and leaving the tallpeople means that no longer will Tan-Tan be subject to sexual and physical abuse. No longer will she live in fear of her father's violent advances and her stepmother's jealous anger. Her errantry and its role in changing her Othering gives Tan-Tan this moment of song, this moment of crisp clarity, this moment of soaring, and this moment of freedom. But the moment only occurs after she begins to

accept Benta and the douen people as equals and learn from Benta and Chichibud as her elder authority figures.

The Daddy Tree Community: Becoming the Other

Living with Benta and Chichibud's family and learning the ways of Papa Bois (or Father Bush, master of the forest (Hopkinson 103)), Tan-Tan grows in her experiences and realizes her fluid positionality. Glissant argues that people benefit most when they see Relation as "not merely an encounter, a shock...but a new and original dimension allowing each person to be there and elsewhere, rooted and open, lost in the mountains and free beneath the sea, in harmony and in errantry" (34).¹¹ Glissant stresses the fluid positioning of Relations. As errantry occurs, an individual experiences both dimensions of being: the new and the original. Tan-Tan's friendship with Abitefa, Benta and Chichibud's teenage daughter, allows for this kind of fluid identity, there and elsewhere, while disregarding a generalizing or universalizing narrative about teenage girls. Tan-Tan and Abitefa can share their similarities while also recognizing the benefits of each other's differences. Each character has moments of being comfortable and uncomfortable in their surroundings. For Tan-Tan, becoming best friends with Abitefa further allows Tan-Tan to learn and to share secrets with the douens. When Tan-Tan shares that she is pregnant, Abitefa mentions the lack of an egg and the "skin round the baby" as she "peer[s] at Tan-

¹¹ Glissant interestingly uses the phrase "rooted and open" as dichotomies to indicate how Othering is not necessary for a relational identity, as well as how openness is the opposite to staying solely rooted.

Tan's stomach" (Hopkinson 233). Tan-Tan becomes uncomfortable and Abitefa becomes uncertain of this difference. To Tan-Tan's amazement, Abitefa demonstrates her call: she raised her snout in the air and opened and closed her mouth like she was screeching, but Tan-Tan didn't hear no sound...[before] Abitefa would do the same silent motion when she was showing Tan-Tan how to startle beasts...Tan-Tan had thought it was just alien body language. (234)

Tan-Tan's prior nonchalant and rapid dismissal of Abitefa's body movements as alien and abnormal lead to her misinterpretations of the douens' sonar and echolocation abilities. Now that she understands Abitefa's abilities, Tan-Tan sees how their differences are positive and begins to move away from the Othering she previously employed. However, while she builds upon similarities between herself and Abitefa, Tan-Tan still makes social mistakes, based on her prior Othering thoughts, with the larger douen community.

Misinterpretations and misunderstandings continue during Tan-Tan's stay. Wandering through the bush alone, she mistakes another douen for Chichibud, who responds, "I name Kret. Tallpeople could never tell we apart" (Hopkinson 219). Tan-Tan's errantry at this early stage results in her disrespecting a douen who already distrusts her. The douen people's skepticism and wariness stem from several reasons, but all are due to the Othering attitudes taken by tallpeople. Chichibud tries to explain the douens' fears as Tan-Tan sees the adults teaching themselves at a foundry. Tan-Tan's naïve understanding of Other Relations results in her expectations of the douens making knitting frames. When pressed to consider a more critical reason for metal-working and secrecy, her responses change to simply "I don't understand" (230). Chichibud's

movements towards her, first staring and “scrutinizing her like a stranger,” then “moving closer,” impress the importance of his words, “‘Guns, Bombs. Cars. Aeroplanes,’” explaining that “‘if douens don’t learn tallpeople tricks, oonuh will use them ‘pon we’” (Hopkinson 230). Tan-Tan does not understand his reasoning, and typical of Relations, one side has a difficult time realizing the dangers the other side readily sees. Tan-Tan’s Relations are currently “in harmony and in errantry” (Glissant 34), as she wants to understand the douen people’s point of view, but she struggles with believing any undue harm could come to her friends. Exasperated, Chichibud is left with no reply other than “‘Girl child, believe what you want to believe. We see how allyou does act, even towards your own, and we preparing weself’” (Hopkinson 230-31). This moment is an uncomfortable negotiation for Tan-Tan and Chichibud. She learns to consider the Other’s position when production and power is uneven and when difference has already created inferior stereotypes and positions. Chichibud also learns about his Other and that one cannot force knowledge of unfair practices onto another person. The person in power must be willing to consider uneven power relations that occur in their favor. Until Tan-Tan acknowledges the benefits she has been granted by being a tallperson and Antonio’s daughter, she cannot change unfair practices in herself and her people.

Tan-Tan’s Relations with the Other begin to evolve as new experiences force her to consider the positions of the tallpeople and of the douen people. This expansion of Relations with Chichibud’s family allow for a greater totality of Tan-Tan’s identity, where she considers her prior privileged position and learned stereotypes. Uncomfortably, but also positively, she grows as her knowledge and understanding

grows. Tan-Tan's learned Othering must be destroyed and replaced with an understanding of difference; however, for this to occur, neither Tan-Tan's difference nor the douens' differences can be eliminated. Differences remain vital for diversity; Glissant states that "Diversity, the quantifiable totality of every possible difference, is the motor driving universal energy, and it must be safeguarded from assimilations from fashions passively accepted as the norm, and from standardized customs" (30). For diversity to remain a positive force, societies' multiple differences must remain and be celebrated, such as Abitefa's echolocation and Tan-Tan's hunting abilities. Assimilation into "normal" or "standard" traditions cannot be passively consented to without questioning the necessity and benefit of those traditions. When Tan-Tan learns to speak a bit of hinte, she does not completely assimilate into the douen lifestyles. She maintains her own language skills and switches between the two as needed. Tan-Tan strives to not assimilate into the douen culture as she attempts to still acknowledge and celebrate their differences.

However, celebrating difference is a not an easy task, especially when difference has historically been Othered. Accepted in Benta and Chichibud's home, Tan-Tan's discomfort remains as she knows she is not an equal or welcomed addition to the larger Daddy Tree community. She does not "fit" or "belong" with the douen people. Tan-Tan remarks upon their greeting of hello, to sniff and/or lick her clothing depending on their age: "the douen men sniffed Tan-Tan politely, but some of them rolled down their second eyelids the way douens did at a bad odour" (Hopkinson 183). The rolled down eyelids highlight Tan-Tan's difference in a negative way, which makes her feel Othered in this unfamiliar setting. While Tan-Tan is different from the douens, their reactions to her,

from not hiding their responses to her odor to relieving themselves near her feet to lunging at her with a knife (Hopkinson 183, 180, 181), make it apparent that she is not a member of the community. Their Othering does not stop even after she performs the secret-keeping ritual (186). One douen “rolled down his second eyelids-them to stare; a big douen insult” (186), and others come out of their houses to watch her struggle with living in a tree (215). However, even if Tan-Tan had been welcomed, her arboreal environment proves trying. Tan-Tan cannot fly as the other douens and must climb or get a ride from Benta; when teased about it, she remarks “‘Easy for oonuh to laugh...Oonuh make to travel this way’” (188). Later, she must crouch down to get into Chichibud’s home (189), use a hole with a suspended bucket to relieve herself (191), and eat raw, chopped up “grubs” for dinner (196-97); all the while, the community laughs at her when she expresses a concern for privacy that they do not share (191). Her exile to the Daddy Tree leaves her alone in her customs and physically separated in her bodily needs. When out of Chichibud’s house and in the community, no one greets her and no one speaks to her. She moves through the community in silence. The silence and separation from the community catalyzes Tan-Tan’s language skills.

To gain an identity based on both root and Relation, Tan-Tan’s struggles and perseverance with language is paramount. Glissant affirms that “the reality of exile ... is felt as a (temporary) lack that primarily concerns, interestingly enough, language” (15). The ability to communicate one’s desires and needs becomes Tan-Tan’s principle focus. While Chichibud and other douens have “learn[ed] all oonuh speech, for oonuh don’t learn we own” (Hopkinson 95), Benta and the other hinte have no means of speaking

with Tan-Tan except the few words Tan-Tan begins to get a sense of. Astounded at first by the existence of hinte speech, Tan-Tan asks Chichibud, ““All this time she could talk?”” to which Benta quickly reprimands, “***Talk to me!***” (Hopkinson 182, formatting in original). Hopkinson indicates hinte speech in bolded letters between asterisks in lieu of quotation marks. The formatting sets the language as unique to not only Tan-Tan but readers as well. This uniqueness becomes a barrier for Tan-Tan and an onus for her to learn it. When alone, Tan-Tan practices and “would watch at the reflection of her face in the [bath] water, pursing up her lips-them and skinning up her teeth-them, trying to trill like a hinte. She rolled her tongue into a tube, she chirped, she whistled; all she do, her words came out dead and flat” (232). The work and energy Tan-Tan puts into speaking hinte allows her to notice the differences in speech between the two girls’ languages. The flatness she perceives in her own trills indicates the sharp poetics she hears in Benta and Abitefa’s speech. Tan-Tan not only learns about the Other through language, but also prizes the abilities she does not have, and she continues to work to improve her speech abilities. In terms of Tan-Tan’s errantry, this recognition and appreciation make her identity more complete (or total to use Glissant’s pursuit of cultural totality). Acquiring the ability to speak the hinte language becomes one of Tan-Tan’s first practices that help her move from being in the place of the cultural Other to gaining a totality of identity, based on both her tallpeople root and her Relation with the douen people. Tan-Tan has been in the place of the Othered and the Othering and can work towards ameliorating these actions.

Surviving with Abitefa: Diminishing Othering

Diminishing the actions of Othering and recognizing equality for Tan-Tan and Abitefa begin as Benta forces them to spend time together learning about Papa Bois. The two girls' joined errantry originally is forced and, thus, strained. Benta commands that since Abitefa is

testing sheself every day in the bush. Go with she. The climbing go be good practice for you, and spending time with tallpeople is good practice for she for when she become a packbird... So you go be spending time away from the douen-them who ain't easy with having you here. (Hopkinson 221-22, formatting in original)

Benta's mandating of these interactions does not please the two teenagers. Abitefa dangerously loses Tan-Tan in the bush, prompting a physical fight between them. Readers only glean Tan-Tan's internal monologue during the altercation, but her slight switch away from Othering can be glimpsed. Tan-Tan begins with derogatory statements and characterizations, such as "bitch," "ugly mouth," and "big bird foot-them" (225). Even when apologizing, Tan-Tan calls Abitefa a "four-foot ratbat" (226). All of these terms signal Othering; however, Tan-Tan also calls Abitefa "woman" and speaks directly to her as she admits to picking the fight in her apology. These actions and word choices convert what is thought to be Tan-Tan's Othering to merely fighting. Unlike her initial interactions with Benta where Tan-Tan mistakenly addressed only Chichibud, when interacting with Abitefa, Tan-Tan speaks and acts towards her as an equal. To show her sincerity, Tan-Tan attempts to communicate in hinte by saying "the Anansi Web's phrase for 'sunny and fine'...Cockpit County people would sometimes hum the song snatch to

mean, ‘everything all right between me and you’” (226). This is an unsuccessful moment of communication since Abitefa does not understand the meaning until, in the next moment, they exchange gifts of passion fruit and a newly weaved carrying pouch (226-27). The “sunny and fine” song, while not directly understood, allows the two individuals to convey an apology and then the acceptance of it. The two girls never fight again and “[t]hrough the days of foraging in the bush, a friendship sprang up between Tan-Tan and Abitefa” (Hopkinson 232). A closeness in their Relations, which neither girl sought out initially, develops from their daily interactions. Glissant explains how “[f]or neither [individual] is it a question of exploring, but one, rather, of going toward a totality that is unrealizable, without being required to say where they will come together—nor even that they have any need to do so” (85). The coming together of Tan-Tan and Abitefa is not due to either’s initial motivation but one of survival and camaraderie, even though it was imposed at the beginning. Tan-Tan must climb down the Daddy Tree to urinate and to find edible food for herself; Abitefa must learn to survive in the bush without parental guidance before becoming a packbird and marrying. For both teenagers, the presence of the Other benefits their development and their future or current aims. Although they hold diverse viewpoints on some subjects (for instance, Abitefa does not agree with Tan-Tan’s desire to acquire abortion medication), their similarities prove equally important to their differences and diminishes the Othering that occurred between them.

Tan-Tan’s relationship with the douen people challenges violent generalizations about each of their respective communities. Tan-Tan and Abitefa’s errantry through the bush brings the danger of tallpeople to the Daddy Tree community. Specifically, Janisette

has been errantly wandering, searching for Tan-Tan, also. She arrives with a motorcar and a firearm, resulting in Benta's sister and Kret being swiftly and unemotionally murdered (Hopkinson 265-73), as birds being shot. Janisette does not acknowledge the two as people who are fighting and standing up for their community. However, when Chichibud gains possession of the shotgun, the roles become reversed. Chichibud is called "Mister Douen" and begged not to shoot a tallperson. While the "Mister" lends some amount of respectability, the person does not recognize Chichibud as an individual douen, but instead he is just called a generic name. By providing a title to the unknown douen, the tallperson believes it covers the Othering of not distinguishing between individuals. This also allows her a small amount of comfort; she does not need to work towards knowing the individuals, as she can generalize about the group, adding titles of respect, and not worry about the interrelational violence that occurs when generalizations happen. Tan-Tan is astounded that the tallperson "didn't recognise Chichibud. She saw him almost every month when he brought goods to trade, and she still couldn't tell him different from any douen man" (Hopkinson 272). Perhaps in part to her misrecognition, Chichibud coldly responds, "'I can't shoot at he? Not even for practice? ...And if I had beg allyou same way not to kill my people, what you woulda say?'" (272). Chichibud stresses "people" and the action of "kill[ing]" as opposed to the actions of shooting a bird. In the bush with control of the firearm, Chichibud does not have to be deferential to the tallpeople. The tallpeople have wandered into his community where he garners respect from the other douen people. Once Tan-Tan names Chichibud, telling him to let them leave unharmed, then the tallperson inhales sharply saying "'Rahtid! Is Chichibud

that?'" (272). The tallpeople view Chichibud as someone who is obedient and peaceful, as this is how he acts in the tallpeople villages. They never would have imagined him firing a gun on them.

During this juncture, the tallpeople generalize Chichibud with all other douen men. With the development of Relation identity, Tan-Tan's errantry also highlights the need to end generalizing behaviors. Glissant points out that there is a type of violence against generalizing. Ignoring specificities results in a reassuring generalization for the Othering group; however, "identity as a system of relation, as an aptitude for 'giving-on-and-with' [*donner-avec*], is, in contrast, a form of violence that challenges the generalizing universal and necessitates even more stringent demands for specificity" (Glissant 142, formatting in original). Tan-Tan's encounter between the douen people and the tallpeople underline the generalizations that the tallpeople participate in as well as the need to end universals and intentionally work toward specificity. Chichibud demands the tallpeople recognize him; when the tallpeople are unable to do so, he erupts violently because through Othering he is not identified, specifically as Chichibud, an individual douen man with specific, individual actions. Glissant argues that

thought of the Other cannot escape its own dualism until the time when differences become acknowledged. From that point on thought of the Other 'comprehends' multiplicity, but mechanically and still taking the subtle hierarchies of a generalizing universal as its basis. (17)

Janisette and the other tallpeople remain at this mechanical understanding of multiplicity as they remain entrenched in the importance of their hierarchies and still believe their differences equate to superiority. Obviously the douen people differ from the tallpeople,

by definition creating a multiple, but as long as the tallpeople consider themselves superior to the douen people, tallpeople will not be able to comprehend the benefits of such multiplicities. Tan-Tan's evolution to diminish Othering demonstrate the possibility of ending generalizations and appreciating differences and multiplicities.

After the tallpeople's confrontation, the entire douen community moves locations, and Tan-Tan and Abitefa's new errantry focuses on mutual survival and friendship. To protect themselves, the douen community exile Tan-Tan and Abitefa: ““you cause harm to the whole community, cause the daddy tree to dead...The two of you too dangerous to carry with we. You going to have to make your own way somehow”” (Hopkinson 281). Chichibud's use of “carry” reminds readers of how Tan-Tan had to be “carried” by Benta during her journey to the Daddy Tree when she was injured. Now, Tan-Tan and Abitefa must face surviving on their own. This begins another form of errantry motivated by survival. Abitefa and Tan-Tan seek out a douen and tallpeople community respectively to possibly join. However, because of their growing Relation both refuse to leave the other until they have found safe homes. This dual motivation of survival and friendship marks Tan-Tan as becoming what Anthony Reed terms an arrivant: “a figure not circumscribed by nation or identity...a figure of non-belonging, non-enclosure...a figure for moving beyond the margin, beyond the domination/resistance paradigm” (517). Tan-Tan already lost her root identity that was tied to her father and the tallpeople, and now with the tallpeople's violence, she experiences non-belonging in the douen communities. However, her Relation with Abitefa remains an essential part of her identity. Instead of non-belonging being negatively viewed, Reed argues that this fluid position now places

Tan-Tan as a figure of “moving beyond the margin” of both communities. She can now belong in the bush with her best friend, thus breaking all domination/resistance paradigms. Neither girl wants to dominate the other’s group, nor do they want to resist the other’s group. The central matter for them both is their mutual survival and maintaining friendship.

To guarantee mutual survival, differences in communication once again come to the forefront of their relationship. Tan-Tan has been practicing her hinte speech abilities, and over the months, the sounds that she thought were “too liquid and complex for her mouth to form” have become available. She now can “skreek” with Abitefa, as she does to warn her about the presence of Melonhead after she discovers him in Sweet Pone (Hopkinson 232, 307). While the sound startles Melonhead, Tan-Tan thinks how “her hinte talk was getting better” (307). Tan-Tan’s Relations become not merely tolerant but appreciative; she begins to value the diverse abilities she and Abitefa have. Tan-Tan continuously pushes herself to become a better friend and actively learns lessons from her Other. As Pille Peetersoo states, at some point, the recognition of having an Other can be spoken about in positive terms: “it is clear that the Other should not be seen as functional in difference, but also in similarity” (130). In fact, generalizing universals and absolutes explode in violence because of individuals’ fear of disappearing into the collective. Differences must not only be recognized and tolerated, but also acknowledged and celebrated. This type of positive acknowledgement only occurs once an individual diminishes negative Othering through gaining positive Relations. Then the focus on Others become, as Glissant praises, about the specificity of differences. Tan-Tan respects

her and Abitefa's differences, like their different desires for secrecy, at the end as they concoct a story together to tell the tallpeople about Abitefa (Hopkinson 307). She also has removed the negative aspects of Othering: when trying to explain her rolling calf "pet" to a tallperson, she is asked, "'You mean the bird?' [and] It took her a second to understand that he was calling Abitefa a pet. 'No, a next beast...'" (Hopkinson 308). The question strikes Tan-Tan as wrong since she would never think of her friend as a pet nor a bird like the other tallpeople see Abitefa. The remaining step in diminishing Othering would require Tan-Tan to stand up for Abitefa; for instance, instead of using the phrase "the next beast," she could explain that what tallpeople see as packbirds are female douens, called hinte. However, as the hinte do not want their identities shared, Tan-Tan struggles between respecting the group's decision to remain secretive and treating her individual friend with respect. To not let onto the hinte's secret, Tan-Tan uses the Othering phrase the tallpeople would use.

Hopkinson gives the hope, however, that such secretiveness will not always be necessary. The novel ends with Tan-Tan giving birth to a son and Abitefa welcoming him into the world: "Abitefa thrust her beak into the nest of blankets that Melonhead had brought, sniffed the baby's skin in greeting" (Hopkinson 329). Readers end with the knowledge that Abitefa remains an integral part of Tan-Tan's life; their friendship is secure. Tan-Tan recognizes and appreciates not only Abitefa's presence on this momentous occasion, but also the standard douen greeting, which she originally questioned and was taught to "sneer" at (124). Immediately after Abitefa's welcome, Tan-Tan names her son "Tubman: the human bridge from slavery to freedom" (329). She

“surprised herself, coming out with it so quickly. She hadn’t been thinking of what to call him” (329). However, the name foreshadows the importance of Tan-Tan’s and Abitefa’s friendship and the bridge they have created between the two groups of people. Because Tubman will be raised with Abitefa as a constant presence and knowledge of the douen people, he will have a Relation identity instead of a root identity. Glissant describes Relation identity through four axioms:

Relation identity

- is linked not to a creation of the world but to the conscious and contradictory experience of contacts among cultures;
 - is produced in the chaotic network of Relation and not in the hidden violence of filiation;
 - does not devise any legitimacy as its guarantee of entitlement, but circulates, newly extended;
 - does not think of a land as a territory from which to project toward other territories but as a place where one gives-on-and-with rather than grasps.
- (144, formatting in original)

Diminishing Othering through her desire to physically survive results in Tan-Tan gaining a Relation identity. She understands the origin folklore of not only Kano Tabo, but also learns the lessons of Papa Bois through her first errantry fleeing with Chichibud and Benta followed by her second errantry through the bush with Abitefa. From her errantry, these multiplicities of knowledge move her away from a belief in the singular entitlements of one’s ancestry and towards a relational totality of being. Tan-Tan now lives in a land where she will continue to “give-on-and-with” the douen people and the environment of the bush, and where she can teach Tubman, as the bridge to freedom, these lessons.

CHAPTER III

TRACKING STASIS: DEVELOPING MR. BISWAS'S CLASSED IDENTITY IN A

HOUSE FOR MR. BISWAS

Like Tan-Tan's errantry in *Midnight Robber*, Mohan Biswas in V.S. Naipaul's *A House for Mr. Biswas* demonstrates Édouard Glissant's idea of errantry in that his mobility diminishes Othering. However, while Hopkinson fictionalizes her characters as well as the planet, New Half-Way Tree, Naipaul based his characters on his real family and their experiences living in specific spaces in Trinidad. Bruce Alvin King, in the second edition of his biography *V.S. Naipaul*, describes *A House for Mr. Biswas* as "an imaginative reconstruction of his father's [Seepersad Naipaul's] life and his own youth in Trinidad" and as "modelled on Naipaul's family history" (10, 18). King later specifies Seepersad Naipaul's movements around Trinidad and the corresponding labels V.S. Naipaul uses for those locations in *A House for Mr. Biswas* (207). The real-life events and spaces of his father's, which Naipaul fictionalizes only slightly, influence Mohan Biswas's motivations for errantry; the main character is focused on stasis and affluence. Naipaul's emphasis on how physical possessions and class mobility motivate characters is further visible through the various book covers over the years. While Naipaul approved the book covers, he was not directly involved in their construction. For me, the book covers provide a valuable readable text as a framing of the novel and my interpretation of it. The material motivations that the novel, including the book covers, focuses on do not

result in great wealth for Biswas, but they lead to interactions revealing how he gradually develops better Relations with individuals of various economic classes, which he has deemed his Other.

Not moving, while not the first emphasis of spatial movement theorists, becomes a concentration when contemplating social constructs of home and belonging alongside diasporic communities, migration, and assimilation. Scholars who study concepts of movement and spatiality, such as Carol E. Leon, Katherine A. Zien, and Sharika D. Crawford, highlight finding a place to stop or belong alongside movements.¹ Readers may ask why stasis or not moving is viewed as positive for many people. Three possible theories come to mind: negative views of unpaid work, negative views of moving, and positive associations of rootedness. The answer for Seepersad/Mr. Biswas and V.S. Naipaul surely stems from a unique combination, in greater or lesser quantities, of each. First, moving entails work. It is additional work that is unpaid and largely unrewarded. As such, it is undesirable as work. Further, it is a type of work that can be contracted to others, and any work that can be offset to others results in an image of prosperity and wealth. The wealthy have purchased the ability to remain stationary, mandating instead that others move to accommodate them; and simultaneously they have created an Other category. Even moving to another country for educational reasons is often most accepted

¹ In addition to Zien's *Sovereign Acts* and Crawford's "Politics of Belonging on a Caribbean Borderland," a number of scholars posit various discourses on belonging that evoke theories of movement, space, or diasporic studies, such as Meinhof and Galasiński's *The Language of Belonging*, Kelly's *The Hero's Place: Medieval Literary Traditions of Space and Belonging*, and Arkotong Longkumer's *Reform, Identity and Narratives of Belonging: The Heraka Movement in Northeast India*.

when it is temporary and the individual returns to their home country, or they at least benefit their home country from afar if they are unable to return. Thus, moving may be positive, but more so as a temporary status for educational advances which will lead to greater employment opportunities. Many societies still see those who move continuously, without educational motivations, in negative terms.

The adverse attitudes about moving leads to the second reason many people seek stasis. Eurocentric history considers specific—poor—types of travelers in a negative light. Certainly, this excludes explorers and tourists, who have the financial stability to move across countries according to their desires. However, migrants, refugees, nomadic, traveling communities have been viewed as burdensome and dangerous to the settled, static nation-states they traverse or those that are the travelers’ destination nations. Being settled has historically been a sign of civilization and traveling (or not being settled) has fallen as the binary to civilization. *Mr. Biswas* concentrates on a specific Indo-Trinidadian experience; however, Trinidad, being a British colony for nearly 500 years, inherited many of the beliefs and attitudes towards particular groups. Britain imported negative attitudes towards Irish, Scottish, and Welsh travelers in particular, as a large number of poor Irish citizens were charged with crimes, often petty crimes such as vagrancy, and the British sent undesirable offenders to serve out their prison sentences in their colonies.² Mícheál Ó hAodha’s *Insubordinate Irish: Travellers in the text and*

² Because so much of it relies on deeply flawed research, the discourse about white “slavery” has been thoroughly discredited. However, the practice of sending “vagrants” to colonies is well documented beginning in 1672 in “The political anatomy of Ireland” by William Petty and in 1870 in *The Cromwellian Settlement of Ireland* by John P

Michael Hayes and Thomas Action's *Travellers, Gypsies, Roma: The Demonisation of Difference* detail the feelings towards and discrimination of nomadic people, including ethnic Othering practices. Joanna Richardson and Andrew Ryder, in *Gypsies and Travellers: Empowerment and Inclusion in British Society*, continue the discussion with possible solutions to the Othering practices directed at travelling communities.³

The extensive research available on traveler communities and Europe's attitudes and beliefs about this specific society indicates what the extent that many people desire settled lives. Moving evokes migration, which evokes displacement, even if the migration is a short distance. Unfortunately, displacement is often used as the opposite of being placed, settled, or rooted. Put in another way: society seeks the opposite of moving because it seeks the opposite of displacement. Stasis connotes roots. Often, people desire to stay in a place, belong to and participate in that place, build a home, and an ancestry, in that place. For many people, these actions in particular connote having roots in a particular place. Similarly, if a person constantly moves around or is forced to relocate at a young age, they often consider their roots tied to their ancestors' place of belonging. These roots become a link to stability. For instance, Kamau Brathwaite's *Roots* details the presence of African histories in Caribbean literatures and music. The ability to trace

Prendergast. Additionally, the debate surrounding white indentureship remains: see Nancy Isenberg's *White Trash: The 400-Year Untold History of Class in America*.

³ See also Becky Taylor's *A minority and the State: Travellers in Britain in the Twentieth Century* and David M. Smith and Margaret Greenfields's *Gypsies and Travellers in Housing: The Decline of Nomadism* for information about national responses to cultural continued errancy.

back and link certain aspects of West Indian literature and jazz helps connect Caribbean citizens to Africa, helping overcome slavery's forced separation.

However, Europe also continues to influence how Caribbean citizens construct their identities. Peter A. Roberts's *Roots of Caribbean Identity* discusses identity construction and Europe's impact on Caribbean lives. Roberts specifies how views of Caribbean identity have shifted from people being defined by Europe to Caribbean nations self-constructing their identity, including their portions of their European past. Caribbean nations' roots emphasize racial remembrances, highlighting notions of the sea and the islands, and the hybridity of creole languages. Having roots in the Caribbean region supports an overarching identity, which above all else encompasses a sense of belonging. The sense of belonging can stem from any number of cultural elements.

Stephen Foehr's *Jamaican Warriors: Reggae, Roots, and Culture* exemplifies how music (specifically the creation of reggae in Jamaica) connects Jamaican citizens in the country and throughout diasporas. Music, literature, art, religion, and family histories connect people to a place they call home and, even when they move or migrate, a place to state they are "from." Class links to ideas of belonging through Richard Hoggart's definition, in "Who are 'the Working Class'?" Class is one element that provides belonging. A "sense of being in a group of their own" is retained as classes of people gaining housing in near vicinity often due to transportation and language after migration (Hoggart 6). Migrations, wandering or direct, voluntary or forced, often lead to classes of individuals living in proximity. While this practice can, of course, result in a voluntarily segregated population, beneficially, it leads to a familial environment where one encounters many of

the cultural elements and viewpoints that provide a sense of belonging in another location. It is no wonder that individuals seek stasis when significant concepts, such as belonging and acceptance, are incorporated into being rooted.⁴

The Root and The Other

Mr. Biswas's roots include his immediate and extended family in Trinidad, allowing him a place he is "from;" however, with the early death of his father (Naipaul 30), the family is divided between various extended family member's homes. Because of this split and the ensuing Othering he experiences, Biswas's primary identity is not based on his family or his ancestry but becomes linked to his class status and dependency on others. Mr. Biswas's errantry throughout his remaining life shows him purposefully moving away from his rooted class identity. Biswas's actions, at first glance, seem to simply be his attempt to better his working-class status; however, his perpetual movement throughout the novel reveals that he has a greater goal in mind. Analyzing errantry and Relations between economic hierarchies enables scholars to reject a singular influential root and instead see class as a pluralistic, relational, and complex concept. While many postcolonial nations, such as those in the Caribbean, move to theorizing class as pluralistic due to their histories, Marxism provides a foundational form of

⁴ Caribbean studies focus heavily on ideas of roots and rootedness, from around the times of independence to present. See also Ann M. Pescatello's *Old Roots in New Lands: Historical and Anthropological Perspectives on Black Experiences in the Americas*, C. James Trotman's *Multiculturalism: Roots and Realities*, Elizabeth M. DeLoughrey's *Routes and Roots: Navigating Caribbean and Pacific Island Literatures*, and Andrea Quesley's *Rescuing Our Roots: The African Anglo-Caribbean Diaspora in Contemporary Cuba*.

analysis. The complex overlapping development between base and superstructure delivers an understanding of the various forces of production and how they influence social forces as well.

In Trinidad and Tobago, and indeed across many Caribbean nations, class is distinctively tied to race, ethnicity, and gender. Rose Brewer argues for the combination of race, class, and gender being theorized simultaneously as there remains a gender/racial division of labor in the Caribbean. Trinidad and Tobago's population, with a large Hindu demographic, also intersects class with traditional religious practices, like caste systems⁵. Biswas's struggle of class mobility encompasses struggles with the region's expected class hierarchies based on assumptions about his race, ethnicity, gender, and religion. Instead of class being a universal category available to be applied across nations, the class forms and development in Trinidad specifically demonstrate the need to modify a traditional sense of class due to their distinct historical processes of slavery and bonded labor. Stuart Hall makes this criticism of Marxism's applications universally, in "The Problem of Ideology: Marxism Without Guarantees." Hall critiques that Marx "did not conceptualize the social formation as a determinate complex formation, composed of different practices, but as a *simple...structure*" (31, italics in original). Marx's work begins with the economy determining all other social practices where "each effect is simple" (31). Hall's, and others', main problem with classical Marxism is its closed

⁵ Caribbean nations never officially utilized the caste system for job placement or divisions of workers. However, India tracked different caste members migration and many Indo-Caribbeans maintained the categories to mark social status. See Lomarsh Roopnarine's *Indo-Caribbean Indentures* for breakdowns of caste statistical numbers as well as cultural consequences of caste migrations.

ideology. Hall states, “it would be preferable, from this perspective [of open horizons], to think of the ‘materialism’ of Marxist theory in terms of ‘determination by the economic in the first instance,’” instead of as “‘determination in the last instance,’” which gives the

illusion of theoretical *certainty*. And this has been bought at considerable cost, since certainty stimulates orthodoxy, the frozen rituals and intonation of already witnessed truth, and all the other attributes of a theory that is incapable of fresh insights...capable still of engaging an[d] grasping something of the truth about new historical realities. (43)

Utilizing Marxist theory, while still considering it as open without any guarantees of outcome, assists one in analyzing class structures and formations in locations outside of the European paradigm.

Specifically, the prior colonies of Europe must account for the historical realities of slavery and indentured servitude which greatly complicate the European class movements from peasantry to proletariat. Trinidad and Tobago, like many nations, moved from a rooted economy, centered on land production to a more abstract system focused on the trade of one’s productions. This development occurred even though, as Glyne A. Griffith points out in “Marxism: Reading Class in Anglophone Caribbean Literature,” most literatures remain focused on the peasant class rather than the middle class due to “the legacy of disenfranchisement, exploitation, and alienation that presents itself for observation and critique at every turn” (285). Distinctively, indentured servitude complicated this movement as the ideas of ownership and who’s production could be traded became muddled. The country’s treatment of formerly enslaved people compounded the ideas of ownership as many Afro-Trinidadians were not granted the

same rights as the Indo-Trinidadians who were finishing their indentured contracts. The “complicated intersections of race, shade, and class” will always consider the “intersection of colonialist oppression and capitalist labour exploitation” (Griffith 288, 286). These considerations continue in Caribbean nations today. As the economy moves further into service industries, the importance of female labor to the national economy become highly visible. Carla Freeman adds gender into the intersections of identity characteristics in her critique of the importance placed upon Caribbean female bodies by the global markets, in *High Tech and High Heels in the Global Economy*, along with the importance of female bodies throughout various class structures historically. Trinidad and Tobago’s economic form and development accounts for these types of histories, which intersect gender, race, and ethnic identities with one’s class identification. Following such developments allows a theorizing of Caribbean class with less “rigid structural determinacy” as Hall calls for in his critique. The multiplicity of factors influencing class identity leads to Othering based on class identities in a similar manner to that of racial or gendered Othering. The fluidity between classes is thus also difficult as one’s class is anticipated according to one’s ascribed, embodied characteristics. Class mobility is certainly possible, but it is also complicated by the specific historical relationships between groups of people.⁶ With effort, Relations amongst Others can still be diminished through errantry between classes.

⁶ While indentured servitude ended in 1917, the influx of workers replacing slave labor created a divide in many countries, resulting in discrimination and silencing and hierarchies still reminiscent in certain spheres today (for example, as noted in “Diversity, Difference, and Caribbean Feminism: The Challenge of Anti-Racism” by Rhoda Reddock). In 1961, when *A House for Mr. Biswas* was written, divisions are noticeable

To determine one's Relations with the Other based on class, one needs to first identity the root and the Other. In the case of Mr. Biswas, the root of his classed identity is in the statement that "he became once more only a labourer's child—*father's occupation: labourer* was the entry in the birth certificate" (Naipaul 47). Biswas's statement highlights not only his disdain for his root, but also the singularity of class's importance as it overtakes what would be a more traditional emphasis on caste. While he is a Brahmin and is therefore treated respectfully during religious ceremonies, Biswas's classed identity controls his life the rest of the time. He uses his class to formulate his identity; thus, when others disdain his class, he likewise disdains his root. Teun A. van Dijk, in "Political Discourse and Racism: Describing Others in Western Parliaments," argues that disdain for lower classes, specifically the working class, is racially and ethnically motivated by the majority elite class's desire to remain privileged, although the elite conceal their biases with subtle languages and explanations to avoid outwardly offending. van Dijk argues this premise in terms of a white elite majority in a developed Western country and a racial or ethnic minority group; however, the argument holds in any country that is divided along socioeconomic boundaries.

both along racial lines but more directly stated along economic lines. For example, Mr. Biswas is placed in charge of field workers without any experience. He also, when employed at the newspaper, is put in charge of judging the "deserving destitutes" competition and awarding money. During these episodes, Biswas is thrown out of numerous homes in anger because of his insensitive demeanor and his questions' audacity. Scholars like Patricia Mohammed and Ron Ramdin discuss this vein of racial Othering that occurs in general throughout the novel in large detail. I instead examine specific instances of class disparity between individual characters in the novel, nearly all of which are of Indian descent.

Biswas's ethnic ancestry, particularly the history of East Indians in the West Indies, impact his economic opportunities. After the abolition of slavery, many empires imported indentured servants from all different Indian caste groups to fill the new need for workers. According to Radica Mahase's research, "for the duration of the indentureship period [between 1845 and 1917], 147,600 Indians migrated to Trinidad where they worked mainly (though not solely) on the sugar cane plantations" (465). Taking over the work that had been done by African slaves could have provided a commonality between the two major racial minority groups, especially after indentureship ended. However, Lomarsh Roopnarine adds that "East Indians, particularly in Guyana and Trinidad, stuck to themselves, and only a few joined with other ethnic groups" (79). Confirming Roopnarine's statement, Biswas's major interactions remain between local, rural Indians, prompting contemplations about how disdain of class groups manifests itself when the character's interactions involve the same racial and ethnic group. van Dijk's argument does not address the Othering that occurs within the same ethnic group but along different economic standings. Biswas's prospects as a young man remain informed by his father's work as an estate labourer because that is how his Aunt and Uncle treat him. Later in the novel, his dependence on his wife's family businesses forces him to occupy an inferior standing in the household. Although he tries his hand at a multitude of jobs, the official listing remains "labourer" because of Biswas's lack of ownership over more than a few household items.

Beginning from a root as a laborer, Biswas's economic Other is the upper-class owner, regardless of race or ethnicity. He strives to either own personal property, such as

a house, or commercial property, such as a business which would possibly include housing.⁷ Mr. Biswas's original motivation for his wandering movements is a search for home ownership or, specifically, the perceived freedom of stasis that it would grant. Throughout the novel, the physical space Biswas occupies proves his class identity and personal worth. In the prologue, which takes place at the end of Biswas's life, he marvels that "now at the end he [finds] himself in his own house, on his own half-lot of land, his own portion of the earth. That he should have been responsible for this seemed to him, in these last months, stupendous" (Naipaul 6). On one hand, Biswas's security in home ownership is tentative as he owes a mortgage that he cannot keep up with and constantly fears losing his home (6). Patricia Mohammad argues that "even in locating his own home, there is no real resolution to his state of uncertainty," resulting in a novel that "concludes with a continued sense of the family's alienation from the society" (69). On the other hand, as the novel explores, Biswas does pass away in his own house, on his own land that is unshared with any extended family. Figure two, below, shows the book cover for the 2016 printing through Pan MacMillan publishing of the Picador Classic series version of the novel; this version emphasizes Biswas's material and mental accomplishments. He not only owns the home, but also specific possessions, which are shown in the front room depicted on the cover. The rich teal and yellow of the home and

⁷ I do not use the Marxist term "bourgeoisie," as the ultimate power at the time of the novel remained to be comprehended as the Empire and the historical plantation owners. This is largely due to the statements of political centralization found in Marx and Engels's *The Communist Manifesto*. The smaller shop or land owners do not rise to such a level. In Marxist terms, this could perhaps be the categorized as the lumpenproletariat according to occupation. However, as the novel does not deal with forms of revolution, I will use the blanket term of "upper-class" throughout the chapter.

the surrounding bright red, purple, and yellow flowers, which Biswas planted and tended, indicate the mental accomplishment of owning the house on Sikkim Street. The book cover promotes the interpretation of a successful ending to Biswas's movements through multiple houses. Yet this cheerful book cover deceives readers, as Biswas's success in social mobility is questionable due to his financial standings.

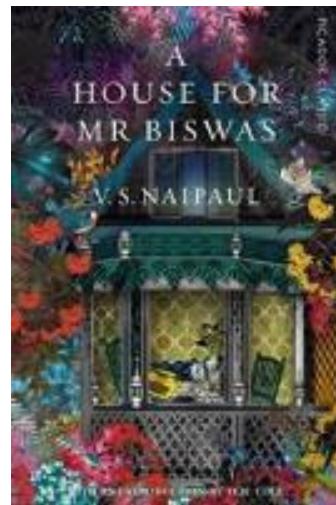


Figure 2. 2016 Pan MacMillian Cover

The novel, regardless of the particular cover, begins with a complex understanding of Biswas's success, leading his character to be read through the lenses of both upper and lower-class positioning. In the first sentence of the novel, Naipaul points out that Biswas, "a journalist of Sikkim Street, St James, Port of Spain, was sacked" (5). Drawing attention to his non-laboring career and personal address implies Biswas's success, but ending the sentence in passive voice highlights Biswas's continued failure to become a member of the upper-class, who hold intellectual jobs and own property; because the sentence falls flat, readers get a sense of Biswas' disappointment as he

continues to fail in achieving his goals. The novel's remaining pages detail Biswas's movement from laborer's son to non-laboring journalist in similar grammatical fashion. Through these movements, and his semi-success but quasi-failure, Biswas's class identity evolves into a pluralistic one containing elements of both his root and the Other. Being of both class systems, Biswas's movements bring him closer to various classed identities and diminish the negative Othering that Biswas participates in during part one of the novel.

Power Relations with The Other

In *Orientalism*, Edward Said begins his argument with the understanding that the Self is a person in a position of power, who uses that power to "Other" people who do not share the same position, thus ensuring the Self remains in their position of power. In Marxist terms, the maintenance of control is much like the power the capitalists maintain as they reinvest capital into various means of production. Said's argument concludes, amongst other things, that the Other reflects back onto the Self to show the Self as they truly are inside. The mirror effect of Othering ties the Self to the Other. In terms of economic development, employers and employees must co-exist because both workers and owners are necessary to economic growth. The Other defines who the Self is, by providing characteristics that the Self is not. The ability to reflect and, in a sense, define who or what someone is can be understood as a power that the Other holds. However, to be clear, the power to reflect does not equal the initial power held by the Self who practices Othering based on discrimination and stereotypes. However instead of a mental

power, in *A House for Mr. Biswas*, the power of the Other becomes stated in more physical terms because the action of Othering becomes reversed. Mr. Biswas Others the upper-class characters, who hold most of the economic power, during the novel's first part as a strategy of diminishing their power over his Self. The power of the upper class begins with deciding who is afforded the benefits of stopping and who controls one's ability to stop or forces someone's continued movement. These decisions of movement involve individuals as well as groups. In *A House for Mr. Biswas*, Naipaul focuses mainly on an individual's ability to stop, along with a specific individual's control over such movements. For much of the novel, Biswas simply desires the ability to stop moving, whether stopping to move one's possessions and family from one house to the next, or traveling between one job to the next, or halting his physical body to rest in peace after a day's work. When stopping motivates one's movements, as it does with Biswas, the powerful group or individual can be located as those who grant the benefit of not moving according to their desires. Michel Foucault's work on power and power relations, most notably in "The Subject of Power," emphasizes that power is exercised between individuals: "power exists only as exercised by some on others, only when it is put into action, even though, of course, it is inscribed in a field of sparse available possibilities underpinned by permanent structures" (137). Even though groups or institutions exert power over individuals, the singular nature of Foucault's emphasis allows for a specific, detailed analysis into power relations. This accounts for the relation between individuals. The negotiation of power, in terms of dominance and submission, builds a particular power relation between two people. The dominant, more powerful individual controls the

ability to compel others' movements. Foucault emphasizes that "in effect, what defines a relationship of power is that it is a mode of action that does not act directly and immediately on others. Instead, it acts upon their actions: an action upon an action, on possible or actual future or present actions" (137). Since various identity categories have unique power groups, often times, finding the indirect power actions lead to discovering a relationship of power. As Biswas desires stasis in the form of affluence with regards to his class identity, the upper-class, as the powerful group in the power relation, act on his future actions and indirectly control when he can stop moving through the objective capabilities of the type of work granted to him and the amount of money (or loans) he can obtain. In addition to controlling Biswas's actions of stopping, the upper-class also acts upon his continued movements through the instabilities of work and housing.

Trying to gain control, Biswas's motivations and his future actions are already stated in the novel's title: *A House for Mr. Biswas*; only the size and splendor of Biswas's desired house is questioned in the form of what degree of home ownership, security, and status will he work towards. The house is not only a commodity in Marxist terms, but also an object of commodity fetishism. Biswas does not simply want the house, but he wants the house as a symbolic thing. He not only desires non-movement and home ownership, but specifically a degree of non-movement that indicates security and status. Pursuing class, wealth, and security enables Mr. Biswas's hoped-for stasis. This pursuit originates with a laborer's beginning, but Mr. Biswas also has examples of stasis and wealth through his extended family, in the characters of Aunt Tara and Uncle Ajodha, who live in the town of Pagotes. Cover artist Stephen Russ depicts the Pagotes house,

shown below in figure two, for the 1961 book cover from the original English and American editions.

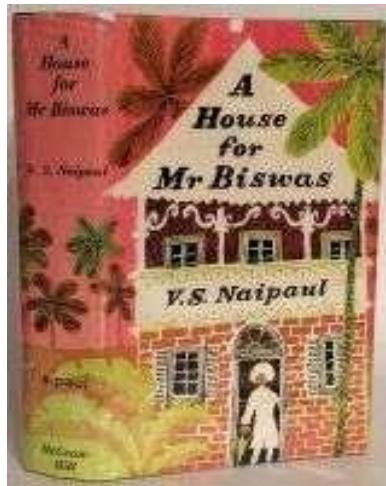


Figure 3. 1961 Andre Deutsch Cover

Aunt Tara and Uncle Ajodha's house becomes the representation of wealth and success for Mr. Biswas at a young age. Matching descriptions in the novel, the book cover details an elaborate house: multiple brick stories with an ornamental parapet around the upper balcony and decorative, bracketed spandrels around the upper pillars. The vegetation is minimal, but multi-colored, and all but one bush reaches high into the sky, along with the house. The sky glows a vibrant but still soft pink as though the sun has just set, creating a homey, welcoming sense. The faceless man entering the home is dressed in a white gentleman's suit, complete with hat and umbrella. The faceless aspect of the individual complements Naipaul's statement on class: the luxuries of the upper-class are attainable for Others. The faceless man could be anyone, including Mr. Biswas. The home in the novel becomes a powerful symbol to Mr. Biswas of the autonomy the upper-class have.

Biswas desires autonomy from his family, which he sees as only available with a better class status. Mr. Biswas searches for this autonomy, which Russ's artwork, declares to readers as a possible outcome for Mr. Biswas's story. The book cover in this instance reinforces the power of the upper-class Other through the belief that such mobility is possible.

Aunt Tara and Uncle Ajodha's power over Biswas begins the power and influence of the upper-class Other, as he compares their large, expensive home with the squalor of the workers' back trace where he resides as a child. Biswas notices the power Aunt Tara holds over his sister and his mother. After his father's death, "Tara came and at once took control...she was energetic and capable, and had adopted her husband's commanding manner" (Naipaul 31). Tara exemplifies womanhood for Biswas: she controls capably and commands energetically. The ellipses between these two strong statements include statements of Tara's jewelry:

Her arms were encased from wrist to elbow with silver bangle which she had often recommended to [his mother]: 'They are not very pretty, but one clout from this arm will settle any attacker.' She also wore earrings and a *nakephul*, a 'nose-flower.' She had a solid gold yoke around her neck and thick silver bracelets on her ankles. (31)

Naipaul couches Tara's femininity in her mental strength and her manly manner, making her a near-equal to Uncle Ajodha in power.

Partha Chatterjee, in "The Nationalist Resolution of the Women's Question," explains how the nineteenth-century Indian hierarchies of women according to class developed as a response to colonialism. He states that first a separation of material and

spiritual spheres formed and then it followed that “as long as we take care to retain the spiritual distinctiveness of our culture, we could make all the compromises and adjustments necessary to adapt ourselves to the requirements of a modern material world without losing our true identity” (Chatterjee 155). To maintain spirituality, India looked towards upper-class women to create a “‘new’ woman who was superior to Westernized and ‘common’ women—the ‘new bhadramahila’ (respectable women)” (151). Naipaul’s writing of Aunt Tara combines Chatterjee’s theories along with the necessities of life in Trinidad. Aunt Tara wears jewelry, which Chatterjee lists as one of the new “items of clothing...considered vulgar...a useless luxury” (157). However, Aunt Tara specifically states her jewelry’s defensive purpose. Naipaul’s explanations of her jewelry come in-between sentences that focus on her power and capability, further indicating their acceptability. Representing a Trinidadian “respectable [Indian] woman,” Tara shows modesty “in her dress, her eating habits, her social demeanour, her religiosity” while still holding “some idea of the world outside the home into which she could even venture as long as it did not threaten her ‘femininity’” (162). Tara’s jewelry then holds a greater significance than defending against would-be attackers; it marks her feminine side while not being an unnecessary luxury. It is her respectable woman symbol of not being western (frivolous) and not being common (unfeminine). Tara’s position of power, therefore, not only resides in Ajodha’s, and thus her, wealth; but, individually, Tara holds the power position of the respectable woman, perfectly balanced in representing the Indian female population.

Aunt Tara's power complements the "new patriarchy" which also arose in the nineteenth century, represented by Ajodha's descriptions and actions. The new man distanced himself from the "common woman" who was, amongst other things, argumentative (Chatterjee 160). Tara runs the household while Ajodha makes it possible for her to do so in material and mental comfort. Naipaul first describes Ajodha as a man "who had, at one bound, freed himself from the land and acquired wealth; already he owned a rumshop and a dry goods shop, and he had been one of the first in Trinidad to buy a motorcar" (30). Ajodha's description stresses the comfort and power that occurs when one links space, class, and possession of movement. The diction, particularly the words "land," "owned," and "motorcar," demonstrates how the space itself, the land, and one's relationship with it, locates an individual and their class. For Ajodha and Tara, the possession of land and movement, which connote higher class standing, situate them as powerful, particularly when they are juxtaposed with those who work the land, an occupation that connotes a lower class in the novel. Furthermore, their possession of not only property, but also of personal movement, sets Ajodha and Tara apart from the lower-class Other. They own the ability to move large distances as they desire, and they were one of the first families to understand the benefit of such movement.

As this reference occurs at the beginning of the novel, readers know that early on, Biswas learns the lessons of comfort and respectability that comes from Aunt Tara and Uncle Ajodha's class. He also learns that he does not fall into the category of the upper-class's respectable person. This is seen immediately as he lives "in one room of a mud hut in the back trace. He was not happy there and even after five years considered it a

temporary arrangement” (Naipaul 46-47). Biswas’s unhappiness is understandable as he continually sees and feels the contrast of his situation and his Aunt’s and Uncle’s. They have maintained an inequality between Biswas’s family and their own, stating loudly through their actions that Biswas is not equal to them. This inequality, however, is not innate. He is a part of their family, and they could have housed him and provided for them as an equal family member. (As they did later with his two cousins.) Yet, Tara chooses not to. With her power and control, Tara Others Mr. Biswas and his mother by keeping them in housing which announces and, continually restates, their lower position. With their lower position confirmed and accepted by Biswas’s mother, Tara controls nearly all aspects of Biswas’s early life: education, housing, and work.

Tara controls the family businesses, granting work to Ajodha’s brothers and their nephews as she deems appropriate to their class positions. Tara dictates Biswas’s movements, from education to learning to be a pundit (Naipaul 48). When he fails, and Biswas must rely on his Aunt and Uncle again, “Tara sent him to the rumshop” (57), which Ajohda’s brother, Bhandat, runs for them. Fortunately, “the importance of the rumshop had declined” as there were “unpleasant rumors: Bhandat apparently drank, beat his wife and kept a mistress of another race” (57). Bhandat’s rumored actions—shared by the rumshop patrons, “who came past them mean[ing] to drink themselves into insensibility...There was swearing, boasting, threatening; fights, broken bottles, policemen” (57)—threaten to reveal his “lower character” and the necessary distancing between him and Ajodha. Tara, by sending Biswas to the rumshop, labels him and his available jobs as lower-class, a suitable punishment for failing to become a pundit. Her

control may be viewed as proper as long as Biswas lives attached to their home and under her care. It is this control, of one who is not his parents, that he rejects as soon as he is able. The upper-class power is largely viewed through the actions of the female characters, but Ajodha adds to the views of their upper-class power as he finds other employment for Biswas.

Ajodha refuses to read the newspaper, seeing it as less dignified unless someone reads it to him. Biswas is frequently “called to the house to read, for a penny, a newspaper column” to Uncle Ajodha, and twenty years later, “Mr. Biswas’s son read it to him, for six cents” (Naipaul 48). Ajodha, generally a quiet man in the novel, demonstrates his power wholly through his money and class. He demands to be viewed as “dignified” and refined in his manner (48). He, however, contrasts his dignity with Biswas. Sennett and Cobb point out how one of the hidden injuries of class is the development of class as a system for limiting freedom and dignity. Instead of knowledge, such as literacy, being a tool to gain class freedom, it does not equate to gaining dignity. Reading to his Uncle Ajodha, in truth, equates an indignation for the family who looks down on him. Ajodha rejects Biswas as the same class by paying Biswas to read to him, making him perform the very action he refuses to do himself. This occurs whenever Biswas is not with the other lower-class patrons of the rumshop.

Biswas desires Tara and Ajodha’s power, along with the wealth of their home. As Stephen Harold Riggins, in “The Rhetoric of Othering,” explains, “Human qualities that are in some ways appealing are recognized in Others” (10). Simply because Biswas is extremely unhappy living in the back trace of Tara and Ajodha’s home does not mean he

cannot recognize the benefits of the power they hold over him and other family members. Instead of merely accepting his position or turning in disgust away from the upper class, Biswas does find certain qualities appealing. In fact, such recognition is necessary for his struggle. Foucault explains that “every strategy of confrontation dreams of becoming a relationship of power” (143). Biswas uses the power relation between Tara and himself, or the upper and working-class groups, to motivate his dreams of gaining stasis. It is important to note that just because Biswas recognizes the appeal of and dreams of becoming equal to Tara’s power, does not mean that he falls in line with said power. Falling in line with Tara’s desires would have perhaps motivated Biswas’s struggles to gain affluence, but it would not be errantry with wandering and searching and struggling for a greater purpose. Biswas’s errantry is partially predicated on his feelings of resistance to both his root and the Other. Aunt Tara and Uncle Ajodha’s display of power results in Biswas’s negative attitudes towards upper-class people as a group and motivates his errantry through strategies of confrontation.

Biswas’s recognition while resisting the upper-class’s power begins a relationship of confrontation between the two parties where “from the moment it is not a struggle to the death, the fixing of a power relation becomes a target—at one and the same time its fulfillment and its suspension” (Foucault 143). Biswas’s strategy of confrontation leads him to fixing or ending the power relation with Tara specifically. He becomes determined to find his own job without relying on Tara, while also showing the fulfillment of the power relation: Biswas “set about looking for a job. How did one look for a job? He supposed that one looked. He walked up and down the Main Road, looking” (Naipaul

64). Biswas's naivety in "looking for a job" demonstrates his dependency on Tara and his reliance on those in power. However, the suspension of the power relation occurs again when his resolve began to waiver and his mother advises him to return to Tara. Then he storms off again once "anger gave him energy, and he determined to walk until he was tired" (Naipaul 66). Biswas, as an inexperienced young man, turns to errantry, a motivated wandering that quickly leads him to the Tulsis, due to the harshness of Tara and Ajodha's living arrangements and their constant control over his surroundings. He develops an Othering attitude towards them to match the Othering he feels from them. Because they view him as only a laborer and treat him as inferior, he obtains the identical mindset towards the powerful upper-class while wanting to prove to them that his worth exceeds their original beliefs.

As Tara represents the powerful upper-class during Biswas's youth, Mrs. Tulsi fills the role in his adulthood. Mrs. Tulsi's power begins as she corners Biswas into marrying her daughter and continues as she also dictates the job he will have. The only two moments when Mr. Biswas decides his own course of work is at the very beginning and the very end of his time with the Tulsis. However, even then Mrs. Tulsi can be seen as manipulating Biswas through emotional control. Before Mr. Biswas officially marries Shama, Mrs. Tulsi speaks at length about the positive values of love, marriage, and partnership (Naipaul 89); afterwards, during Biswas's moments of unhappiness and resentment, she speaks of fate and one's blind acceptance of social standings before pronouncing the necessity to persevere against mistreatments (158). She uses her speeches to manipulate Biswas into acting how she desires. Mrs. Tulsi's ability to

antagonize Biswas and attempt to control his behavior while living in Hanuman House pairs with her philosophical turns where she appears to empathize with Biswas, using mis-pronouns to associate herself with Biswas's labor background. Mrs. Tulsi uses the phrase "your father" or "your dear father" when discussing her deceased husband, Mr. Biswas's would-be father-in-law (Naipaul 158). However, by using such address, she also evokes Biswas's actual father and positions herself as imparting words of wisdom as a father would to a son in times of hardship.

Instead of Mrs. Tulsi's actions endearing her to Mr. Biswas, he takes great offense which results in him Othering her. Biswas begins to define Mrs. Tulsi by making up derogatory names for Mrs. Tulsi, including "old queen," "old hen," and "old cow" (Naipaul 99). Naming is a recognized foundational aspect of Othering and controlling how one and others view a person. Utilizing the adjective "old" places Mrs. Tulsi in a position of decline. Similarly, his consistent use of animals attempts to equate a non-human, specifically a less-than-human, characteristic with Mrs. Tulsi. This naming is done to lower her position, with the knowledge that such naming will not lower her class position, but it can lessen her power over Biswas's mental image of himself. Only later in the novel does Biswas call her "she-fox" as a recognition of Mrs. Tulsi's control over the extended household and her power through her scheming speeches (122). Mr. Biswas's recognition of Mrs. Tulsi's power in itself does not motivate his errantry; however, when combined with the power and appeal of Tara's position, Mrs. Tulsi symbolizes again what Mr. Biswas cannot have until he gains control over his own work and living

arrangements. Biswas naming of Mrs. Tulsi is more a symbol of his errantry to find a balance between his root and his Other and less a childish schoolyard act.

Stasis through Errantry

Mr. Biswas's living arrangements, although dictated by Tara and Mrs. Tulsi, symbolize his struggles for errantry as he works towards stasis. Errantry in many senses is connoted negatively, as wandering brings to mind displacement, exile, and forced migration. To note, many cultures regard journeys positively when they achieve a goal or object, even if not tangible. Similarly, for Glissant, errantry need not be negative even in terms of displacement due to exile or migration. Glissant sees that the struggles that occur during moments of errantry often benefit individuals, particularly when errantry is motivated by a positive desire. Biswas's struggles to move in or out of certain locations demonstrate his desire to settle in one home and not move any longer. Biswas's material development occurs in distinct stages, which are organized spatially as well as historically in Trinidad. Naipaul uses metaphorical location names to indicate Biswas's mindset. Biswas begins in the "back trace" of Aunt Tara's house, representing his inferior initial position. This is not a home of its own right, but only a "trace" or hint of what a home should be. Biswas must become errant to find a home where he belongs. This trace of a home resides behind Tara's home, which is in Pagotes, meaning "scapegoat" in Spanish. Biswas blames his entire childhood under Tara's control for his hardships and position in the world. Naipaul's metaphorical locations when writing about Biswas' time with Tara and Ajodha serve as an acknowledgement of their influence on Biswas. Tara

and Ajodha serve as the excuse for Biswas's unhappy childhood and his desire to break ties with his root and reach for errantry. While Tara and Ajodha may be responsible for Biswas's dislike of his class status and the inferior feelings he has towards it, Biswas chooses to leave and live an errant lifestyle while looking for work outside their influence. Pagotes becomes the scapegoat for Biswas to resist Tara and Ajodha's control and living in the back trace motivates Biswas's errantry when searching for stasis.

Biswas's first movement away from the back trace is to Mrs. Tulsi's Hanuman House, named after the Hindu deity Hanuman, which Biswas uses as a communicator to further his confrontations of Others. While scholars, such as Ghosh and Shojaan, link Hanuman House to the presence and/or lack of religious significance to Naipaul's childhood, it also serves Biswas's Othering tactic through relationships of communication as Foucault would argue. Biswas asks, ““And what about the two gods? It ever strike you that they look like two monkeys? So, you have one concrete monkey-god outside the house and two living ones inside. They could just call this place the monkey house and finish”” (Naipaul 114). Biswas uses language and naming as an act of power. His ironic name of “gods” for the two Tulsis sons emphasize his lack of respect for the individual people and for the location's namesake, which in Hinduism exemplifies strength and perseverance. This impertinence, as the Tulsis family views it, also signifies the movement away from caste (an Indian tradition linked to religion and the Hindu belief in reincarnation) towards a more Western understanding of class. The powerful individuals in his families convince Biswas that his life will be complete once he ascends class ranks and gains stasis. Biswas's search for a higher class standing leads to his

errantry at The Chase, through Green Vale, to Port of Spain, and finally in the house on Sikkim Street. Sikkim Street connotes Biswas's arguable arrival at his goal; the original inhabitants of Sikkim, in northeast India, called their land Nye-mae-el, meaning ‘paradise’ (Chowdhury 43). Finally resting at Sikkim Street, Biswas’s errantry ends.

Before reaching such paradise, Biswas moves from location to location and gains various possessions and viewpoints. He learns, during his errantry, about his class standings in relation to those around him. Biswas’s class-based errantry shows readers the power of his physical movements, which transport him from one space to another, as he begins to understand economic identities. Upon leaving Tara and Pagotes for Hanuman House, Biswas announces his distaste for laboring work, distancing himself from his father’s laboring class identity. However, the Tulsis do not allow him to break his tie to the land. Mr. Biswas constantly struggles against being tied to the land through the jobs suggested by the Tulsis. The narration on laboring begins with Tara’s descriptions of Ajodha’s successes and continues with commentary about the Tulsi women in Shorthills. For instance, the Shorthills’ Tulsi women remain close to the land because of their household work. Naipaul writes that “The widows, when not cooking or washing or cleaning or looking after the cows, were making coffee or chocolate or coconut oil or grinding maize. Their clothes became patched, their arms hard. They looked like labourers” (Naipaul 405). The land marks the women’s class, not only through their clothing, but also through their bodies as their muscles transform. The signs of the respectable upper-class women have vanished as their bodies become hardened by

their physical movements. Biswas struggles with being connected to such movements, a struggle that seems to echo Naipaul's struggles with his working-class roots. On seeing his children's birth certificates, he exclaims:

'Look. Occupation of father. Labourer. Labourer! Me!...your father, occupation—occupation what, girl? Painter?...Sign-painter? Shopkeeper? God, not that!' He took the certificate and began scribbling. 'Proprietor,' he said, passing the certificate to [his wife]. 'But you can't call yourself a proprietor. The shop belongs to Mai' (Naipaul 156)

Mr. Biswas constantly desires a job-title beside his name that will move his identity away from the low-class position of laborer to a higher one. However, as Biswas's wife points out, Biswas has not achieved this status on his own yet. As Bahareh Shojaan states, Naipaul examines Biswas's "struggle for a place to settle his identity" (72); and while Shojaan focuses on Biswas's racial, ethnic, and religious identities, the same argument holds true for Biswas's class identity. As noted previously, in Caribbean class formation and development, all identity characteristics are linked together. Biswas fights through a class identity in flux according to the place he occupies.

However, before he can find a "place to settle" his class identity, he struggles through his attempts at transforming his class. Biswas's struggle primarily occurs as he grapples to transform his perceived position. However, he continues to fail to escape his root class identity, while also failing to grasp a plurality of class identities because in each new location, Biswas comments on the location's temporary nature. For instance, at The Chase, Biswas comments that what he perpetually felt "about their venture [was] that it was temporary and not quite real...and the feeling lasted until he left The Chase. Real

life was to begin for them soon, and elsewhere. The Chase was a pause, a preparation. In the meantime, he became a shopkeeper" (Naipaul 140). Biswas's nonchalant acquiescence indicates to readers his reluctance to work at anything but transforming his perceived class position, as he thinks society perceives laborers. Richard Sennett and Jonathan Cobb have written extensively in *The Hidden Injuries of Class* about the perceived and imagined condescending ideas about class and respect. Biswas believes society disrespects the laboring class and, whether true or not, this belief influences Biswas's viewpoints both of himself and the larger community. His physical movements away from such condescension, both in rejecting his root and in his dislike of his Other, is in line with his struggle to accept one and strive towards the Other. Biswas did not care to become a shopkeeper at any time in his life; however, his main concern, since his youth with Aunt Tara, was to not be a part of the laboring class. Even though this is a positive move away from physical labor tied to working the land, Biswas sees being the shopkeeper at The Chase as temporary and below his talents because he it is still working for his in-laws. The space is not his and at any time he can be forced to move by the more powerful Other. When this occurs, Biswas finds that his movements are not in his own control. The powerful Other can force Biswas's errantry, which motivates him to gain the power that comes with a higher-class status.

Stasis motivates Biswas's errant wandering, but when given the opportunity to build his house at Green Vale, Biswas experiences physically debilitating anxiety, conveying a sense of class immobility. Biswas views a life of labor as the continuation of a death-like state without reprieve, continuously working with no movement. The life of

labor began to evolve after the period of indentured servitude. Roopnarine argues that after indentured servitude, the caste system became modified and workers “began to assimilate into the Caribbean class system” (72), where “paternal social stratification decreased and status differentiations based on education, economic power and profession became important” (75). However, the reliance on socioeconomic conditions to delineate power and access to work are exactly the problems when said conditions are based on intangible ascribed identity characteristics, such as ethnicity. The actions of passing down one’s ancestral occupations, on birth certificates for instance, perpetuate the fatal mindset that Biswas retains. Biswas admittedly knows nothing about laboring with the land (Naipaul 198); and even though he is an “overseer” at Green Vale, he fights against even this minimal reliance on the land or manual, physical work to the point where permanence in a place that focuses on the land brings on a mental illness. Instead of Green Vale symbolizing an energizing valley, for Biswas it symbolizes a hole full of death. Moving out of such an environment, which reminds him of his previous class identity, compels Biswas to return to Mrs. Tulsi and the charity of Hanuman House.

Figure four is the novel’s 1985 Penguin Publishing book cover, illustrated by Tony Moore. The house in this case is pushed back, just barely poking through the expanse of wilderness that surrounds it. The coloring begins with white ferns, which are the absence of color—a blankness that holds the place of the foreground and surrounds everything else. The leaf tips stab into the rest of the image, creating a sharpness.

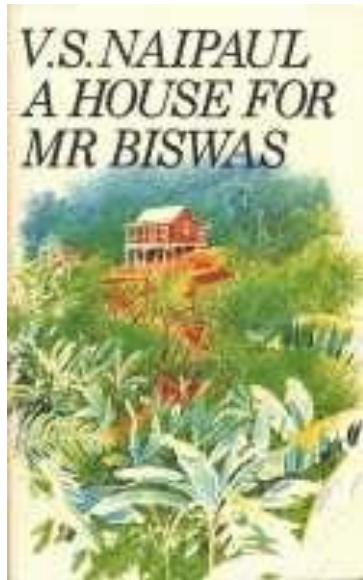


Figure 4. 1985 Penguin Publishing Cover

A great stretch of green follows and visually holds a depth which envelops the viewer through its multiple textures. The only way out of the all-encompassing environment is a broken red path bordered by sharp, dead trees. A visitor must traverse this labyrinth to gain refuge at the red house on the hill. The picture of the house appears to offer shelter and protection; it rests on stilts high above the enclosing landscape where now the white beams provide a respite from the continuous green flora. The same green flora, with tints of blue to indicate distance, continues after the house as well. As a book cover, the illustration provides readers with the knowledge of hardship and struggle in order to gain "A House for Mr. Biswas." These struggles pictured here are very different from the original pictures of success and wealth. The wilderness and its complications in Moore's illustration perfectly symbolize Biswas's difficulty in accepting and prospering at Green

Vale. There is danger in the foliage itself. For Biswas, the land of Green Vale and the work as an overseer dangerously threatens his life.

Biswas cannot mentally move past the wilderness pictured as Green Vale and the type of work necessary to survive in the location. At Green Vale, he continually “mutter[s] to himself, holding bitter, repetitive arguments with unseen persons. He was ‘trapped’ in a ‘hole’” (Naipaul 213). Biswas’s conversation with himself appear to be the beginning of a mental break. The hole trapping his movements are his surroundings: trees where “half the leaves were dead; the others, at the top, were a dead green. It was as if all the trees had, at the same moment, been blighted in luxuriance, and death was spreading at the same pace from all the roots” (197). Naipaul’s repetitive use of death surrounds Biswas and his mindset. As in the image described above, the location’s flora becomes the center of reader’s knowledge of the place. However, since this flora is also stated in terms of death, we see how Biswas links the rural landscape with death and rootedness. Death sweeps through all associations and comes from the trees’ roots. Yet, as Biswas connects the place with a laboring class, the death that Biswas fears comes not from the flora itself, but from the associations of working the land and belonging to the laboring class. Biswas feels that if he remains at this job and builds his house here, he will die. Through this fear, Green Vale halts Biswas’s movements, even his errantry. Biswas feels that “death was forever held in check...And new leaves came, as sharp as daggers; but there was no freshness to them; they came into the world old, without a shine, and only grew longer before they too died” (197). Seeing the landscape as symbolic to the workers, Naipaul’s suggests that even young men and women, when born into the

laboring class with no chance of movement, are already dead, even if they are a new growth. Biswas's fight against the land becomes ironic later on as he returns to harvesting, even though overseeing harvesters resulted in his mental collapse, in order to acquire the wealth necessary to construct his second house after living in Shorthills.

After returning to live with the Tulsis in Shorthills, Biswas begins harvesting because his desire for stasis is so strong. Happily, he attempts to use the land he hates for gaining wealth and the work he hates for building his permanent future: "Cycling to work in the cool of the morning and whistling in his way, he would suddenly jump off his bicycle, look right, look left, pull down oranges or avocado pears, drop them into his saddlebag, hop on to his saddle and cycle measuredly away, whistling" (Naipaul 387). The death Biswas associated with the land in Green Vale has vanished. Smuggling a dozen pieces of fruit for sale during his morning bicycle commute allows Mr. Biswas to build his own home. The total use and control of an economic base—the natural resources, the labor, the conditions of labor and production—gives him a sense of control as well as means to accomplish his desires. Biswas's desires to own his own home, which will grant stasis, motivates his mentality to be positive. His physical movements, including his cycling, jumping, hopping back and cycling away happily, are joyous because they are less like laboring. Biswas steals the fruit from the Tulsis land, using the land when he is not supposed to. Readers can assume that if dictated to harvest the fruit for sale, Biswas would find the task unpleasant. However, since his actions are of his own volition and for his own benefit, his movements are quick, motivated, and happy. At this point his movements are joyful as his goal is his own. The laboring is joyful to him. The

time at Shorthills reconnects Biswas to his laboring root in a positive manner, largely because laboring is of his own choosing.

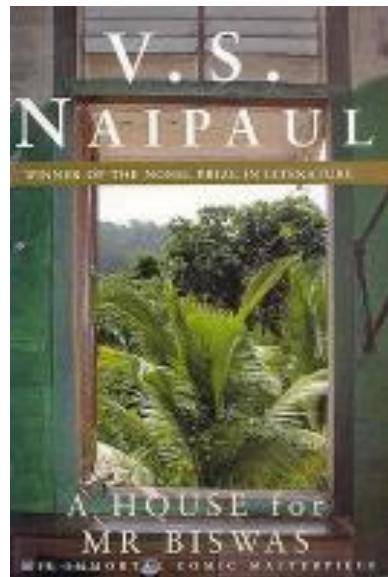


Figure 5. 2003 Picador Publishing Cover

At Shorthills, represented by the book cover in figure five shown above, published by Picador in 2003, the wilderness no longer haunts or consumes the picture. Instead the window frame boxes it and separates it from the viewer. The image begins with the assumption of safety and security as it is from inside the home. The viewer already is granted safety away from the pointed leaves from figure four. However, the prosperous fruit trees lie just behind. The open window invites a slight merging of inside and outside spaces. Yet the green painted wall also indicates theunnecessariness of being outside. While unnecessary, errantry is still present as he moves through the land into the city. Errantry is no longer mandatory for Biswas; he is not forced to move, yet he does so willingly in order to gain stasis. However, while inside, he is safe. In the picture, the

heavy bedroom dresser in front of the window protects from any ideas of diving into the wilderness. Shorthills, then, provides the perfect amalgamation of inside and outside for Mr. Biswas. He can use the land for his own purposes and benefits while not being overwhelmed by it or needing it for his employment. This seems to be a happy medium for him as he conjoins aspects of both his root of laboring and Relation with the upper class. Biswas's errantry through Shorthills move him closer towards the upper class and the home ownership he desires. However, his home once built, meant to be his upper-class space, was paid for through, as Naipaul states, Biswas's "plundering" of the land (386). His fruit thievery comes back to harm him as Biswas's second home burns down, and his movements become forced again as he returns to renting rooms from his in-laws (Naipaul 415). Biswas desires for a higher-class status may have motivated his happy movements while living in Shorthills, but his joyful movements are short-lived once he builds his house through fraudulent means. The experience, however, did begin to blend a class identity based both on his root and on his Relation.

Errant Modes of Transportation

Biswas's errantry is visible at a large scale through his end goals, specifically his desires for a home and place to gain stasis; however, they are also visible at a micro, embodied scale through his body movements and modes of transportation, including figurative speech. Many Caribbean theorists discuss wandering historically and/or figuratively. For instance, when discussing the lasting effects of the Middle Passage, Elizabeth DeLoughrey, in *Routes and Roots*, makes use of Kwame Braithwaite's term

tidalectics, a figurative play of dialectics which rejects land-based ideas as all theories' foundation, to describe histories' ties to the ocean and its cyclical mode of history always in motion. While Biswas does not directly mention his history, he evokes the sea when figuratively discussing his class movements. When first at Hanuman House, Biswas rejects working on the Tulsis' estate and the dependence that comes with it. He pronounces that his "motto is: paddle your own canoe" (Naipaul 101). Biswas's commitment to movement improving his economic standing reaches into his figurative speech. Neither water nor modes of transportation through water appear anywhere in the text; however, figuratively, readers understand Biswas's statement towards independence. Further, the actions of canoeing indicate errantry as one has no set path. Canoeing is a wandering through a body of water for purpose; and when "paddling one's own canoe," one is in control of their errantry. He will not follow the path of the Tulsis simply because they expect him to be subservient. Like DeLoughrey's use of tidalectics, he rejects the standard power structure to follow his own and remain true to his own history. The use of movement in Biswas's motto demonstrates his commitment to errantry bettering his class position on his own terms. He repeats the phrase multiple times as he holds new occupations; it is even used by the larger Tulsis family to refer to Biswas's children as "little paddlers" (177). This figurative statement of independent movement allows Biswas to hold ownership over his movements instead of following or allowing any other person to dictate his future. As he repeats the phrase throughout his multiple careers, this independence also allows him to own his failures. His career path

(and economic path) is not linear but wandering through many future possibilities even returning to his despised starting points.

With the multiplicities of errantry as Biswas moves between houses, modes of transportation, and economic positions, questions addressed in chaos theory apply. This line of questioning begins with addressing the question of Biswas's movements as chaotic. As demonstrated, Biswas's end goal is to halt his movement. Are movements motivated by stasis more rushed and, thus, more chaotic, because it focuses on one's economic livelihood? Or are such movements more pointed and, thus, less wandering? If the second is true, then what degree of "wandering" is needed to exemplify errantry? Or does being motivated by stasis remove the wandering element of the definition? Forced versus free wandering has long been theorized in migration studies.⁸ To answer the appropriateness of errantry's theory to a question of stasis, the additional characteristic of continuity in repetition and chaos is needed.

Antonio Benítez-Rojo, in *The Repeating Island*, specifically discusses repetition as a cultural theory of Caribbeanness, which has later been used in Caribbean identity theories. Benitez-Rojo asserts the continuous nature of a repeating self, whose culture identifies with images of the sea and slaveships as well as current unequal modes of production. Because of the histories of the Caribbean nations, economic production and one's position in the economy is tied to one's forced or independent movements.

⁸ For instance, see Carole B. Davies' *Black Women, Writing and Identity: Migrants of the Subject*, which sees in-between spaces as overlapping communities that individuals wander between, and Leela Fernandes' *Transnational Feminism in the United States: Knowledge, Ethnics, and Power*, which studies the importance of the labor of the traveling subaltern which unsettles notions of the nation-state.

Wandering for oneself allows for a control as one's identity characteristics, such as class, may ebb and flow like the sea images associated with the archipelago. For Benítez-Rojo, the continuous repetition of culture and identity is a "discontinuous conjunction" which provides the "paradoxes within sociocultural fluidity" of chaos and fractal theories (2-3). When discussing embodied movements in Caribbean studies, the fluidity of culture must account for the multiplicities of experiences, nations, empires, as well as each of these histories. Benítez -Rojo, and other scholars, find chaos and fractal theories illuminating, with their emphasis on complex systems which appear to be random but hold an underlying pattern of repeated self-similarity.

When applied to ideas of errantry and *A House for Mr. Biswas*, fractal theory in the "repeating islands" would argue that Mohan Biswas's movements throughout the novel establish his identity's chaotic nature of class positioning. His wandering between various houses reinforces the wandering aspects of chasing stasis without forethought. The multiple houses and occupations, while different in some respects, also have a self-similarity in their symbolizing Biswas's continuous need for errantry. Biswas's chaotic wandering through life is a repeating pattern, ebbing and flowing through his successes and failures, tied to his personal history and similar to his cultural history. Benítez-Rojo, in reiterating chaos theory, argues that chaotic movements should not be viewed negatively, "where every repetition is a practice that necessarily entails a difference and a step towards nothingness...; however, in the midst of this irreversible change, nature can produce a figure as complex, as highly organized, and as intense" (3). Biswas's life and his embodied movements exemplify errantry through their chaotic nature, which are also

complex and organized through class mobility. In such a reading of Naipaul's character of Biswas, Benítez -Rojo's also points out that "for the reader who is attuned to Chaos, there will be an opening upon unexpected corridors, allowing passage from one point to another in the labyrinth" (3). Naipaul's labyrinth, moving Biswas through Trinidad's communities, in and out of multiple houses, with and without his family, becomes a chaotic search for stability.

The labeling of Biswas's movements throughout his life as wandering suggests to readers not only a feeling of perpetual movement and non-belonging, but also a lack of control over his future. The novel begins with the realization that "for the next thirty-five years he was to be a wanderer with no place he could call his own" (Naipaul 39). Biswas is labeled as a wander because he lacked the control over his own place. Glissant, however, argues that this wandering can be positive in the development of one's identity because "uprooting can work toward identity, and exile can be seen as beneficial, when these are experienced as a search for the Other...prompting the knowledge that identity is no longer completely within the root but also in Relation" (18). Regardless of Biswas's control at the moment, he works on his Relations with his Others, positively building his identity. Biswas's identity is not tied only to his laboring class root, as long as his movements lead to greater experiences. Often, he does not know the outcomes of his movements, nor does he plan any of his movements. The novel's locations begin and end with Biswas's walking errantry. At the beginning, he simply wanders from districts to district looking for work, stopping once some stranger employs him. He begins his uprooting and perpetual movement with his own body: "He walked aimlessly, along the

main road and down side streets he had never taken” (Naipaul 61). His body and his errantry that he decides upon is in his control when walking. Uncomfortable with his root of laborer, Biswas’s aimless walking is to distance himself from his Othered Aunt and Uncle and the space he occupies in Pagotes, which he never felt he had a claim to possess. Never belonging at his Aunt and Uncle’s, Biswas walks in order to gain distance through errantry, even though it leads to an unknown future.

Part of errantry is the embrace of an unknown future. At the end of the novel, Biswas leaves Hanuman House for a final time and begins walking, eventually landing in Port of Spain. Notifying no adult, he only told his eldest child that he was leaving (Naipaul 291). Biswas then “walked past the Red Rose Tea Is Good Tea Sign, past the rumshop with the vast awning, past the Roman Catholic church...” (292). Naipaul’s use of the word “past” does indeed leave all the elements of Hanuman House and the rural town in Biswas’s past. He has no care to bring the experience forward and no care to remain in his current present location. Part One of the novel ends with a statement of moving past locations as he remembers his brothers’ legs after swimming in a pond. The simultaneous rejection of Biswas’s past in terms of space and the embrace of his childhood memories marks the beginning of remembering his root with slight fondness. Biswas rejects his entire family as possible hosts during his errantry, but through “accident...[as] at the road junction Mr. Biswas had still not decided where to go” (195), he decides upon traveling to his brother-in-law’s home in Port of Spain. Biswas’s walking out of Hanuman House, advising no one of his movements, and allowing fate to decide his course is perhaps the largest moment of errantry in Biswas’s life. Walking, the

small embodied power to move and change direction, dictates two of the largest changes in Biswas's circumstances and bookends the novel's locations.

Appropriate to the importance of movement in the novel, the book cover, figure six below, shows a black and white cover photo by Sir H. H. Jones with the Royal Geographical Society in London. The photograph was used by Vintage International in their first edition in March of 2001.

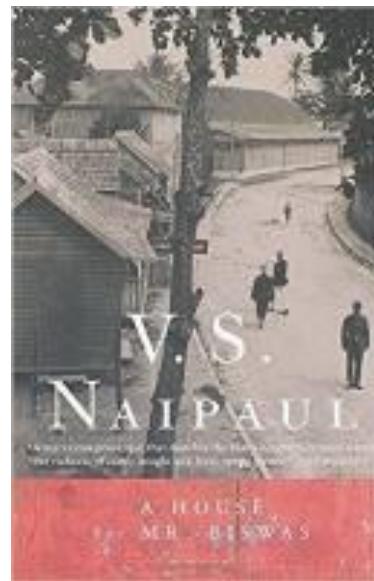


Figure 6. 2001 Vintage International Cover

While unable to state the picture's location, it depicts errantry along with the unknown future of the path. On the left, four large buildings occupy the space. The buildings' proximity closes off the picture's left-hand side, leaving only the texture of the roof tiles to separate the structures for the viewers. The signs for a watchmaker/jeweler and grocer align the area with Biswas's descriptions of Pagotes, where he began his wandering as a young adult. The large tree in the center create a natural boundary for the viewer,

demarcating the only path available for Biswas. But this is a path of unknown futures as it veers to the right. The soldier standing still, facing the viewer, acts as a sentinel to the street and community. Before entering, one must pass through his scrutiny. The two men on the path walking away, however, entreat the viewer to join in wandering the path. Although they both walk on the street, their paths are different. The man on the right takes a diagonal course as his feet turn to the left. The other man, on the left side, seems to take a direct route through the street, unwavering in his line. The fourth figure in the photograph is a child running. Hurriedly he comes towards the viewer, rushing with something in his hand. His route through the street is direct also as he seems determined to accomplish his current errand. While some of the individuals move haphazardly and some move purposefully and some move not at all, they reinforce the message of multiple available avenues through the space. Additionally, in the dirt street, the viewer perceives many prior footprints, each different from the four visual courses currently shown. Not all of these footprint paths are linear, showing amounts of errantry through the city streets. Biswas's aimless wandering takes his own aimless path, beginning with his time in Pagotes through his time at Hanuman House to the rented rooms in Port of Spain, and his modes of errantry evolve from walking as he gains more wealth and independence from his family and his in-laws.

Biswas's wanderings continue as he bicycles through the communities. His first hope of stasis happens as he leaves Hanuman House after arranging his marriage into the Tulsis family: he "was cycling back [and feeling] elated!... He felt he had been involved in large events. He felt he had achieved status" (Naipaul 87). After being ostracized by

Aunt Tara and Uncle Ajodha's house, he is now "involved" in something large; he has status because of his inclusion. His desire for the inclusion--an understandable desire for anyone--states his desire also for additional control over his life, which he has linked to his class status. This greater control amounts to a greater status. Biswas's perceived movements between classes is clear as he cycles

his way along the County Road and the Eastern Main Road. Both were lined for stretches with houses that were ambitious, incomplete, unpainted, often skeletal, with wooden frames that had grown grey and mildewed while their owners lived in one or two imperfectly enclosed rooms. (Naipaul 88)

Instead of such a life, with his marriage that moved him to Hanuman House, it was "from such failure, he had by one stroke made himself exempt" (88). The physical pumping of his legs up and down repetitively moves him from Pagotes to Arwacas, resulting in better fortune, visible through the different housing unavailable, or so he believes, to him. While not immediately bestowing financial success, his cycling does move him from being dependent on his Aunt Tara and her whims of using him for various jobs. He transitions to a married man, who (albeit lives with his in-laws) works as his own boss as a sign painter (albeit he does not make a living wage to support a family). While his cycling is more direct and purposeful than his prior wanderings on foot, the movement symbolizes to Biswas a mobility of class. Even though his dependency merely transfers from one household to another, he believes he has gained a greater class status. Indeed, his bicycle becomes such a momentous symbol of success that he bestows it upon his son, Anand, after he upgrades his next mode of transportation (495), an automobile, which grounds Biswas and brings him closer to his Othered upper-class neighbors.

Although the automobile grants Biswas a larger area for errantry, the automobile begins to ground his class identity, diminishing his Othering actions as his errantry increases. Despite his successful transition to a government job in the Port of Spain, he still rents a room from Mrs. Tulsi. Yet, with such a momentous change of occupation and status, stasis seems assured. Biswas changes his manners, acting more like the respectable Ajodha, to match his perceived elevated level of a government worker. During one of these moments, his new boss, Miss Logie suggests a holiday while he transitions between jobs, adding that “transport was difficult, but the car would come for them at the end of the week” (Naipual 479). Biswas had never considered a holiday away from the larger Tulsis family. According to Roopnarine, this moment would act as the beginning of Biswas’s emphasis on a nuclear family rather than seeing himself as part of an extended family community (76-86). In fact, when indirectly questioned about the other children around the property, Biswas quickly answers, “‘Orphans’” (Naipaul 482). Biswas rejects the larger Tulsi clan as a part of his family. Focusing on just his nuclear family and their enjoyment, the use of an automobile just for them to go to the seashore for a week’s holiday was “overwhelm[ing]...the thing was beyond ambition” (479). In upper-class style, Biswas and his family take the chauffeured car. However, it is provided from someone else, as it is his boss’s car driving to his boss’s beach house. The holiday experience indicates success, but not Biswas’s; instead, it is a material carrot of what may await him with diligent work. The holiday may seem the ultimate prize but when their plans are divulged to the greater family, the car remains the most important secret. “The manner of transportation was still kept secret: it was to be the final surprise. It also

caused Mr. Biswas much anxiety” (Naipaul 480). The ultimate prize for Biswas is not the sea he has never seen, or the time alone with his immediate family, but the car ride. The ability to travel great distances at his own whim, as Tara and Ajodha demonstrate, is of the greatest importance in gaining class mobility. He sees his physical mobility tied to the class rank he holds as compared to the ranks of those around him.

The holiday errantry becomes the upper-class experience for the Biswas family when given the supreme mode of physical mobility. When driving to the seaside, the family notices the beauty of Trinidad, the sense of freedom on the winding, cool road, and finally the welcoming attitude of the “untouched bush” (Naipaul 483). The acquisition of freedom, beauty, and discovery of the pure land becomes welcome to Biswas and his family. They are free to experience the land as Others on holiday where no work is expected or associated with the land. The Buick that they ride in connects him with the global and neocolonial consumer economy that he associates with the purchasing power of the upper-class. Biswas’s new outlook is linked to the upper-class and the stasis where one can experience the land without any hardship. The Biswas family not only gain new outlooks and experiences, but also protection against hardships as well. They drive “through narrow, ill tended roads darkened by bush on both sides. Small villages surprised them here and there, lost and lonely” (484). Regardless of Biswas’s past mental hardships prior to his first holiday, now darkness, smallness, loss, and loneliness are held at bay merely by the four doors and windshield of a Buick. The vehicle provides escape—movement away from the bad, dark possibilities that some people live. With a car, one can be “surprised” by poor or “ill-tended” villages and then speedily drive past,

forgetting all about such lives who occupy those buildings. The speedy escape past the poor villages is the same escape Biswas associates with his leaving the back trace of Pagotes, but with more speed. He no longer needs to struggle or be trapped by a location. The automobile resolves the trapped feelings Biswas felt before in Pagotes or Hanuman House or Green Vale.

Biswas's car-trip to the seashore represents his first experience of a car's leisure and class. After successfully accomplishing his first task with the Welfare Department, "a memorandum informed him that, to enable him to move easily about his area, he was to be given a car, on a painless government loan" (Naipaul 490). The importance of this memorandum is only in part a statement about Biswas's achieved goal of rising in class. Positively, he has gained more money with his new job. He is also no longer dependent upon any family member for employment. And while he does not own his own home or live alone with only his immediate family, he now is going to have a vehicle of his own and the ability to move himself and his family around. As Biswas has demonstrated before, he believes that such mobile capabilities will lead to owning a home and stasis for himself. Unfortunately, for Biswas the communication also contains two vital words: "given" and "loan." Biswas does not ask for the vehicle, nor is it his idea to purchase a vehicle. The department has deemed it necessary for him to have one due to his work's demands. On one hand, the new Prefect that Biswas buys is a job perk. On the other hand, Biswas must purchase the car. While the loan may be "painless" to some individuals, it remains a loan. Biswas does not own it outright, just like his future house on Sikkim Street. Unable to purchase the vehicle on his own, Biswas gains another debt.

However, his debt is not owed to distant family members, but to the government. This new kind of debt for Biswas holds the benefit of not being visible to his brothers-in-law, with whom he continuously competes. The government loan moves economic concerns from a personal, often familial, system to an impersonal system that is more abstracted and illustrates a shift in the nature of capitalism. This impersonal system allows Biswas to “secretly” learn to drive and compare multiple car advertisements “in secrecy” (Naipaul 490). Biswas specifically does not want his family to know about the vehicle. But this desire is not for the sake of competition or surprise. He does not want to answer questions about the cost nor the means to purchase the vehicle. To admit to a loan would be to admit to a lesser triumph of status; keeping the loan a secret ensures that no one has to know that his new class symbols are only a façade.

Relations in Class

Through his errantry and material focus, just like with his future house, Biswas’s car indicates an achieved level of success even though it was not the level he hoped for. His physical mobility and errantry brought about the means of gaining material acquisitions which allow him greater physical and social mobility and more opportunities to engage with his Others. While not of the upper-class, Biswas’s new standing and the extent of his social journey, grants him better understandings of his Relations with lower and higher-class members. Biswas’s better Relations are partially seen through the ease that he moves between classes, in a way “code-switching” according the people residing in a particular environment. Specifically, when Biswas visits his cousin Jagdat, he takes

on the actions and attitudes similar to this “person of importance, Ajodha’s heir” (Naipaul 435-36) This is possibly the position and title Biswas could have had if he had lived with his Aunt and Uncle in their larger house instead of in the backtrace. The juxtaposition between the two characters’ classes provides a possible moment of tension; however, not at this stage in Biswas’s errantry. Biswas has transitioned and gained his own class mobility through his own actions. As a governmental worker, he has bettered his class status without his family’s assistance. He has gained control through his errantry of multiple houses, occupations, and transportation. Biswas has worked on becoming Jagdat’s equal during this time and now can share in nights of drinking and narrating family histories (436-37). Biswas not only becomes Jagdat’s equal during these evenings, but Biswas also asserts himself and his equal knowledges in his representations of family history. He spends multiple evenings with Jagdat without drawing attention to Jagdat’s negative sexual past. The two men act as if they are completely comfortable spending time together alone and in the presence of Jagdat’s other friends. Whether truly equal or not in their class standing, Biswas spends time with his Othered cousin and begins to better their Relations.

Earlier in the novel, Biswas equally adapts to Jagdat’s father, Bhandat, who has been ostracized completely from Tara and Ajodha’s circle. Bhandat requests an award as a “deserving destitute” (Naipaul 429-35). Seeing his current living conditions, Biswas “refuse[s] to be moved” by his poverty, accepting the hospitality of sweet tea and yellow cakes. Far from being insensitive, Biswas is not pointing out Bhandat’s poverty; he does not make Bhandat feel less or unworthy of his attentions because of his economic

standing. Naipaul describes Bhandat's living arrangements as a "flat facade, diversified by irregular areas of missing plaster, small windows with broken shutters, and two rusty iron balconies" (430). The novel only quickly mentions the dilapidated building where Bhandat occupies a room with his Chinese girlfriend. Instead Biswas's visit to his Uncle's home focuses on Bhandat's romantic relationship, how the two individuals communicate, and Bhandat's issues with aging. Biswas's "refus[al] to be moved" is accompanied by Biswas's gracious allowances for his uncle's age and deafness, Bhandat's stories of "wonderful opportunities not taken" (Naipaul 432), and laments over lost wealth. Biswas can relate with Bhandat and his economic hardships, making Bhandat not feel Othered with Biswas's new success. Biswas switches equally well between navigating the needs and complexities of both his lower classes and upper classes family members with equal ease.

Biswas's new-found ease of relationship expands beyond his family members as he begins to consider himself as belonging to a different class status at work. When meeting Miss Logie, Biswas remarks that "he had been immediately attracted by Miss Logie, the head of the department" (Naipaul 476). However, Biswas's attraction is not due to her appearance. Naipaul only uses one physical description for Miss Logie: she is tall (476). Otherwise, Biswas's attraction leans upon Miss Logie's attitude as he describes her as "energetic," noting that "she was not pompous or aggressive, as he had found women in authority inclined to be. She had the graces" (479). Miss Logie's appeal certainly rests on her gender, but specifically her unique (to Biswas) combination of power and gender. Unlike Tara or Mrs. Tulsi, who seem overbearing in their positions of

power, Miss Logie conjoins power with style, poise, and charm. Biswas is so taken that “even before there was talk of the job he had found himself attempting to please” largely because “he had known no Indian woman of her age as alert and intelligent and inquiring” (Naipaul 476). For Mr. Biswas, Miss Logie embodies the respectable woman more than Tara or Mrs. Tulsi due to her combination of refinement and command. Her position is elevated in Biswas’s eyes because she does not Other him like the upper-class women he knows; instead “whenever she introduced him to anyone she spoke of him as her colleague, a graciousness he had never before experienced; and from being relaxed with her he became debonair” (478). As Biswas acts relaxed and debonair, he begins to consider himself a colleague of this refinement, instead of just a worker. As Miss Logie’s refinement stretches to her dealings with her employees, she offers a decency and kindness never portrayed during his prior experiences with other women in power.

With Biswas’s small change in class status as an independent worker, readers see the bettering of Relations with the Other in Biswas’s in-laws. Biwas’s Relation with Owad, his brother-in-law, has a particularly striking transition. Owad, Mrs. Tulsi’s youngest son, lived in Hanuman House when Mr. Biswas’s “communication tactic of Othering” was directed to all the powerful, wealthy individuals in the Tulsis house. Biswas called the two younger sons of Mrs. Tulsi’s “little gods” due to the gifts heaped upon them by their mother (Naipaul 99). Because Mrs. Tulsi saw her two sons as her only escape from managing a household full of daughters, she pampered the boys with the hopes that they would care for her when they grew older. This attention and pampering causes Biswas to develop a great contempt for both sons. However, later he ends up

spending large amounts of time with Owad in Port of Spain. Biswas, in his largest moment of errantry, leaves his family and wanders to the big city in Trinidad. When his errantry takes him to Port of Spain in search of financial freedom, he fails to acquire housing on his own and ends up with only partial stasis: he controls his finances due to working as a journalist for the local paper, but he rents a room from Mrs. Tulsi in her new house in Port of Spain. Not having the entire Tulsi clan around makes “their presence hardly a strain” to Biswas, as Mrs. Tulsi treats the children with “neither distant nor possessive” qualities and “her relations with Mr. Biswas became less cautious and formal as his friendship with Owad grew” (Naipaul 322). Mrs. Tulsi is willing to treat Biswas, and his nuclear family, better because of his relationship with Owad. As their Relations get better, the Othering that occur on both sides diminishes. Due to Owad’s view of Biswas’s work as intellectual, he takes a liking to Biswas and they talk and spend free time together. Biswas in turn “developed a respect for the young man who read such big books in foreign languages” and begins to share unprinted details of crimes he covers as a member of the press (323), thus granting him access to information not readily available to the general public. This sharing of information and secrets puts Biswas on a common ground to Owad, who shares intellect about different cultures and money for cinemas. The two men move about the city together, embracing their errantry together. As Priya Parrotta states in her book about Caribbean coexistence, “contradictions can be socially invigorating and can ultimately contribute to true tolerance” (8). The two men found one similarity and used that to make their contradictions valuable to them both. While their

history of Othering remains, their Relations improve now that their errantry has brought them closer together.

Through the time Biswas and Owad spend together, they learn about the mutually positive elements both bring to their relationship. Both Other people of different classes less, enabling their Relations to flourish, coming to the apex during a trip to the seaside with Biswas's son, Anand, and the other "little god," Shekhar. Without the intrusion of further relatives, Biswas had the feeling that "they were all men together, and he thought himself privileged to be host to the two sons of the family" (Naipaul 337-38). Biswas's use of "hosting" positions him as the temporary head of the household in his mind and above the two younger men. Being in a position of power, albeit due to everyone else's absence, allows Biswas to consider himself as an equal to the brothers partially because of his intellectual work being similar to their studies in college. This quasi-equality betters their Relations as they consider each other differently. During one episode at the seaside, Biswas becomes angry and hurt when the two brothers jokingly grab him and toss him into the water (339). However, instead of shouting insults like he would have done at a prior time in their relationship, when his feelings become hurt Biswas takes a moment and is able, with this pause, to "recogniz[e] the unreasonableness of his anger;" and at the same time the two brothers become "embarrassed" by their actions (339). Even with their prior differences of attitude and their current differences of class, the two sides have learned to recognize the Other, the Other's feelings, and their own mistakes in the mutual interactions. Errantry does not lead to the elimination of differences, but, as

Biswas shows, it does lead to a better understanding of those people who were once viewed as Other.

While better Relations with the Other are demonstrated through Owad and Biswas's relationship, it also extends to the originator of Biswas's views of Othering and reconnects him to familial roots. By the end of the novel, Biswas's original anger at Tara's Othering and controlling ways leave. To get out of the Tulsi house, he borrows \$4,500 to buy the house on Sikkim Street. Tara "took it well; she said she was glad that he was at last going to be free of the Tulsis" (Naipaul 545). Although Tara began the actions of Othering and class disparities for Biswas, his errantry to find economic independence takes him away from her control to experience the Othering of the Tulsi family. Through his errantry between multiple locations and jobs his relationship with Tara begins to change. Biswas's errantry brings him back to Pagotes during various moments, and he realizes the degrees of class. He gains a better understanding of Tara and Ajodha, along with his cousins who are now their heirs. His better Relations develop to the point where Biswas simply "decide[s] to call in" on his aunt and uncle without cause or announcement (492). While as a child he was unable to come and go between their home and his at the back trace, now he drops in to visit at any time. His increase in class status and his experiences in gaining his current class level, even though it does not raise to the level of Tara and Ajodha's, grants him knowledge of how to get along with his Others. One of Biswas's last interactions with Ajodha entails the loan for his new home and the purchase of his freedom, as Tara states it, from Mrs. Tulsi, where Ajodha treats the matter as a "petty business transaction" (545). All of Mr. Biswas's prior

worrying about their financial differences are unnecessary. His aunt and uncle gladly loan the funds required, even though Biswas will not be able to fulfill the terms of the loan. But as Shama reminds him, “the debt would settle itself” (Naipaul 560); and through Biswas’s eldest daughter, Savi, and her employment at the end of the novel, the reader senses it will be settled with little hardship.

Tara and Ajodha pose no threat to Biswas any longer. Biswas’s struggling movements of errantry, motivated to better his class status, ultimately benefit his children who gain college degrees and make good on Biswas’s debts and promises. Sennett and Cobb mention the hope of the working class that the “hidden injuries” that have been endured will be for the betterment of ones’ children and their mobility without such struggle. The betterment for Savi and Anand is seen as they have gained the class status which allows them stasis in the house on Sikkim Street. They work on their own terms and move about according to their desires, staying only as long as they please. But above all else, Biswas’s two eldest children, without struggle, move between the class structures in Trinidad. Savi, whom the novel rarely focuses on, uses the lessons from Biswas to develop fruitful, beneficial relationships in Trinidad, which are seen as she returns from studying abroad when her father falls ill. Anand, contrarily, navigates the class structures in Trinidad successfully, but his return from studying in England is never addressed. Readers glimpse struggle and errantry in Anand’s short letters to Biswas as they focus on the Othering that occurs across ethnic and nationalistic lines. Anand’s errantry in England does not focus on bettering Relations between Others in class, but those between Others in colonial bonds.

For Biswas, through searching for stasis, he, as well as some of his children, gain a class identity based on root and Relations. Glissant comments upon the greater good that occurs from this combination: “starting from the moment that cultures, lands, men, and women were no longer there to discover but to know, Relations represented an absolute (that is, a totality finally sufficient to itself) that, paradoxically, set us free from the absolute’s intolerances” (27). Glissant states that these better Relations, which are the results of errantry, lead to a totality in identity, which in turn remove the biases of identifying with only one absolute. The interactions between diverse individuals are often unavoidable; and when Othering occurs, avoiding those Relations result in damaging practices and additional divisions. When an individual sees themselves as being constructed through only one root, they remove the important influences and histories of Relations. However, when combining both root and Relation, the entirety of identity construction can be realized. Similarities and differences can be recognized and celebrated.

Focusing on relationships instead of stasis, Penguin’s alternative 2001 cover for Vintage International is one of the few book covers that does not display a house, shown below in figure seven. It instead focuses on Biswas’s typewriter, painted yellow for dramatic effect, in front of a group of people. The typewriter fills the bottom center of the image as Biswas’s writing career propels his better Relations with Others. It is this work that initially sets him apart from the Tulsi clan.

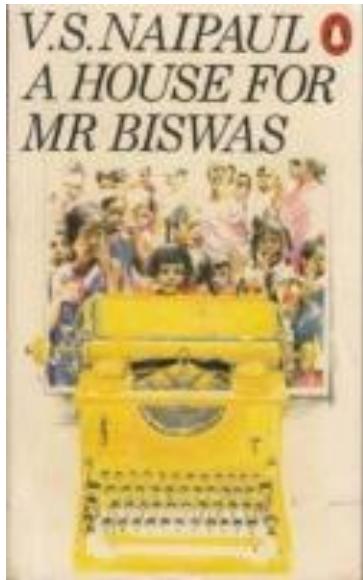


Figure 7. 2001 Vintage International Alternative Cover

But the typewriter also alludes to Naipaul's writing career, and the metacognition of this book's place in his errantry in England and his struggles across colonial boundaries. Naipaul's writing career is his means of staying in touch with his root. While the bottom half of the typewriter has only blank space around it, the top of the typewriter overlays the framed image of people, showing that the one image connects to the other. As the bottom line of the frame corresponds nearly perfectly, but not exactly, with the bar on the typewriter, viewers intuit that the two fit together. The framed people include many children and women with spontaneous expressions and gestures. This is not a posed picture but a moment in time. Images of men, in the same impromptu movements are in the back; and the picture slowly fades to white space, indicating that more people would be behind the last row. These people, meaning to be countless, make up Biswas's Relations portion of the image which traverses multiple class statuses. Instead of focusing

on Biswas's house or his errantry between spaces, this book cover centers the results of Biswas's errantry for a better class standing. With the focus on his final occupation, readers now begin reading the novel with the Relations between people in the forefront.

While movement transports Mr. Biswas from one classed existence to another, he uses movement not as an end but as a continual progression of bettering his situation in the hope of settling and not moving around. Biswas's errantry bounces between turning away from his laboring roots at Pagotes and Green Vale, to rushing after a higher hierarchy of class at The Chase and Hanuman House, to finding a degree of stasis and then learning from Others in Port of Spain and Sikkim Street. Through his errantry to discover stasis, as he moved between various forms of transportation and locations, he discovers a better understanding of his class Other. With a combination of his root and Relations, Biswas's class identity is whole, and he is able to focus on the larger importance of people instead of absolutes, as he did earlier in the novel. An analysis of Biswas's movements through these classed spaces establish his classed identity as, finally, totally formed through the root of labourer, the Relations with the higher class, and the multiple symbolic spaces in-between.

CHAPTER IV

CIRCLING BELONGING: ALDRICK'S EVOLVING MASCULINITY IN *THE DRAGON CAN'T DANCE*

My analysis of errantry and Relations has thus far examined Othering from a position of power in *Midnight Robber* and from a subordinate position in *A House for Mr. Biswas*. In *The Dragon Can't Dance* by Earl Lovelace, the protagonist, Aldrick's, power position changes according to different masculine constructions. The fluctuations in power result in a more complex relationship with Others than those discussed in the previous chapters. I focus on Aldrick's masculine identity and the Othering that occurs between, on one side, hegemonic and hyper-masculine men and, on the other side, non-hegemonic men and women. Aldrick begins the novel with a hegemonic masculine identity and Othering attitudes *because* he has power, though both his power and his Othering slowly decreases as his movements become more errant. Toni Morrison's *The Origin of Others* clarifies how Othering entails not only a rejection of the Other, as demonstrated in the prior chapters, but also a desire to "own, govern, and administrate the Other" (39). The desire to control the Other describes the actions and attitudes of Aldrick, who attempts to control all around him while his masculine identity is constructed through hegemony and hyper characteristics. Through Aldrick's Othering, he denies personhood to Others, even as he insists upon and becomes consumed with his personhood being recognized (Morrison 39). Aldrick learns the lessons of Othering as he

wanders, purposefully trying to force recognition of his own personhood. Errantry ends up granting Aldrick a pluralistic masculine identity as he moves from living for other people and being responsible to their pre-approved lifestyle to living for himself and taking responsibility for his own actions. Realizing who to live his life for requires Aldrick to take actions considered non-hegemonic (and even disloyal to his heritage) during the novel's setting. For this reason, Aldrick's errantry simultaneously moves him to a non-hegemonic masculine category. Throughout much of the novel, Aldrick belongs to either the Yard or the Corner; when his masculine identity becomes Relational to his Other, though, he leaves the Hill to belong to his true self. Aldrick's embodied errantry moves him from a singular and dormant, although hegemonic, masculine identity to a pluralistic, Relational masculinity that harmoniously lives with feminine identities and non-hegemonic masculine identities that he Othered in the past.

Several critics have analyzed gender relations in *The Dragon Can't Dance*, but none have combined the spatio-cultural lens of errantry with Relation's emphasis on Othering as a gendered action which can pluralize masculine identity. Earl Lovelace published the novel first in England in 1979, but few scholars engaged with the text until it was published in the United States in 1998. After nearly 20 years, much of the scholarship now emphasizes the novel's polyphonic nature and the minor characters of difference. For instance, Daryl Cumber Dance discusses the stereotypes of Indian women in Caribbean literature along with the authors' uses of these characters. He incorporates into his argument the minor character Dolly, Pariag's nearly silent wife, who has little dialogue. Similarly, Kenneth Ramchand and Masood Ashraf Raja focus on Pariag and

relationships between Indo-Trinidadian and Afro-Trinidadian men. Other scholars marginally discuss aspects of masculine behavior but focus on analyzing resistance, power, and Carnival's evolving roles.¹ Linden Lewis's article "Masculinity and the Dance of the Dragon: Reading Lovelace Discursively" explores masculinity most closely as he compares the multiple masculine characters and their interactions, as well as the lack of strong female characters. Lewis examines four characters (Aldrick, Fisheye, Pariag, and Philo) and their various masculinities, along with Sylvia, who serves as "the dragon tamer" (170). Lewis provides valuable insight into masculine varieties and some masculine identity constructions' progression achieved through self-reflection and the desire to renegotiate masculinity. However, he does not account for why masculine identity progresses, specifically how the body and its movements help shape masculinity alongside the interactions and Othering that occur between men of differing masculinities or women. Through a study of the character's errantry and the Relations that transpire during times of errantry, a reader can track how Aldrick's masculinity progresses and becomes pluralistic. Aldrick's errantry takes four different routes beginning with his acceptance of non-movement and historical idleness on Calvary Hill, which only changes during his errantry-like repetitious dragon dance. Finding these types of movement

¹ See Gerard Aching's *Masking and Power* and Hella Bloom Cohen's "The Clothing Economy of Earl Lovelace's *The Dragon Can't Dance*" for analyses on costuming and performativity's roles in power relations and resistance. Raphael Dalleo's *Caribbean Literature and the Public Sphere: From the Plantation to the Postcolonial* tackles the commodification of carnival and the effects such a change have on traditional avenues of resistance. Tohru Nakamura's "The Interplay of Political and Existential Freedom in Earl Lovelace's *The Dragon Can't Dance*" and Mana Waite's "Self-determination in the dance: 'Cultural Action'/Constraint and Creativity in the Trinidad Carnival" discusses the role of carnival in identity construction and theories of personhood.

unsatisfactory, Aldrick turns to a circular errantry including criminal activity, ending with his purposeful downhill strides towards his future. During these four occurrences, I argue that Aldrick passes through three masculine constructions (hegemonic, hyper, and non-hegemonic) while holding fluctuating degrees of power and moving away from Othering.

Aldrick begins with a hegemonic masculinity; however, this term first needs to be reconsidered when used to describe non-white, non-Western masculine constructions. Hegemonic masculinity changes depending on a particular society's values and desired characteristics. Toby Miller in "Masculinity" recaps the rise of the term hegemonic masculinity, beginning with Antonio Gramsci's theories of hegemony and "consent-through-incorporation" along with R. W. Connell's adaptation of this theory to gender relations, specifically masculinity (116-21). However, in both cases, hegemonic masculine behavior began to be theorized based on Western European and North American white, heterosexual men. Unfortunately, few scholars have considered hegemonic masculine behavior while taking into consideration colonial relations and globalization's uneven power distributions. Those who have, such as Robert Morrell and Sandra Swart in "Men in the Third World: Postcolonial Perspectives on Masculinity," insist that hegemony is held by men in the Western world, meaning that any man, however powerful, wealthy, privileged, or autonomous, in the non-Western world cannot claim a hegemonic masculine identity. This trap epitomizes Mark Simpson's views in *Male Impersonators: Men Performing Masculinity*, which questions the "impossibility of the demands of manhood" when the sole definitions of hegemonic masculine identity is held separate by an ascribed status such as race, ethnicity, or sexuality (275). Hegemony

focuses on power and influence, and certain ascribed statuses grant larger amounts of these. However, it becomes detrimental to all involved when hegemony is measured from one vantage point across the globe. Keith Nurse provides a delineation for powerful non-Western masculine identities with his difference between masculinity and masculinism, where masculinity is fluid without negative hegemonic ideologies, which he views in the static realm of masculinism. While theories of hegemony certainly began with Gramsci's understanding of the European ruling class, these no longer should automatically be assumed to be white or Western. Bob Pease and Keith Pringle challenged writers in their anthology, *A Man's World? Changing Men's Practices in a Globalized World*, to stop assuming the anchor for gender theories is automatically found in Western culture. Similarly, for this chapter and in accordance with Pease and Pringle's challenge for contextualization, I will investigate the various masculine constructions, beginning with what is or is not hegemonic, according to the particular, local context found in Lovelace's novel.

Non-Movement and Non-Possession in Calvary Hill

Earl Lovelace begins *The Dragon Can't Dance* with a celebration of non-movement and non-possession, which accords to societal norms and sets up Aldrick as representing hegemonic masculine identity. Aldrick demonstrates the standard for what is "normal" and expected based on local historical traditions. Aldrick lives in a single room in a Trinidadian Port of Spain neighborhood named Calvary Hill. The novel tracks the development of certain neighbors living on Alice Street, where all the rooms surround a

common Yard. The Yard and Calvary Hill's larger neighborhood are where Aldrick locates his society, which help define his particular culture. In the Yard, Aldrick originally holds a hegemonic masculinity, where he represents a position of power. In this instance, Aldrick's power does not entail wealth. Aldrick's lack of wealth is, in fact, an essential part of his hegemonic status. When asked about marriage, Aldrick proudly states he has nothing, no ties to anyone, and no responsibilities: "You don't see how I living? No chair, a little bed in a little room. A woman want things. I ain't have nothing here except my dragon costume to put on for Carnival...I ain't working nowhere'" (Lovelace 32-33). At thirty years old, Aldrick purposefully lives his life with nothing. His only possession and the only importance in his life is his dragon costume which he constructs throughout the year.

Instead of seeing non-possession as detrimental, the neighbors in Calvary Hill embrace it as a rebellious statement about dispossession, as the neighborhood was historically abandoned by the political ruling class. The ruling class's abandonment means those holding wealth and traditional ruling power cannot be representative of hegemonic masculine behavior. According to Connell, to hold a hegemonic position one must have the community's consent to represent them through the values that are incorporated in everyday life, something he calls "consent-through-incorporation." The residents of Calvary Hill do not incorporate the values of working long hours for little pay; they do not participate in political events that do not reach or benefit their community; they do not buy into the employment welfare programs that only take advantage of their strength and reject their personhoods (Lovelace 49). Instead, the

neighbors endorse Aldrick's incorporation of non-possession and a year of work that culminates in two days of dancing his dragon message. Aldrick's everyday life incorporates his dragon message: the importance and recognition of personhood regardless of property or possessions.² The dragon's message of personhood and non-possession, and therefore Aldrick's hegemonic masculinity, is steeped in the history of slave rebellions and anti-colonialism. As stated in the prologue:

now, one hundred and twenty-five years after Emancipation, Aldrick Prospect [is] an aristocrat in this tradition [of] asserting their humanness in the most wonderful acts of sabotage they could imagine and preform, making a religion of laziness and neglect and stupidity and waste. (Lovelace 10-11)

It is through this type of lifestyle, where non-possession is equated with non-movement, that Aldrick's "humanness" is found. His lifestyle stems from the purposeful rejection or sabotage of the values, specifically the working values, of the Western colonizers.

Aldrick's embodiment of non-possession and non-movement increases his appeal to those around him, both male and female. Aldrick has many women visit his room at night (Lovelace 32), along with a trail of male friends who respect Aldrick and are loyal to him. Everyone likes Aldrick and looks to him as the Yard's leader. While speaking to his current best friend, Philo the Calypsonian, Aldrick confirms that he is "living the life. If it have one man in the world living the life is you – no wife, no child, no boss, no job. You could get up any hour of the day you want to, cuss who you want. Anywhere you go

² For an analysis of the positive possibility of non-possession and non-movement that focuses on personhood and 'proper'ty value of individuals, which calls for a reversal of Marxism, see Beverly Skeggs's "The Making of Class and Gender through Visualizing Moral Subject Formation."

people like you. You is a favourite in the world” (Lovelace 101). Aldrick is liked by all and admired for his lifestyle of not working. Instead of unemployment worrying him, he finds freedom in not answering to anyone. His actions are his alone. Aldrick does not move unless he decides to. This time period in his life exemplifies his decision to remain motionless, enacting a time of non-errantry in his life. He is not wandering for any purpose, except during Carnival. He lives a simple life among his friends and does not strive for any grander purpose than to play dragon for two days a year. People admire this free non-movement, non-possession lifestyle, as it harkens back to rebelling against slavery.

People seek out Aldrick as his free lifestyle gives him the power to challenge and punish others in the community. Specifically, the boy, Basil, seeks out Aldrick to teach him the ways of making the dragon costume (Lovelace 35). After two years of his apprenticeship, Basil shares his secret of physical abuse with Aldrick in the hopes that he will intervene (45-47). Basil’s actions are not simply him telling an adult about the abuse, since the abuser, Fisheye, is a feared member of the community. Basil believes that Aldrick is the person with enough power to intercede on his behalf and stop the abuse. While the novel does not visit the character of Basil again, the confrontation ends with Basil re-entering the house and Fisheye admitting his troubles to Aldrick because he was “impressed by Aldrick’s dignity” after Aldrick turns “soberly” (72-73). Aldrick’s slow movements, the closest to non-movement he can achieve, effects Fisheye and grants Aldrick dignity. Aldrick, being a leader in the Yard, has influence in the larger community of Calvary Hill. He can address a physical abuse accusation and still impress

the other individual. Instead of Fisheye becoming violent with Aldrick, he confides in him.

Aldrick's leadership and confidence are enhanced when Miss Cleothilda and Miss Olive look to Aldrick to discipline Pariag, a food vender of Indian descent, for showing off by purchasing a bicycle (Lovelace 104-11). The unofficial motto of the Yard is "All o' we is one," but Pariag signals his difference in his desire to do more and better his circumstances by purchasing a bicycle. Pariag views a bicycle as not only a means of increasing his vending business, but primarily as a way to make the Yard "see" and recognize him; yet in doing so, he violates the prime tenet of non-possession. The bicycle adds movement to Pariag's character and sets him apart from the Hill's use of non-movement as rebellion. The bicycle becomes Pariag's symbol of errantry as he moves to be recognized in the Yard. However, the two matriarchal women, Miss Cleothilda and Miss Olive, look to Aldrick to correct Pariag's erroneous beliefs. Aldrick comments that "earlier it would have thrilled him to provide in violence an answer to Pariag's audacity" (105). Aldrick's realization that he would have violently taken care of Pariag shows that Miss Cleothilda and Miss Olive were correct in coming to Aldrick to be the Yard's enforcer of the values of non-possession and non-movement. Sharing the same values and embracing an enforcer role, Aldrick is the community's hegemonic masculine figure. He has the power to punish Pariag, as he has the power to challenge Fisheye.

Aldrick's power in enforcing the Yard's values also translates to his power in shaping the values of the Yard, granting him further hegemony. The power to shape values is shown in first his rejection of Pariag as a member of the Yard and later when he

questions who benefits from the policy of non-possession. Pariag is a relative newcomer to the Yard, only having lived there for two years. Three days before buying the bicycle, Pariag addresses Aldrick and tries to befriend him (Lovelace 74-76). Pariag realizes that if Aldrick accepts him then he will “belong” to the Yard and others will begin to accept him as well. Aldrick’s hegemony to shape values comes into fruition after people, like Pariag, believe in it. Pariag brags about his skills as an all fours player, momentarily catching Aldrick’s attention with the reference to the country’s national card game. Unfortunately, Pariag does not convince Aldrick of his value as they do not need another player (75). The all fours teams are already established. Pariag has no more of a place in their card game than he does as a member of the Yard.

Aldrick attempts to state Pariag’s non-belonging and then awkwardly walks away from the sudden conversation, reinforcing non-movements including bold encounters. Aldrick’s slow movements demonstrate the value of non-movement; even when leaving an awkward encounter, he barely moves—never hurriedly, never purposefully. Since Aldrick does not move with a sacred purpose, this is not a moment of errantry. He leaves Pariag to wonder about the awkwardness as the novel switches to Pariag’s view (Lovelace 76, 92). Pariag sees that his “bold” move in initiating contact with the Yard’s “king dragon” has failed; his personhood still hasn’t been recognized and he still isn’t considered a member of the community (92). While not physical, this “bold move” of Pariag’s contrasts with Aldrick’s slow, easy movements. Pariag’s failure of contact highlights the failure of bold societal movements, extending the value of non-movement beyond physicality. The successful type of movement on the Hill is non-movement and

idleness. As these philosophies are unknown to Pariag, he instead turns to possessions. Unfortunately, his use of possessions to enhance his recognition by other community members backfires as it equates his values to those of the colonizer. Aldrick's initial rejection of Pariag influences the rest of the Yard's reactions to his bicycle. However, as the Yard erupts with disdain, Aldrick begins to question who benefits from the anger and violence bestowed upon Pariag and his bicycle (Lovelace 110). Aldrick's questioning, and eventual rejection of non-possession, does not catch on with the Yard initially. Yet, it resonates at the end of the novel as everyone turns towards work and betterment through money and jobs. Aldrick's actions, whether conscious or not, dictate what is and is not an important value for the Yard—what values must be upheld, and which can be considered fluctuating according to current needs. He has the power as the hegemonic male figure who everyone looks up to and expects to lead them, not only during Carnival as the king of dragons, but all year long in all matters.

Aldrick's hegemonic masculinity largely entails respecting other people's business and being a leader for the majority's benefit, but it also leads to Aldrick's Othering attitudes towards people of difference, primarily nonhegemonic men and women. This is apparent in the ways he treats Sylvia and his views of wealthy men, like Guy. Aldrick respectfully distances himself from men's personal business, but he does not respect a woman's personal body or decisions. The novel provides detailed descriptions of Sylvia, implying that the male characters focus on her body in particular. For example, when Sylvia is introduced, her description is given from the viewpoint of the young men in the Yard:

their eyes sweeping up her ankles, along the softening curves of her thighs and breasts, desiring her, wishing, each one of them, to have her jumping up with him in the band for Carnival, when, with the help of rum and the rhythm of abandon and surrender that conquered everyone he would find his way into her flesh.
(Lovelace 24)

The young men focus on Sylvia's body and their own desires. Unfortunately, her actual body is not even described, but is merely sexualized in the characterless words "soft," "curve," "desire," and "flesh." Sylvia has been Othered through men's gazes and descriptions. In her descriptions, she is not even an individual woman with specific desirable traits; she is merely a soft, curvy desired piece of flesh. Her individuality is stripped, and she becomes no more than a body. These descriptions keep her apart from the hegemonic men who have these desires towards not her, but her body. She does not have the power to control her own body. The novel describes men's successful conquering of her body, with "her mind never in [the act of sex] ...She had watched, felt, the whole performance as if she wasn't there, from a distance" (25). Sylvia is sexually conquered, instead of having sexual conquests herself. Toni Morrison's *The Origin of Others* states the importance of such an image as it "increasingly rules the realm of shaping, sometimes becoming, often contaminating knowledge. Provoking language or eclipsing it, an image can determine not only what we know and feel but also what we believe is worth knowing about what we feel" (36). The sexual images of Sylvia not only overtake, or eclipse, any other known factor of her personhood, but also determine what is important to know about her. For this section of the novel, her only purpose is as a sexually desirable woman. Whatever individuality or autonomy she may possess is overshadowed by her image. The loss of her individuality and autonomy label her as the

Other—a person who is used and made to experience non-belonging to sustain the position of the privileged or powerful group. In Sylvia’s case, her Othering bolsters the hegemonic and hyper masculine characters who use her body to feel a greater sense of authority and control.

Similar to the men in the Yard, Aldrick views Sylvia as an Other because of her femininity; specifically she is an Other to be conquered. Sylvia’s Otherness is visible in her movements, which are originally seen as fast: “too fast for things to penetrate her; they could only slide off her” (Lovelace 26). Contrary to the sexual references of men’s penetration and ejaculation, her quickness places her above the Yard. It converts Sylvia’s body from an object to under her own purposeful control. Her quickness makes a statement of non-belonging to the Yard, with their creed of non-movement. Opposing the Yard’s typical movements, she becomes symbolic of a pure life and freedom that could be possible to those living in the Yard. With her quick pace and “briskness of limb,” those watching hope Sylvia can “make the miracle, climb undefeated out of this hill” (26). Sylvia’s movements challenge Aldrick and hegemony on the Hill. Even as the men attempt to sexually claim her body, her quickness defies their claims. As Morrison states, Othering can be recognized through the “unreasonable claims” being placed on a person and a body (38). Aldrick, and those who wish to be idle, desire Sylvia’s quickness to dissipate, so that she can be molded into their ideal. Sylvia, however, holds the power through her quick movements to leave the poverty of the Hill and possess her own body. Anthony Giddens, in *The Transformation of Intimacy: Sexuality, Love, and Eroticism in*

Modern Societies, warns of common consequences facing women who do not relinquish control, explaining:

the sexual control of women by men is much more than an incidental feature of modern social life. As that control starts to break down, we see the compulsive character of male sexuality more plainly revealed—and this declining control also generates a rising tide of male violence towards women. (3)

As Sylvia takes greater control over her own body and sexuality, the threat of violence follows. Sylvia's solution to independence without violence is to choose a mate who will also help her move away from the Hill and poverty. Her body will become the means of her movements away from the Yard. Contrary to an automatic rejection of using her body, readers realize that, at this point, it is Sylvia taking ownership of her body for her own desires instead of others using her body while she floats above the scene. This move allows Sylvia to escape the poverty of the Hill but only as a maneuver to traverse the patriarchal system which she remains in without incurring bodily violence.

The patriarchal system allows for Aldrick's Othering of nonhegemonic men as well. Pariag is Othered to such an extent that he becomes invisible to the neighborhood until he egregiously steps out of line. Pariag's ethnic differences set him apart from the Yard's community. In any description, he is first and foremost considered "the Indian." He is not granted a gender, only an ethnicity. This descriptive Othering coincides with Pariag's Othering through non-involvement, making him a perpetual stranger. Pariag's feelings of being a perpetual stranger is part of Morrison's originating Othering practices. Morrison states that the "stranger is not foreign, she is random; not alien, but remembered, and it is the randomness of the encounter with our already known—

although unacknowledged—selves that summons a ripple of alarm” (38). Morrison reminds readers that individuals, even those foreign and unknown, have familiar attributes. Thus, Othering practices can be removed, as the image of the foreign stranger is removed. Thus, such an encounter between two “strangers” is merely unexpected and, therefore, surprising, but not a scary confrontation compelling actions of Othering. This is the case when Pariag confronted Aldrick about joining an all fours game. The moment was unexpected, but not so unfamiliar. Pariag is not so distant from Aldrick; Pariag reminds Aldrick of times when he first moved to the Hill as a child and was isolated (Lovelace 37-41). As those reminders are uncomfortable, Aldrick distances himself from Pariag and the uncomfortable “ripple of alarm” he senses. It would be expected, from Morrison’s statements, that the remainder of the community does the same. This results in episodes where, for instance during the Christmas holiday, no one celebrates with Pariag, even though he prepared for their visit (89-92). Pariag blames himself for not calling them in and stating that he “is a Indian from New Lands and I ain’t have no prejudice” (91). The necessity of Pariag’s statement on racial equality underlines his isolations by the other characters. Even after speaking to Aldrick before purchasing the bicycle, it takes until the middle of the night before Aldrick recalls, “Shit! I never try to talk to him in the two years either” (76). Aldrick’s Othering of Pariag lies in the metaphorical invisibility he bestows upon Pariag, because Aldrick fears such invisibility as a hegemonic man. Unfortunately, the extent of this Othering is that not only is Pariag left out, but Aldrick performs these actions unconsciously.

Other than Pariag's ethnic differences resulting in Aldrick's Othering, individuals' wealth and class status set people apart and result in Othering actions. The characters of Guy and Miss Cleothilda throughout the novel garner Aldrick's condescension. Aldrick quickly points out that Pariag's bicycle only threatens Guy and Miss Cleothilda as only they care about wealth (Lovelace 110). The creed of everyone being equal is proclaimed loudly through the novel. However, this equality is merely propaganda for Guy and Miss Cleothilda to maintain their higher status. Miss Cleothilda never shares her wealth with her neighbors; Guy uses his position of power to gain sexual access to Sylvia when her mother cannot afford rent (25). They have secured the power that comes with wealth as long as they continue to convince everyone else that they are equal and "all one." As long as the Yard, en mas, believes that they too reject possessions and work as a statement against the historical colonizer, then they can slowly gain more and more wealth. Aldrick, however, sees the threat of their accumulating wealth and refuses to treat them as equals. Aldrick still values non-possession and does not feel threatened by the wealth of Miss Cleothilda, nor does he admire the power of Guy. Both wealth and power are used to the detriment of the Yard.

As the hegemonic enforcer of values, Aldrick necessarily becomes hostile to Miss Cleothilda and Guy. He first refuses to excuse away Miss Cleothilda's hypocritical behavior by calling her simply "crazy" (Lovelace 134). Miss Cleothilda, after Carnival, quickly turns from a jovial character who celebrates the community of the Yard to a grumbling elder woman who blames others for her actions. Members of the Yard look to Aldrick to evaluate her behavior. Yet Aldrick now sees that justifying her change in

behavior as “crazy” each year has allowed her to belong to the neighborhood by still believing in the motto of “all o’ we is one” and accumulate wealth that sets her apart. With Aldrick’s already announced hegemonic masculinity, his hostility Others Miss Cleothilda and he begins to oust her from the Yard. She begins to lose control over the community and to not belong to the Yard.

Aldrick similarly rebukes Guy about rent collection, which demonstrates Guy’s non-belonging and Othered identity. Guy attempts to collect ten months’ worth of back rent from Aldrick after Carnival and is reprimanded for his insolence. Aldrick questions,

‘I going somewhere? Eh? Every day you get up and look out, you see me here, not so? You think I going away to America or somewhere tomorrow morning? Eh? Well, what the hell you rushing me so for, this big Carnival week? When I get the money I will pay...Listen, man, I is still Aldrick. I is still the dragon. I could turn beast in a minute.’ (Lovelace 109)

Aldrick’s admonishment to Guy takes place in the Yard for any observer to hear and ends with Guy “taking a step backwards” and addressing him “in a more polite tone” (109). While he ends in a threat of violently “turn[ing] beast,” his larger argument is ultimately one of belonging. Aldrick belongs to this community of non-possession where a triviality like rent money is absurd. Guy, contrarily, does not belong, as demonstrated by his keeping track of how many months behind Aldrick is on rent. The difference between the two men is further indicated when Aldrick address him as “man” instead of his given name Guy. Even if stated as a pun on his first name, this address further Others Guy with the refusal of acknowledging his proper name. This is the same refusal to acknowledge

wealth as power that Aldrick refuses to grant to Miss Cleothilda when asked to justify her actions as simply crazy.

Aldrick's Othering of these individuals emphasizes how they do not belong to the community like he does. Aldrick unequivocally belongs to the Yard. He is the king dragon, the enforcer of values, and the representative of non-movement and non-possession as a statement of personhood. He does not move. He does not pay rent according to the argument that he will not move. He belongs to the Yard. That is until his one purpose, the one time he moves to embody the message of the dragon, is no longer effective.

Carnival's Frantic Dragon Dance

For two days each year, Aldrick embraces the idea of errantry, becoming Carnival's dragon. For Aldrick, this "errantry" begins with a remembrance of his coming to Calvary Hill. He prepares for this moment of purposeful movement all year long as he creates his dragon costume. For Aldrick, the dragon symbolizes a threatening, terrifying beauty that is his selfhood: "it was through [the dragon] that he demanded that others *see* him, recognize his personhood, be warned of his dangerousness" (Lovelace 36, italics in original). Through the tradition of Carnival, specifically Bakhtin's carnivalesque, Carnival typically provides space for the collapsing of social hierarchies, where complex messages exist alongside and in opposition to the dominant "authoritarian word" (Bakhtin 194). Carnival should be ideal for Aldrick's message of danger and his demand to be recognized. Aldrick's message, in particular his dangerousness, comes not from

violence or his physicality, but through his internal toughness. Aldrick makes his dragon costume from pieces that each “celebrated some part of his journey to and his surviving upon this hill” (Lovelace 36). Aldrick celebrates his movement on the hill—synonymous with poverty, governmental deprivation, and individual subsistence—through his dragon costume and the dragon dance he performs. His prior journey to the hill marks Aldrick as dangerous as he purposefully chose this location and, once here, he remains and survives upon this hill with all its associations.

Aldrick’s attempts at errantry, embodied in his dangerous dragon dance, extend past himself and incorporate his community. Aldrick’s physical act of putting on the dragon costume results in

a sense of entering a sacred mask that invested him with an ancestral authority to uphold before the people of this Hill, this tribe marooned so far from the homeland that never was their home, the warriorhood that had not died in them, their humanness that was determined not by their possession of things. (Lovelace 120)

Aldrick, as the dragon, as the person granted ancestral authority, holds the hegemonic position of narrating and reminding the community that they are entitled to demand human rights. He becomes the sage embedded with the “mission, to let them see their beauty, to uphold the unending rebellion they waged, huddled here on this stone and dirt hill hanging over the city like the open claws on a dragon’s hand, threatening destruction if they were not recognized as human beings” (121). The juxtaposition of beauty and rebellion, as well as destruction and recognition, becomes a dominant portion of Aldrick’s dragon dance as it becomes his mission to impress these beliefs on Carnival’s

spectators and participants. This ancestral mission corroborates Aldrick's hegemonic masculinity, specifically in his community, if not in his country. While discussing masculine ties to the nation-state, Simpson argues that as the "manly" group increases in shows of strength so does the belief in the strength of the nation-state itself (267-68). The manliness of Aldrick as the dragon represents not only the community of Calvary Hill, but also becomes symbolic of the strength of Trinidad. This is most visible during Carnival season. The dragon narrates through his dance the people's beauty and their threatening destruction, rebelling for recognition and changing conditions. Aldrick employs a frantic, disjointed dance to narrate a tale of human rights and demand recognition of personhood as the narration encompasses a plurality of people and multiple historical rebellions.

Aldrick's frantic dance includes all the community's hardships as he loses his individualistic identity and takes on communal significance. "With a strong, piercing scream, he stepped into the street, his chains rattling, his arms outflung, his head lolling, in a slow, threatening dance of the Beast" that over the next two days interweaves

dancing the bad-devil dance, dancing the stickman dance, dancing Sylvia and Inez and Basil and his grandfather and the Hill and the fellars by the Corner
...affirming the power of the warrior, prancing and bowing, breathing out fire, lunging against his chains, threatening with his claws. (Lovelace 123)

The dragon dance includes all individuals and all their hardships living on the hill. The totality and extensive reach of Aldrick's dance lends a weight to his movements. In two days, he must complete his dance that benefits everyone on the hill. The demand for recognition as human beings, to Aldrick, also mandates a threat of rebellion if that

recognition is not conceded. (Fatefully, Aldrick's demand for recognition involves no more planning or concrete requests beyond a feeling of respect, foreshadowing its failure.) Merging both messages, recognition of personhood and the threat of rebellion, makes the dragon dance more frantic and offers two messages for two different audiences.

For his community, Aldrick wishes to impress upon them their beauty.

Oh, he danced. He danced pretty. He danced to say, ‘You are beautiful...Listen to your steelbands how they playing! Look at your children how they dancing! Look at the colours of your costumes in the sunshine! Look at your colours! You is people, people. People is you, people!’ (Lovelace 124)

This portion of Aldrick's errantry still holds a frantic message for his neighbors. He repeats the pretty dance imbued with statements of worth and value. His movements are wandering as they respond to the people surrounding him, but the purposeful dance does not change. He frantically reminds them of their beauty and personhood alongside the importance of their recognition of them. Without them realizing their personhoods, there is no chance of demanding change or even recognition from other people. They must collectively demand human rights. Aldrick dances this message to them, frantically hoping they see and recognize him as the messenger.

For the ruling, wealthy, Other people, Aldrick's dragon dance is meant to cause terror. Historically, Carnival spectators rewarded entertainers (typically dancers, fighters, and orators) with money. Once they received payment for their feats, the entertainers move onto other spectators while continuing their performances. Through the possession of money, spectators hold power to dictate the entertainers' movements. In this sense, the

wealthy spectators would control Aldrick as he frantically dances his message of personhood and consequence. Aldrick, therefore, goes against this tradition:

And he watched terror strike pale faces as he lunged towards them, and he smiled inwardly as they grinned nervously and rushed hands into their pockets to find coins to offer him in appeasement, as was the tradition. But no. No. He refused the money. He wanted it to be known that he was for real, that you couldn't just offer him a coin and he would disappear. (Lovelace 124)

Aldrick wants his message to be heeded as more than just a dance, more than mas.³ This entails the act of being beheld, or looked at, as more than a performer. “Aldrick growled and he spat and he moved to press against them, watched them grow more afraid, more confused. He wanted to frighten them. He liked it when they saw him coming and gathered up their children and ran” (124). Aldrick’s purposeful terror coincides with his desire to make his message ever-present and ever-potent. He tries to make the repetitious acts and dances frightening to provide a weight to his message as the terror is evoked again and again through his movements. In Aldrick’s mind, Carnival provides the ideal location for his message as it repeats each year. His message is reinforced through repetition. However, the repetition becomes detrimental for Aldrick’s message as it becomes expected and commonplace.

Aldrick’s message of terror fails to reach spectators because of his locational choice, which indicates his failure at errantry as well. Aldrick’s desire to impart terror onto the wealthy spectators falls short because Carnival is changing. While once a

³ Caribbean societies describe “mas” as an act during a masquerade, usually Carnival; but the term can also connote acting under a false pretense or playing entertaining tricks.

location of social change, Lovelace describes one of the unique hardships with neocolonialism's beginnings.⁴ Carnival, on one hand, was historically linked to moments of crisis and breaking points where relief from societal pressures became crucial, where the complex nature of laughter was therapeutic (Bakhtin 209). Yet, on the other hand, Carnival also historically has the temporal restraints of occurring for only a short time. Carnival allows for a few days of communications, including abuses, curses, profanities and oaths according to Bakhtin (203-04, 220-21), which highlight the plight of the subordinates. While Aldrick succeeds in frightening his viewers in the moment, it is as short lived as one who experiences a horror movie or a haunted house. Additionally, he represents no real terror because he is in a commercial setting. While discussing a vastly different marketplace, Bakhtin comments on the heightened focus on the market during Carnival, where images of the human body dominate and all that is high, spiritual, ideal, or abstract is transferred to the material level (200-06, 213-23). Aldrick's ideal and distinguished message of recognition, personal beauty, and rebellion becomes lost in the material commercialization of Carnival. Lovelace laments through multiple characters Carnival's commercialization, as the steelbands gain corporate sponsors and traditional rebellious characters become "outlawed from the city or just died, gone" (121). Aldrick's message of personhood and rebellion, once shared among many performers, now is feared that "it would be lost...among the clowns, among the fancy robbers and the fantasy presentations that were steadily entering Carnival; drowned amidst the satin and silks and

⁴ For more recent developments on Carnival and its efficacy for social change, see Kevin Browne's *High Mas* and Max Harris's *Carnival and Other Christian Festivals: Folk Theology and Folk Performance*.

the beads and feathers and rhinestones” (Lovelace 121). Aldrick’s threat occurs during a time and at an event that did not foster change or rebellion. As Carnival becomes more profitable and embraces celebration, terror and rebellion are left behind.

Failure to fulfill the purpose that motivates one’s wandering is not what results in the failure of errantry; however, the lack of actual wandering does. Aldrick may recreate his dragon costume each year, but his dance is the same each year with a similar set route. The dragon dance does not involve moments of wandering, even though his dance has a sacred purpose. Aldrick’s dragon dance is the same he performs every year; it is a repetitive and familiar movement for him and for those around him. This partially explains his inability to dance for effective change, as his audience already knows the outcome and that no rebellion or frightening consequences will transpire in the following days. Aldrick searches for terror and beauty, but he does so in the same familiar way each year. Only with the extensive commercialization of Carnival does Aldrick see the breakdown of his message of terror. The messages of beauty and personhood ring louder but does not entail the consequential addition of non-recognition. Aldrick’s dragon dance no longer is a true threat but merely a dance, a performance.

Aldrick’s recognizing his dragon dance, which has been closely tied to his hegemonic masculine identity, as a performance will inspire his eventual fluid masculine identity. Judith Butler’s theories on performativity emphasize how gender is “a constructed identity, a performative accomplishment which the mundane social audience, including the actors themselves, come to believe and to perform in the mode of belief” (520). While Butler discusses gender as a destructive, socially and historically

constructed binary, her performative theory applies also to gender when viewed on a spectrum. As such, Aldrick performs hegemonic masculinity because he believes that is what the dragon and the ancestral authority has bestowed upon him. Even though Carnival is, of course, a performative event and Aldrick's dragon is, of course, a costume, they both represent his hegemonic masculine identity, which he believes is true and he performs accordingly. Once the validity of the dragon's masculine representation comes into doubt for Aldrick, his hegemonic masculine performance also comes into doubt, stimulating a personal form of masculine crisis. Simpson's work analyzes the "crisis of masculinity as a crisis of 'looking' and 'looked-at-ness'" (6). Simpson's perspective can help to explain how Carnival initiates Aldrick's crisis of masculinity. As he becomes "looked-at" and his masculine dragon becomes scrutinized, Aldrick becomes more and more aware of his position and his bodily movements. As Carnival progresses, Aldrick dances more frantically. Yet, no further realization of his message is attained. He begins to understand the dragon dance is no longer an effective way to bring about change.

Doubting the dragon dance's effectiveness becomes amplified as Aldrick watches Sylvia dance as a search for her own selfhood. Aldrick finds his "threatening" masculinity inadequate to enact change. He sees that "in the face of this scream for life, this cyclone of affirming and appealing tears, it suddenly struck him that his dragon with its threatening claws and fire was small before this girl's scream. He wanted to give her life, her self. But, how could he?" (Lovelace 127). Aldrick loses his hegemonic power as he becomes unable to truly act on the community's behalf, especially for the woman he claims to love. He cannot give Sylvia the change he deems she needs, and he cannot

threaten the ruling class for change. As the threatening half of Aldrick's message falls short, he realizes the importance of a change of venue. He cannot remain the hegemonic masculine representative without making a true threat of rebellion. He cannot remain the man in power when his entire life's purpose, up to this point, holds no true power. He cannot be the dragon man after he learns that the masculine dragon is a performance. Yet, in the framework of Butler, this moment allows for "gender transformation" when there becomes a "possibility of a different sort of repeating, in the breaking or subversive repetition of that style" (520). Aldrick will seize the opportunity to transform his masculine gender, thereby breaking from the repetitious acts of the dragon's hegemonic masculinity; however, his transformation is to a hypermasculine construction.

As Aldrick begins to take on a hypermasculine role, the necessity of masculine transformation is reinforced to him by Sylvia's rejection, which leads Aldrick to further Other her. Unlike my previous chapters' instances of errantry and Othering, Aldrick's Othering of Sylvia continues even at this moment because his dragon's dance is not true errantry as it lacks the wandering element. The dragon dance's lack of wandering illuminates why Aldrick returns to Othering Sylvia. As he recognizes the ineffectiveness of the dragon, Aldrick hopes to regain control and reaches for familiar actions but to a greater degree. Aldrick attempts to dictate Sylvia's movements as he tries to control and confine her, merely due to her status as a desired woman. When Aldrick sees Sylvia at the end of Carnival dancing, his primary concentrations are on her liveliness and his desire to join her (Lovelace 127-28). While joining someone in dance is not Othering, Aldrick means to join her in life. His reasons for joining her in this manner reveal his

masculine hierarchy. Through Lovelace's description of Sylvia's frantic, all-encompassing "twisting" and "flinging" and "leaping," Aldrick's response is to first "watch her" until his desires raise to when he "wanted to reach out and hold her" so that he could "give her life, her self" (Lovelace 127). Aldrick's attitudes towards Sylvia expose his true feelings at this time, which is to believe that she cannot dictate her own life or find her true self without the male providing it for her.

Aldrick's controlling attitudes exemplify another aspect of Morrison's understanding of Othering. Morrison argues that Othering partially originates with the desire to "own, govern, and administrate the Other. To romance her, if we can, back into our own mirrors" (39). Aldrick wants to control and govern Sylvia's movements as well as make her fit into his understanding of personhood and agency, which he holds as necessary for the community's happiness. Aldrick finally reaches out to touch Sylvia, and "she s[ees] him, s[ees]his awkward hand reaching to her, and in one movement she sp[ins] out of his reach" (Lovelace 128). Sylvia's rebuke of Aldrick physically freezes him and stops his entire movements. However, Sylvia's power in the relationship is short lived. Only momentarily does Aldrick find "a kind of crazy new caring and respect for the girl" before he switches over to a focus on himself and also discovers a "kind of warrior's pride in himself that he had chosen her, Sylvia, in that very instant, to be his woman" (128). Aldrick finds respecting Sylvia and her determination to not submit to his desires to be "a kind of crazy" emotion. He sends the message that a hegemonic or hypermasculine man in his position of power does not usually experience such an odd emotion as respect for the woman he supposedly loves. Even though the respect is

present, it becomes overshadowed by Aldrick's possessive qualities of Sylvia and his "choosing" of her, as if she has no choice herself. The callousness towards women, Sylvia in particular, highlights Aldrick's switch to his soon-to-be new masculine identity as he develops a hypermasculine construct based on warriorhood.

Circular Movements on the Corner

True errantry begins for Aldrick once he sees the dragon dance as performative and rejects it. He moves to hypermasculinity as a new attempt to replace his failed hegemonic masculine identity, embracing the other "warriors, the true rebels," who congregate at a corner at the entrance to their Calvary Hill neighborhood. While not a response to the loss of the "hegemonic imperial masculinity" due to "postwar decolonization" that Susan Brooks describes, readers can see Aldrick's turn towards hypermasculine construction as a response to the loss of power and standing in the community. These men believe the Corner provides a space for real rebellion, that can bring social change, instead of the mas of Carnival. Studying hypermasculinity, Matt Zaitchik and Donald Mosher found hypermasculinity to be defined by four common traits: acting callously towards women and/or sex and viewing violence as manly, danger as exciting, and toughness as emotional strength. The warrior, hypermasculine identity would typically result in an increase of Othering, especially towards women; however, because Aldrick is using his errantry to find belonging, his Othering decreases, and he shows flashes of respect and consideration for his Others. The respect that begins to form during Aldrick's hypermasculine construction provides the foundation for greater

Relations between him and his Others. Aldrick's movements this time are a form of errantry, in that a sacred purpose motivates them and they consist of wandering. His movements are literally circular, as he circles back to the same position spatially, but figuratively the circular movements do not merely repeat. They allow Aldrick time to build an understanding of language and power with Others, hence increasing those Relations. Aldrick's circular errantry results in incorporating a hypermasculine identity construction into a growing masculine plurality that comprises of respecting Others as well as demanding a voice and personhood through protest and criminality.

Desiring rebellion against the ruling class and belonging to a community, Aldrick joins a group that will become known as the Corner Nine and begins building a hypermasculine identity. *The Dragon Can't Dance* combines the stories of multiple neighbors into Aldrick's struggle with masculinity. As Aldrick constructed his dragon costume, other men, in particular Fisheye, also fight with society's changing masculine expectations and concepts of rebellion and warriorhood. Fisheye heads the Corner Nine, with Aldrick taking a leadership role later. The men are "hard, tough men" described as "a few young fellars, rebels all" (Lovelace 140-41). This younger generation looks towards Fisheye and Aldrick as leaders in a rebellious, warrior-like manhood that has been lost to many. The young men angrily view the community as relinquishing acts of rebellion to acquire social change. While describing angry young men in England, Susan Brooks's work, in "Engendering Rebellion: The Angry Young Man, Class, and Masculinity," sheds light on the purpose of this anger. Brooks states that the angry young men texts have a role in granting masculinity as they criticize "dominant" Western values

of work; instead they show the “authentic, free male individual” rebelling against society (24). The male characters Brooks analyzes rebel against a Western dominant culture, but from a very different vantage point than Lovelace’s characters. Specifically, for Aldrick, this authentic individual would be honest to one’s ancestry and free from unjust social constraints. This is what Aldrick seeks as he wanders and finds the Corner Nine. When Aldrick joins the group, Lovelace describes them as:

a band of maybe six or seven young fellars, warriors, who still believed in their muscles, who hushed to their bosoms an anger older than themselves, their faces drawn into tight unhumorous grins, their gestures containing the slow sullen confidence and bravado of the old times. (151-52)

Aldrick joins this group as an equal, feeling the ancient anger of colonization and inequality and knowing the need for ancient bravado.

Aldrick quickly becomes a leader of the group, unfortunately this only highlights certain aspects of his prior hegemonic masculine identity. His lieutenant role is hoisted upon him as the men view him as a “veteran of rebellion, Dragon” (Lovelace 152). The men’s capitalization of Dragon removes Aldrick’s additional hegemonic masculine qualities, such as helping to shape communal values. Instead, the younger generation views his entire identity as only the terror and frightening rebellion he danced for in his dragon identity. His prior leadership roles and influence in the community which he held as a hegemonic male have been overshadowed, if not completely removed. Fisheye embraces this leadership role; however, Aldrick, after already failing in a hegemonic masculine role, is less willing. As the group emphasizes the threatening half of the dragon dance, which Aldrick knows to have dissipated in effectiveness, he becomes distant and

sullen. Only through Lovelace's omniscient third person point of view do readers understand the quiet and studious nature of Aldrick as he considers not only his perspective but his Others' perspectives as well.

While not accepting their life choices, Lovelace's wording demonstrates Aldrick's willingness to consider the working Other's perspective as they move to gain wealth. Even though he demonstrates outwardly a hypermasculine construction, Aldrick's Othering lessens during his time with the Corner Nine because of his errantry. Part of Aldrick's errantry is returning to the Corner each day to watch as Others pass by. The activity of working marks the people passing by as Others for Aldrick because of his desire to maintain non-possession as a mark of success and freedom. The group remains physically stationary as they are "watching the monotonous pedestrian journeying of people ensnared in their daily surviving, a ritual impelled not even by greed, set in motion by that most noble and obscene reason: the wife, the children, the belly" (Lovelace 152). The journeys to and from work become ritualized, replacing the frantic dancing or the historic movements of Carnival. But here, the Corner Nine view it as "obscene" determined by the need for physical survival. Aldrick once viewed surviving upon this Hill as a celebration of his inner toughness, but now his remarks indicate a judgement about *how* one survives in poverty. However, his judgement is short lived as, in Lovelace's typical complex-compound writing style, two clauses later Aldrick announces that "he did not have the courage to [become a worker]; that even though he knew that this pose of rebellion was not power, that to abandon it for that living paraded before him was a more profound treason, a surrender, a kind of death he had not yet

achieved” (153). The workers are Othered as Aldrick equates their movements as treasonous and a deathly surrender of freedom that he had with non-possession and non-movement. Aldrick could never become this type of man as he reaches for a true freedom, one that he thinks only comes from “true” rebellion against the work ethics that are linked to wealth and the prior colonizers.

The parade of workers contrasts with the parade of Carnival: one frantic, one monotonous; one celebratory, one surrendering; one frantic with a message of personhood, one dead; both are equally ineffective as a means of living freely. Aldrick’s views, that Others are different and strangers, contrast with Morrison’s explanation that there are no strangers, just “versions of ourselves, many of which we have not embraced, most of which we wish to protect ourselves from” (38). Morrison’s clarification of strangeness links each person to one another in the same way that Aldrick’s frantic dragon dance is linked to the parade of workers. Lovelace’s writing indicates a recognition of this association: Aldrick’s masculine evolution is in the often-overlooked recognition of the Others’ “courage” and “achievement.” Aldrick’s view of the Othered workers begins to change. On one hand, they are Othered because they refuse to rebel against working and neocolonialism. On the other hand, Aldrick can see this Other as courageous: a group of men who have put their families or physical well-being above their supposed innate desire for freedom away from work (Lovelace 152-53). They achieved a way of life that considers and includes other people, specifically their families. At this point, however, Aldrick personally sees this ending in a death that he wishes to protect himself from. Aldrick, by embracing a hypermasculine construction,

possesses the freedom to not work, to state “I have not surrendered” or embraced that version of himself (Lovelace 152). Silently struggling with this thinking, Aldrick begins to view Others’ choices as their own, even though he could not imagine living a working life himself.

Aldrick’s lessening of Othering with Sylvia and Pariag are both informed by his silence about their situations. With Sylvia, Aldrick wants to be “listened to” about his suggestions for her life (Lovelace 153). But even through seeing her quick-paced movements become slower, a “victorious drowsiness that was more and more becoming a part of her,” Aldrick remains silent: “It pained him, this wasting of Sylvia, this dulling of her; but he said nothing” (138). Aldrick grows in wanting to allow Sylvia to make her own decisions about how and where to live her life. Unfortunately, he also “fling[s] words after her; and she would fling back her answers” (153). Sylvia remains Aldrick’s Other as he cannot let go of the desire to control her as his “chosen woman,” although throughout the novel he attempts to relinquish his self-proclaimed male authority over her movements and decisions. Giddens argues that the way around the too-oft violence that rises when men lose control over women’s sexualities is in the transformation of sexual relations to intimate relationships. He defines this intimacy as “transactional negotiation of personal ties by equals” (Giddens 3). The transactional nature of Giddens’s statement is viewed in Aldrick and Sylvia’s “flinging” words back and forth, and the same verb being used for them both. To view Sylvia as an equal—equally able to make decisions and control herself—remains for Aldrick to learn.

While Aldrick attempts at silence with Sylvia collapse, his silence with Pariag enhances their Relations. After an unknown assailant(s) vandalizes Pariag's bicycle, he leaves it as a memorial for one day before taking it to a mechanic (Lovelace 140). As he passes the Corner Nine,

everybody grew silent. They watched Pariag carry-push that bicycle, and in that moment they felt themselves closer to him than they ever had. It was suddenly as if he had become alive, a person to them; and that moment, which was sacred, for it joined people together to a sense of their humanness and beauty, they would remember and recall long afterwards. (141)

As Aldrick feels closer to Pariag and recognizes him as a person, his silence allows Pariag's bicycle memorial to continue, enhancing his strength. The Relations between the Others increases as they are "at that time both closer to them and farther from them" at the same time (141). The view of each other as the Other is not removed; however, the Relations between them are improved. They can recognize each other's struggles and pains while seeing strength and goodness or kindness in each other as well. Aldrick's errantry, as a purposeful wandering, brings him closer to his Others and allows him to experience aspects and witness parts of their lives. Glissant stresses that "Relation is not made up of things that are foreign but of shared knowledge" (8). The shared moment between Aldrick and Pariag create a better Relation between them. They each have a shared knowledge of the Other's strength and the Other's respect. Aldrick comes to respect Pariag through viewing his new movements as determined and purposeful with a strength previously unseen.

Even though Aldrick's movements with the Corner Nine take a circular route, they demonstrate errantry in that they are circular distinct movements. Betsy Wing, in her translator's introduction of Glissant's *Poetics of Relations*, states that

directed by Relation, errantry follows neither an arrowlike trajectory nor one that is circular and repetitive, nor is it mere wandering—idle roaming. Wandering, one might become lost, but in errantry one knows at every moment where one is—at every moment in relation to the other. (xvi)

Wing equates circular and repetitive movement, even though one's path may start at the same location yet result in different understandings of Relation or is directed by an enhanced knowledge of Relation. Aldrick's movements in response to the police begin with circular movements; but during his evasion of police on the Corner and the hijacking of a police vehicle, his movements become distinct wanderings for a purpose while focusing on the power relations between him and others.

Aldrick's circular movements around the Corner, as the men leave and return according to the presence of police officers, increase his hypermasculine construction. Lovelace remarks:

the power of the Dragon even to threaten was coming to an end; but [Aldrick] remained there at the Corner out of a stubborn pride and loyalty, moving when the police came and returning at their leaving, so that Fisheye would watch him and say: 'You is man. All those fuckin' cowards run; you stand up. You is man.' (164)

Aldrick links his loss of power to the police presence and their decisions to be "no longer hesitant, respectful" towards the men occupying the Corner (164). This is stated as though being the Dragon and threatening rebellion previously kept the police polite

towards the men. However, the community's support of Aldrick, specifically his beliefs of rebellion and non-movement as a common value, caused the police force's respect. Once the community removes their support and labels the men as "hooligans" to be feared does a larger police presence occur to, precisely, "rid the Corner of 'hooligans'" (Lovelace 164). Aldrick's insistence on remaining in this particular place begins his circular movements. His statement that this circling back to it is born out of "stubborn pride and loyalty" becomes an example of Glissant's errantry in terms of his knowledge about power relations and the movements they cause. Returning to the same position is repetitive but Aldrick understands the power relation between his people and the police and offers a silent resistance against the removal of the "hypermasculine man" at the Corner. Fisheye recognizes Aldrick's understanding of Relation, thereby confirming Aldrick as a man.

Aldrick's circling the corner, while repetitious in action, provides distinct moments of knowledge for Aldrick. He questions and challenges Fisheye and the other younger men about their views on the community and working. Aldrick maintains his acts of diminishing Othering in his statements that consider the working man's point of view. When Fisheye tries to teach that "they is traitors, every one of them. They only want a excuse to be slaves again," Aldrick counters with the idea that "maybe it's their best they doing, man" (Lovelace 165). When pushed, Aldrick responds with a defeated "I don't know;" however, Aldrick's train of thought returns again and again to the point that all individuals do their best to survive as best they know how. Aldrick's knowledge and

Othering takes on mental errantry, as he wanders to better understand Others and better understand himself.

Aldrick's errantry culminates with the group's resistant apex against their removal from the police force and the desire to preserve the Corner's hypermasculine identity. Fisheye brings a gun and whispers his "command: 'Nobody leaving here 'til the police come. Today we ain't running'" (Lovelace 170). The presence of a deadly weapon indicates the group's acceptance of violence; however, the men's astonishment and curiosity as they pass the gun around belies their familiarity with such violence. When no plan is formulated past a fistfight to draw attention, Aldrick realizes the hypermasculine aspect of the moment:

at that time there could have been no other answer, no more elaborate plan, for these men shared a belief that victory was won out of the justice of their cause and the courage of their soldiers. Plan? They needed no plan. To require a plan was to question the very truth of their cause and the bravery of their soldiers. (171)

The militaristic discourse, including the new view of the Corner Nine as "soldiers," whose "courage" and "bravery" should not be questioned, plays into a form of hypermasculinity. With the goal of "justice" for the larger community, their personas transform into hypermasculine military rebels who fight for the "truth of their cause" through any means necessary, including Fisheye's threatened gun violence and the hijacking and false imprisonment that does occur.

The two-day hijacking becomes Aldrick's final and ultimate hypermasculine moment and parallels his message of Carnival, even in time length, but in a more successful environment which does produce terror. This becomes his most effective

protest of the ruling class. The group's movements and choice of location intensify the message. A vehicle, with two police officers held prisoners, drives in circles, mostly through the town square, "the centre of down-town Port of Spain, a few blocks away from the headquarters of the Trinidad Police Force. It was where politicians gave their speeches, and where, every day, groups of men would be assembled discussing politics and religion" (Lovelace 173). Instead of parading down the city streets as in Carnival, the Corner Nine drive straight to the center, and then circle the town square, to perform their protest. Utilizing this portion of the city announces their right to be in such conversations but also contrasts the actions of these rebel warriors with the politicians' actions of speech. Movement, even circular movement, is needed alongside language. The Corner Nine uses speech to alter the city's discourse towards change. They state that their actions are indeed violent, but also benevolent on behalf of the oppressed. Their movements through the city, specifically choosing the city square, announce the need for both action and speech to combat inequalities.

The group's use of language highlights Aldrick's conception of masculine power with errantry and diminishing Othering. Aldrick hears

his own voice saying, shouting, crying: 'This is the People's Liberation Army ...with guns and jeep coming into the city seeking power, making a cry for our people to rise, to rise up and take theyself over;... take power and rise to be people for our own self, take power, take Pow-er, Pow-er! Pow-er!' (Lovelace 175)

Aldrick's message to the onlookers mirrors his attempted message during Carnival. Just as he was exhausted after his two-day dragon dance, here he is "hoarse, and perspiration

was streaming down his face" (Lovelace 175). His use of vocal language takes just as much effort as dancing. Toni Morrison voices how

the resources available to use for benign access to each other, for vaulting the mere blue air that separates us, are few but powerful: language...can encourage, even mandate, surrender, the breach of distances among us...whether they are distances of culture or the distinctions and indistinctions of age or gender. (35-36)

While hijacking a police vehicle will not be considered benign, the call for action to the community is, as Aldrick calls for everybody to recognize and fight for their personhood and the power they deserve as people. So powerful is the moment for Aldrick that "he didn't even know that they had been circling Woodford Square for the last hour until he heard the roar of the applauding crowd gathered in the Square: 'Pow-er! Pow-er! Pow-er! Pow-er! Pow-er!'" (Lovelace 175). The circular errantry of the vehicle and group is seen as a purposeful wandering to reach the poverty-stricken, forgotten communities and ask that they demand change and recognition. For this outreach, the circular repetition is necessary. As Morrison stated, the language encourages the surrender of the distance. In Lovelace's novel, this distance is what was previously felt between the Corner Nine and the community who prior called for their removal as "hooligans." Sylvia, in particular, watches the circling vehicle and "tri[es] to fit the two [knowledges of Aldrick] together" (177). On one hand, she remembers Aldrick as hegemonic in that he tried to lead the community and work towards recognition and personhood for all individuals; on the other hand, she sees Aldrick more recently as the hypermasculine representative who wanders for his own benefit and no longer fits in the community. What the Others do not grasp is Aldrick's move to a more pluralistic masculine construction. He is both the

hegemonic, caring leader as well as the hypermasculine fighter. After the Corner Nine are imprisoned for the crime of hijacking the police vehicle and keeping the police officers hostage for two days, Aldrick adds non-hegemonic masculine construction to his plurality of manhood.

Down the Hill

Aldrick's move to a non-hegemonic masculine construction does not begin with his own actions but includes the power of language. The language of law designates him as a displaced individual. William Conklin begins his argument about law and Othering with the statement that "texts, interpretive practices, and social conduct differentiate among persons to render benefits to some persons and exclude others" (226). The discursive practices in law are no different. Aldrick and the other men are purposefully excluded from their own defense where "the language of expert knowers displaces the embodied meanings that an aggrieved has experienced" (Conklin 228). Aldrick's personal experience of the police hijacking is reworded and re-remembered for him according to a socially acceptable defense. The men do not speak for themselves, but instead their lawyer tells their stories with unfamiliar, different words. The defense that the men are not guilty due to their demonstration of injustice, anger and frustration does not ring true to Aldrick (Lovelace 184-85). He states that it was not just a lesson or demonstration, but that "I was serious. I wanted us to take over the town, the island. I was serious" (185). The language of law contorts Aldrick's experience and displaces him from his own actions, calling and labeling them something else. Conklin states that these

“interpretive acts displace the everyday language through which one experiences a harm of exclusion” (228). Aldrick is again excluded from the community and displaced from his personal experiences and remembrances. This outcasting begins to create a non-hegemonic masculine identity of Other-ness.

During his five years in prison, Aldrick finds himself Othered by the correctional system and through isolation from the Corner Nine. His reasoning and deductions outcast him from the other men, because they now feel displaced from their understanding. Aldrick’s errantry in prison, both his physical wandering in the confined space along with his mental errantry of thoughts, bring about a non-hegemonic masculine identity. He is isolated both mentally and physically. After Aldrick explains a few times his new understanding of power and personhood gained during the trial, Fisheye exclaims,

‘Man, you beat me,’ looking at him with new respect, distance between them suddenly that neither of them would try to bridge in a hurry; so that from that day Fisheye didn’t seek him out, and the others passed him, respectful and half-fearing, saying to themselves singly what together they had agreed: ‘This man crazy!’ (Lovelace 189)

The combination of fear of craziness, yet respect for his intellect, label Aldrick as someone different, someone who sees the world in a different way than the hypermasculine, silent men they all had been. This philosophical thoughtfulness is labeled as crazy and Others Aldrick from the Corner Nine “so that the five years and two months he spent in prison were spent mostly alone...in a kind of web, a kind of cloud, a stranger in a country where he knew no one, was barred from others by a difference in language” (189). Instead of choosing a silent and brooding demeanor, he is now silenced

and unable to share his philosophies. Aldrick's separation makes him the foreign individual just as Pariag felt in Calvary Hill. Experiencing this Othering and the labeling that occurs with it, Aldrick is forced into a non-hegemonic masculine role where his isolation compels a change within him and distances him from the hypermasculine construction he had built.

In conjunction with the isolation from the Corner Nine, Aldrick experiences the Othering of the correctional system. The correctional system epitomizes one of Morrison's ideas of Othering, when she states that Othering is found in the "govern[ment] and administrat[ion of] the Other" with the intention of reinventing them in a more familiar, desired form found in "our own mirrors" (39). The correctional system epitomizes the controlling of Others for the intention of reinventing them into a more desirable form. However, the results are the denial of personhood: "the specific individuality we insist upon for ourselves," in Morrison's words (39). The consequences of controlling become known and experienced for Aldrick when his control is removed, as someone else controls, "govern[s] and administrate[s]" his body and his movements. Aldrick is left only to wander in confinement without even his comrades. He now understands the results of control and begins to embrace a non-hegemonic masculine identity.

Contrary to being negative for Aldrick, his new non-hegemonic masculine construction combines with his prior experiences and knowledges of hegemonic and hyper masculinity to create a pluralistic vision of masculine identity, including the contradictions and complexities of life. Aldrick constructs a masculine identity that accounts for the need for rebellion as well as personal and communal survival; the need

to be responsible for one's own life while still striving for personhood and recognition from others. The isolation in prison, forced by the other Corner Nine, and the resulting Othering is negative at the time. But later the non-hegemonic masculinity results in Aldrick's embrace of masculine plurality, after having experienced all types of masculine construction. Berthold Schoene-Harwood, in *Writing Men: Literary Masculinities from Frankenstein to the New Man*, traces the embrace of male authors towards "the imminent emergence of a socio-political plurality of multiple masculinities" while remaining concerned with "heritage[s] of systemic oppression and regulatory masculine self-deformation" (6). The imminence of multiple masculinities stems in part from the rise of a feminist studies that highlights intersectionality and nonessentialism. However, in part, multiple masculine identities also rise from the understanding of gender fluidity within an individual. For Aldrick, masculine plurality comes out when it is a strength that allows him to instigate contact again: "one day he was strong enough, he felt, to approach them...he began again out of his loneliness, his caring, to seek them out, taking to them ti[d]-bits of his thoughts, listening to them" (Lovelace 189). The combined feelings of strength, loneliness, and caring combine aspects across the three masculine constructions of hyper, non-hegemonic, and hegemonic respectively. Aldrick takes the first steps to bridge the divide between the men; he also does so not only for his own benefit of ending his loneliness but additionally because he cares for the other men. For the rest of the novel, Aldrick demonstrates no specific masculine understanding; instead, masculinity is constantly fluid, depending on his audience and need. With this fluidity, Aldrick relates to the individuals he encounters and ceases his attempts at control.

Aldrick's errantry through town, after his release, guides his diminishing of Othering through respect for individual choices and differences. As Aldrick's errantry increases, his Othering attitudes decrease. In Aldrick's final chapter, he encounters several of his old neighbors through multiple sidetracked attempts to find Sylvia. Stopping at Freddie's snackette, readers learn how he does not equate his prison time with defeat: he does not believe in "the consoling greeting for a defeated warrior from a band of deserters who had long made peace with the enemy" (Lovelace 193). Yet, while he does not believe in the community's defeated views, he does not share his ideas about prison making him want to live more. Prison did not defeat Aldrick, nor did it squash his desire for rebellion; however, he tries to politely "fashion a way in which he could say, 'I am not conquered,' without wounding, bruising too roughly their sensibility, without abusing their hospitality" (194). Aldrick lacked this consideration for the working people's feelings and sensibilities about their life choices in his fervent declamation during the police hijacking.

Aldrick's consideration for Others' choices extend directly to women and greatly lessens the Othering act of control that he previously sought with Sylvia. When Aldrick finds Sylvia, he proclaims his love for her and his wish to see her happy according to her own desires, as her own self (Lovelace 201-02). But unlike his actions during his two prior masculine constructions, Aldrick now "turned and walked away" (203). Aldrick's movement away from Sylvia indicates his willingness to leave the decision to her. She can remain with Guy and pretend to be like him and Miss Cleothilda, or she can follow her true self to be with Aldrick and find happiness according to her desires. Only when

interrupted by Miss Cleothilda does Aldrick turn and look back: “He didn’t wave. She didn’t wave either. And then she waved, thrusting both hands into the air in a saucy, brave and affirming sign. And it struck him: maybe she has not given up hope for life, for living” (Lovelace 203). Sylvia’s sign of life confirms Aldrick’s movements away to give Sylvia space to make her own life choices. After all, if what he desires is for her to live her life according to herself, then she must be allowed make the decision of what kind of partner to live with. Aldrick responds physically as he “waved again, this time with both hands, signaling faith in her and a joy in the moment, signaling as a dear friend, a lover, who is going on before to be joined later by her” (203). Aldrick’s signal of faith, signed as not only a lover but a dear friend, sustains his pluralistic masculine identity. He trusts; he waits; he befriends; he goes ahead, all without pressure or control.

Relations between Pariag and Aldrick become better also through errantry. During Aldrick’s time in prison, Pariag became the community’s shopkeeper; but even with this enhanced role in the community, he remains the Other through isolation and the lack of rebellious history. While “walk[ing] down the Hill with brave reluctance” (Lovelace 204), Aldrick contemplates Pariag, who

had been asked to bear the burden of a battle he did not know was his own, that was never shown him to be his own, and which could not be shown either, because none of them in the Yard could explain it...And even if they could have explained it, could they have offered him that life? Could they have offered him the dragon, Carnival, rebellion, the possession of nothing? (204)

Aldrick, after being in the non-hegemonic male position, sees Pariag’s perspective anew. Aldrick sees that without living the history of rebellion and non-possession for

generations, Pariag could not belong to the community. He would always be slightly outside it, until the community changed. (The novel hints at this change as possible since the change of non-possession has already occurred.)⁵ As Aldrick wanders down into the city, he sees Pariag as someone who could have been a friend if they had ever tried to truly understand each other. However, since they remained near strangers, Aldrick can only look honestly at their Relation and why Pariag was the Other. The distance between them remains, but it has lessened. Aldrick desires to speak with Pariag, but he cannot explain his, or the community's, prior actions to Pariag. Instead of attempting to unburden himself of his prior Othering behavior, to explain it away for the sole purpose of making himself feel better, Aldrick continues his errantry. Aldrick sees how “each man—Pariag included—had the responsibility for his own living, had the responsibility for the world he lived in, and to claim himself and to grow and to grow and to grow” (Lovelace 204). While Aldrick is directing this new recognition towards Pariag, it more directly correlates to Aldrick’s own life and his own responsibilities. Aldrick grows as he moves downhill. He can do nothing about his Relation with Pariag; he can only be responsible for his own living, claim himself, and continue to grow.

The end of the novel through its focus and structure clearly shows Aldrick’s removed need for constant control over Others as his errantry into an unknown life is renewed. Aldrick only has tentative plans for his future in the city, yet he pursues the

⁵ The incorporation of Indo-Caribbeans in Carnival is still an issue today, as chutney music becomes increasingly defunded. See “Chutney Music in Carnival: Re-defining National Identity in Trinidad and Tobago” by Kumar Mahabir for this social change’s historical trajectories.

unknown life that will bring him closer to Others, instead of rejoining the familiar Calvary Hill community. Readers glimpse that his errantry further into a life beside Others will extend to reducing Othering acts as well. One of Aldrick's last statements focus on a desire to work as a sign painter; he even speculates about signs he might paint, but when they are all directive statements, he laughs (Lovelace 205). Aldrick's laugh is not one of amusements, but instead one confirming his understanding of the downfalls of control. Statements, such as "No spitting!" or "No obscene language!" (204, 205), become ridiculous attempts at power when such things cannot always be controlled. Instead Aldrick changes his Othering acts of control and hopes to "paint some new signs, signs of life, of hope, of love, of affirming, and let his own living match and mirror them" (205). Working as a sign painter, Aldrick would not control his readers; however, he would attempt to influence lives with positive messages of life, hope, love, and affirmation. Aldrick has moved from the prior singular masculine constructions where he dictated Others' behaviors to one where he would "match and mirror" such messages in his own life, switching his focus to himself and what his responsibility in his own life. The remaining novel focuses on Pariag, as the Other, and Philo, as the Calypsonian storyteller. This structure indicates two things. First, Lovelace's leaving of Aldrick's character signals the character's unknown future. He "walk[s] down the street, alive, and ready to go on" (205). Lovelace purposefully leaves Aldrick's character positively in a moment of errantry where Aldrick does not know the future, but he knows the position and Relations which surround him. Second, the novel's structure reinforces Aldrick's lack of control and centrality. He does not need to be the center any longer; someone else

can tell the next installments of his future. Lovelace tells the last chapter with an emphasis on Philo, the calypsonian, and stresses everyone's movement. Aldrick moves down the hill; Pariag moves out of Calvary Hill and into the corner shop; Philo "had to get away, to move in a larger area of space, to move, to move on" (Lovelace 232). Philo moves on to Diego Martin where he becomes the eccentric standout to the monotone identities in the neighborhood, becoming a positive Othering force for change. And, through the calypsonian, on the last page, readers learn that Sylvia moves to "look for Aldrick" (240). Each of the main characters end the novel with movement and errantry. Each recognize their need for purposeful wandering, through which they gain their desire along with the knowledge that they only have control over their own lives.

Although it has been incorporated throughout, Toni Morrison's statement about the origin of Othering deserves to be reiterated in its entirety: She states that to understand the "unreasonable claims" one attempts to have on another person is to understand a

longing for and missing some aspect of [one]self, and that there are no strangers. There are only versions of ourselves, many of which we have not embraced, most of which we wish to protect ourselves from. For the stranger is not foreign, she is random; not alien, but remembered; and it is the randomness of the encounter with our already known—although unacknowledged—selves that summons a ripple of alarm. That makes us reject the figure and the emotions it provokes—especially when these emotions are profound. It is also what makes us want to own, govern, and administrate the Other. To romance her, if we can, back into our own mirrors. In either instance (of alarm or false reverence), we deny her personhood, the specific individuality we insist upon for ourselves. (38-39)

Throughout the novel, Aldrick's hegemonic dragon message and hypermasculine message is one of personhood. Yet, while he remains controlling of Others, they cannot

claim their own personhood. Only once Aldrick sees the results of Othering control and relinquishes his desires to own, govern, and administrate his community can they rise up to claim themselves and celebrate their beauty as individuals. To do so he must continue his errantry, which he embraces now with a Relational, pluralistic masculine construction. Aldrick's fluidity of masculine construction, which ends with a plurality, evokes Schoene-Harwood gynandric complexity, which emphasizes a fluidity of gender, as though on a spectrum, along with a confluence of self and otherness. The open structure that ends Lovelace's novel indicates that Aldrick remains errant in his movements, as well as the other characters accepting errant paths of their own, to increase relational identities. Aldrick's complex masculine gender incorporates Others into his identity. Through errantry, Aldrick creates a 'third space,' in Homi Bhabha's terms, for his identity after he leaves Calvary Hill. This space not only allows for all types of masculine construction without the need to control them but is created through knowledges produced by each different type of construction. Errantry will continue Aldrick's plurality of gender as he gains better Relations between his own personhood and that of his Others by diminishing his actions of gendered Othering.

CHAPTER V

GENERIC ERRANTRY: DIMINISHING SEXUAL OTHERING IN *IT BEGINS*

WITH TEARS

My three prior chapters have focused on the errantry that occurs during characters' micro-movements; however, this chapter begins with a different focus of authorial errantry, specifically in the amalgamation of genres in a single text for a sacred purpose. Opal Palmer Adisa began her work with the genre of the novel in 1997 with *It Begins with Tears*. As a poet, prose-writer, photographer, and essayist, her literary work is well-known throughout Caribbean culture's interlocking circles. Her first novel exemplifies her multi-generic literary work by incorporating multiple literary genres to a single text that narrates the complexities of women's sexualities in a small rural Jamaican village. Adisa's text travels through elements of drama, mythology, oral storytelling, dream vision, prose, and poetry, which allow for the exploration and contestation of sexual views found in society, religion, history, and literary traditions. (As Adisa switches between the genres frequently, my chapter will be organized around the attempts to combat sexual views in these discursive realms and will not necessarily follow the novel chronologically.) Similar to the diminishment that occurs in characters' Othering as their errantry increases in my prior chapters, Adisa's generic errantry leads to the diminishment of Othering in readers as the novel details two tensely debated issues in sexuality: prostitution and sexual assault. Adisa's use of generic errantry moves readers

from considering these topics from a dualistic lens of either/or to a non-dualistic lens where sexuality changes from an identification element to a behavioral element, which is fluid and based on individual experiences.

Few scholars have addressed Adisa's *It Begins with Tears*; those who have focus on either issues of modernization, female communities, or the male characters' roles in healing. Donna Aza Weir-Soley's book chapter, "The Erotics of Change: *It Begins with Tears*" in *Eroticism, Spirituality, and Resistance in Black Women's Writings*, addresses the struggles between "two conflicting ideologies (modernity and tradition) whose oppositional imperatives threaten the cohesion and stability of a traditional peasant community" (142). Weir-Soley sees the erotic as a means of resistance to negative aspects of modernity while propelling an intersubjectivity and interdependency that accommodates modernity's positive elements. Her chapter, as well as a previous article, "Myth, Spirituality and the Power of the Erotic in *It Begins with Tears*," highlights the sexual as spiritual through Adisa's mythological incorporations. In this way, Weir-Soley addresses the form of Adisa's novel, but she does not tackle the entirety of the text's form and, therefore, does not address the challenges to patriarchal institutions' sexual views and silencing, nor the effects of them on the reader.

Two scholars' texts, Justine Eileen O'Neil's work, "Reciprocity is Everything: The Female Journey to Elective Bonding in African-American Literature" and Pin-chia Feng's "Rituals of Rememory: Afro-Caribbean Religions in *Myal* and *It Begins with Tears*," underline the benefits of female communities, one focusing on female bonding and the other on female spiritual agency. O'Neil rejects the novel's moments of

compulsory heterosexuality in traditionally gendered societies as restrictive to female sexual and emotional security. She argues that the act of “elective bonding,” as women engage with female communities and demand the agency and reciprocity in all relationships, removes restrictions and strengthens sexual relations (O’Neil). Feng’s article also focuses on female communities but as a female spiritual agency utilized for emotional healing. Providing great information about the creolization of Caribbean religions, Feng, however, only briefly analyzes Monica’s trauma, instead turning to the traumas of Beryl and Angel as indicative of neo/colonization.

Feng addresses emotional healing, while Elina Valovirta’s “Blowing the Love-Breath: Healing Men in Caribbean Women’s Writing” mainly focuses on Desmond’s actions in Monica’s physical healing process. However, more directly related to this analysis, she also discusses affective feminist reader theory, which redefines the affective fallacy as a political tool for transcultural feminism. Specifically, Valovirta, employing Sara Ahmed’s work, states that the affective fallacy prevents readers from “intrusively taking on the other’s suffering through sympathetic reading” (100). While my analysis relies on the reader’s reactions and a change occurring in them due to the experience of generic errantry, I count on the reader distinguishing between the recognition of differences and appropriating a character’s suffering.

My terminology for Adisa’s style is generic errantry, which incorporates Glissant’s ideas of errantry as a sacred wandering along with the authorial decisions in literary construction. Generic errantry consists of writing with and through multiple genres; that is a wandering through elements that typically exemplify one genre or

another, moving alongside those elements and conventions, and playing with multiple literary forms and traditions sometimes simultaneously. Although Jacques Derrida remarks, at the beginning of “The Law of Genre,” that “genres are not to be mixed. I will not mix them” (55), his remark is proven to be an exemplary statement illustrating the type of orders and authority found in genres, drawing limits, norms, and interdictions. Derrida concludes that intermixing does occur, and must be allowed to occur, in order for the “law” of non-mixing to be a law in the first place. Mixing genres becomes the “counter-law,” which calls back to or cites the original in essence “summoning each other to appear” (Derrida 57-58). The original law of non-mixing is called forth by Adisa’s generic errantry, but so also are the other “laws” of the novel. K. Anthony Appiah stresses a commonality in African novels where a mutual feature is the writing of “usable” traditions positively in order to counter the previous negative writings of African traditions (205). Adisa’s generic errantry has a similar sacred purpose. The purpose of generic wandering occurs in order to rewrite and remake a particular narrative, enabling the “decolonization of the novel,” described by Elizabeth DeLoughrey in her analysis of Sir Wilson Harris’s work in progressive realism. In Adisa’s text, readers find the rewriting/retelling of prostitution, adultery, and sexual assault from a feminist, postcolonial viewpoint in order to upset and reject the patriarchal histories of the novel in particular, but also in many literary genres. While described as a novel (in Adisa’s “thanks”) and recognized as such, Adisa’s text wanders through multiple genres, sourcing various elements of different genres as fitting to the text’s narrative. This creates a novel which weaves through a difficult narrative for many readers, providing breaks and

moments apart from the grim, challenging sexual topics, while still exploring other sexual complexities, like desire and love. With wandering, the narration takes on a realistic retelling of sexual experiences, which rarely are told in straightforward, linear modes due to the patriarchal systems that control sexuality.

Affording silence and the necessary space to relate stories of sexual abuse specifically is a psychological practice. In trauma studies, the allowance of silence and ability to tell one's own story in one's own way is well-documented.¹ I assert that Adisa's text, due to her generic errantry, allows for this type of space and time to the reader to absorb these narratives with emotion but not trauma. Adisa through her generic errantry creates a temenos of literary space for the more difficult topics, which is not typically found in novel forms. Amy Hodges Hamilton writes, in her essay "First Responders: A Pedagogy in Writing and Reading Trauma," that as she reads narratives of trauma, she shares in the trauma (179). Combatting this re-traumatization in readers, Adisa's errantry provides instead a sacred literary space, which is severed from the constraints and histories of traditional literary genres, to create a space away from the profane for the purpose of safety. This safety, found only in a sacred space separate from the vulgar, produces a sense of precarity and vulnerability necessary to detail the sexual exploits and abuses narrated. Judith Butler, in *Precarious Life: The Power of Mourning and Violence*,

¹ For instance, see "Giving voice to silence: Silence as coping strategy of refugee women from South Sudan who experienced sexual violence in the context of war" by Marian Tankink and Annemiek Richters in *Voices of Trauma: Treating Psychological Trauma Across Cultures* and Gabriele M. Schwab's "Voices of Silence: On Speaking from Within the Void (A Response to Shahla Talebi)" in *Critical Trauma Studies: Understanding Violence, Conflict and Memory in Everyday Life*.

states that when precarity and vulnerability are foregrounded in narratives, grief “furnishes a sense of political community of a complex order, and it does this first of all by bringing to the fore the relational ties that have implications for theorizing fundamental dependency and ethical responsibility” (22). While Butler’s writing addressed the national grief after the terrorist attacks in 2001, her theoretical premise of precarity and vulnerability can be, like Glissant’s theories of errantry, focused on a micro-level of existence. To discuss sexual assault, adultery, and prostitution, an embracing of the precarity and vulnerability of the topics and/or the events equally produces a complex community which ties together the self and the Other, foregrounding their relational ties. Generic errantry adheres to the fragmentation of narration found in trauma studies, asserting multiple points of views which builds a community of witnesses while eventually blurring the self/Other dichotomy in readers.

The blurring of the self/Other dichotomy for readers becomes the purpose of Édouard Glissant’s *Poetics of Relations* as he discusses improved Relations in literature. For Glissant, the main interactions between Others occurred through the transfer of literature and intellectual thought for the purposes of justifying colonization. Glissant affirms that ‘Relation informs not simply what is relayed but also the relative and the related. Its always approximate truth is given in a narrative...Relation, driving humanities chaotically onward, needs words to publish itself, to continue’ (27-28). Relations are the connections between individuals, specifically those differences which mark Otherness. But Relations also are contained in the histories people carry with them into every situation, whether individual histories or collective histories and generational histories.

Relations, additionally, can reflect situations: some histories, some connections, some differences shed light on specific moments, but some histories, connections, and differences are not relative to specific moments. Events become related, or re-told, according to what is relative, thus becoming moments of Relation. For these reasons, Relations are what is related. Glissant adds that his interest in the poetics of Relations began with the power of words to relate colonial power not only to the French empire but specifically to the colonized, providing “a language that was presented as universal (with the aim of providing legitimacy to the attempt at domination)” (28). During these moments of colonization, Relations were related to the self and Other, creating the Othered narratives and histories that would continue to be relayed throughout generations. However, the domination of one group over another is not the end of Glissant’s poetics of Relation (as hopefully demonstrated in previous chapters).

As the related narratives travel though their own paths of errantry, the center/periphery divide crumbles. The poetics’ path is threefold: knowledge passed from the Center to the peripheries; those from the peripheries to the Center, as exemplified in *The Empire Writes Back*; and, finally, the travel from periphery to periphery, “reproduce[ing] the track of circular nomadism...mak[ing] every periphery into a center; furthermore abolish[ing] the very notion of center and periphery” (Glissant 29). This is the sacred purpose for the wandering of the written word: as stories, histories, and knowledges travel, they finish with an errantry, tying together the Others of the colonizers, centering the multiplicities of experiences and histories until the notion of a center fades. Certainly, the colonial history remains, however, the singular import

vanishes. This third stage means that “the time came, then, in which Relation was no longer a prophecy made by a series of trajectories, itineraries that followed or thwarted one another. By itself and in itself Relation exploded like a network inscribed within the sufficient totality of the world” (Glissant 29). The exploded network, which highlights different histories and experiences and narratives as equal across the entirety of the world, diminishes the Othering that began and festered through the first two stages of Relation. The writer’s role is in “the power to experience the shock of elsewhere” where “diversity, the quantifiable totality of every possible difference, is the motor driving universal energy, and it must be safeguarded from assimilations, from fashions passively accepted as the norm, and from standardized customs” (29-30). The celebration of diversity and the relinquishment of power stand in the front as the necessary actions to gain the third stage of Relations. Only through the relinquishment of colonizing and globalizing power does assimilation and standardization become viewed as archaic and unwarranted signs of authority. As the writer celebrates diversity, so too does the world reader. Through this celebratory role of diversity Glissant’s third stage of Relations is achieved.

Combining K. Anthony Appiah’s “Cosmopolitan Reader” with Judith Butler’s *Precarious Life* suggests the celebratory role of the world reader in order to create a productive literary community. Butler’s text focuses on the development of a political community through the grief that comes with international tragedy. However, such a community, where all lives are grievable and tragedies create acknowledged precarious lives, can be created through any shared grief and the vulnerabilities that arise through

the narration of those grief-stricken events. In this way, I argue that texts, which share familiar tragedies across audiences, create a powerful literary community, diminishing Otherness. By familiar tragedies I do not mean that each reader has experienced the tragedy, nor that the disparate cultures that each reader resides in equally struggles with or even recognizes such events as tragedies. By familiar tragedies I mean that each reader, through their “common capacity for reason,” can equally grasp “a narrative logic that allows us to construct the world to which our imaginations respond” (Appiah 223). According to Appiah, this capability creates cosmopolitan readers, defined not through universals or an insistence on human nature, but through an agreement about particulars, the ability to agree with particular judgements in particular instances which creates commonality. Appiah reaches for an understanding of “rationalistic rhetoric” to further explain his embrace of cosmopolitan readership, which “claims that in all encounters human beings are struggling with similar mental apparatus to understand a single world” (224). Appiah focuses on the singularity of the world along with equal mental capacities. In this instance, morality of right and wrong no longer can be considered, for if each side in the self/Other dichotomy is equally capable, then each side could be right or wrong. It, then, becomes an unwinnable battle to convince a side of “truth.” Instead, by considering equal capacities and a shared world, “cosmopolitan reading presupposes a world in which novels...travel between places where they are understood differently, because people are different and welcome to their difference” (224). Through the welcoming of difference and not a tolerance or acceptance of difference, cosmopolitan reading extends to a more celebratory understanding of diversity. Traveling through this difference—différance in

French, which highlights errance, “we learn about the extraordinary diversity of human responses to our world and the myriad points of intersection of those various responses” (Appiah 225). The learning and knowledge achieved through Appiah’s cosmopolitan reader results in Butler’s community of relational ties of dependency. Butler emphasizes that when grief is displayed and shared what is highlighted is one’s

relation to the Other, a relation that does not precisely reduce me to speechlessness, but does nevertheless clutter my speech with signs of its undoing. I tell a story about the relations I choose, only to expose, somewhere along the way, the way I am gripped and undone by these very relations. My narrative falters, as it must. (23)

It is not the relations which results in a faltering narrative, but the grief shared with the Other which brings about such gripping emotions. For once “we” replaces “I” and “you,” the injustices enacted upon one body becomes communal. The communality possible in Relations between the self and the Other once the third stage of Relations is developed is what Adisa’s novel demonstrates, including the faltering aspects of narration found in her generic errantry.

Beginning with Drama

Before the narrative begins, *It Begins with Tears* provides a cast of characters as usually found in the genre of dramas. In a typical drama, this list of characters provides actors with an insight into how to perform each character’s role, as well as providing readers with the same insight into how to read and interpret the characters on the page. In Opal Palmer Adisa’s novel, the cast of characters lists the novel’s characters according to

their locations, marking each as an “inhabitant of” a specific fictional Jamaican village (i). Automatically, this indicates that each character belongs to the village and is a part of the community. Each character’s label includes three characterizations, including an abstract role in the community which indicates the quality of their character. Foregrounded is each individual’s relationship to other characters. For most of the characters, their relationships to others is given priority. However, the book introduces Monica as “retired whore, goddaughter of Miss Cotton, dreamer” (Adisa i). In the first two words accorded to her person, Monica is marked first sexually, second by her past, and third by the condemnation of her sexual past. Adisa’s action of listing the character of Monica in this way results in her being sexually Othered in the community as well as Othered in relation to the reader. A similar statement of former prostitute would have sufficed, but it would also have diminished the condemnation directed towards the character by all parties. By labeling Monica as a “retired whore,” the novel guides readers to react negatively towards all of Monica’s sexual acts, including a future adulterous relationship, even before the novel begins.

Monica’s character is marked sexually from the beginning of the novel. No other character is described to readers with regards to their sexuality. The other descriptions relate to characters’ familial positions or their marital statuses. A few of the characters are marked by their occupations. However, since Monica’s occupation was a type of sex work, her initial position in the novel is that of the sexual Other. The other characters’ labels, those corresponding to the characters who have a sexual history of either sexual assault or an alternative sexuality, do not mark them as such from the outset. Beryl, who

has silently suffered from an ongoing sexual assault as a young adult, is listed as “daughter to Madge Gordon, sleepwalker, farmer” (Adisa i). Her sexual assault is not revealed until the end of the novel, when she tells her own narrative during a cleansing ritual. Equally obscured from readers is Arnella’s sexuality; Arnella is listed as “dressmaker, priestess in training” (i), although she is a part of a polyamorous relationship with Godfree and Valrie. The hint of an alternative sexuality between the three characters is described in Godfree’s listing as “husband to Valrie, soulmate to Arnella, carpenter/sculptor” (i). While the acknowledgement of this alternative sexuality becomes known immediately in the novel as Arnella gives birth to her and Godfree’s child, they are not labeled as Other. Readers can interpret “soulmate” without any ties to sexuality. Monica is the only character marked by her sexuality.

Due to the sexual labeling before the narrative begins, Monica cannot escape her sexual past. Adisa’s labeling in the cast of characters is static. Monica will always be considered, first and foremost, as the retired whore living in Kristoff Village. A cast of characters provide information that remains constant during the play, same as one’s occupation, relational ties, and personality traits. By Adisa adding Monica’s historical sexual experience, she has also labeled it as static. It remains a defining characteristic that Monica cannot escape. The entire narration uses the word “whore” when speaking of Monica’s character; neither the terms prostitute or sex worker are used. This word further condemns Monica’s future sexual acts as negative as she enters into an extramarital affair. Without the cast of character addition of “retired,” readers would be uncertain whether this is a derogatory colloquialism for a promiscuous woman or if the character

performed sex work as an occupation. The narration does not confirm the “rumors” of Monica’s past that circulate through the narration until towards the text’s end. Therefore, for most of the text, the only authority stating Monica’s previous sex work is the dramatic cast of characters, which follows the character throughout the narration because it remains constant and outside of the narration. In the narration, rumors of Monica’s past sex work provide reasoning for her current sexual acts of adultery to damage her reputation.

Monica’s outing as a former prostitute haunts her character, while no one else’s past is considered unescapable. While it is true that Monica, or any retired persons, cannot un-do their past work experience, she ought not be labeled eternally due to her prior work. To provide a counter example, Beryl was attending teaching college and working at a hotel in the city during the time of her rape (Adisa 222-27). However, her character listing does not mention former college student or hotel housekeeping staff. Adisa, instead, lists her as her current occupation: farmer. Beryl’s history does not follow her throughout the label as the thing that defines her. Perhaps this difference is due to the choice Monica had in her former profession, whereas Beryl certainly had no choice. However, Monica’s options as a fourteen-year-old runaway in an unknown city were certainly limited. The fact that she considered prostitution as a way to provide for her survival ends up haunting the rest of her narrative. While Monica can retire from the acts of prostitution, she is unable to retire from the stigma of the profession. Before she comes to Kristoff the people know about her past and continue to hold it against her. This is the

same stance the readers are guided to hold as her first defining trait remains “retired whore” throughout the novel.

Using the derogatory title of “whore,” in place of prostitute or sex worker, guides readers to condemn the character before the narration begins. Sex work is not typically approved in many cultures, Western or non-Western, therefore Adisa’s diction only seems slightly noteworthy with profanity. The theories in Michel Foucault’s *The History of Sexuality* alongside Nancy L. Fischer’s “Purity and Pollution: Sex as a Moral Discourse” help to designate why Monica’s title of “whore” condemns her in the view of readers and many characters in the novel. Foucault states that in the 1800s through the medicalization of sex and the religious practices of confession, both utilizing discursive power, societies began to define deviance in terms of individual identities rather than behaviors, resulting in an indictment of the individual instead of the action. Sexual behavior, previously condemned, became the condemnation of the individual actor. Fischer states since this change, in contemporary times “sexual immorality is part of the person’s character rather than a behavior that arose out of a specific situation” (39). This change of identifying sexual immorality is reflected in names, such as “whore.” Monica’s label again becomes a part of her, unable to be shaken, and descriptive of her personhood.

The labeling of one’s sexual immoralities as defining identities is an attempted form of social control of these “immoral” actions. The informal social control that comes with labeling a person as sexually immoral includes gossiping and shunning that reveals what sociologists call “downward comparison,” which raises the speaker by denouncing the actions of another. Listing Monica as a whore, when no other sexuality is commented

on, raises the sexual purity of the other characters, as well as that of the reader. The gossiping that occurs around the village, even before Monica arrives in Kristoff, is shared by the reader since they already hold the condemned version of Monica in their minds after reading the cast of characters. Fischer explains the condemnation applied to sex workers in her comparisons between purity and pollution. Drawing from Mary Douglas's *Purity and Danger*, Fischer expounds:

things that get placed into the ‘polluted’ side of the equation—such as dirt, mold, and bodily fluids—are often metaphorically associated with disease, and thus are thought to contaminate whatever they come into contact with. Things designated as ‘polluted’ are thought to be dirty and dangerous. (40)

Beyond the association of prostitution with the spread of sexually transmitted diseases, the personal temperaments of prostitutes become “pollutants,” plausibly contaminating those who retain sexual purity. Such an argument would follow the logic that “whomever has the moral and mental disposition that would embrace an immoral act of prostitution must not be allowed to speak to or be near those who are morally clean and wholesome.” Hence, when a person, or character, is labeled as “whore,” which conjures discourses of “uncleanliness,” “dirty” or “nastiness,” the pollution/purity dichotomy is invoked (40). The results of invoking this discourse is to separate people into groups: those who are sexually moral and those who are sexually immoral. The desired outcome of separation is the attempt to limit the sexually immoral group. When groups are bounded, the denouncement and criticizing of the Other group become acceptable: they are after all not like us. Most readers would place themselves (honestly or not) in the sexually moral group as that is the socially desired and accepted group. Even individual readers who

may be labeled sexually immoral by society may still hold the subjective nuances of not participating in the sale of sex, resulting in their participation in the Othering and condemnation of Monica due to her initial label. Adisa begins her narration at this starting point and moves through generic errantry to a more acceptance stance of sex work.

A Pathway in Caribbean Mythology

Adisa, as common in Caribbean cultures, combines Christianity with African Caribbean religions to discuss religion's stances on sexual topics through the genre of mythology. The condemnation of Monica's sexual experiences, that the cast of characters guides readers to, results largely from society's views of sexual morality, including those dictated by many religions. Religion remains a large component of sexual morality not addressed by Fischer. According to data from Pew-Templton Project's "Global Religious Futures," Jamaican society was 77.2% Christian as of 2010, with a projected 2020 percentage of 77.3% Christian. The next highest religious demographic was "unaffiliated" at approximately 17.2%, followed by "folk religions" at 4.5%. Unfortunately, as noted by the editors of *The Encyclopedia of Caribbean Religions*, many of these studies do not account for the African Caribbean Religions in the region, nor the transformed aspects of some of the world's most common religions. As stated by Taylor and Judith Soares, in Jamaica, the African religions flourished on plantations as well as in Maroon communities because of the British Empire's disinterest in converting enslaved peoples. These statistics that lump all forms of the Christian faith together, therefore,

mislead readers. Taylor and Case explain how due to colonization and multiple re-settlements,

in some cases, the dominant aspect of a given religious tradition were retained or reinforced in the encounter with different traditions within the region. In other cases, phenomena from diverse traditions entered into symbiotic or syncretic relationships with each other, thereby creating new religious meanings and practices specific to the region. In still other instances, entirely new religious beliefs and practices emerged in the Caribbean, through with some connection to earlier traditions. (xiv)

A primary point made throughout *The Encyclopedia of Caribbean Religions* is that any particular known religion will hold many common features, even some of the main tenets, with those practiced in other cultures; however, some other features may differ due to the Caribbean's complex colonial past.² The creolization of Caribbean religions and the current hybridization of these religions is what Feng sees as "part of their tactics of opposition in that the Christian system imposed by the white oppressors has been creolized and multiplied into all kinds of Afro-Caribbean religions" (155). Seen as an act of hybridity, the Afro-Christian religion displayed in *It Begins with Tears* also includes, for instance, funeral services with call and response and precautions against beloved elders, who have died, becoming duppies along with ritual cleansings and baptisms at the river.

The religion exhibited in the novel, specifically in the mythology sections, entails aspects of European Christianity, as well as forms of obeah and myal. According to

² For more information about the creolization of Caribbean religions as resistance, see Richard D. E Burton's *Afro-Creole: Power, Opposition, and Play in the Caribbean*.

Edward Brathwaite, Obeah was officially defined in 1760 by Jamaican colonial legislators as “communications with the Devil and other evil spirits” (162). The colonial legislators, however, did not differentiate between two forms of Obeah: one as sorcery and another as a healing practice against evil (Taylor and Soares 421). Due to the negative histories often attached to the designation “Obeah,” another religion, Myal, is closely related to Obeah as its “antisorcery” (421). While Adisa does not reference a specific religion, she combines aspects of Obeah, Myal, and Christianity in her mythology sections. Adisa’s writes about the characters of the Devil and She-Devil, as they interact with their family unit and their neighbor, God, as the inhabitants of Eternal Valley. The cast of characters list Devil and She-Devil as the Priest and Priestess of Eternal Valley, with God and his family listed as “followers” (Adisa i). The focus on the Devil family coincides with obeah, turning the negative “evil” that the colonial legislators assumed into a positive and powerful characters that readers relate to as a representative family. Linking also to Myal or the beneficial form of Obeah, many of the fragmented episodes of Devil and She-Devil highlight the benefits of the Devil’s flowers along with She-Devil’s cooking. The healing powers of such actions, as well as the cultivation of the natural environment, set Devil and She-Devil as the Priest and Priestess in the Eternal Valley.³

In Caribbean literature, Caribbean mythology plays an important role of reimagining and remaking Western narratives, including Greek and Roman mythology.

³ Note that Adisa’s combinations of religions may also refer to aspects of religions, such as Pukumina and the Convince traditions.

Greek or Roman mythological characters are not found in Caribbean mythology. Instead, Caribbean mythology often plays with folklore characters found in African myths. Similar to the unknown terror during the transport into slavery, folklore characters are often placed in unfamiliar settings in order to remake what is unknown into the familiar. For children, mythology enacts pathways for escape but also for understanding aspects of Caribbean consciousness. Some of the most difficult topics become broken down into manageable blocks in myths that readers can struggle with individually. For adults, according to Kevin Browne, the incorporation of mythological characters or settings becomes essential to a Caribbean consciousness that is attuned to its past histories and experiences. During his book launch for *High Mas*, Browne details the importance of the Devil character during Carnival. The Devil's role in Carnival is to "pull from everyday obscurity" those histories and experiences in order "to herald the coming of an unease you usually hide away" (Browne). In Adisa's mythological sections, the Devil and She-Devil hold a similar role of incorporating the negative associations in Obeah into a familiar, positive setting of the family. This grants authority to the characters for the readers.

Through her generic errantry into mythology, Adisa accomplishes two things: she normalizes sexual encounters in a family setting and personifies the trait of Silence as a means to denounce the world's management of sexual assault. The genre of myth is typified by the employment of gods to explain the current form of the world and/or humankind or to interpret a worldly/human aspect, whilst judging its moral value. Adisa's mythology, spread through the prologue, epilogue, and five other episodes,

reflects sexuality as a positive behavior, acted upon by all the eternal inhabitants, God and Sabbath Angel as well as Devil and She-Devil. Devil and She-Devil, as a married couple, enjoy a healthy sexual relationship encouraged by heterosexual desires and jealousies. Through their interactions, Adisa normalizes a playful sexuality between consenting adults. While this does uphold the institution of marriage, a frequent topic in sexualities studies,⁴ the mythological sections act as an approval for the characters in the novel, and the readers, to pursue playful sexuality due to the placement of the mythological sections. Adisa places the first mythology section directly after the cast of characters. This first installment deals primarily with She-Devil's demands for marriage equality, thus rebuking the patriarchal views and uses of marriage and sanctioning an equality in marriage for both parties. The novel's appeal for marriage equality interests multiple cultural readers, as She-Devil mentally struggles with certain aspects of Western feminism and leans towards a cultural specific equalist movement, specifically organic Jamaican feminism. Tegreg, She-Devil's daughter, conversely demonstrates a wider acceptance of some Western feminist ideals. Regardless, however, both female characters share a feminist view that reveals normalizing sexual relationships with their respective spouses. The prologue ends with the Devil and She-Devil "stealing into the bushes, the grass their bed, the trees their roof" as below in Kristoff Village "the sky seemed an inviting bed to the weary, the lazy and the lust-driven" (Adisa 8). All people, with ranging sexual desires, are comforted as the eternal beings enjoy sex as a couple longing

⁴ For more information about marriage pressures and behaviors specific to Jamaica, see Eugene B. Brody's *Sex, Contraception, and Motherhood in Jamaica*.

for each other in a natural setting. The mythology states that sex is a healthy, expected element of womanhood. Desire is not shameful but presumed between couples. This message to readers allows a slight diminishment of Monica's prior occupation. Even though the relationship between Devil and She-Devil involve emotional connections and Monica's relationships with customers typically do not, they both are consensual sex between couples that include an amount of sexual labor. In this case, if sex is normal and desirable between all beings—even the gods—then sex workers become less reviled. However, as marital sexual relationships are the only ones presented, sex between non-married individuals continues to be censured.

As the mythology sections continue to question non-marital sex, it clearly attacks sexual assault as well as the Silence that comes with it, while still not blaming the attackers. She-Devil has one interaction with Monica. Monica is sexually assaulted in Kristoff Village by the act of hot scot bonnet peppers being inserted into her vagina by three women. One of the women, Grace, is the wife of the man Monica has an on-going affair with after leaving professional sex work (Adisa 131). Monica, in agony, requests to be shown the way to death from She-Devil: “She-Devil smelled Monica coming...She could feel the pepper steaming up her insides. She reached for and gulped down a glass of water. Angry words were not going to issue from her mouth, but steam emitted from her nostrils” (144). She-Devil shares a portion of Monica's pain, reinforcing the severity of the assault. When the gods feel human pain, the degree is amplified for readers. Not only is this a sexual assault with lasting emotional pain, but an ongoing physicality that lasts for days and is felt by the gods. Additionally, She-Devil is angered by the assault,

not speaking of her anger, but showing it through the stereotypical view of steam radiating from the nose.

She-Devil may not announce her anger verbally, but she does provide three messages about sexual assault. She speaks to Monica from a distance, yelling at her from the gate of her property. She announces her declaration, as the Eternal Valley's Priestess, towards of the assault:

'Listen here. Ah don't mean to be wicked, but go back. Ah can't help you today. Ah ain't ready fah you yet. You med you bed so sleep pan it. Ah busy preparing fah me son's wedding... Wha dem do to you is worse dan crime but don't give up. The fire will burn itself out. But ah done blame dem. Me have husband too, and some woman can be desperate. Sorry, me can't help show you de way today. Go back, your time not due yet.' (Adisa 144)

Adisa's mythology gives three messages. First, She-Devil states that sexual assault is "worse dan crime," which places it over any other crime; she is angered by the other women's actions. Yet, sexual assault is not a cause for death; no matter how physical the assault is, one can overcome it. It "burns itself out" in a manner of speaking with time. However, second, Monica's actions brought the assault upon herself. Since "some woman can be desperate" when they lose their husband's attentions, Grace is absolved of her role in the crime. The other two women's roles, Marva and Peggy, are not addressed by She-Devil, except through the inclusion of "dem." She-Devil, thus, condemns sexual assault as a horrendous crime, but the Priestess does not hold always the attackers solely responsible because of her understanding of jealousy. The Christian adage of "one reaps what one sows" becomes reinforced by She-Devil's proclamation towards Monica. Interestingly, when Marva dies later in the novel during childbirth (232), an episode

between her and She-Devil does not occur. This may indicate She-Devil's rejection of a woman, who with no "justifiable" anger, would sexually assault someone. As controversial as She-Devil's proclamation may be for readers, it does indicate many religious views towards sexual assault. Third, adultery does not exclude one from the Eternal Valley: She-Devil cannot show Monica the way to death "today" because it is not her time. However, She-Devil does not reject Monica eternally because of her actions of adultery or prostitution. She-Devil's rejection of actions but not of the actor becomes a harkening to Fischer's explanation that rejects sexual immorality as "a part of a person's character rather than a behavior that arose out of a specific situation" (39). As Elizabeth Bernstein found in her work on sexual labor, "normative discussions of sexual labor begin with an understanding of the socially and historically specific meanings that affix to commercial sexual transactions and to intimacy and sexuality more generally" (319). Even if the women of the village denounce Monica because of her past actions, the gods do not. She-Devil denounces the social and commercial influences that make the act of prostitution or adultery negative. She-Devil's announcement has two stances of Monica's sexual experiences, remaking familiar religious views on love and responsibility, She-Devil's messages about Monica's experience may be unsettling for readers, but Adisa's personification of Silence during the mythology sections reinforce the common social appeal for the need to speak out about conflicts after some time. The placement of this mythological episode, at the beginning of the text, has the effect of resonating throughout as the narration turns later to sexual assault. Adisa represents Silence as a house-guest who "tormented them, enjoying her short reign" (6). For those

unused to Silence, she becomes unbearable, changing one's entire environment. Yet, however tormenting towards an individual, Silence enjoys being included in one's life, she therefore "had impeccable manners and was very attentive to the needs of her friends" (Adisa 6). During this episode, Silence is always around, even underfoot, as a comfort for her friends. But eventually "Silence became a bother. As the saying goes, too much of one thing is good for nothing" (7). With this proclamation, She-Devil removes Silence and begins speaking again. While the personification of Silence comes at the beginning of the novel and is the house-guest due to a marital argument, the character of Silence remains constant throughout the novel's generic errantry. When initially invited, Silence is comforting. However, she can become difficult to constantly accommodate. The same can be said of a personification of secrets, who after a while creates a worrisome fear of discovery. Adisa states, "Silence and Secret were companions, but very few were loyal to them, so they were always in search of recruits" (6). When these personifications are applied to the silence and secrets kept due to sexual assaults, She-Devil's assertions towards Silence send a clear message to sexual assault survivors. It is beneficial to remain silent for only a period of time; once Silence become bothersome, it is time to speak. Gabriele M. Schwab, speaking about trauma, emphasizes the relationship between silence and time more explicitly when she states, "a certain amount of silencing pain, of splitting or sealing it off from the daily world, is conducive to survival. Too much silence, however, becomes haunting" (120). Through the genre of mythology, Adisa reimagines Silence and focuses on the change of Silence's character

from welcome houseguest and needed friend to a bothering and disruptive force, whose goal is to reign over a person.

Foucault complicates the discussion about sexual silence, when discussing sexuality in general as well as the silencing of sexual assaults. He illuminates that stifled speech

was not a plain and simple imposition of silence. Rather, it was a new regime of discourses. Not any less was said about it; on the contrary. But things were said in a different way; it was different people who said them; from different points of view, and in order to obtain different results. (Foucault 27)

Instead of parents and teachers instructing their youth about sexual topics, Foucault illuminates the change of power to governments and other policing agencies. In this way, topics like prostitution and adultery become considerably discussed. But as pointed out, this discourse is different, not for the understanding or education of the young, but different because unfamiliar people use fear-inducing techniques, for the result of social control. Similar outcomes are desired when lawyers or journalists report on sexual assaults, providing statistics, expert testimony, and jury findings. These reports educate a population about sexual assault outcomes in hopes to produce “safe-minded” women and conscientious men. However, the victims’ narratives are too often deemed too atrocious, too direct, too specific for readers or viewers to consume. In this way, victims can be again silenced. If they do detail their experience, if people do believe them, if their attackers are charged, if a trial is held, then their stories in their voices are still not disseminated because they are not the approved people to speak to the public about sexual matters.

A Hiatus into Oral Storytelling

When writing about any of the multiple silences that Foucault and She-Devil focus on, Silence and Time are two top concerns of sexual assault victims. Adisa uses generic errantry to include a section of oral storytelling later in the novel, which provides a social personification of Time. When linked to the personification of Silence, the pause for oral storytelling addresses these two joined issues about the recounting of sexual assault. Velma, an elder of the village, sits and tells moral stories to the children, both female and male. Only one story is detailed by Adisa: the tale of Time and Nel (113). As noted above, Silence is fine as a houseguest for a time; but, if Silence is given too much of a reigning interval, then, Velma insists, Time can become cruel and take away one's life. In the story, Nel is a beautiful woman who refuses every man who attempts to court her (Adisa 113-15). She ends up being seduced by a duppy and is impregnated by him. Ashamed, she hides her pregnancy and dies in childbirth, isolated from everyone who loves her. The warning about Time bookends Velma's story about women taking too much time and dying alone because of it. The story begins, "Time carried de weight...Sometimes Time's laughter was bitter and frightening, like a sudden gush of wind dat blind you eyes" (113-14). Because Time is old and able to carry the weight of negative things, he also takes charge of one's life.

Relinquishing control to Time and Silence results in a bitter and frightening life. The story ends:

No one did know Nel did pregnant cause she did shame and neva tell anyone...Her beauty didn't mean a ting. Time took it like him tek her laughter.

Him had de last laugh. Time is like duppy, same way dem laugh like john-crow wid field rat caught in him throat. (Adisa 115)

The duppy who seduced Nel is actually Time, with the field rat being those stuck in his throat. Time will consume a person. Instead of being active after her youth, Nel chose to give in to Time and not truly live her life. She metaphorically loved a duppy, something already dead, instead of loving the living or the life given to her. She “could not stand the sight of others so she ran from home and build a little cottage for sheself” (115). She withdrew and stopped sharing her life with others. This relinquishing of control resulted in her death, along with her loss of beauty and laughter. Additionally, because she remained silent due to shame of her actions, no one was able to support or comfort her. Velma’s story does not indicate why Nel fell in love with Time or why she gave Time so much of her life. Yet, the moral of the story is clear: one should not relinquish life to Time or it will destroy a person.

Adisa writes that Velma relates this story to her daughter and later to her two grandsons, making the warning against Time applicable to both male and female audiences. The applicability to female audiences seems clear in the larger narration about female sexuality being acceptable, the denouncement of sexual assault, and the relationship between Silence and Time. The storytelling of such matters to male children may create a pause for some readers. I would like to address this on two levels. First, men are sexually assaulted also. And due to the sigma surrounding the sexual victimization of men, these assaults are even less reported than women’s sexual assaults. Therefore, the storytelling’s warning about Time and Silence become acutely applicable to the teachings

of young men. Second, many Caribbean feminist scholars join in welcoming men, especially young men, into participating in feminist discussions, including those about overcoming the stigma of sexual assault in society. Elina Valovirta discusses the importance of Caribbean women writers (such as Opal Palmer Adisa) in including narratives where male characters act as participants, in the forms of helpers, healers or caregivers, to women's quests for equality and liberty in their own lives. Men do not take over or control women's quests for equality, but Caribbean feminists strongly hold the connections between men and women in society. For any change to occur, all people, men and women, must be welcome to participate in the movement. It is thus imperative that young men, like Velma's grandchildren, hear Nel's tale and the detriments of giving too much of life to Time.

A Veer to a Dream Vision

To change the stigma about women's sexual assault along with the condemnation of women's sexualities, the history of sex and the scrutiny of women's characters, especially as reinforced through prose literary traditions, must be challenged. The tradition of the dream vision, dating back to Chaucer, enforces not only the sharp inspection of female characters, but also the uses of women's sexualities and sexual stories. Opal Palmer Adisa attaches her novel to the entirety of Anglophone literary history through her errantry into a dream vision, complete with a confused dreamer, a natural setting, and an awakened state of analysis. Early in the novel, Monica dreams of water and is confused by the inevitability of "dirty" water as she attempts to wash

clothing (Adisa 29). Monica is the confused dreamer as she continuously replaces the water with more fresh water, only to discover it has turned muddy again and again. The natural setting, outside by a stream as she washes her delicates, links to dream visions as well as hints towards the guide of River Mumma.⁵ Awaking, Monica's head is "heavy and disoriented," and she vows to abstain from sex with married men (29). Monica quickly analyzes her dream vision and connects the "dirtiness of water," which she cannot use to wash her undergarments, with her past sexual actions. Adisa's dream vision focuses on sex, even to the item of clothing being cleaned, just like Chaucer's numerous dream visions.⁶ Chaucer's *Legend of Good Women* begins with a dream vision and foretells women how to be "good" while also not being "virgins." The traditional patriarchal answer to women's sexuality is to accept "suffering in love," including the rape of Philomela and Lucrece, and to give everything to a man as a "tribute" of one's goodness.

⁵ Adisa's dream vision is technically missing a guide; however, later in the novel, River Mumma, a Caribbean mythological character known for her protection and vengefulness, is invoked during the cleansing ritual that takes place in the river after Monica's sexual assault. The locations and the ideology of cleanliness beside Monica's dream vision of inevitable "dirtiness" associates the two episodes.

⁶ Chaucer, considered the father of dream visions, wrote many which could provide an interesting comparison to Adisa's use of the genre, specifically "The Book of the Duchess" and "The Parliament of Fowls." Both silence female voices: The Duchess, along with Alcione, never speaks and is not truly present in the visions. She is only described according to her body parts. Similarly, the Temple of Venus in "The Parliament of Fowls" is silent. As a type of sexual grotto, men traverse throughout the temple according to their will, but it is notoriously silent and is not available as a space of authority for love or sex. My focus on *Legend of Good Women* is due to its directness towards the subject of sex and sexual assault.

By providing a dream vision quickly in her novel, Adisa links to this traditional response—and then rejects it, along with the sexual Othering that occurs in such traditions. Adisa's dream vision is only a paragraph. She quickly leaves off such patriarchal visions of how to write about women's sexualities. After the single dream vision and her analysis of its meaning, Monica does not heed the warning. The very next morning she invites Desmond (her soon-to-be lover as well as the current husband to Grace) to bed, after merely laying eyes on him in a blue shirt (Adisa 31-32). The novel nearly immediate relinquishes this literary tradition to reject the medieval dream vision. This is indicative of Adisa's rejection of the traditional narrative's communications of sexual topics, which too often blames sexual assault on victims' former actions, such as the tales of Philomena and Lucrece, along with the masculine technique of omitting details of or a focus on women's sexualities in order to minimize their importance. Once again Chaucer's *Legend of Good Women* provide the examples of Cleopatra and Anthony, along with Thisbe and Piramus. Both legends end up being structured to pay homage to the men of the tales, even though the proclamation at the beginning is to write about "good women." The men in these tales become the people celebrated. Adisa rejects the tradition of minimizing women's stories by nearly trivializing the men in her novel. The dream vision happens to a woman, who interprets it, and then rejects it, holding instead to her own beliefs of sexuality and sexual expression. Adisa's, and hence Monica's, rejection of the dream vision exemplifies Foucault's reasoning about the modern incitement about sexual discourse: "Something that smacks of revolt, of promised freedom, of the coming age of a different law, slips easily into this discourse on

sexual oppression” (7). It is precisely the decolonizing novel, that Appiah locates in postcolonial literatures, that encourages such revolt of the social power relations that produce various oppressions.

Moving throughout Prose

Monica, in the previous genres, has been permanently labeled as sexual. Adisa’s errantry, by beginning with the label of prostitution, creates an abhorrence for her future sexual acts, specifically her adulterous relationship with Desmond. Mythology has not condemned her sexual past, which includes prostitution, but it does hold her responsible for the consequences of her current adulterous actions. In this way, audiences read her sexual assault to be partially blamed on her, but they also have been advised that sexual assault victims should not remain silent for too long for their own wellbeing. However, Adisa’s errantry into the genre of dream vision laid the groundwork for Monica and readers to reject past declarations about sexuality from patriarchal societies, religions, and histories, including the denigration of sex work and adultery. The prose narration, through fragmentation and formatted headings, slowly places Monica’s sexual history as secondary to her current relationships with other characters, as well as underscoring the importance of love over the institution of marriage.

The fragmentation of Adisa’s novel takes place in her generic errantry, occurring as the above listed genres break into the main narration that takes place through prose. This errantry not only creates a pause for readers, but also demonstrates Adisa’s revolt against the power structures that normally govern sexual discourse. Three neighboring

women gossip about Monica, only to have other village inhabitants discard their downward comparisons. In this sense, Adisa has rejected a form of social control and power over sexual discourses. Foucault states that a “speaker’s benefit” is gained during outright discussions of sexuality:

if sex is repressed, that is, condemned to prohibition, nonexistence, and silence, then the mere fact that one is speaking about it has the appearance of a deliberate transgression. A person who holds forth in such language places himself to a certain extent outside the reach of power; he upsets established law. (6)

By outright challenging the power structures that enforce women’s silence about sexual assaults or society’s condemnations of prostitution and adultery, Adisa becomes a dissident to such power discourses. She, as an author, has already completed the forbidden in writing about such topics, let alone writing Monica as a central, positive character. As such she helps remove the concealment of these topics from sexual discourses. Caribbean literature, as a part of the postcolonial tradition that is invested in the decolonization of the genre of novel, is primed to take such a stance against power in questioning who has the power to speak about what topics and how they speak about sexual topics.

Adisa’s novel, is split by headings, disrupting the narration while also announcing the next topic. After a section, Adisa gives two blank lines followed by a centered, bolded heading. The blank space produces a short moment for readers to pause and reflect on the prior segment, while being advised of the upcoming subject. The headings throughout the prose announce an episode’s topic while also giving some warning to readers about the difficult upcoming issues that Adisa addresses. Analysis determines Adisa’s headings

warn about perceived improprieties, the consequences of choices, dishonesty in households, and spiritual revenge. Multifacetedly, these same headings advise the benefits of being oneself, choosing to love, owning up to one's past, and communal healing.

Monica's narrative begins with the heading of "Midday" (Adisa 24), as a way of underscoring her sexuality above any other aspect. The prose narration about Monica begins, like the cast of characters did, with marking her as sexually Othered. Midday is the time when Monica engages in sexual activity and shows the village's view of the impropriety of Monica's actions, but the time of day also shows Monica's disregard for their feelings towards her. She deems it more important to be true to herself and to not hide. Adisa begins with a convoluted dialogue about Monica's appearance as well as society's decision to hide sex: "No one else would be so bold face. 'Chow! Dem too stupid. Mek dem gwane.' The act had been relegated to night, to privacy and secrecy, but Monica would have none of that. She liked doing it during the day, preferably just before lunch" (24-25). The beginning comments on Monica's boldness to appear in Kristoff not under the cover of night, followed by her statement that villagers could go away because of their stupidity, and her preferences regarding sexual activities. The alternating between such subjects, each given a sentence, has an aspect of errantry that connects all three topics in the introduction of Monica's character. She is bold, independent, and sexual. Again, highlighting her sexuality, Adisa's describes Monica's body as well as her clothes in detail. The narration of Monica's body and dress come from her, underlining her primary identity as a sexual woman even in her own mind. Monica "had selected her

clothing carefully as she suspected that all the villagers would be watching her, and she wanted to give them a show" (Adisa 27). Monica's deliberate actions of choosing clothing for "a show" of herself and her body focuses the reader's attentions on Monica as the sexual Other who enjoys being sexualized by those who watch her. The message for readers is that she is an active participant in a view of her as erotic. While this sets Monica as a sexual Other to some readers, it also references back to the mythological pronouncements on sexuality being a normal and healthy part of relationships.

Knowing that the villagers will judge her based on her past sexuality, Monica "settled on the Friday evening bus when every one would be liming and taking it easy after the working week...[to] announce her arrival to the entire community, and get it over with in one sweep" (Adisa 27). Monica understands the community's views on sex and their gossiping nature. Even though she thought she would be "almost guaranteed some privacy...the inhabitants had pried and obtained the details about Monica's move back" (26). Monica is not granted privacy as she leaves her prior life for one of quiet retirement. As noted by the cast of characters, Monica is defined by her past sexual experiences, which carries into Adisa's prose. The quiet life in the countryside which Monica anticipates becomes a shattered dream. Society's preoccupation with sexuality will not be quieted. The gossip begins in Kristoff before Monica even arrives:

they had even done some digging and found out that most of the thirty years she had been away had been dedicated to whoring, and that no bigger whore than she had ever serviced Kingston or Spanish Town. Supposedly, her legs were so wide apart and she was so large one would stand at her feet and see all the way inside her womb. Decent, God-fearing women had to watch their husbands. And though she was a big woman, in her forties, one could never tell. (26-27)

The passage by Adisa confirms the use of gossip as a form of downward comparison as well as informal social control. The women of the community confirm that they are “decent, God-fearing” people, while Monica is obviously not. Additionally, the passage denigrates body appearances and age, stating that Monica was a “big woman, in her forties,” as though women of this age or this body type should not be able to attract men. These statements, as Monica is introduced in the prose section, confirms the messages stated in the cast of characters as well as society’s most common reflections about sexual women. However, the prose becomes ambiguous about Monica’s actual sexual practices. The term “whore” seldom means the act of prostitution colloquially. Therefore, Adisa provides a question for readers about whether the gossip is true or if Monica was a promiscuous woman who enjoyed sex and engaged in sex with married men.

The gossiping of the community’s women is written to be anonymous, implying that the entirety of the female community shared in the gossip. As Monica disembarks from the bus, the dialogue becomes more unspecified. The gossip occurs from her arrival: “Although she wore no hat or gloves, some later claimed she was so attired” (Adisa 28). Because of the gossip already circulating around the town about her, Monica’s arrival creates a stir, to the extent that her attire is described multiple times until it is incorrectly recalled. The use of “some” to define those gossiping about her indicates the number of villagers who participated in the gossip. Adisa’s indistinct use of addresses continues:

But it was her red lips and manicured fire-red nails that sealed her fate. ‘Whore!’ the wives spat, their grudging admiration fueling their anger, and pretended they didn’t see her. ‘Is who have time fi paint them nails?’ one said sarcastically. ‘Me dear! Hands fah working,’ another offered. “Well we know how she use hers.” Laughter from the wives gathered. (28)

Indiscriminately, due to the nonspecific taglines provided, Adisa states that all women of the community share in this moment of degradation of Monica. The interchanges that follow do not even offer taglines, as though every woman gets a line to contribute to judgement of Monica's past and the assertion of Monica's fate. Adisa emphasizes the communal rejection of Monica, strictly because of her past sexual actions, save for the character of Miss Cotton, Monica's godmother, and Desmond, Monica's soon-to-be lover.

While the initial reaction is one of rejection, Adisa then breaks prose to reject the traditional dream vision and a poem about living with the past. When Adisa returns to prose, two sections, "In-between" and "Gathering the clouds," affirm love while still warning about the consequences of one's choices. In the first section, "In-between," Desmond struggles with his decision about whether to act on his love for Monica, despite her past experiences as a prostitute and the rumor of her having sex with his two best friends, or remain in a loveless marriage to Grace. Adisa's switch to Desmond's point of view demonstrates his active participation in the affair. Many readers, and even critics, when discovering adultery in the book, blame Monica. Valovirta, when recounting the affair, places Monica as the primary actor who "enters into" the relationship with Desmond (109). Monica's actions consent to the affair, even though Desmond initiates it. Readers focus on Monica through Adisa's generic errantry. She is the character who is labeled through negative sexuality in the drama section and then purposefully rejects the warnings of the dream vision in order to pursue her own sexual pleasures. This errantry places her, and not the male participant, as the adulteress who seduces a married man.

Some readers often do not consider the love that may develop in an affair between the two individuals, seeing instead that such actions and such loves should never be allowed to form in the first place. Eva Illouz, in “Romantic Love,” counters this idea: “in many cultures, sight plays an important role in the activation of emotion (many languages have an equivalent of the expression ‘love at first sight’); the feeling of falling in love is sudden and is experienced as a disruption of one’s routine and daily life” (193). If this is the experience, as described by Adisa when Desmond and Monica meet, then, for readers, the positives of love begin to overcome the reader’s typical response of abhorrence to adultery.

Adisa rejects the blaming of Monica when she incorporates Desmond’s struggles from his own point of view. He contemplates, “people didn’t get divorced in Kristoff Village. One married for life. The man might stray, take up with someone else; but that was no excuse to abandon his wife and children” (Adisa 56). Society’s views on divorce and affairs dictate Desmond’s decisions to remain married and still be with Monica at this point. Society is more accepting of men who engage in extramarital affairs than women due to the histories of patriarchy. Weir-Soley comments:

while extramarital affairs occur even in traditional Jamaican cultures, the players are usually not as bold as Monica and Desmond. Although these affairs are often ‘open secrets,’ for the sake of propriety they are carried out surreptitiously at night, giving at least the appearance of secrecy. (167)

With the affair known through the community, Desmond as the male participant can still “walk with his head high” if he is just having an affair with Monica. The affair is less the issue for the community, being overtaken by their lack of concern for other’s reactions.

The narrative turns, however, as Desmond's thoughts veer to contemplations of love: "Desmond was doing more than sleeping with Monica. What was he doing?" (Adisa 57). Desmond is falling in love with Monica, but without saying the word or giving a full expression to the thought, Adisa only has him consider society's response to divorce. For the reader, the hint of love in their relationship is enough to slowly diminish the Othering that occurs during discussions of adultery. First, readers realize that Monica is not fully to blame. Desmond, in his own words, struggles with the idea of divorce or living in a loveless marriage just as many readers would do. However, since society holds love in such high regards, readers begin to absolve Monica. Illouz's defines a culture of romantic love where "the definition of the good life includes finding a person able to generate long-lasting and yet exciting feelings, and being able to extend the experiences of love throughout one's life" (195-96). If the "good life" includes long-lasting love, then Desmond should be able to pursue such a life. However, readers are also aware of the historical stigmas placed on divorce and they begin to identify with the struggles of Desmond. Monica, as his love, becomes a character compelling compassion as she has, unfortunately, fallen in love with a married man.

Readers further gain affirmation of Monica returning Desmond's love during "Gathering the clouds," which alludes to rain's positives and negatives and ends up warning about the consequences of their choices. While there are positives in the rain cloud, the heading specifically hints at the negative. "Gathering the clouds" first alludes to rain clouds, which can bring natural devastations to a region. In the mythology sections, Devil and She-Devil's physical altercations caused heavy, tumultuous rains over

Kristoff Village (Adisa 1). The allusion to rain, anticipated to be damaging, foreshadows negative consequences for Monica and Desmond. Further, Adisa's choice of the active participle verbal of "gathering" becomes telling. Adisa's language forewarns that the exploits of Monica and Desmond will result in the assault on Monica. They are the ones who unknowingly are gathering the clouds through their actions. Readers may take this heading's omen as another instance of blaming Monica for her own sexual assault, similar to She-Devil's statements. Blaming victims for sexual assaults results in readers sympathizing with the victim. While many people may not believe that adultery is correct, they do not believe that an adequate response is sexually assaulting the woman or man involved. By adding this suggestion of blame through the active participle in the heading, Adisa ends up bringing readers into the stance that Monica should not be sexually Othered.

The heading hints at negative consequences to adultery, but the section positively reinforces ideas of romantic love and committed love. Monica cuts all ties to her prior life of prostitution as she rejects Samuel Lawrence, a prior lover who set up her house in Kristoff: Adisa writes, "also Monica wanted Sam to know she was interested in someone else. He could continue to come if he wanted and sleep in the guest room. She liked him and considered him a friend, but no longer felt any obligation or desire to sleep with him" (79). Adisa moves Monica into a full sense of retirement with this section. No longer should she be criticized for her past actions as she has completely left them behind her. Adisa also, in this quote, moves a reader's understanding of prostitution. It is not the business of unknown clients, but a relationship that stresses companionship and can

produce friends. While this friendship may not be typical in prostitution relationships, there is an amount of emotional labor in sex work.⁷ Elizabeth Bernstein, in “The Political Economy of Sexual Labor,” discusses the idea of “emotional labor” being applied to sex work. Emotional labor is labor that calls upon the use of emotions, such as a flight attendant’s cheerfulness, a waitress’s concern about the appeal of one’s food, or a sex worker’s ability to listen to domestic or career problems. Bernstein argues that these “are commercialized refinements of services that women have historically provided for free” (317). On one hand, feminist readers can argue that emotional labor is one problem with capitalism: women are hired and paid to do the work they traditionally offered for free and are, therefore, paid less. On the other hand, we can read the idea of pay for what is traditionally unrecognized labor in the home as an argument for recognizing such labor and providing compensation for “free” labor through social programs. By linking Samuel Lawrence as a friend of Monica’s, Adisa stresses this emotional labor, in addition to the sexual labor, that Monica provided. Monica’s retirement from prostitution, along with Adisa’s stress of the emotional aspects, make Monica’s experiences as a sex worker no longer the main sexual focus of the novel.

⁷ Researchers in a multitude of fields have researched emotional labor in gendered occupations as well as new expectations of women providing emotional labor in traditional male occupations, such as the case with female lawyers. For additional information on the emotional labor in sex work, see Tania Levey’s *The Emotional Labor of the Professional Dominatrix*, Susan Dewey’s *Neon Wasteland: On Love, Motherhood, and Sex Work in a Rust Belt Town*, and *The State of Sex: Tourism, Sex, and Sin in the New American Heartland* by Barbara G. Brents, Crystal A. Jackson, and Kathryn M. Hausbeck.

Monica and Desmond's adulterous affair becomes the novel's, and thus the reader's, main conflict. Adisa paints Monica's choosing of Desmond as positive in that they follow love. Further, Adisa addresses the community's rumors of Monica sleeping with other men: "Although she had been back not three months yet, Monica had been pursued relentlessly. She was abrupt and short with several men, but sweet to Trevor, declining his offer while keeping his friendship. Ainsworth was turning her on to the magic of printed words" (79). Monica, while having sexual relations with a married man, has been committed to Desmond. His two friends, who he worried Monica had slept with, remain only friends to her. Monica has chosen to be in a committed relationship with the person she loves. She confirms this commitment as she tells Desmond to "'Gwane home now. Me nah go mek none eat you sugar'" (79). Monica's insists that her "sugar" or sexuality belongs now to Desmond, and she is committed to let no one consume it but him. Adisa's contradictory messages about commitment, since Desmond is married to another woman, can be explained with Illouz's understanding of romantic love. She states:

When women's sexuality is closely regulated and limited to marriage...romantic love takes the form of an all-encompassing narrative engulfing the self, expressing an absolute emotion and total commitment. Because sexual love was to be entrusted to one person only, such a conception of love emphasized the irreplaceable uniqueness of the love object. When, after the 1960s, women's sexuality became more a matter of individual desire and choice, romantic love took the form of a narrative of self-exploration; the link between sex, love, and marriage was weakened. (Illouz 194)

Illouz clarifies how sexuality and sexual relationships have changed over time and space. Self-exploration to find the correct desire and choice for an individual became the

primary concern, regardless of the institution of marriage. Instead of She-Devil's clear placement of sex in the realm of marital life, Monica and Desmond's relationship indicates that a healthy sexual relationship takes place outside of it as well. Healthy sex is in a relationship of committed love.

As readers begin to empathize with Monica's current situation, Adisa details her gruesome sexual assault, villainizing Grace and shifting the reader's disdain. Without the prior errantry working readers away from Monica's condemnation through the historically religious, literary, and societal realms, this shift would not be possible. However, since readers forego the prior institutions' criticism of her past actions, readers can now sympathize with Monica. The section's heading, "Cold feet bring grief," further places some of the blame on Desmond. Had he broken off his marriage beforehand, or if he had been present at Monica's instead of out drinking because of his fear of requesting a divorce, Monica would not have been alone to be assaulted. Regardless of holding Desmond partially responsible, the villainy of the assault is firmly placed on the three attackers.

Adisa's stylistic writing brings readers closer to the attack, resulting in nearly diminishing the sexual Othering of Monica. Adisa represents the attack in twenty sentences over two paragraphs (131). Readers find the brevity of the tale stark. Complex and compound sentences specify the actual attack, leading readers to experience the length of the actions. However, Monica's statements, such as "They were angry," and "They hated her" (Adisa 131), are short direct statements of realization. Similarly, Monica's statement that "She needed sound" gives the reader an example of survivalist

thinking (Adisa 131). Monica reaches for any familiar sense to combat the experiences of her assault. Such a stylistic technique focuses the reader's emotional state consistently on Monica's fear, astonishment, and pain.

Adisa does not end the narration of Monica's assault without communal warnings. The next section's heading, "Run, but time waiting round de bend," recounts the community's rallying around Monica and allows readers to champion her future healing and standing in the community. The heading warns that people must hurry to save their loved ones from danger. The community cannot take too much time now because Time's damaging element, as warned in Velma's oral storytelling, is nearing. During the episode, six prominent women in the village come to aid Monica's recovery, Desmond shares the hot peppers to help Monica's healing, and the three women who attacked Monica are shunned. The importance of the community's help in recovery is emphasized by an insertion of She-Devil's current engagements. In the middle of the section, Adisa pauses the narration with a few blank lines and a bolded diamond. She then details She-Devil's focus on her son's wedding and her activities to get ready (Adisa 155-156). Regardless of Monica's condition, pain, or need for care, She-Devil does not provide assistance from the eternal valley. Her life's happenings consume her mind and actions. Healing will not come from religion, when religion has blamed the victim. Another bolded diamond switches readers back to the community's aid.

Adisa ends the section with two warnings to women, both designed to minimize Monica's actions and enhance Grace's villainy. The first addresses Grace's character, after her actions make her mentally unstable:

Wickedness had taken hands and feet. It was no longer a curse said in anger or a silent wish whispered then quickly retracted, or a plan for revenge that diminished as time passed. Wickedness was a woman, could be any woman wronged or believing she was wronged, any woman who separated herself from her clan, any woman who forgot that she wasn't invincible, any woman who didn't know that if you spit in the sky it was bound to fall on you. (Adisa 160)

Grace becomes wickedness because she allows anger and hurt to manifest themselves in her. She is truly wronged by Monica and Desmond's affair, but she did not look to the community for empathy and support. She instead acted violently, believing she would not be harmed by her violence. Adisa warns that if one does not allow anger to cool or plans for revenge to diminish, through communal communication if necessary, then one's hurt will transform into wickedness. Monica's attack is blamed on Grace as is her mental breakdown. Through the phrase "or believing she was wronged," Adisa leaves open the possible reading that Monica did not wrong Grace in any way. Therefore, the fault is completely Grace's and readers feel no compulsion to read her amiably.

Adisa's second warning furthers readers to consider Monica as the affable character, who merely needs maturity, ensuring the reader's fondness of Monica. The older women in the village "hoped that the young, hot ones, with new ideas and romantic notions, with possessive ways and individual agendas, would see Grace and learn forgiveness. They also prayed that the young women would mark Monica's flamboyant actions and learn discretion" (Adisa 161). Grace needs to forgive and realize that Desmond was not hers. With such realizations she would not have turned to her individual agenda of revenge, which is the true abomination. Monica, conversely, needs only to mature and learn discretion in love. Adisa firmly places all blame on Grace and

her inability to forgive. The novel does not say that Monica's affair was wrong or should not have occurred, but simply that she should have been more discreet. It does not condemn the affair because of the amount of love between Desmond and Monica.

Therefore, love cannot be to blame.

The last two sections that deal with Monica's sexuality, titled "Not every cutlass can bill grass" and "River mumma calling," removes all Othering from Monica as she is placed in a prominent standing in the community, complete with love and family. With Grace at a mental hospital and then removed from the village entirely to be cared for by her mother, Monica and Desmond become the reader's desired couple in love. Monica becomes the mother of Desmond's children, including his pregnant fifteen-year-old, Althea, who has never been educated about sex or how pregnancy occurs (Adisa 201-06). The section's title, "Not every cutlass can bill grass," focuses on the metanarrative part of this revelation, saying that not every individual can defuse the negative attitudes towards them. Due to Adisa's generic errantry, however, Monica can. In the section, Monica finally affirms her past sexual experiences as a prostitute to Althea with the desire for open honesty: "Monica sat forward, her voice defensive. 'Is true wa de rumour seh. Me was a whore. Plenty man pay fi sleep wid me. Me neva thief or cheat any out a dem money; dem come to me fah a service and me perform well'" (203). Monica highlights her honesty, not only in telling about her past to her new daughter, but also in her actions as a prostitute. Her story's importance lies in the character she had in never cheating or stealing. Readers, after this amount of time spent in the novel, do not much care about Monica's revelation to Althea, and the text focuses on her honesty. The anxiety about

pollution contaminating purity that Fischer initially described has been removed. Monica is entrusted with a child in need of guidance with no concerns about “polluting” her.

Adisa combines Monica’s honesty with her participation in a communal ritual cleansing to complete her healing and remove all traces of Othering. This section also combines myths and prose to indicate a spiritual communal healing. “River-mumma calling” describes the ritual cleansing practice of the village as all the prominent women participate in the telling of their sorrows, including Monica’s naming of her attackers, Althea gaining council about her pregnancy, and Beryl relating the rape that kept her silent for twenty years (Adisa 212-28). This is a time for narration, where each woman can tell her story in her own words and be accepted by her community. This is meant to be a time of support and sisterhood. Adisa leaves Monica’s narration with the idea that the ritual cleansing along with the ability to divulge her experience completes the healing for Monica (and others). Kamau Brathwaite, in *Roots*, describes this belief in *nommo*, name in the African tradition, where words hold a mysterious power. Thus, by Monica narrating her assault and naming her attackers, the power of nommo heals her. Feng expands, stating that Adisa uses “spirituality in general and rituals in particular as the ways in which these traumas can be described and *de-scribed*” (152, italics in original). Through the ritual cleansing and naming, Monica retells her assault to a society that shares her beliefs, believes her narrative, and accepts her and her sexual past.

As Adisa switches the reader’s disapproval from Monica to Grace, River Mumma not only cleanses Monica but also “punishes” Monica’s attackers after she names them in front of River Mumma. River Mumma, in multiple Caribbean tales, is simultaneously the

river woman who cares for other women, a siren calling people to nature, and an avenger against those who take what is not theirs.⁸ This aspect of retaliation is stated twice by Miss Cotton: ““When one oman do wickedness against anoda oman, den she do it against all oman dem”” (Adisa 213). Miss Cotton reveals the sisterhood that is meant to connect all women. More than Grace not gaining support or empathy from the community, she did not turn to her sisterhood for support. She instead chose “wickedness” against her sisters, hurting them all. As the women call on Monica to name her attackers, Miss Cotton adds, “Dem must face dem punishment” (217). Grace’s punishment is already read as her mental break caused by her role in the attack. And, although none of the women harm the other two attackers, they are punished by River Mumma as one falls and dies in childbirth and the other woman is hospitalized with advanced uterine cancer (233, 235). For justice, Adisa turns to River Mumma and Caribbean mythology instead of the police force or religion, as they are two institutions that have traditionally failed women after receiving reports of sexual assault. Instead, for recompense, Adisa seeks faith in female community with a touch of spirituality. The use of mythology in the main prose sections complicates the women’s belief in River Mumma’s vengeance. No longer is mythology set apart to make the unknown familiar. Instead, Adisa utilizes River Mumma as a part of a belief structure, combining Yoruba deities with Jamaican folklore, where the women call upon her to witness their sufferings and provide justice. At the end of the

⁸For the multiple aspects of River Mumma, see Lucie Pradel’s *African Beliefs in The New World: Popular Literary Traditions of the Caribbean*, along with stories and poetry by authors, such as Nalo Hopkinson, Lorna Goodison, Shara McCallum, Lorna A. Fraser, and Tanya Batson-Savage.

prose section, the reader considers Monica's attack as being avenged and Monica as cleared of all errors in her actions.

Five Journeys through Poetry

The spacing and lengths of Adisa's poems re-envision the space given to women on sexual topics, which usually results in silence. Adisa splits *It Begins with Tears* into five parts, each beginning with a roman numeral, an italicized title, and a poem. The consistent appearance of poetry makes them expected to the reader and acts as an introduction to the individual parts. The italicized title acts as the part's title and the poem's title. All five poems are short; one is only four lines. Adisa, however, gives each poem an entire page of print. This results in them being surrounded by blank space, evocative of women's silence and the need to both have and disrupt that silence. Foucault states "Silence itself...is less the absolute limit of discourse...than an element that functions alongside the things said, with them and in relation to them within over-all strategies" (27). Adisa, through the mostly blank page, uses silence, not as the opposite of speech, but as a mean of relating more complex aspects of her over-all text. She does not arrange the poems in the middle of the page, but instead has them placed towards the top of the page. Again, this results in a large blank space being primarily underneath the poems, which gives the reader time after reading for reflection to consider the connections between the narration and the poetry. The poems highlight a larger topic of women being able to make their own sexual decision without condemnation and living with their sexual decisions within a community.

The poetry acts as a guide to the reader about how to consider sexual decisions as well as living in female communities. The poems' speaker(s) take on the role of a wise sage, dispersing advice to the reader. These poems help address, as Weir-Soley states, "the challenges that modernity represents to a way of life that is steeped in the traditional values of communalism and interdependence" (142). The poems strive to guide the reader into considering a balance of traditional values along with modernity's views of womanhood and sexuality. The poems, specifically, do not address, or mention, the novel's characters but provide counseling addressed directly to the reader. The topics relate to the narration and the sexuality Adisa examines throughout the novel by focuses on advice to live through and with one's past. Adisa addresses the topic of Othering as she includes advice on responsible living within a community. Unlike her other errantries into and through the multiple genres, in her poetry Adisa consistently argues against the sexual Othering of Monica.

The first poem, "How it began," stresses combining modern views of individualism with the weaving together of a community. The poem uses sewing as a controlling metaphor, indicative immediately of traditional women's work, to state how "several strands of thread" are "woven" together into a purposeful design, yet they all "remain distinguishable / separate / from the others" (Adisa 9). "How it began" references the creative work of women along with the communities they build together. These communities, Adisa finds, are by design. Women create communities and become stronger together, yet they always continue to be individuals from other people in the community. This individualism is one of the strengthening aspects, similar to threads

woven together. When the reader encounters this poem after the cast of characters and the initial mythology section, it combats the sexual Othering of Monica as not belonging in Kristoff's community, for all threads belong in the designed pattern.

While community strength is stressed in "How it began," individual respectfulness towards that community becomes the focus of "Then it happened." Adisa addresses the reader as "you," who must "walk sideways" to remain mindful of the past (49). Myriam J. A. Chancy, during a reading of her new novel *Douze*, reflecting on the Haitian earthquake, remarks that lateral movements are the only way to deal with life. Laterally, one does not forget the past, nor lose sight of the future, and it positively allows for a distinct view of the present. Like Chancy's remark, Adisa's poem continues to address the present as she warns one to not speak pointedly, or while "holding salt in your mouth," and to "never never laugh out in the dark..." (49). The belief that one will act according to what one eats is reinforced in the prose section as one of Monica's attackers continuously craves hot peppers. Additionally, laughing out loud at night is a warning against giving one's position away to any nearby duppy, who can then come and lead you to your death. This is to say that one's demise may come from one's outspokenness. Adisa stresses the importance of being respectful to the community through not speaking too loudly. As part II includes Desmond's and Monica's declarations of love, this warning coincides to the women's later warnings about discretion.

Part III's poem, "Vengeance like a storm," guides the reader to consider their actions after they have not been discreet. The poem's speaker advises to "never look

someone / in the eye / after you've laughed / at them" (Adisa 91). By Adisa's direct address to the reader, she has positioned them as already foregoing the prior poem's warning about discretion. This address locates the reader in the same situation as Monica, blurring the self/Other dichotomy before Monica's sexual assault occurs but after the affirmations of love that endears Monica's character to readers. To ward off the upcoming vengeance, future actions must revolve around being thankful, polite, and respectful, always remembering the karmic relationships in Caribbean mythology. The poem's ending to "remember / you'll never know / when you might need / to collect" refers back to River Mumma as she not only dispenses vengeance but also physical healing (91), depending on the needs of women.

After "Vengeance like a storm" pulls the reader into a shared position with Monica, the fourth poem, "Remembering to remember," further pulls the reader into a community. While discussing the cyclic nature of the world and the need to accept "clouds bubbl[ing]" and "the sky open[ing]" so that "the earth drinks," the poem's speaker connects the reader to themselves: "you and i too / chase the wind" (Adisa 141). The reader, in the line "you and i too," becomes a part of the community, tied to the speaker as an equal in actions that mirror nature. The lower-case "i" that Adisa uses minimizes the identifying pronoun of the speaker, making the community consist evenly of anyone and everyone who strives for what is elusive to them, including their past as the title alludes. This poem is placed before the passages that describe Monica's rise to prominence in the community, and the warnings to women about wickedness and discretion, but also right before She-Devil turns Monica away as it is not time for her

death. While Monica may seek death, it remains elusive. Similarly, the elder women may desire discretion and forgiveness for the younger women, but those may also remain elusive.

The final poem, “Walk if you have feet,” returns to the message of individualism as it advocates personal responsibility for one’s actions and for one’s survival. Instead of individualism being a negative of modernity, this poem removes the dichotomy and rigidity of such statements. This poem comes right before the River Mumma episode of healing for multiple characters. However, to receive this healing, the individual character must come to River Mumma of her own choosing. The survival that one is responsible for implies some strife or storm occurring in the reader’s life, as stated in the poem “every story start in a pan / that has a hole / from which some peas spill” (Adisa 187). Not life, but story—every story—begins with some kind of strife or tears. This statement brings all readers, and all survivors, together, removing any Othering that may have remained in the reader’s mind. Only through the “hole” or damage is the story able to be told, allowing the “peas,” as seeds for growth, to “spill.” This is the process of healing through storytelling. However, the speaker accentuates that “but still / jackass can’t walk / on two feet” (187). The mule, as the beast of burden working for someone else, does not have value of self to perform their own tasks and carry their own weights on two feet. The speaker again focuses on the reader as they instruct the reader to “walk if you have feet” as a means of stating that the reader is responsible for carrying their own pans as they move through life.

The five poems, taken holistically, give the reader their own sense of an errant journey. The poems confront the differences between the reader and the character of Monica. Experiencing this difference, the reader is able to slowly see Monica as a character not wholly tied to her sexuality, but to the community. In this errantry, the poems help the reader in moving from familiar positions, of recognizing the values of non-essentializing communities and hearing warnings about indiscretion, to unfamiliar spaces, of being complicit in moments of indiscretion, of being folded into a healing community where each person seeks something elusive, and of acknowledging that every story has pain that must be accounted for and is alleviated through personally carrying the pain for growth.

Adisa's generic errantry takes a route through drama, mythology, oral storytelling, dream vision, prose, and poetry. Her route does not take a linear path, but complexly weaves through these genres twenty-nine times. The result of her generic errantry is to lead the reader through an Othering process focused on a woman's sexuality. Adisa, through generic errantry, combats the stigmas surrounding prostitution, adultery, and sexual assault, highlighting the silences that historically patriarchal powers enact through religious, literary, and social institutions. Meaningfully, Adisa does not change these institutions, but allow for the reader to reply to these patriarchal messages themselves. This often results in readers' turning away from the institutions and embracing the views of a female community. This community challenges the Othering that patriarchal institutes initiate, instead viewing sex as a behavior and not an

irretractable aspect of identity. This diminishes the Othering that the reader previously experienced towards the sexualized character, Monica.

As Adisa's errantry continues, in hearing Monica's story, the reader becomes responsive towards her particular experiences, foregoing a universal condemnation of sex workers, adulterers, and/or sexual assault survivors. Adisa forms the personal telling of the story, along with a sage poet, as the height of healing through community. The community allows and encourages Monica to speak, after a time of chosen silence. Foucault argues that "there is no binary division to be made between what one says and what one does not say" (27). The telling of sexual experiences does not come in binaries. Instead, the binaries, if they do exist, remain in the question of who speaks. Foucault urges scholars to

try to determine the different ways of not saying [sexual experiences], how those who can and those who cannot speak of them are distributed, which type of discourse is authorized, or which form of discretion is required in either case. There is not one but many silences, and they are an integral part of the strategies that underlie and permeate discourses. (27)

Silences, like those utilized by Monica about her past sex work and sexual assault as well as in Adisa's poetry, become an important part of Adisa's narration about sexuality.

Adisa's generic errantry further addresses sexuality as a changing behavior or act that one partakes in, instead of as a controlling identity. Generic errantry moves the reader to consider the Caribbean as a non-dualistic society where differences are not discussed as either/or dichotomies, but both/and options. Monica is not either an honest woman or a sex worker. She is not either the victim of sexual assault or to blame for her

sexual assault. Adisa's errantry creates a path through various genres to state and challenge dualistic society's binary thinking on sexuality. Monica is both a sexual person and a prominent member of the community. She is both a retired sex worker and an honest woman. She and Desmond were both adulterous and in love. The reader experiences an alternative to the purity/pollution binary of sexuality; and, through a diminishment of Othering, the reader gains a Relational understanding of sexuality. Sexuality in *It Begins with Tears* is discussed in terms of behavior and not an identity, which diminishes the sexual Othering of these actions. This view of sexuality allows for change and fluidity in characters and in their actions.

The combinations I find in *It Begins with Tears* of sexual Othering, healing communities, sexual silences, and a turn towards non-dualistic communities coalesce Mae Gwendolyn Henderson's "Speaking with Tongues: Dialogics, Dialectics, and the Black Woman Writer's Literary Tradition." Speaking about difference, she states

one discovers in these writings a kind of internal dialogue reflecting an *intr subjective* engagement with the *intersubjective* aspects of self, a dialectic neither repressing difference nor, for that matter, privileging identity, but rather expressing engagement with the social aspects of self ("the other(s) in ourselves"). It is this subjective plurality (rather than the notion of cohesive or fractured subject) that, finally, allows the black woman to become an expressive site for a dialectics/dialogics of identity and difference. (Henderson 134, italics in original)

Henderson stresses seeing identities as plural and recognizing the other in the self. Only through this journey of self-reflection, that moves Othering actions away from the actions of "repressing difference," can we form a space for discussions about the interactions of, with, and between differences. Adisa offers this productive space where a female

character's pluralistic identity becomes formed through her use of generic errantry, leading the reader to reject a reading based on identifying sexual differences and more on communal acceptance of individuals.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION: AN ERRANTRY FOR ANOTHER PATH TO IDENTITY RELATIONS

Édouard Glissant's theory of errantry, in *Poetics of Relation*, allows literary scholars a methodology for tracing character's micro-movements and authorial movements in an analysis of identity constructions. Glissant argues, "Identity is no longer just permanence; it is a capacity for variation, yes, a variable—either under control or wildly fluctuating" (141). Identity variation, either controlled or fluctuating, results through many actions, but often this is the result of interactions with Others. Using Glissant's concept of errantry, I argue that not only is holistic identity construction neither static nor individual, but that singular aspects of identity evolve as well. Along the lines of K. Anthony Appiah's *The Ethics of Identity*, one's identity comprises of the root identity taught through the familiar and the Relations with Others that develop as difference becomes emphasized in unfamiliar spaces. Whether the aspect of identity where Othering occurs is found in racial, class, gendered, or sexual differences, errantry into the Other's space can diminish Othering, even if a character does not set out with this motivation. Errantry's role provides the multiple influences, roots and Relations, of the identity-constructing, and identity-evolving elements to move into a positive relational identity for each individual.

Each chapter of my dissertation analyzes moments of errantry in everyday movements, whether demonstrated in the characters or through the author's genres, and the resulting Relations. In Nalo Hopkinson's *Midnight Robber*, Tan-Tan wanders through unfamiliar terrain, relying on her Other and their wisdoms, as she internally wanders through multiple practices of Othering. The differences she encounters between herself and Others does not evaporate but becomes, instead, a celebrated portion of her friendship. V.S. Naipaul's novel, *A House for Mr. Biswas*, similarly does not eliminate Othering between classes, but Mr. Biswas's errantry leads to a relational identity where his class identity comprises both his rooted past as laborer and a new understanding of the upper-class, as he comes closer to them. Even though seen as the most fluid identity aspect I analyze, the Othering transpiring between classes, at least in Naipaul's novel, is the aspect which most resists a relational identity where the Other becomes celebrated. At the end of the novel, Mr. Biswas achieves stasis and his Othering diminishes, but one still glimpses movements in which he strives for greater wealth. The ending of Earl Lovelace's *The Dragon Can't Dance*, conversely, clearly shows Aldrick's relational identity. Unlike Tan-Tan's racial identity, which does not change, and Mr. Biswas's class identity, which changes slightly, Aldrick's masculinity profoundly moves through three different constructions as his errantry relocates him in various environments with diverse influences. However, even when these influences lead to a less-positive masculinity that encourages violence, his Relations with Others improve. Aldrick's relational identity, more than any of the others, reveal errantry's role and the possibility of the "third space" hybridity Homi Bhabha asserts. Aldrick's relational identity, constructed through errantry

and his plural masculinities, diminish his gendered Othering while allotting necessary space for differences. Tellingly, this novel has the only ending in which errantry continues into the unseen future. Errantry's literary paradigm, as illustrated in Lovelace's novel, leads me to examine additional forms of errantry. My analysis of Opal Palmer Adisa's *It Begins with Tears* centers around her wanderings through six generic traditions. Adisa wanders back and forth, returning to three main genres—prose, mythology, and poetry—twenty-nine times. This generic errantry, which I read as motivated by challenging traditional patriarchal responses to female sexuality, first sets up and then diminishes the reader's sexual Othering towards Monica. The genres confirm the power of labeling and language, as well as the power of silence. Her use of mythology provides an altered view of Christian religion and removes the importance of religion's response to sexual topics by accentuating communal spirituality. Using familiar tropes, like love, to accentuate the importance of communal acceptance of aberrant actions, like adultery, slowly moves readers to reconsider their sexual preconceptions and Othering practices. In these four chapters, I examined and emphasized the change in literary characters and readers, but I can perceive such errantry transpiring and benefitting individuals as a cultural theory.

While I believe Glissant intended his theory of errantry as a literary theory, he also later expanded the concept into abstract lives and extended belief systems. In this vein, my conclusion will posit the theoretical use of errantry in visual texts. My next project will proceed from literary text to visual text and analyzing performance art as texts. This is congruent with recent research on Glissant and errantry. A current art

exhibit, titled *Lydia Cabrera and Édouard Glissant: Trembling Thinking* curated by Hans Ulrich Obrist, Gabriela Rangel, and Asas Raza, took place at the Americas Society in New York City during the winter of 2018. It considers the prominent ideas of Cabrera and Glissant, including errantry, rooted identities, and relational identities, as contemporary artists display works influenced by their ideas of identity. Alongside the exhibit is a video, “Édouard Glissant: One World in Relation,” and a catalogue essay by the curators. With the turn of errantry into visual arts, I locate a prior art exhibit, *En Mas’: Carnival and Performance Art of the Caribbean* held during the summer of 2017 at the DuSable Art Museum in Chicago, IL, to be a prime site for investigating moments of errantry.¹ The exhibit provided physical artifacts and still pictures or videos of festival demonstrations. Many of these displays underscored errantry along with issues of class, gender, and power relations, particularly “Inside-Out, Outside-In” by John Beadle, “Invisible Presence: Bling Memories” by Ebony G. Patterson, and “Positions + Power” by Marlon Griffith. However, as these festival processions follow a distinct route already predetermined, I analyze social errantry in the resistance and political messages embodied in the performances, instead of those in the physicality of micro-movements. A message’s errantry is distinguished as they move away from the social discursive norms, established by groups in power. This type of errantry brings individuals closer to their Other, as their Other becomes the political message’s intended audience. However, analysis of these visual texts suggests that Othering diminishes only as social errantry is

¹ My sincere gratitude to the English Department of the University of North Carolina at Greensboro for funding this travel through their Summer Dissertation Research Assistantship grant.

balanced with social decorum. People must remember Glissant's second stage where the other and the voyage become highlighted.

I begin my analysis with the costuming from "Inside-Out, Outside-In" by John Beadle which displays costuming he made for a festival on May 7-9, 2015 in Nassau, Bahamas. Beadle's work interrogates the distinctions between spaces, specifically between self and other, public and private, and participant and spectator. His cardboard costumes consist of body pieces, shields, arm wraps, and elevated headdresses. They have intricate decorative patterns removed from each piece. The cut-outs remind viewers of fences separating two distinct spaces, while also allowing some interaction between the two spaces to exist. Similar to Appiah's confluence of identity, which necessitates individual and social as well as rooted and relational aspects of identity, Beadle's costuming provides space for both self and other to influence identity formation.

While a powerful statement about space, Beadle's social errantry takes place in the statements about class. The medium of dress being natural cardboard reinforces the classed elements of traditional carnival participation, encouraging anyone to join in political discourse through masquerade. Through diligence and work, all costumes are accepted, and all participants are welcome. Surprisingly, however, the costumes include no masks, making the statement that all moments of social errantry in masquerade include one's personhood, shown through their face. One's face, as one's personhood in costuming, is integral to the process of political discourse. While Beadle's exhibit was viewed at DeSable's museum, it is important to note that he places them in a glassed cube to make the explicit statement that such a viewing distances an audience and becomes an

inadequate space to truly experience the political statements and social errantry occurring in festivals.

“Invisible Presence: Bling Memories” by Ebony G. Patterson took place in Kingston, Jamaica on April 27, 2014 during Jamaica’s Carnival. This exhibit, through the carrying of 80 elaborately decorated coffins, questions the access of festival based on class hierarchies. Patterson reinserts political protest into the Carnival and Jankonnu spaces, which now exclude and silence lower class citizens. The Carnival parade provides a space of political visibility where one was previously denied. Social errantry occurs as the participants decorated the coffins in the style of “bling funerals,” typical of upper-class citizens. Each participant carries their own decorated coffin, which is mounted vertically to a large pole. The link to funerals additionally commemorates people killed during police and governmental raids on urban, often poor, communities. The coffins range up to six feet high and become the focus of viewers, along with a statement about the burdens of carrying community deaths.

Five of the coffins were supposed to be included in the *En Mas*’ collection; however, they were missing. My future analysis of this installation ties together expectations of festival—Carnival and the morning ritual of Junkanoo specifically—as a space for political resistance and class, as well as questions the missing exhibited coffins. *En Mas*’ as a traveling exhibit moves and relies on multiple bodies to carry out such movement. The errantry of the exhibit pieces further explores issues of class as well as international movement. One questions what it means for the impact of Patterson’s performance art piece when sections become lost, effectively silenced to an international

audience. The performance piece, as an original, loses no influence as the intended audience viewed it at its fullest showing; however, losing the ability to reproduce such a piece for a larger viewing audience does, to a degree, affect the powerful political statement Patterson makes originally.

The third installation, “Positions + Power” by Marlon Griffith, moves from protesting class to protesting for gendered rights in an age of public surveillance, especially during mas. This performance piece took place on March 4, 2014 in Port of Spain, Trinidad. Griffith designed costuming for an “Overseer” and “Doberman” hovering above spectators. The two characters are attached to a metal ladder which is pulled on wheels by other participants. The hovering bodies are reminiscent of the police towers that loom over strategic spaces in Carnival. A long black skirt and halter top cover the overseer’s body while a hood completely covers the head. Two large glowing eyes search the crowd below. The exhibit raises questions of the oversight and safety of gendered bodies during a festival, specifically the feminine body. Errantry of movement occurs through the procession as the overseer moves high about the others; the route becomes wandering as the overseer does not control its own body. The gender of the overseer is withheld; however, aspects of femininity are more present during the performance than when in exhibit at DuSable. Social errantry transpires as the spectators’ attentions become focused on the body of the overseer. It is simultaneously on display as well as surveilling the community. This fluctuation of control, at once a supervisor of actions but also an examined feminine body, demonstrates the social errantry being critiqued.

The large alien-esque illuminated eyes of the overseer searches through crowds as it scans for any misdeeds to report. The exhibit questions the conclusion that when empowered people deem an individual to be in violation of some code of conduct, then the individual is simultaneously deemed to be errant—moving erroneously according to society. Too often female bodies are harassed because of their movements, yet the female's behaviors are those that society labels as errant. The exhibit further provides social errantry as the figures surrounding the overseer are masculine bodies dressed in similar feminine attire, specifically not transgendered women. This addition increases the errantry of the group in terms of moving against social gendered norms, but also creates a solidarity between men who support freedom for feminine bodies during festivals.

As social protest occurs more often, I turn towards social errantry where bodies, costuming, and movements become important texts to consider. However, such a turn also presents certain problems. Glissant states that errantry and a relational identity become the final stage on one's identity “quest for totality” (18). As this quest begins with a motivated search for the Other, I contemplate again how likely this is to occur in today's political upheaval. Perhaps the motivations that bring us into contact with the Other becomes irrelevant as long as we move through Glissant's three stages of:

- the thinking of territory and self (ontological, dual)
- the thinking of voyage and other (mechanical, multiple)
- the thinking of errantry and totality (relational, dialectical).

We will agree that this thinking of errantry, this errant thought, silently emerges from the deconstructing of compact national entities that yesterday were still triumphant and, at the same time, from difficult, uncertain births of new forms of identity that call to us. (18, format in original)

Glissant's call for a desire to search out difference remains uncertain to me as we are now confronted with international political difference daily. However, his emphasis on the need to engage with those of difference, working towards diminishing Othering acts and beliefs, will lead to relational identities on a social level. The social protests that occur through festival processions in the Caribbean, as well as the Relations related in Caribbean literature, demonstrate a method through errantry of productive engagement through cultures' chaotic networks. Hopefully, Glissant's new form of identity still calls to us and, though difficult and uncertain, can become the triumphant form for the future.

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