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OPAL PALMER ADISA, Jamaican born, is a literary critic, poet, prose writer and storyteller. A recently published work is *It Begins with Tears* (Heinemann, 1997). *Tamarind and Mango Women* (1992) won the PEN Oakland/ Josephine Miles Award. Her essays, articles, reviews and poems have been published in numerous journals. She has a Ph.D. in Ethnic Studies Literature, has taught at San Francisco State University and the University of California, Berkeley. Presently she is Associate Professor and Chair of Ethnic Studies Program at California College of Arts and Crafts. She lives in Oakland California where she is raising her three JA-Merican children.

Gendering the Oceanic Voyage *Trespassing the (Black) Atlantic and Caribbean*^{*}

Elizabeth DeLoughrey

*What you chart is already where you've been. But where we are going,
there is no chart yet. We are brave and daring and we are looking
ahead. Our Black women's vision has no horizon.*

Audre Lorde¹

Recent critical theory has focused on how the oceanic trajectories of the Atlantic Rim posit an opportunity to break down the homogenizing discourses of the nation-state and question the "unthinking assumption that cultures always flow into patterns congruent with the borders" of nations (Gilroy 1993: 5). In *The Black Atlantic*, Paul Gilroy calls for a recognition of the demographic legacies of the African diaspora as facilitating a continual "process of movement and mediation" throughout the Atlantic Rim which transcends national boundaries and ethnic absolutisms (19). While C.L.R. James was the first to suggest black transatlanticism and industrial/cultural modernity as originating in the sugar plantation systems of the Caribbean, Gilroy and others have adapted James' early work as a way to challenge the framework of national and ethnic identities.² Considering the fact that black Atlanticism first appeared in

^{*} My thanks to Sangeeta Ray and Merle Collins for their feedback on earlier drafts of this article. I also wish to thank Carol Boyce Davies for her helpful suggestions regarding final revisions for *Thamyris*.

¹ Lorde in Grewal, 130-31.

² See James' essays "Black Studies and the Contemporary Student" (1969) and "From

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the work of one of the most influential intellectuals of the Caribbean, it is surprising to note that *The Black Atlantic* eclipses “periphery” migrations from this region in its emphasis on the metropolises of the United States and England. Historicizing diasporan practices of the Anglophone Caribbean and examining the way in which black women “chart this journey” are objectives of this essay.

While diasporan frameworks are crucial for their dismantling of (often colonial and pedagogical³) nationalisms, the focus on the movements of ships and peoples across the Atlantic can be prematurely celebratory without adequately considering how gender and class inform and define transoceanic travel. One has to question to what extent Gilroy’s masculinist black Atlantic obscures the impact experienced by women who are left behind, thereby uncritically validating male transience. In this essay, I investigate how Anglophone Afro-Caribbean writers inscribe transatlantic migration and question the ways in which Gilroy’s diasporan theory is complicated by the novels of George Lamming, Caryl Phillips, Mervyn Hodge, Jamaica Kincaid and Joan Riley. While Gilroy’s work has some relevance for men’s production of literary transnational migrations, the women writers I examine consistently depict the watery trajectories between the Caribbean and the English metropole as a repetition of the familial, social and cultural rupture consistent with the (re)experience of the middle passage. This contradicts Gilroy’s promotion of the “playful diasporic intimacy that has been a marked feature of transatlantic black Atlantic creativity” (1993: 16). The narrations of transatlantic rupture offer a complex and alternative vision of the black Atlantic which interrogates the benefits of aquatic travel, particularly for women. By focusing on the contemporary literature of the Anglophone Caribbean, this paper will argue for a more materially based analysis of migration and diaspora studies that is cognizant of how assumed masculinist theories of migration can obscure the way in which Afro-Caribbean women (re)inscribe the transoceanic voyage. Masculinist diasporan production has created a notable silence towards what M. Nourbese Philip calls “displace” of black women which I address here by highlighting the “polyvocality” of diasporan narratives (Philip 312).

White James Clifford argues that “when diasporic experience is

viewed in terms of displacement rather than placement, traveling rather than dwelling, and disarticulation rather than rearticulation, then the experiences of men will tend to dominate” (258-59), the women writers I examine complicate the experience of “dwelling” in the Caribbean, showing it to be inextricably entangled with the “traveling” diasporic subject. If we can assume that “Caribbean identities...are products of numerous processes of migration” (Davies 13), then women writers of the region may gesture towards a complex entanglement between national and diasporic subject locations.

An examination of how selected Anglophone Caribbean writers inscribe the slippages between national, Caribbean and postcolonial identifications is necessary lest such productions become erased in the reductive paradigm of the black Atlantic. Here I argue alongside James Clifford’s central tenet of *Routes*, that “practices of displacement might emerge as *constitutive* of cultural meanings rather than as their simple transfer or extension” (3). The cultural displacements explored by Anglophone Caribbean writers produce a series of regional and national identifications that are not *a priori* to transoceanic migration. In other words, slavery systems and their colonial histories (the legacies of the past) and contemporary global capitalism all contribute to black Atlantic migrations. This is due to the multiple legacies of the black diaspora and economic systems that continue to fracture the Caribbean’s social, cultural and economic autonomy. This is *not* to prioritize a discourse of displacement over Gilroy’s “essential connectedness” (1993: 102), but to broaden the parameters of reading the black Atlantic so that the contributions of Anglophone Caribbean writers who inscribe transoceanic migration as facilitating a fractal sense of global “unbelonging” can be used to further complicate current theoretical productions. The Afro-Caribbean women writers I analyze should not be assumed to represent *all* facets of Caribbean migration (especially as Indo-Caribbean writing interrogates other historical trajectories). Still, their contributions do not sit easily alongside the masculinist paradigms of postcolonial and diasporan theory. While Carole Boyce Davies (and others) have queried whether “the concept of ‘nation’ has not been a male formulation” (12), here I would like to ask if black diasporan theory has equally excluded the complex subject positions seen in the literary discourse of Anglophone Caribbean women. Perhaps with its emphasis on transience and defining public spaces, “it is not an accident that it happens to be men who are asserting the right to theory and travel” (Davies 45).

Toussaint L’Ouverture to Fidel Castro” (1962) in Anna Grimshaw (ed.), *The C.L.R. James Reader*.

³“Pedagogical” in Homi Bhabha’s use of the term in his essay “Dissemination. Time, Narrative and the Margins of the Modern Nation” which poses an interesting reading of the “double-time” inscribed by the “minority” writer within the “pedagogical” narration “of national authority in a tradition of the people” (147). He argues that the minority’s “performative”, modern time of the nation is posed against the homogeneity of the “archaic, atavistic temporality of Tradition” (149).

Diaspora and Intellectual Currency

Gilroy reads the “shape of the Atlantic as a system of cultural exchanges” where the “history of the black Atlantic...continually criss-crossed by the movements of black people — not only as commodities but engaged in various struggles towards emancipation, autonomy, and citizenship — provides a means to reexamine the problems of nationality, location, identity and historical memory” (1993: 16).⁴ This theory of the black Atlantic serves as an ideological trope which, rather than prioritizing land-based geographies and politically constructed nation states, focuses on the fluidity of water as a channel for a continuous series of black migrations.⁵ This is an important way to conceptualize the cross-currents of transnationalisms and interethnicities. While Gilroy’s method may be limited in its deployment of what he calls “anti-anti-essentialism” (something Spivak would call strategic essentialism) to break down national discourse,⁶ his theory does provide an interesting way in which to contextualize the process of migration in archipelagic regions such as the Caribbean.⁷

Yet it is no accident that theoretical attempts to reimagine the cartography of a community whose history was disrupted by European colonization and slavery emerge simultaneously alongside scholarship reconfiguring global capitalism, postcolonial studies and the re-configuration of the nation-state. In an era of global capitalism, it is not surprising to see a sudden critical imperative to redefine (in Benedict Anderson’s phrase) a regionalist “imagined community” which is crucial to positing an alternative relationship that is not overdetermined by national or corporate hegemony.⁸ Certainly Gilroy’s reading of the black

⁴ Gilroy’s contribution is based on the (material and human) exchanges between metropolitan centers. His work on the cultural productions produced by black migration between London, New York, and Kingston is almost entirely based on Atlantic capitalism. This becomes extremely problematic when the capitologic trajectories which undergird migratory theoretical paradigms are ignored. This point is well-argued by Neil Lazarus.

⁵ The invasions of imperialism and tourism, brought to the islands by the channels of the sea complicate Gilroy’s positioning of water as a liminal and fluid vessel of cultural exchange. Bodies of water and waterfront are still territories, and are colonized and patrolled by the economic forces of nation-states.

⁶ Gilroy’s notion of a black Atlantic necessarily excludes the position of Indo-Caribbean migrants such as Sam Selvon and the many other diasporic and indigenous peoples who make up the population of the Caribbean.

⁷ To focus on trans-Atlantic intellectuals or musical performers/producers as Gilroy does is a crucial step towards reading black creative production against the grain of nationalistic discourse, but it has an inherent danger of eliding the material causes and consequences of such oceanic migrations. As critics, we must question to what extent the trans-Atlantic journey, and more importantly, its *discursive and literary inscription* can elide the differences between migrants and writers of migration.

⁸ See Miyoshi and Conery for their critiques of scholarly regionalisms which are more reflective of global capitalism than cross-culturalism.

Atlantic is indicative of the dismantling of national identities. This repositioning of the frame of black cultural studies lies in its focus on “diaspora temporality and historicity, memory and narrativity” (1993: 266). Gilroy’s contribution to the field has been profound; within two years of the publication of the book, the Rutgers Center for Historical Analysis established a Black Atlantic Studies Fellowship project and numerous journal issues and conferences have been dedicated to the topic.⁹ I mention this not to question the extent to which the theories of one book have altered the visions of black cultural studies, but to highlight the tremendous currency of new transnational discourses which, while contributing greatly to a field encumbered by national identifications, can also obscure the historical workings of capital as well as the intersections of class and gender.¹⁰ Such paradigms of transoceanic migration are, as I explain below, based on male privilege in the public realm. While the discursive dismantling of the nation has begun, the inherent gender assumptions associated with the masculinist nation are often carried over, unacknowledged, into varying forms of transoceanic regionalisms.

For instance, in its insistence on discarding national paradigms, Gilroy’s diaspora theory has not yet been able to account for the fact that in postcolonial countries, nationalism has anti-imperialist contours which cannot be conflated with the settler colony nationalism generated from the United States or imperial nationalism in England. To assert a black Atlantic which examines only the crossings between the United States and England (and their representative black “settler” populations) not only erases historical, economic and cultural differences, but demographic ones: this conflates so-called “minority” discourse in the U.S. and England with “majority” discourses generated from former European colonies in the Caribbean. Since England and the U.S. are the primary focus of *The Black Atlantic*, I examine Anglophone Caribbean writers who offer a broader slippage between national, Caribbean and postcolonial identifications.¹¹ My discussion shows that cultural dis-

⁹ Such as Yale University conference “Locations, Cultures, Topographies in Diasporan Cultural Criticism” held in April 1996; *Journal of African Literatures’* special Black Atlantic issue in 1996 and frequent articles in *Diaspora*.

¹⁰ This decade’s emergent journals such as *Public Culture*, *Transition*, and *Diaspora* also indicate its critical popularity.

¹¹ When Gilroy asserts that “the archeology of black critical knowledges... involves the construction of canons which seem to be proceeding on an exclusively *national* basis — African-American, Anglophone Caribbean, and so on” (33) he conflates settler colony, imperial and postcolonial nationalisms. I would contend that Gilroy ignores that “African American” canon construction is almost exclusively based on the history and cultural production of blacks in the United States. What is too often ignored is the African-American discourse of black *Canadians*. See Rinaldo Walcott, *Black Like Who? Writing-Black-Canada* for his response to Gilroy and other U.S. and England-based cultural theorists.

placement is a product of the *histories of the postcolonial nation*, not the migratory voyage across the Atlantic Ocean. This derives from the Caribbean migration to metropolitan centers which weakens the production of the "home" nation, and neo-imperial economic systems which continue to fracture the Caribbean's social, cultural and economic autonomy. Anglophone Caribbean writers who inscribe a culturally traumatic transoceanic migration offer an important supplement to premature celebrations of cross-cultural hybridity.

Diaspora and Caribbean Regionalism: Routes and Roots

In its emphasis on transoceanic movement, diaspora theory has particular resonance for Caribbean cultural and literary production because of the complex migration patterns which begin with early Taino, Arawak and Carib settlement of the islands. Caribbean migration originally had more localized migration patterns from the 18th until the early 20th century due to diverse sociopolitical changes and economic initiatives such as the building of the Panama Canal, corporate plantations and oil drilling. Demographically, more Caribbean peoples have left the region in the years since World Wars I and II for a variety of social, economic and political reasons.¹² For the purposes of this essay, I will begin with this century's so-called "first wave" Anglophone Caribbean migration after World War II, when Britain's efforts to rebuild its post-war economy resulted in a call to the Empire for labor.¹³ Among the primarily male migrants to England during this colonial era, a number of authors created a substantial body of literature which questioned the contours of British cultural nationalism and initiated a form of literary Caribbean regionalism. Caribbean migrant women were certainly an important presence in this reformulation of black settlement, but their struggles against metropolitan "barricades" circumscribed their literary production.¹⁴ Anglophone Caribbean men of this generation produced a literary regionalism as gendered by masculinist homosocial communities as the diasporan practices of *The Black Atlantic*.

Writers such as Samuel Selvon and George Lamming who relocated

to England the early 1950s explored the position of the Caribbean ex-ile living in this metropolitan island. While they were not the first significant population of Caribbean migrants to England, the large body of literature produced in this era reflected a complex negotiation of national, colonial and regional identities. Certainly such transoceanic passages created a broader sense of homeland, where nationally identified writers and characters transformed their visions of home from the nation to the island region. As Lamming observes in *The Pleasures of Exile*:

No Barbadian, no Trinidadian, no St. Lucian, no islander from the West Indies sees himself as a West Indian until he encounters another islander in foreign territory. It was only when the Barbadian childhood corresponded with the Grenadian...in important details of folk-lore that the wider identification was arrived at. In this sense, most West Indians of my generation were born in England. The category of West Indian, formerly understood as a geographical term, now assumes cultural significance. (214)

A range of Caribbean scholars have observed that national and regional identity is often a construction on the part of the exile: distance from the homeland can facilitate a type of nostalgia for origins, while easier access to publishing houses and print media perpetuates the exile's construction of his or her national/regional home. Lamming reveals that West Indian identification is continually renegotiated when he migrates to the United States and is exposed to non-Anglophone Caribbean peoples. "I find that I refrain from saying that I am from the West Indies, for it implies British colonial limitation. I say rather, I am from the Caribbean, hoping the picture of French and Spanish West Indies will be taken for granted" (215). But as the Lamming quotation suggests, it is the *series of migrations* experienced between the Caribbean and England, the United States and Canada that produce multiple layerings of regional identification. While diaspora is relevant to this literary regionalism, it is not gender neutral — the literary presence of women during this time period is treated as secondary to the male regionalism established on the ships to England.

Lamming's 1954 novel *The Emigrants* explores the transoceanic journey of primarily working class, male Caribbean migrants to England. "Everybody is in flight and no one knows what he is fleeing to...so many people wanting a better break" (51). Unlike Gilroy's celebration of transatlantic "routes", such cross-fertilization results in a limbo between the continents that frame the Atlantic. A good portion of the novel takes place on the ship and the journey is punctuated by the primarily male Caribbean characters' introduction to Marxist ideology and lurid tales of lesbianism which solidify a homosocial transoceanic community. One

¹² See Thomas-Hope and Grosfoguel for a detailed analysis of Caribbean migration patterns.

¹³ I realize the terms "first wave" and "second wave" (adopted from Thomas-Hope) themselves are problematic since technically, the "first wave" of Caribbean outmigration in this century was due to Caribbean participation in World War I efforts.

¹⁴ See Beryl Gilroy's "Women of Colour at the Barricades" for a discussion of the racial and gender hegemonies in England which discouraged black women's writing in this time period.

character "held their attention with stories of the women who entertained other lesbians on barges" (40) suggesting that male Caribbean regionalism is threatened by a sexually autonomous community of women. In this text, Lamming's Anglophone Caribbean regionalism draws upon heteronormative and homosocial practices which exclude and objectify women.

An extensive debate between islanders about their national and regional identities ensues. When Jamaican, Trinidadian, Barbadian and other male islanders debate and cajole each other about their respective island nations, a character interjects:

the two o' you come from different island but him talk the way you talk an' it ain't make no difference at all. De wahter separatin' you from him ain't do nothin' to put distance between de views you got on dis life or de next. Different man, different land, but de same outlook. Dat's de meanin' o' West Indies. De wahter between dem islands doan' separate dem. (61)

The response to this character's regionalism is undermined by the comments of the "Strange Man", who emphasizes national and intranational class diversity of the islands, and by the novel itself, which depicts the immigrant community's gradual disintegration during their exile in England. The more lasting transnational connections are made more through Caribbean/African connections than amongst members of the Anglophone Caribbean region.¹⁵ Like Sam Selvon's novels depicting Caribbean exile in England such as the series which commences with *The Lonely Londoners*, such novels focus more on the relationship between the metropole and previous island colonies than inter-island relationships. The early novels produced by this region's midcentury wave of migration to England are more concerned with the Caribbean male subject's relationship to the metropole than establishing a solid expatriate Caribbean community or with exploring migration between the Caribbean islands. Anglophone Caribbean diasporas have particular histories which often reflect the demographics of migration; these in turn are undergirded by national migration policies.

The scope of this project cannot encompass the history of Caribbean migration to England in such literature; but *generally* speaking, the novels from this region alter the focus from the position of the (male) exile in the metropolitan center to how regional identification can be

achieved on the basis of shared ethnicity and/or archipelagic identity.¹⁶ This has much to do with the ways in which predominantly male Anglophone Caribbean migrations changed their routes from metropolitan centers such as England after World War II (facilitated by British citizenship and economic opportunity), until the Commonwealth Immigration Act of 1962, which limited further immigration to the U.K. Meanwhile, the U.S. 1952 Immigration and Nationality Act restricted British West Indian immigration until 1965 when stricter quotas were lifted; thus, Anglophone migrations were then redirected towards neo-imperial powers such as the United States. As a result, the black Atlantic and its associated generations of "ex-isled" Caribbean literatures are refigured by metropolitan policies that determine or preclude immigration. This is not to suggest that Caribbean nations and global capitalism have no effect on these migrations. "All the Caribbean postwar outmigration correlated with efforts of the local elites to move Caribbean economies away from sugar plantation production towards industrialization, mining and tourism. The role of foreign capital penetration in this process of development is considered a major cause of international migration in the Caribbean" (Grosfoguel 599).¹⁷ Not surprisingly, such literary attempts to create a transatlantic identity are still heavily determined by economic and linguistic colonization, national and gender differences, and the material patterns of migration. To summarize, diasporan practices have particular relevance for the production of Caribbean literature and in fact have contributed to Caribbean regionalism, yet this regionalism is generated by the migrants who depict it in literary form. While Gilroy argues that to search for "roots" is to discover "routes", it is equally important to acknowledge that the *routes* of the diaspora are often circumscribed by metropolitan and colonial ideologies and economic practices that undergird black Atlantic roots.

¹⁶ Ana Lydia Vega's short story "Cloud Cover Caribbean" promotes a satirical version of Caribbean regionalism which critiques masculinist regional models and US imperialism in the Caribbean. The story describes a Haitian refugee who pulls in other shipwrecked nationals from Cuba and the Dominican Republic. The three men on the boat spend much of their time fighting, indicating that even an overall narrative framework cannot contain the nuances and perspectives of "Caribbeaness" without a fierce struggle. The only moment when the three characters find common ground is when they speak of the "internationally famous backside of the island's famous beauties". Their discussion of Dominican "whores" and complaints about Cuban feminists indicates that only the objectification of Caribbean women solidifies their "international brotherhood". As I argue in a forthcoming essay (Fall 1999) in the *Journal of Caribbean Literature*, such regional identifications are heavily circumscribed by the linguistic and colonial histories of the Caribbean.

¹⁷ Unfortunately, I do not have the space to address the complexities of Caribbean outmigration patterns. See Grosfoguel and Elizabeth Thomas-Hope for the sociological, economic and political circumstances which shaped Caribbean intermigration of the 19th century and outmigration in the 20th.

¹⁵ In C.L.R. James' writings of the black Atlantic, he prioritizes a cultural and political relationship between Caribbean men such as Franz Fanon, Aimé Césaire and others with African independence movements. Distressingly, Gilroy has abandoned Africa as a central focal point in the black Diaspora; despite the abundant literary and political exchange between the Caribbean (particularly Francophone) and Africa.

Defining Migrants: The Anglophone Caribbean and Masculinist Voyaging

There is a marked difference between how exile, migration and transnationalism is depicted in recent theoretical work of (and related to) the Caribbean and how such movements are inscribed in recent literature from the region. To some extent, much of the more celebratory and productive transoceanic Caribbean literature has particular resonance for male writers who seem less inclined to describe how such migrations affect those remaining at home. Gendered investigations are crucial to further determining the differences between black migrants from the United States and Canada who travel under different historical and economic circumstances than black settlers in England and Europe. How the migrant renegotiates the homeland's construction of race, class and gender within the contours of the new nation is a question well worth asking. Does one necessarily abandon or transcend the contours of national identity in the migration overseas? Migration does not necessarily create a new *regional* identity for the woman migrant, but can facilitate a chasm between two deterministic and distinct national discourses of "womanhood". This is a point I will return to when I discuss Joan Riley's *The Unbelonging*.

Contrary to Gilroy's theory of cultural hybridity that helps determine the history of the black Atlantic, many Anglophone Caribbean writers depict the Atlantic Ocean as a consistent force of cultural separation and displacement. This provides a trajectory from the middle passage to the position of the Caribbean "ex-isle", who seeks economic fortune in colonial metropolitan centers. Many contemporary women writers of the Anglophone Caribbean depict migration as continuing to disrupt the home and family much in the same way as the middle passage. While I examine the ways in which women writers from the region differ from their male counterparts, easy distinctions cannot be made between gendered depictions of "travel" and "dwelling". While the quotation by James Clifford cited earlier asserts that diasporic experience for women may entail more concern with placement, dwelling and rearticulation, the novels I discuss below complicate facile gender dualisms which cannot be reduced to the gendered subject position of the author or his/her subject.

Transoceanic travel has been an important literary and experiential component of island regions, yet scholarship is only just beginning to investigate the ways in which such migrations differ according to historical or cultural experiences of each writer. Poets such as Derek Walcott and Kamau Brathwaite rely heavily on the trope of oceanic migration to rewrite and recontextualize master narratives such as *The Tempest* and

Odysseus, while rehistoricizing the middle passage. The novels of George Lamming (*The Emigrants*), Caryl Phillips (*Cambridge and Crossing the River*) and poetry of Grace Nichols (*I is a long memoried woman*), just to name a few, explore the cultural displacement experienced through transatlantic African slavery. Some writers emphasize an "irruption into modernity" (Glissant 198) while others depict the middle passage as a continuum along the trajectory of life and death.¹⁸

For these reasons, it is crucial to assert the diversity of the migratory experience, the polyvocality, and to resist totalizing discourses of diaspora. The patterns of migration uncritically celebrated by Gilroy fail to differentiate between the ways in which class, gender and nationality profoundly affect circumstances of migration. "The experience of black men on ships" so foregrounded in *The Black Atlantic* privileges a public sphere that was almost entirely inaccessible to women (Helmreich 245). George Lamming's novel *Natives of My Person* (1974) would lend itself well to the critical paradigm offered by Gilroy's work because of its masculinist focus, but to assert that this is representative of diasporan practices would obscure the ways in which gender and class inform travel. In many ways Gilroy and Lamming's novel perpetuate a similar exclusion of women. But forty years prior to the publication of *The Black Atlantic*, Lamming had offered a critique of the masculinist voyager.

Natives of My Person recreates the transoceanic voyage of an entirely male, primarily European-managed ship sailing to establish a homosocial island community of "New World men" (336) in San Cristobal, beyond the fixed boundaries of the nation, "Lime Stone". Although the characters are not *black* diasporan, the novel does gender the migration along public and private dichotomies. While the Commandant has secretly arranged for their wives to meet them on the island, the women's transoceanic voyage on the ship "Penalty" is not depicted nor, due to its secrecy from most of the novel's characters, is it even referenced until the concluding chapter of the narrative where women's voices are portrayed as distinct from men's. The women are referred to only as wives of male voyagers, and discuss the circumstances (primarily revolving around male betrayal and abandonment) which led to their arrival at a cave on the island. The wives' "dwelling" is juxtaposed against the sailors' constant journeying and transience. Even in the San Cristobal cave, the women find "the waiting is familiar" as is the "same sound of absence" (335). Their husbands' transoceanic voyages are so normalized that their "arrival and return" become "the same" (334) to the women. It is in this final chapter where Lamming presents his critique of the homosocial community of the

¹⁸ In Nichols' view it is the "middle passage womb", a culturally destructive and creative passage which is somewhat in line with Gilroy's celebration of hybridity.

ship and their aspirations to establish a nation without women. This critique is expressed through the novel's "foreigner" Pinteados, who explains "real power frightened" the men:

But they had to avoid the touch of power itself. The women are absolute evidence of what I mean. To feel authority over the women! That was enough for them. But to commit themselves fully to what they felt authority over. That they could never master. Such power they were afraid of. (325)

The ship is sailing towards the "future of the women who are waiting" (329) but that future is never inscribed. As the final lines of the novel suggest, the women "are a future they must learn" (351).¹⁹ Lamming's gender politics create a dualism between the women who wait (in the cave as a subterranean power) and the men who trespass a broad public space (the oceanic and terrestrial). In an effort to highlight the women's extreme immobility, Lamming erases their transoceanic voyage which was ultimately arranged and described only by men. Thus, the private/public geography of the ocean and those who journey across it are never challenged. The precariously balanced homosocial community of the ship, the Commandant's concealment of women's presence and Lamming's erasure of women's voyaging (and agency) certainly have some important parallels to a masculinist/black Atlantic. Like the heteronormative climate of *The Emigrants*, transoceanic voyaging seems based on the exclusion of women, who only function in these novels in their domestic/sexual relationship to men or as lesbians for the voyeuristic and ultimately condemning male gaze. Thus, autonomous women are perceived as a threat to the homosocial male project of migration and nation building and can only be integrated to regional and national communities under heteronormative practices. To a certain extent, Lamming's novel reflects the demographic trends of Caribbean migration in the 1950s where a larger proportion of Caribbean men migrated to the metropole than women. These demographic trends have altered in such a way that women's migration from the Caribbean exceeds that of men, yet postcolonial theory in its "belatedness", has yet to interrogate the meanings of such changes for gendered voyaging.

¹⁹ Lamming's construction of the newly imagined nation is something I do not have the space to develop here. While the foreigner Pinteados learns he "was safer without any claims to a national pride" and plans to challenge the Admiral who holds "illusions of common birth and history" (326), Lamming still upholds the heterosexual familial model of the nation through his use of the domestically circumscribed wives, left in eternal narrative "waiting" for the men to arrive. Whether the private/public, dwelling/voyaging dualisms will be altered is a question left unanswered by the text, but it is surely significant that in a Caribbean novel, the new nation seems based on those who will cease to travel.

It seems that women's participation in transoceanic travel (as dwellers or voyagers) is still "a future" that has yet to be learned. The lack of women voyagers is persistent in Anglophone Caribbean literature produced by men and perhaps best seen in Caryl Phillips' 1993 novel *Crossing the River*. Phillips' work evidences an overt consciousness of how women are positioned in the public/private and traveling/dwelling binary system, but his narrative framework often collapses back into a masculinist paradigm.²⁰ Published in the same year and location as *The Black Atlantic*, Phillips' novel explores the repercussions of the African ancestral narrator who, in a "desperate foolishness" (1) sold his children to the English slave ship of Captain Hamilton. In the sections dated in the 18th century, the novel depicts only the viewpoints of the unnamed male ancestor and the voyaging and homesick captain. The mother of the sold children is never referenced, suggesting not only a transaction perpetuated through African and European men, but a *patriarchal genealogy* for the diasporic "children" of the Americas.

While feminist scholars have questioned the social construction of the nation based on its private/public dualisms and erasure of women's contributions to the project of national culture, diaspora theory often entails the same masculinist paradigm. *The Black Atlantic* offers an engaging way to examine male migrants' negotiations of their national, ethnic and regional identities. However, its gender privilege is unmarked because the impact experienced by the wives, families and/or friends left behind by Frederick Douglass, Martin Delany, Richard Wright or James Baldwin is completely erased. A critical apparatus which uncritically examines male travelers in the public realm inevitably endorses male transience.²¹ Gilroy rejects nationalism while simultaneously employing its descriptors by imagining the black Atlantic along kinship lines which reinscribe "patriarchal lineages" (Helmreich 245). Since the term "diaspora" originates in the Greek and Hebrew definitions of sperm/seed genealogies, Gilroy merely reinscribes the patriarchal in his black Atlantic (Helmreich 246). This patriarchal lineage is evidenced in Phillips' literary text.

The way in which black women are erased from the production and

²⁰ Phillips' 1985 novel *The Final Passage* does inscribe the journey of a Caribbean family (which favors a woman's perspective) to the hostile English isle. My point is not to assert that Phillip's work as a whole lacks sensitivity to issues of gender and migration. But it is telling that his depiction of 20th century Caribbean migration to England can include women, whereas his more epic explorations of the African diaspora, like Gilroy and Lamming, exclude women.

²¹ Phillips' earlier novel, *A State of Independence*, draws attention to this when his protagonist leaves St Kitts for twenty years and returns to find his previous girlfriend conveniently waiting. It is suggested that the lack of communication with his mother over those twenty years has contributed to her illness, indicating an entanglement between the dwelling and traveling subject. Yet the fact that he has also left another woman waiting back in England in favor of his romantic reunification is never critiqued.

reproduction of diasporan travel is further seen in the second section of Phillips' novel, "The Pagan Coast", which presents entangled homoerotic dualisms of father/son, God/Christ and white/black in its depiction of a liberated African American slave who returns to Christianize and settle in Liberia. He is pursued by his former master in a brilliant inversion of Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*. The Liberian black settler Nash Williams is never depicted crossing the Atlantic, but his arrival (documented through often obsequious letters back home to his former master) is couched in terms of struggle and toil: he loses his American wife and children and cannot obtain the material supplies necessary for his farm or missionary school. He ultimately questions his Christian ways but whether alternative epistemologies are found is a question never answered. Williams becomes polygamous, but the actual presence of his wives and the many children they bear for him is never directly depicted in the narrative. Again, the transatlantic journey in this section of the novel circulates around questions of masculine identifications, and investigates the way in which men of African descent address their patriarchal, epistemological lineages. The fact that such lineages are impossible without the participation of women (seen through Williams' polygamy) is never addressed in the novel.

Crossing the River depicts two female protagonists, but neither "cross the (literal) river" of the Atlantic, nor do they directly participate in transnational migration in the manner of Phillips' male characters. While he blends the River Jordan metaphor with the crossing of the Atlantic to conflate the aquatic trajectory towards political and spiritual salvation, Phillips specifically genders local and global crossings. For instance, the section "West" depicts an aging, escaped slave woman who dies before her quest for freedom and reunification with her daughter in California is achieved. Martha is the only woman traveler in the novel, but significantly never arrives to her destination. While the men who transverse the Atlantic are faced with spiritual, communal or literal death, they are at least successful in the execution of their journeys. Unlike Lamming's work, the woman protagonist is pursuing a (female) familial relationship rather than a heteronormative trajectory. While she resides uncomfortably in the boundaries of the slave-owning nation, her journey is ultimately reduced and contained within domestic space.²²

²² The association of women with nation and men with transnationalism is further explored in the novel's conclusion. The concluding section depicts a tradition of women's "placement" juxtaposed against a series of "displaced" and transient men in England during World War II. The arrival of American troops brings the African ancestors' spiritual son, Travis, who endures some hardships due to Yorkshire racism and ultimately perishes when he is transferred to fight on the European continent. Although this section is more concerned with the white English woman Joyce who carries their child, no references are made to Travis' family, personal history or community, nor is this necessarily presented as problem in the text. Socially unaccepted by

For the purposes of this essay, Phillips' novel is significant for two reasons. First, like other novelists who depict the Atlantic crossing, he refutes Gilroy's assumption that such voyaging represents a celebratory hybridity. Secondly, the transatlantic crossings are specifically gendered. Joyce, an English character in his concluding section, never travels beyond the rural community she has been raised in, and Martha, who manages to get as far as Colorado, is related more to domestic/national journeying than international. While Phillips employs a loosely organized polarization of "dwelling" and "traveling" characters which fall into neat gender roles, the women writers I investigate below are more overt in depicting women who travel, and who complicate the tendency to relegate women to the private space of the domestic or Caribbean island. Certainly, the demographics of increased Caribbean women's migration has informed these more contemporary depictions of transoceanic migration by female writers. Yet the relationship between women and the project of postcolonial nation building may suggest a more complicated relationship to the domestic space of the island nation. As Clifford suggests, perhaps we should ask to what extent *remaining home* can be read as an act of resistance on the part of postcolonial writers whose economic and social factors pressure otherwise (5).²³

The Second Phase of Dis Place: Afro-Caribbean Women's Migration

Women's inability to "dwell" or "place" themselves successfully is seen in the endings of Merle Hodge's *Crick Crack, Monkey* (1970) and Jamaica Kincaid's *Annie John* (1985), where the narrators are unable to sustain their dreams in the limited space of the island nation and depart via ship to the colonial metropolis. While the earlier novel is rooted in Trinidad and the later in Antigua, nations with very different histories, the relationship between the former British colonies and the metropole is depicted as remarkably similar. Both novels depict a coming of age narrative which precedes both nations' independence movements and

the military. Travis leads an isolated and transitory life in Europe and dies before seeing the birth of his son. Joyce and her mother are depicted as stifled in their rural town with few economic or social opportunities which exacerbates their rootedness in contrast to the transitory and ultimately unavailable men they marry.

²³ For instance, Earl Lovelace's novel *Salt* depicts a male school teacher's struggle to create a sense of "worldliness" in his island home of Trinidad. Many other Anglophone Caribbean writers are invested in the same politics of Caribbean dwelling such as Olive Senior, Roy Heath, Louise Bennett, just to name a few. The point is that migration and exile are *not* the only parameters in which to view this region's literature.

therefore are more aligned with women's entanglement with colonial hegemony. The authors' concern with women's migration reflects demographic tendencies between the late 1960s and '80s when educational and domestic/nursing service schemes had been established in England for commonwealth women. Anglophone Caribbean outmigration patterns in the 1970s were different from the previous decades in that a larger spectrum of migrants, including women, children of earlier migrants, and a wider variety of socioeconomic classes were represented (Thomas-Hope 26). These "second phase movements" of migration were facilitated by family members (predominantly male) who had migrated primarily to port cities in England during the post-war era (Thomas-Hope 25). Of course, social and national policies in the Anglophone Caribbean which were still torn between (post/colonial) Caribbean and (metropolitan) English culture contributed to educational and social systems which worked as "push factors" in outmigration.

I have chosen to focus on these novels because they reflect a particular relationship between the former English colonies and the historical trajectories which lead their female characters to the metropole. The novels refute assumptions that diasporic traveling necessitates "playful intimacy" and resist the erasure of migrations that are determined by historical (read: colonial) forces. The Anglophone women's novels I examine all depict black middle-class migrations to the metropole, a negative correlation between such migrations and the female body, and suggest that contemporary diasporic migrations are metonymic of the middle passage. While Lamming and Phillips' male characters become racialized by the sociocultural systems of their host nations, their gender identities are only renegotiated in terms of a wider black homosocial community. In the novels by Hodge, Kincaid and Riley, each female character experiences a disassociation from her body in a futile effort to negotiate colonial, national and postcolonial gendered hegemony.

In *Crick Crack, Monkey*, Tee's coming of age documents the negation of her identity as a black (colonial) subject and poses a criticism of the lack of validated social spaces in Trinidad where Tee can position herself. The novel begins with Tee's mother's death and her father's consequent migration to England for employment in the era before Trinidadian independence. Tee and her brother are raised alternately by her maternal and paternal aunts who represent the poles of rural poverty and urban bourgeois Trinidad. Tee's entrance to womanhood is depicted as a difficult negotiation of the values derived from the colonial system, and the novel concludes with Tee's rejection of her rural heritage and her migration to England to join her father.

When as a child Tee leaves (her Aunt) Tantie's "squawking" love to reside with her painfully bourgeois Aunt Beatrice, she loses not only the

warm, rural community of Trinidad, but the only possible space that could confirm and validate her identity. In this novel, internal migration within the nation (from rural to urban center) brings the character closer to the colonial system which negates her blackness, suggesting that movement within the nation, for women, can facilitate cultural rupture due to the social and material values inherited by urban colonial spaces.²⁴ The novel is primarily concerned with the way in which colonial systems impede the "folk" traditions of rural Trinidad, and the urgent need to negotiate a black female space for the coming of age of the nation. Through Tee's colonial education (which prioritizes whiteness), Hodge emphasizes Christian signifiers that depict a "fair" Christ who favors blonde-haired and blue-eyed children, and an Aunt who epitomizes bourgeois individualism. The reader witnesses Tee's literal and psychic disintegration to the extent that she wished her "body would shrivel up and fall away" (97). The direct consequences of Trinidad's colonial history are experienced upon the black female body which is unable to "develop" amidst this colonial inheritance. In this novel, the consuming space of English colonialism negates any possibility of Tee's successful "dwelling" in her home country and she loses her "true true name". Her middle-class education teaches her to objectify her own rural heritage: carnival, an event which could otherwise suggest possibilities for cross-caste/race unification becomes a "real nigger break-loose", and during her last visit with family she is repulsed at the rural body she now objectifies in her uncle.

In the final chapter, Tee denies her humble roots and rural community and leaves to join her father in England, reflecting second phase migration. However, this migration is not a cause for celebration. The last line of the novel where Tee writes, "I wished with all my heart that it were next morning and a plane were lifting me off the ground" (111) suggests that the movement away from Trinidad, the overseas migration to the colonial metropole, signifies a moment in a series of devastating migratory losses which further fragment Tee as a Caribbean/Diasporic subject. To the postcolonial migrant sent to the metropole, the black Atlantic has particular resonances that cannot be separated from the history of colonialism in the Caribbean. It is not only the transoceanic journey but the cultural signifiers of the national space of arrival which complicate how migration is depicted.

While economic factors pressure Tee's migration (within Trinidad and to England), Hodge is also concerned with the conflation of colonial and Christian ideologies which together determine Tee's migration to the

²⁴This could be juxtaposed against the film/novel "Rue de Cases Nègres" (*Black Shack Alley*) where a boy's coming of age entails a similar transition from rural poverty to the urban colonial in Martinique, but with much more successful results.

"motherland". The separate spaces of Trinidad and England are collapsed in Hodge's effort to highlight the ways in which the Christian linear trajectory towards salvation becomes the structural base for Caribbean migration to England. *Crick Crack, Monkey* depicts the Trinidadian conflation of the Christian afterlife with the journey to the mother country (England) to obtain cultural/economic salvation as ultimately facilitating the loss of cultural identity. Tee and her peers learn at a young age that "Glory and The Mother Country and Up-There and Over-There had all one and the same geographic location" (30). Tantie reminds her that "it ain't have no blasted heaven here but it ain't have that no-where" (64) but this falls upon deaf ears. Hodge questions to what extent this journey to the afterlife (death) and the motherland (cultural death) is obligatory for the Caribbean subject. In the last pages of the novel Tee's grandmother has died (her journey to Up-There) and Tee leaves for England (Over-There) reflecting the limited choices for women in Trinidad. Those who "dwell" and remain on the island are severely affected by the migratory or physical losses of their families. Tantie laments, "but why they must take mi chirren?...my chirren is goin unto the Golden Gates" (110). Clearly neither "dwelling" nor "travel" in the oppositions posed by Clifford above are shown to be valid options for any of the characters in Hodge's novel, nor are they mutually exclusive experiences. In a compression of space and time, Tee's transatlantic voyage represents the middle passage with equivalent loss. Denied her blackness, creole tongue, gender, and community, Tee enters the black Atlantic as so many did before her and disappears from the face of the text.

Like *Crick Crack, Monkey*, Jamaica Kincaid's Antiguan novel *Annie John* also depicts how migration erases female subjectivity, although Kincaid's work circulates more specifically around the mother/daughter relationship and its connections to colonial hegemony. The novel's grandiose and unreliable narrator, Annie, is depicted in a circumscribed rebellious strength. For instance, she "defiles" the Capital H "History" of the West by "marking" an image of Christopher Columbus, but Annie's personality is often shown as merely reactionary to her mother's demands or expectations. Like the colonial adult/child relationship model explored by Albert Memmi and so many others, Annie cannot seem to extricate herself from the overwhelming shadow of her mother/parent, and therefore cannot attain a sustainable identity in her increasingly concentric Antiguan homeland. After a period in which she undergoes a depression/infantilization and is nursed back to health by her grandmother, Annie emerges too large for her bed, family and island society. While Tee wishes to "shrink", Annie emerges as gigantic. Like Tee, Annie's "dwelling" is not a valid option when juxtaposed against the equally problematic migration to the colonial metropolis; these limita-

tions are experienced negatively through their bodies. Annie leaves for England in the closing chapter of the novel, desiring escape yet having no realistic alternatives on this side of the Atlantic or the other. She explains, "I did not want to go to England, I did not want to be a nurse, but I would have chosen going off to live in a cavern and keeping house for seven unruly men rather than go on with my life as it stood" (130). Given Annie's intense emotional alignments with women (which are inevitably broken by heteronormative socialization) her suggestion that she become a domestic for the Seven Dwarfs as an alternative only highlights the lack of economic and social opportunities for Annie.

This also highlights the national and international private/public dualisms as mutually restrictive to women. Since her grandmother is associated with Obeah practices (a point of contention in Annie's family), but Annie chooses the (bourgeois) socially sanctified profession of nursing, Kincaid suggests that colonial inheritance in Antigua has denied any possibility for a young woman who resists heteronormative or domestic roles. Like Hodge's novel, the consuming space of English imperialism has denied alternative social roles for women in both island colonies. Thus the hegemony of colonialism is very present in the space of the colonial island nation, and both Tee and Annie suffer from diasporic "unbelonging" before they depart for England. Ironically, Annie's new profession is as "gendered" as the roles offered in her own nation. Since British migration policy of this time dictated primarily nursing and domestic service schemes for immigrant commonwealth women, Annie's choices are dually circumscribed by national and colonial social mores.

As Annie waves to her parents from the England-bound vessel, her mother becomes "just a dot in the match-box size launch swallowed up in the big blue sea" (148). All of Annie's familial attachments are consumed by the vastness of the Atlantic Ocean, and the last line of the novel explains the sound of the waves against the ship "as if a vessel filled with liquid had been placed on its side and now was slowly emptying out" (148). The Atlantic Ocean here literally minimizes her mother's presence to symbolic absence, and empties Annie of her past and identity. The protagonists of *Annie John* and *Crick Crack, Monkey* end up alone, isolated from their communities, language and homeland. As both enter the Atlantic and disappear from the novel, the oceanic trajectory is never described, nor are arrivals even imagined. Unlike the works produced by earlier male migrants, there are no communities to be found upon ships, nor are regional identifications made through relationships with other Caribbean nationals. In contrast to Lamming's homosocial and heteronormative diaspora, these young protagonists do not discover a transatlantic women's space, nor do the authors validate heteronormative

migrations. This suggests that for these two Anglophone Caribbean women writers, entrance to the black Atlantic signifies alienation, the loss of voice, and the erasure of the speaking subject.²⁵ If “to balance the inner and outer space we must factor in silence” (Philip 307), then these silences — the notable gaps and erasures that occur in these migrations to the colonial metropole are crucial to any discussion of diasporan practices.

It is significant that these novels inscribe a migration to the colonial metropole which in Kincaid’s perspective, has historically overdetermined the Afro-Caribbean female subject. Kincaid suggests that had she herself migrated to England, she could not have “invented herself” anew as a writer and her narrative voice would have been suppressed amidst the “patriarchal nineteenth-century English view” (Birbalsingh, 142). Kincaid’s decision to narrate a migration to England, she argues, represents the demographic migrations of her generation and indicates the continuing socioeconomic legacies which circumscribe transatlantic migrations. Neither Hodge nor Kincaid present the “private” or realm of “dwelling” as an acceptable alternative to the public and ultimately destructive journey across the Atlantic. Kincaid laments that as Caribbean writers, “we don’t come from a culture that values us, and we don’t know what else to do with ourselves” (143). To Kincaid, the woman subject (as writer, or as rebellious Annie John) has an uneasy relationship to the nation. These novels reflect that “home is often a place of exile for the woman, as are, sometimes, community and nation” (Davies 22). Thus, in these novels, national and diasporic spaces become equally repressive to women in their attempts to come of age during the colonial era.

Like the protagonist seen in Joan Riley’s *The Unbelonging*, Kincaid and Hodge’s characters slip into an alienated space between cultures, nations and communities. The notable differences between the previous two texts and Riley’s novel are that her protagonist is Jamaican (which entails a somewhat different history of outmigration) and arrives in the metropolitan center. Yet while the previous two novels are concerned with colonial era migrations to England, Riley’s critique is more devastating because her protagonist experiences the same alienation during the era of Jamaican independence. While Hodge was concerned with how to

²⁵ Guadeloupean writer Maryse Condé insists that it is “wandering that leads to creativity. Rootedness is very bad, in the end. It is absolutely necessary to be wandering, to be multiple, on the outside and on the inside. A nomad.” (Françoise Pfaff 43) While to some extent this reflects Condé’s position as a Caribbean writer who has resided in Africa, France and the United States, her characters do not benefit from similar migrations. In *Heremakhoon* her protagonist Veronica Mercier slips between continents, in *I, Tiouba*, the eponymous character’s travels to New England nearly cause her execution. It would be interesting to develop an analysis of Condé since it seems that similar theoretical positions on migration are contradicted by the writer’s own fictional depictions.

integrate blackness in middle-class Trinidad and Kincaid critiqued the heteronormative practices of women’s socialization, both suggest that women’s bodies are denied autonomy in Caribbean colonial space/time. Riley’s protagonist suffers physical and sexual abuse during the era of independence nation building, suggesting that the colonial past which is harbored by the elder generation of migrants in England impedes women’s ability to experience a positively coded coming of age. While Riley’s novel shares some similarities to Michelle Cliff’s *No Telephone to Heaven* in that both protagonists are negatively racialized by Jamaican-England migration practices, Riley’s novel depicts a protagonist which is far more circumscribed by the colonial histories harbored by previous Jamaican émigrés.²⁶

Post-Independence: *Diaspora and the New Nation*

²⁶ “All women have imprinted in them the basic politics of male territoriality.” Alison Fell, 18.²⁷

In *The Unbelonging*, Hyacinth leaves Jamaica as a child to live with her father and stepmother in England, always “regretting bitterly that she had not stayed in Jamaica” (13). After a number of years in England where she is marginalized by a “sea of white faces” which “hated her” (13) she becomes Eurocentrically racialized, much like the earlier male migrations to England depicted by Lamming and Selvon. But Riley highlights that women’s bodies are negatively gendered by black Atlantic migrations: after repeated sexual abuse from her father, Hyacinth experiences the same disassociation from her body as Tee and becomes increasingly delusional about her homeland. Her retreat to delusional fantasy indicates that diasporan migration to metropolitan centers can facilitate the experience of the black female body as literally unlivable. While national “dwelling” was rejected by Hodge and Kincaid, Riley depicts a character whose circumstances deny “dwelling” within her own migrant body. Because her father reenacts the brutal hegemonies of the slave system onto the body of his daughter, Riley suggests that women’s black diasporan bodies can become the modern site of historical violence. It is in this way that imperial and sexual violence collapse onto the body

²⁶ I do not have the space to address Cliff’s novel here, or Cliff’s different depiction of her protagonist’s racialization in Jamaica, the U.S. and England. An examination of *No Telephone to Heaven* would lead this essay in a different direction in that Clare Savage reclaims her blackness upon return to Jamaica. Cliff’s collection of essays, *Claiming an Identity They Taught Me to Despise*, examines the process of Jamaican migration and its repercussions and is an important reminder of the diversity of Caribbean women’s migration experiences.

²⁷ As quoted in M. Nourbese Philip’s “Dis Place: The Space Between” (289).

of the young female immigrant. In this novel, the earlier masculine “first wave” migration to England (Hyacinth’s father) contributes to the destruction of any livable possibilities for the “second wave” of women and dependents. Read in conjunction with the Alison Fell epigraph, Hyacinth has migrated into a space which is already imprinted with historical violence against black women. M. Nourbese Philip’s essay, “Dis Place. The Space Between”, highlights how in the historical dis/placement of black women’s bodies, the safety of the “inner space” between the legs determines the “outer space” or public realm: “that the outer space must always determine how safe the inner space is; that the way in which women know the space around them must always be determined by how safe or unsafe they perceive their inner space to be” (306). Clearly Hyacinth cannot “balance the equation between inner and outer space” but the text does *not* result in silence. Instead, Riley articulates and marks the narratives which in many other cases silenced this aspect of black women’s diasporan experience.

While Hyacinth’s body becomes a metonymic site of violence in England, the anti-colonial era in Jamaica offers no alternatives. She dreams of a return during Jamaican Independence, conflating the national and personal coming of age narratives. But when she does return, despite her friends’ efforts to educate her about Jamaican political corruption, Hyacinth cannot accept that “it was never a paradise” (121). She returns to Jamaica to finally witness “heat and fly-filled poverty” and the literally decaying community of her youth. Ironically Hyacinth is told, “Go back where you come from” (142). She thinks:

How many times had she heard that since coming to Jamaica, or was it since she had gone to England? She felt rejected, unbelonging. Where was the acceptance she dreamed about? . . . “Go back where you belong”, they had said, and then she had thought she knew where that was. But if it was not Jamaica, where did she belong? (142)

The novel concludes with Hyacinth’s retreat further and further into her fantasies. In *The Unbelonging* the internal (albeit delusional) world is the only realm which provides relief from the painful rejections and misplacements suffered by transatlantic voyagers. (This is not to confuse the internal world with the domestic — Hyacinth’s sexual abuse takes place in the home.) Again, Caribbean “dwelling” cannot be presented as an alternative to transoceanic travel: the friends and family Hyacinth had left behind fare no better under the disempowered and uneven Jamaican political system. In this novel, Jamaican postindependence offers no place for the black Atlantic migrant, the domestic poor and/or women. Like Hyacinth, few of these characters benefit from migration (whether they arrive or not), nor do any characters make many productive cross-

cultural, or transnational alliances. While the experiences of Anglophone Caribbean women’s migration to England is as varied as the women who voyaged, Hodge, Kincaid and Riley highlight the many silences of “dis place/ment” that have occurred in “charting the journey”.²⁸

James Clifford’s argument that “the conscious choice *not* to travel — in a context of restlessness driven by Western institutions and seductive symbols of power — may be a form of resistance, not limitation, a particular worldliness rather than a narrow localism” (5) is an important alternative to Gilroy’s reductive vision of the nation and local community. While it certainly has resonance for the Caribbean where complex new diasporas are creating a substantial “brain drain” from postcolonial islands, the women writers above have further complicated the depiction of migration by asking what circumstances contribute to the “luxury” of rootedness. For the characters in the novels discussed above represent a specific social class which traveled to the colonial “motherland” only to find that the prescriptive criteria for national and diasporic belonging in many ways exclude women. Unlike the male migrations discussed earlier who only experience the “marking” of their bodies in racialized England, Hodge, Kincaid and Riley reveal that a negative gendering and sexualization also occur for black Atlantic women *before* they migrate. As Philip would argue, “dis place” begins with the entanglement between private and public realms and their historical significations. The young women depicted here do not have the luxury of transcending the historical and economic circumstances of centuries of European hegemony over the black Atlantic. Nor do these novels segregate the “dwelling” and “traveling” subject in a refusal to subscribe to the dualisms of private/public in national and international spaces. Certainly the production of Caribbean women’s literature may suggest that women find voice, “paradoxically” in the metropolitan center as Canadian/Trinidadian poet Claire Harris wryly observes,²⁹ but none of the novels discussed here necessarily celebrate Caribbean or metropolitan “dwelling”.

These novels reveal that national identity in the Caribbean is profoundly entangled with colonial hegemony and its associated gender dualisms. To validate diaspora over national “dwelling” is to assume that migration always benefits the voyager and that all national movements are conservative and restrictive. Gilroy’s diasporan theory ignores an important component of black diasporan movement: the majority of migrations within and outside the Caribbean have historically been working-class and heavily determined by colonial/economic hegemony.

²⁸ See Davies’ *Black Women, Writing and Identity*, 100-112 for her insightful discussion of Riley’s text and other Black women’s “unbelongingness” in England. See note 31 for further references.

²⁹ “Poets in Limbo”, 43.

The migration to the colonial metropole, or “colonizin’ in reverse” according to Louise Bennett, can indicate alienation from the island homeland, a negative racialization of the Caribbean subject, a limbo state between two deterministic discourses of gender, and facilitate a migrant “cash crop” to be shipped to colonial centers.³⁰ Or as a character in *The Emigrants* describes it, “you’s just a bit o’ cargo they puttin’ from one place to a next” (43). Contrary to Gilroy’s notion of a reciprocal “system of exchange” that is facilitated by the black Atlantic, there is no economic or cultural reciprocity in this movement between the Caribbean homeland and the colonial center. In these novels, the transAtlantic journey compresses space and time, facilitating a metonymic middle passage; this is constituted by violence to black female bodies and marked by the separation of communities.

While I reiterate that the novels I have discussed are not representative of all Anglophone Caribbean migrations to England, and the diversity of black women’s arrival to England has been examined in a variety of collections,³¹ these particular novels raise interesting questions which need to be addressed as we reshape our theories of the black Atlantic. Using the frame of a “black” Atlantic itself has prevented my discussion of the many other ethnicities that are central to Caribbean identities.³² Since contemporary migration patterns reveal more “circular” black migrations from England to Canada, the United States and repatriation/return to Caribbean nations, economic forces will continue to shape each literary generation’s depiction of black Atlantic crossings. New directions have been suggested by the literature of Zee Edgell (Belize/U.K.), Michelle Cliff (Jamaica/U.K./U.S.), Dionne Brand (Trinidad/Canada) and Edwidge Daniccat (Haiti/U.S.), which detail the circular migrations between the Caribbean and U.K./North American nations. These writers address complex issues faced by a “third wave” of diverse 20th-century women Caribbean migrants.³³ While these “circular” migrations have *always* been a component of Caribbean history, their appearance in recent

literature is far more apparent. As some of these works examine the limbo space of departure/return on airplanes, perhaps it’s time that we examine how the modern trajectories of migration are informed by their historical counterparts. The vehicles of black Atlantic crossings could be seen as representative of the variety of migrations taken and the socioeconomic and colonial histories these reflect.

As I have elaborated in this essay, black Atlantic crossings have particular histories that entail complex and often conflicting intersections between national identities, colonial racialization, gender and class; categories which are always unstable and renegotiated at various points in any migration or “dwelling”. Yet the literature I have examined shows that some black Atlantic crossings are still metonymically haunted by the violence of the middle passage.³⁴ The repetition of the middle passage in the form of these Anglophone Caribbean migrations serves to disrupt mnemonic function, while questioning the ways in which transglobal capital continues to “dis place” postcolonial migrants in the present space of the black Atlantic. Seen from this perspective, modern Caribbean revisions of the middle passage offer a reading of history which disrupts a linear temporality and foregrounds the historical process of transAtlantic capitalist trajectories. These novels also draw attention to the silence that circulates around masculinist diasporan theories. “‘Missing’ becomes a metaphor for the silence around the text that omits the woman’s s/place. Words crowd her into silence. Women have, in fact, left their mark on the many silences that surround language — we must, therefore, learn to read those silences” (Philip 296-97). Black Atlantic narratives may not directly rewrite the social memory of slavery, but certainly the Anglophone Caribbean writers described here are concerned with the legacies of the Atlantic slave system and the complex borders which need to be contested. The novels addressed here reinscribe slavery’s *continuing* consequences for black countercultures of modernity as they demarcate the shifting borders of “dis place” by Anglophone Caribbean women.

³⁰ Kincaid, *A Small Place*, 36.

³¹ See for instance, Grewal et al. (eds.), *Charting the Journey*, Rhonda Cobham & Merle Collins (eds.), *Watchers and Seekers*, and Selma James (ed.), *Strangers and Sisters*.

³² In addition to Indo-Caribbean migrations (which have very different historical and cultural “push factors” of migration from the Caribbean), Euro-Caribbean migrations have also been eclipsed in this essay. This is regrettable because Jean Rhys’ novels often depict the same alienation in England/France as Afro-Caribbean novels, with similar critiques (although racialized differently) of women’s inability to “dwell” successfully in either “homeland”. Lakshmi Persaud’s novel *Butterfly in the Wind* explores a similar coming of age for an Indo-Caribbean woman which results in a migration to Ireland. Persaud, Rhys and Sam Selvon all complicate the limited racialized parameters of a black Atlantic.

³³ *In Times Like These, No Telephone to Heaven*, *In Another Place, Not Here*, and *Krik?Kraak!* respectively; all works which address arrivals to the U.K./U.S./Canada, and women’s subsequent returns to Caribbean nations.

³⁴ While Gilroy cites the importance of the return to the catastrophe of slavery, he laments “that rappaport with death... (which) serve(s) a mnemonic function: directing the consciousness of the group back to significant nodal points in its common history and social memory” (198) has been eclipsed by increasing black identification with the “glamorous pharaohs” rather than “with the abject plight of those they held in bondage” (207). Gilroy’s point is well taken and astute — such revisions of the past, as he reminds us, have more to do with the pressures of the present than an accessible historical reality. However, my discussion of the texts shows that narratives of the transAtlantic journey often replicate the irruption of the middle passage. Gilroy’s argument, as it stands, cannot accommodate other “nodal points” besides a direct reinscription of slavery.

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