

Queer Narratives of the Caribbean Diaspora

Exploring Tactics

ZORAN PECIC



Queer Narratives of the Caribbean Diaspora

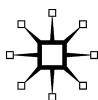
Queer Narratives of the Caribbean Diaspora

Exploring Tactics

Zoran Pecic

Lecturer, Department of Culture and Identity, Roskilde University, Denmark

palgrave
macmillan



© Zoran Pecic 2013

All rights reserved. No reproduction, copy or transmission of this publication may be made without written permission.

No portion of this publication may be reproduced, copied or transmitted save with written permission or in accordance with the provisions of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988, or under the terms of any licence permitting limited copying issued by the Copyright Licensing Agency, Saffron House, 6–10 Kirby Street, London EC1N 8TS.

Any person who does any unauthorized act in relation to this publication may be liable to criminal prosecution and civil claims for damages.

The author has asserted his right to be identified as the author of this work in accordance with the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

First published 2013 by
PALGRAVE MACMILLAN

Palgrave Macmillan in the UK is an imprint of Macmillan Publishers Limited, registered in England, company number 785998, of Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire RG21 6XS.

Palgrave Macmillan in the US is a division of St Martin's Press LLC, 175 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10010.

Palgrave Macmillan is the global academic imprint of the above companies and has companies and representatives throughout the world.

Palgrave® and Macmillan® are registered trademarks in the United States, the United Kingdom, Europe and other countries.

ISBN 978-1-349-34961-6

ISBN 978-1-137-37903-0 (eBook)

DOI 10.1057/9781137379030

This book is printed on paper suitable for recycling and made from fully managed and sustained forest sources. Logging, pulping and manufacturing processes are expected to conform to the environmental regulations of the country of origin.

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

A catalog record for this book is available from the Library of Congress.

Contents

<i>Acknowledgements</i>	vi
Introduction	1
1 Queer Tactical Diaspora and the Caribbean Space	7
2 Shani Mootoo's Diasporas	36
3 The Movements of Dionne Brand	102
4 Queering the Bildungsroman	134
5 Reshaping the Past in Lawrence Scott's <i>Aelred's Sin</i>	158
Conclusion	178
<i>Notes</i>	183
<i>Bibliography</i>	189
<i>Index</i>	194

Acknowledgements

I have many people to thank for helping me through the process of writing this book. First and foremost, none of this would have been possible without the help and support of Justin Edwards, who supervised my doctoral research at Bangor University. This book began as a thesis, and it was his outstanding advice, excellent support and great friendship that made this book possible. Without him, this book would never have been written. I would also like to thank my colleagues at Roskilde University, particularly Dr Lars Jensen. Their encouragement and advice got me through the difficult parts of the project. Dr Jensen's suggestions greatly strengthened my work. I am infinitely grateful to my friends for their emotional and intellectual support. Without them, the process of writing this book would have been so much more difficult. I would like to thank my parents, Ljiljana and David, for their financial and emotional backing. I want to express my love to Sunam Lee. This would not have been possible without your love and support. Finally, I would like to thank Ben Doyle and Sophie Ainscough at Palgrave Macmillan as well as the anonymous readers for their thoughtful and constructive criticism.

Introduction

In *Twentieth-Century Caribbean Literature: Critical Moments in Anglophone Literary History* (2006), Alison Donnell sees a 'new and urgent demand that critics should address in their theorisations of difference, as well as an exciting body of writing that is just beginning to be documented and analysed'. What Donnell calls attention to is the 'recent and important development in Anglocreole Caribbean literature—namely the articulation and inscription of diverse sexual identities within a body of creative writing' (181). Indeed, the canonical Caribbean writing from 1950s onwards rarely challenges normative gender and sexuality. Trinidad-born Samuel Selvon's 1956 novel, *The Lonely Londoners*, for instance, which details the life of young West Indian working-class males in post-World War II London, addresses the complexity of the West Indian migrant experience of metropolitan life. Trying to establish economic and cultural security, the young men embrace London and the excitement of the new.¹ Selvon's account of the West Indians' characters, however, is also a sexualised one. Moses, the protagonist, and his friends, the 'boys', are constantly on the prowl, pursuing White women who are not only the objects of their desires but are also characterised by their ethnicity ('English', 'Austrian').² Moreover, the assertion of Black masculinity comes at the expense of the Black female experience, which is caricatured in the image of Tolroy's 'ma' and Tanty, the Caribbean matriarch. Thus, the novel could be said to engage in the formation of Black identity as constructed through silencing and marginalising the position of women. Moreover, the reproduction of dominant masculine and racial discourses, where the 'boys' are portrayed as

sexually promiscuous, confirms the stereotypical image created by the dominant White culture.³

There is also evidence of humiliation and ridicule of non-normative sexuality in *The Lonely Londoners*. The incident when Captain (Cap) mistakes the drag queen Bon Soir for a female prostitute is pervaded by amusement and laughter. The representation of the Caribbean diaspora in Selvon's novel, a representation permeated with the language of masculinity and sexualisation, reflects not only the 'exoticisation' of Black identity by the dominant White culture but also the 'liberation' of the Caribbean characters from the ruthless London winter. Selvon uses stream of consciousness to represent a reallocation of Standard English to a diasporised language located within the dominant culture. Contrary to the beginning of the novel, which opens on 'one grim winter evening', the stream of consciousness section of the novel, which begins during the British summer, is also permeated by the images of sexuality: 'Oh what a time it is when summer come to the city and all them girls throw away heavy winter coats and wearing light summer frocks so you could see the legs and shapes that was hiding away from the cold blasts' (85). Apart from the compulsory heterosexuality and hypermasculinity expressed in the objectification of women's bodies from the perspective of the Black working-class male, the language of reallocation is also surrounded by homophobia, which is seen by the representation of the 'pansy':

One night Moses meet a pansy by Marble Arch tube station and from the way the test look at him Moses know because you could always tell these tests unless you real green you have a lovely tie the pansy say yes Moses say you have a lovely hat yes Moses say you have a very nice coat yes Moses say everything I have is nice I like you the pansy say I like you too Moses say and all this time he want to dead with laugh. (91–92)

The overt hypermasculinity and homophobia in the novel serve to distance non-heterosexuality from the Caribbean identity, relegating it to a position of decadence and dissipation which can only be found at the colonial 'centre'. The humiliation and laughter surrounding the depictions of non-normative sexuality are means of 'empowering' the Black identity through the 'celebration' of heteronormative sexuality. Thus Selvon's novel, despite its important articulations of the West

Indian migrant experience in London as a collective subcultural community, reproduces dominant masculine and racial discourses at the expense of (Black) women and non-heterosexual subjectivities.

Contemporary Caribbean writing also addresses the issues of sexuality, whether normative or non-normative, as an element that defines the boundaries of national and cultural identity. However, it also *talks back* to earlier Caribbean literature which neglected the discussion of non-normative sexuality on the basis that it was foreign to the region. Certainly, the discussions of gender and sexuality, whether normative or not, are present in all writing. What makes the recent developments in Caribbean literature interesting, however, is not merely the inclusion of 'queerness' within Caribbean space—these texts also offer an investigation into the historical processes embedded in the determination of social and cultural meanings of sexuality in the Caribbean.⁴ By exploring the historical shaping of sexuality in the colonial and postcolonial Caribbean geography, these texts offer an ability to *expose* and *alter* the representations of sexuality that mark sexual inscriptions upon non-procreative bodies as part of an attempt at decolonisation.

This book is a study of such texts; specifically, it is a study of queer narratives of the Caribbean diaspora. Its focus is on diasporic *fiction*s; that is, the literary genre of queer diasporic literature which proposes, through fiction, an alternative formulation of home and diaspora. The book takes its cue from Gayatri Gopinath's landmark work *Impossible Desires: Queer Diasporas and South Asian Public Cultures* (2005), in which she writes: 'If conventional diasporic discourse is marked by ... [a] backward glance ... [then] a queer diaspora mobilizes questions of the past, memory, and nostalgia for radically different purposes' (4). Adding theorisations of sexuality to the histories of colonialism, nationalism, racism and migration, Gopinath merges desire and the body with the histories of racist and colonialist violence that still resonate loudly in the present. 'Rather than evoking an imaginary homeland frozen in an idyllic moment outside history', Gopinath adds, 'what is remembered through queer diasporic desire and the queer diasporic body is a past time and place riven with contradictions and the violences of multiple uprootings, displacements, and exiles' (2005, 4). This book builds on queer diasporic remembering but with the Caribbean as a focal point. In other words, it explores how the Caribbean can be placed within

the field of queer diaspora; that is, diaspora reconceptualised in terms of queerness and connection. By 'placing' Caribbean writing, I mean conceptualising it within a new field that takes account of queer sexuality as a political means, not simply placing it within a tradition of 'queer' or 'diasporic Caribbean writing'. Queer and diasporic writing is already abundant, but when combined the two seemingly disparate fields open up an entirely new domain where social and cultural meanings of sexuality within Caribbean space become objects of historical, colonial and literary investigations.

In *L'invention du quotidien, Vol. 1, Arts de faire* (1980) (*The Practice of Everyday Life* (1988)), Michel de Certeau distinguishes between the concepts of strategy and tactics. Strategy is an entity typically linked with institutions and certain structures of power grounded physically in their site of operation. Tactics, on the other hand, are fragmented (consisting of individuals or groups) and not bound to any specific site of operation—their makeshift nature relies on the improper and subverts the 'mappable' space of strategy. Based on the idea of tactics, the methodology of this book will follow along the lines of what I call *queer tactical diaspora*. In other words, moving from one theoretical and geographical Caribbean space to the next, the book will never fully 'comprehend' the physical and psychological space of queer diaspora. Since queer diaspora deals with movement, slippages and changeability, the notions of queer tactical diaspora become a significantly potent means for deconstructing the developmental model of non-heterosexuality, combining the movement of sexuality (queer/tactics) with the developmental passage from one fixed boundary into another (diaspora/strategy). Utilising Gopinath's arguments on the mobilisation of the memories of the past in order to exhibit the displacement of the originary homelands, I hope to add to the existing scholarship by allowing, via crossings of space, a re-symbolisation of attachment/detachment to a certain territory. My contention is that the insertion of tactics within the wider debates on diaspora and queer studies introduces mobility as well as local historicity to the existing scholarship, highlighting the body not only as a signifier of connection but also of difference.

The texts in this book challenge the hegemonic formulations and constructions of diasporic identity, re-inscribing and remembering 'differently'. Moreover, the genre of queer diasporic fiction works in connection with other disciplines and conventions, continuing and disintegrating literary traditions (such as exile and immigrant

literature). Consequently, some of the texts come from different periods in what is now a long tradition of postcolonial Caribbean writing. For instance, in Chapter 3, I discuss Dionne Brand's *In Another Place, Not Here* (1996) alongside Édouard Glissant's *Black Salt* (1960). And whilst the timespan between the two texts includes multiple positions in terms of postcolonial historiography, the tactical approach here is not one of periodisation but an emphasis on individual elements of postcolonial resistance.⁵ The same can be said about the notions of diaspora that are at play in this book. In Chapter 3, I discuss the Caribbean communities in Toronto that redraw maps and create in-between spaces that claim the Caribbean seascape *as well as* the urban landscape of Canada.⁶ By using the term 'Caribbean', without specifying whether this community sees itself as Trinidadian, Jamaican or perhaps even Antiguan, I position the chosen writings in terms of an overall diaspora map of the Caribbean. Here, tacticality allows for a coupling of the two main strands of critique—the 'queer' and the 'diasporic'—whilst providing means of maintaining the balance between the two.

The *Caribbean* in this book is not based on a specific geographical location; the *Caribbean* here is a concept and an entity which cannot be reduced to a particular place, given that the migrations and movements that 'comprise' the Caribbean diaspora, which can be found all around the world, have historically been important elements of the Caribbean experience. Likewise, I use the term 'diaspora' as a transnational and a transitional concept that links the histories and the identities of those who have, voluntarily or involuntarily, been relocated to and from the Caribbean islands. Whilst these relocations are both literal as well as figurative, they take on several forms—recollection, rewriting, 're-membering'⁷—articulating an identity and a subjectivity which is common and shared as well as different and contentious. Once again, the non-placedness of tacticality serves as a means of maintaining the balance between the queer and the diasporic.

The history of Caribbean studies is long and so is the history of postcolonial Caribbean literature. My use of the selected Caribbean material should not be seen merely as an academic exercise devoid of necessary investigations of the historical and social conditions behind the production of the texts themselves. Rather, queer tactical diaspora works on several levels, using a range of theoretical paradigms. The difference between queer diaspora and queer tactical

diaspora is the methodology of movement, for the latter employs movement in two ways: the movement of bodies across geographical territories as well as the movement of theoretical thought across a range of reading practices. Theories of geography and philosophy in the following chapters focus almost exclusively on reading and analysing fictional accounts of the diaspora narrative, developing diasporic reading practices that employ the theorisation of sexuality and use the diasporic as the overall framework for the analyses of queer sexuality. According to queer tactical diaspora, a novel like Mootoo's *Cereus Blooms at Night* (1996) must not be read exclusively as an example of diasporic fiction which contains elements of queer theory. On the contrary, Mootoo's novel comprises the elements of both, making it neither an exclusively diasporic nor a solely queer novel. Due to the tactical nature of the text, in which memory, movement and the moving body are fused into a queer synergy, *Cereus* re-creates and re-members spatiality differently, metamorphosing the materiality of place and destabilising that which is vital to queer diaspora: the distinction between home and away, 'here' and 'there'. In fact, all of the primary texts in this book show how fiction can *theorise* and *act upon* the Caribbean landscape, making queerness a vital constituent of that very landscape.

One of the main arguments of this book is that mobility ensures difference and marks out dissimilarity and dislocation as a means for contesting the strategy's grasp on place. Queer memories contain the ability to trespass borders and incorporate space as a way of mapping out the interstices between place and body. Therefore, looking at queer desire and the queer body in terms of geography allows me to investigate what can be gained by employing queer tactical diaspora as a tool for abrading the normative workings of 'proper' place. Ultimately, queer tactical diaspora works as a reading strategy that critiques the discourses of decolonisation and heteronormativity whilst decentring the dominant Euro-American paradigms. This way, it has the potential to revitalise and refocus both diaspora studies and queer studies.⁸

1

Queer Tactical Diaspora and the Caribbean Space

Queer Tactics

Fifteen years after the first emergence of queer theory in academia, David L. Eng, Judith Halberstam and Jose Esteban Muñoz ask: 'what's queer about queer studies now?' (2005, 1).¹ Attempting to reassess 'the political utility of queer', they call for a 'renewed queer studies ever vigilant to the fact that sexuality is intersectional...calibrated to a firm understanding of queer as a political metaphor without a fixed referent'. Their urge to chart a new political ground for queer studies is suggestive of the necessity and inevitability of queer studies to open up its boundaries and broaden the field beyond the borders of Euro-America.

Closely related to the issues of intersectionality within queer theory (and subsequently diaspora studies) is the much longer history of immigration scholarship and its focus on how race, class and gender affect numerous migration processes. This history, however, has virtually ignored the connections between heteronormativity, sexuality and migration. Immigration scholarship, with its focus on various social regulations, especially those related to the issues of 'race', class and ethnicity, overlooks Foucault's characterisation of sexuality as a 'dense transfer point for relations of power', a point which becomes a focus of social regulation and biopower (1990, 103). Moreover the conflation of sexuality with gender only reinforces the normativity of opposite object choice. The pitfalls of such gender-centred analyses

are the unfortunate reinscriptions of heteronormativity, affirming Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's caveat that 'the question of gender and the question of sexuality, inextricable from one another though they are in that each can be expressed only in terms of the other, are nonetheless not the same question' (30). Eithne Luibhéid reminds us that

sexuality is an axis of power that structures all aspects of international migration. It is centrally implicated in—but not reducible to—the gender, racial, class, cultural, and legal inequalities that immigrants continually negotiate. . . . Yet in most immigration scholarship, sexuality and heteronormativity remain ignored, trivialized, derided, or conflated with gender. (232)

On the one hand, Luibhéid calls for an expansion of the areas of research in migration studies to address heteronormativity and the normalising regimes in aspects of migration and, on the other, for focusing studies of sexuality on 'international immigration's centrality to the making of "modern" gay, lesbian, and queer identities, communities, cultures, and politics' (233).

Theorising the intersections between diaspora studies and queer studies involves looking at sexuality as a mobile tactic of deterritorialising the relationship between diaspora and queer. By means of tactical deterritorialisation, we are able to challenge the restrictive binary of the local/global identity. The movement between geographical territories is hereby presented as a theoretically significant factor in the construction and discussion of sexuality. Moreover, translocation enters the picture as an element in the transformation of sexualities that are on the move—indeed, the local and global effects of various diasporas force us to turn our attention towards re-inventions and re-negotiations of sexualities in new places and new territories. Diaspora forces us to acknowledge that 'sexuality is not only not essence, not timeless, it is also not fixed in place; *sexuality is on the move*' (Patton and Sánchez-Eppler 2000, 2, my emphasis). Therefore, in this book I delve deeper into the relationship between sexuality and 'being on the move' and ask what happens and what is at stake in the tactical space between diaspora and queer. These questions are significant for not only the interrogation of multiple discourses of queer movement and their ability

to unsettle the balance between home and away—by metamorphosing the materiality of place we are able to destabilise the static place and ultimately the developmental model of queer identity. Introducing a tactical space enables us to *re-create* and *re-member* place differently, stripping off the certainty of strategy's grasp on place. But before such deterritorialisation can come into effect, we need to work on the intersections between queer studies and diaspora studies, or what is becoming known as queer diaspora. My emphasis on tactuality adds to queer diaspora the vital notions of movement between not only geographical locations but also theoretical paradigms (from queer and diaspora theory to postcolonial studies to psychoanalysis to poststructuralism). This, along with analyses of fictional queer narratives, fuses the aforementioned theoretical paradigms, deterritorialising the relationship between diaspora and queer.

The body of work that focuses on queer diaspora is vast and growing. Sánchez-Eppler and Patton's collection *Queer Diasporas* (2000) is a significant volume that emphasises queer sexuality in a transnational context, using *movement* to fuse these distinct concepts in unpredictable ways. This synthesis, according to the editors, 'produces a line of inquiry as intent on deconstructing universalizing ideas about sexuality as it is insistent on catching the lilt of each local articulation of desire' (2). Featuring chapters from prominent scholars from various fields in the humanities, the collection ranges from the discussions of gender production in Japanese kitchens to an interview with a young gay Arab, living in Israel, who engages in sexual encounters with Israeli men. The volume charts a new territory for the study of queerness and diaspora, and according to the editors, 'reveals an extraordinarily complex picture of the frictional relation between geopolitics and embodied desires' (3). In their 2002 edited essay collection entitled *Queer Globalizations: Citizenship and the Afterlife of Colonialism*, Arnaldo Cruz-Malavé and Martin F. Manalansan argue that the

position occupied by queer sexualities and cultures in our globalized world as a mediating figure between the nation and diaspora, home and the state, the local and the global... has not only been a site of dispossession, it has also been a creative site for queer agency and empowerment. (2)

In line with my idea of the queer tactical diaspora, the editors add that this position ‘has also provided diasporic queers...the opportunity to connect with other queers and sexuality and gender activists “at home” in order to interrogate the limits both of nationalist discourses and of modern Euro-American lesbian and gay narratives of identity’ (2). Moreover, Eng et al.’s special issue of *Social Text* besides re-examining the utility of queer studies, investigates how queer diasporas have ‘become a concerted site for the interrogation of the nation-state, citizenship, imperialism, and empire’ (7). According to Eng, queer diaspora ‘investigates what might be gained politically by reconceptualizing diaspora not in conventional terms of ethnic dispersion, filiation, and biological traceability, but rather in terms of queerness, affiliation, and social contingency’ (2003, 4). As a result, queer diaspora ‘emerges as a concept providing new methods of contesting traditional family and kinship structures—of reorganizing national and transnational communities based not on origin, filiation, and genetics but on destination, affiliation, and the assumption of a common set of social practices or political commitments’ (2003, 4). What these volumes show is that when combined, queer and diaspora, although they denote highly contested terrain, exhibit the ability to contest the imperialist notions of sexual, racial and national immigrations. Queer diaspora does not imply a refusal of homeland—both queer and diaspora employ discourses and narratives of home as a site of familiarity. It does, however, reverse the traditional notion of home as origin into home as destination. Indeed, both queer and diaspora compel us to rethink the question of home and belonging, not only in terms of migration as homecoming but also in regard to queering home not as a site of trauma but as a site of a queer possibility: ‘suspended between an “in” and “out” of the closet—between origin and destination, and between private and public space—queer entitlements to home and a nation-state remain doubtful’ (Eng 2007, 208). Thinking about transnational queer culture diasporically offers a renewed insight into the multiple tactical spaces located within the spatio-temporal spaces of queer belonging. Caught between the restraining local and the ever-expanding global, this tactical space affords a promising ability of reconfiguration and recomposition of the local, cultural and national differences and collectivities within the queer diaspora space.²

Framing queer sexuality diasporically is not an uncomplicated process. The apparent dangers within queer diaspora, despite its efforts to expand queer theory and expand its borders beyond Euro-Americanism, are the reconstitution of neo-colonialist relations between 'the west and the rest' (Gopinath 1996, 265). Conjectures about the passivity of the non-Euro-American queer risk the assumptions of framing a non-Western encounter with queer culture and politics as purely an imitation and an unmodified display of the influence of Euro-American discourses of gay/lesbian and queer cultures. The self-centricity of European and North American definition of what constitutes queer sexuality and culture is one of the apparent dangers of embracing queer diaspora as a trope of racial, sexual, cultural and economic equality between all queer subjects. The concealment of inequality and power across geographical borders runs the risk of reinstating cultural and colonial dominance on the part of 'the West'. Viewing the constituency of queer groupings in, for instance, the United States and the Philippines as homogeneous, exposes the long historical and cultural dominance of the West over the other, reinstating the differences between 'us' and 'them' across the diasporic imagination. In response, I interrogate the power structures that operate within the 'community' and, at the same time, unearth the tendencies to obscure the racial, ethnic, class and gender-based power relations within and between the diasporised communities. A critical interrogation into queer diaspora allows an insight into the travelling bodies and their freedom and access to movement as well as the opposing construction of differentiation and homogenisation in the production of the queer signifier.

'Whose queerness?', Gopinath asks in her caveat that same-sex eroticism exists and signifies differently in different diasporic contexts (1996, 263). Certainly, the export of Western sexual and cultural paradigms to the non-West attests to the power of global structures of imperialism and neo-colonialism in shaping the ways queer subjects negotiate their sexual identity across various diasporas. Queer diaspora challenges the notion that queerness and queer visibility is solely a Western import, an alien and unknown concept in other parts of the world. In the world of transnationalism and the constant border crossings, ideologies and images of 'gay' identity and practices

are becoming ever-more problematic. The globalisation of gay and lesbian 'liberation', by privileging Western definition of same-sex sexual practices, runs the risk of marginalising non-Western sexual practices as 'pre-modern' or somehow unliberated. Coding the practices that do not conform to the Western developmental notions of 'coming out' as homophobic or non-progressive exposes the neo-colonising assumptions of sexuality on the part of the queer Western subjects, reinforcing hierarchical relations between the urban centre and the rural periphery. Particularly within the discourses of what constitutes 'gay' identity, we find the homonormativity of certain strands of Euro-American queer studies that privilege White male subjectivity whilst relegating the non-White racialised subject to the periphery of modern sexuality. The definition of sexuality and society in terms of temporality, where the unliberated (closeted) pre-gay subject becomes aware of his/her homosexuality and works his/her way to the recognition and liberation (or outing) of his/her homosexual desire, is an area where queer diaspora needs to focus its attention and make diaspora more supple in relation to questions of race, migration and colonialism.

In *Culture and Imperialism* (1993), Edward Said points out that in the late twentieth century the United States has become a paramount imperial power, with the Western fiction and mass media as the primary weapons for conquest and domination of other cultures. Indeed, it appears that this pre-eminence has influenced the dissemination of queer theory as well. The marking of the United States by a colonising gay identity erases the global cultural differences and imperial power relations. Moreover, the paternalistic activist astuteness of lesbian and gay activists that judge the level of 'progress' of another country in terms of the 'universal' trajectory of the Stonewall Riots, the coming out narrative and identity politics and inherent civil rights, unfortunately situates a putatively universal and ahistorical transcendent gay identity. Similarly, some literary projects attempt to locate a lesbian or gay 'past' into a linear and unified gay tradition, imposing a specifically Western and imperialist teleology of sexuality and liberation onto historically, culturally and traditionally diverse subjects, reinforcing the centeredness of the Euro-American academia. Indeed, the teleological, Western-centred developmental narrative of coming out and recognising one's homosexuality places other forms of non-gay identity at the fringes

of 'civilised' sexuality. The Euro-Americanness of queer theory, with its focus on the White bourgeois assumptions and the transnational lesbian and gay movement, needs to incorporate a critique of its own universalising categories if it is not to replicate the neo-colonising assumptions in relation to non-Western sexual practices. Thus queer theory needs the diasporising and diasporic framework in order to decentre the dominant Euro-American paradigms, a framework that will work in contradistinction to the globalisation and internationalisation of 'gay' identity, specifically in relation to the narrative of development and progress that places non-Western sexual practices as non-modern. Western assumptions about terms like gay, lesbian, the closet and homophobia need to be interrogated, whilst the view that these are naturally given concepts requires that we place them within the context of their specific national histories. Sexual practices that are not organised around visibility are assumed to be closeted or repressed whilst the lack of publicly identified gay people implies that the society in question is predominantly homophobic and hostile towards homosexuality.

Diasporising queerness, however, is not a one-way transmission of queer styles and cultures. The consumption of queerness on the part of non-Western queer subjects is not solely a meagre mimicry, a periodic repetition incapable of displacing conventions. On the contrary, queer diasporic reading practices can adapt and translate queer styles and cultures into productive and creative acts that have the power to displace imperialistic conventions and rework the multiple (queer) pleasures and desires that stem from non-Western territories. Popularising the idea of 'global flows', Arjun Appadurai argues that 'the new global cultural economy has to be seen as a complex, overlapping, disjunctive order, which cannot any longer be understood in terms of existing center-periphery models (even those which might account for multiple centers and peripheries)' (31). One of the key elements of Appadurai's argument is that these flows are disjunctive and chaotic, allowing for a renewed understanding of geography. The multiplicity of flows, Appadurai argues, recreates and transforms geographical spaces, deconstructing simple models of centre-periphery. Queer diaspora, in a similar vein, reworks the emptying out of political and sexual agency of non-Western subjectivities and produces a site of pleasure consigned to the geographical terrains outside Europe and the United States. Pleasure, by means of

queer diasporic readings, is reclaimed and reinvented by the very subjects caught under the logic of the Western colonial and imperial imagination. Certainly, the flow of commodities and identities is not one-way (from the West to the rest)—it is a multiple exchange that reinvents and re-contests queerness and ethnicity. A critical queer diaspora bends and unties the generalised notions of queer subjects, producing and reproducing new geographies of desire, based not on a stable one-way transfer of ideas and identifications but on multiple, fertile, de- and reterritorialised sites of exchange. It opens up a possibility for constructing a creative dialogue between existing power structures in order to deconstruct those very constructs and create new transnational spaces of belonging to consider the multiple ways in which individuals move between and within those spaces. The manifold ways by which desire and attachment come about within these sites of flow and mobility, the manner in which diasporic identities are contested and renewed, are one of the vital tactics of queer diaspora.

The transformations of place and the various identifications that occur in the process force us to interrogate the various meanings of the queer diasporic body within the discourse of colonialism, race, gender and sexuality. This, I suggest, enables us to re-member histories of racist and colonial violence that continue to resonate in the present. Queer diasporic re-membering queers the otherwise traditionally backward-looking diasporic discourse, or what Stuart Hall calls the 'overwhelming nostalgia for lost origins, for "times past" and activates a different past, one fraught with memories of uprooting, displacement and exile' ('Cultural Identity and Diaspora', 245). The queer bodily desire points towards dislocation via the queer body in order to bring past memories into the present and modify them as well as transform the very spaces created in the diasporic invocations of the imaginary homeland. The need for a queer diasporic reading is particularly apt when seen in conjunction with diaspora's gaze towards 'lost (heterosexual) origins' and its expression of the conventional diasporic and national imaginaries that naturalise the relationship between nationalism and heterosexuality. Re-membering transforms—indeed *translates*—the national discourses of 'originality' and 'purity' into queer versions of the primary texts, inventing and re-conceiving notions of 'home' and home-land. Thus, the concept of queer diaspora and queer diasporic reading destabilises the

tranquillity and immobility of place, blasphemising spaces of purity, tradition and authenticity of home. For the queer diasporic racialised body, home, a site fraught with oppressing structures of community space, becomes a tactical space ready to be reworked from within. Dislodging the heterosexual discourse of the nation-state is one of the tactical means of creating diasporic spaces within the oppressing structures, for it generates possibilities and desires within a queer subjectivity. Queer diaspora lays claims to the nation and home by reinscribing the heterosexual home as a site of homoeroticism not alien to the workings of a community. The queer diasporic imagery, by re-signifying what it means to be 'home', reinstates queer subjectivity as a vital part of the makings of a national community, whilst simultaneously recollecting the queer subjectivity within the historically shared national past and memory. This conceptual space, which I call tactical diaspora, caught between 'here' and 'there', levels a powerful critique of the discourses of tradition and purity within national and diasporic ideologies.

Queer diaspora blasphemises the purity of place. By treating place this way I employ Michel de Certeau's distinctions between strategy and tactics as a theoretical tool for de- and reterritorialising belonging and location. Strategies, according to Certeau, 'pin their hopes on the resistance that the *establishment of a place* offers to the erosion of time', whilst *tactics* '[rely] on a clever *utilization of time*, of the opportunities it presents and also of the play that it introduces into the foundations of power' (1984, 38–39, emphasis in original). Strategy relies on the creation and assertion of a particular identity in the given space; tactics, on the other hand, do not rely on the 'proper' place but suggest a temporary and fragmentary projection over a terrain 'without taking it over in its entirety, without being able to keep it at a distance' (xix). Strategic rationalisation, according to Certeau, 'seeks first of all to distinguish its "own" place, that is, the place of its own power and will, from an "environment"' (36). Indeed, strategy involves an assertion and maintenance of a *fixed* place as well as a strategic assertion of identity. Tactics, on the other hand, have the ability to erode the proper place as they, in their very enactment, *deny the permanent adoption of place as identity*. Employing time as a transitory element, tactics destabilise the static place by regulating the timing of power as flow. As opposed to the 'proper' which symbolises the 'triumph of place over time' (36), tactics reject

the developmental model of non-heterosexuality, enabling a flow of desire not relegated to the stability of proper place but as a timeless and drifting current created at the interstices of body and place. The movement of sexuality enables a creation of desire based, but not rooted in, the exchange of bodies and flows across space. Diaspora, in the terms of strategy, becomes a developmental passage from one fixed boundary into another, a dislocation based on belonging to the secure identities and territories of residence. Seen in the light of tactical manoeuvring, this book argues that diaspora exhibits the ability to alter territory, to allow queer desires to appear and, ultimately, to destabilise the heteronormative discourses on sexual identity championed by the nation-state. Examining the tropes and discourses that diasporic bodies carry across borders and into/onto the territories they come to inhabit, I suggest that tactical diasporic movement threatens the maintenance of these discourses by weakening the fixed territorial boundaries and removing the certainty of strategy's stronghold on place. The crossing and re-crossing of spaces allows a re-symbolisation of attachment/detachment to a certain territory—tactical theorisations and queerness sanction a discursive as well as material space for new desires and subjectivities found at the interstices between space/body/time. Tactical diaspora and queerness reworks the strategic allegiances of space by laying claims to nation and home, reinstating queerness as a necessary part of making a national community.

Faith Smith begins her edited collection *Sex and the Citizen: Interrogating the Caribbean* (2011) by asking: 'What does it mean to be *Caribe*, *Antillais*, *West Indian*, *Kréyol*, *Kwéyòl*, *Créole*, *Creole*, and why are responses to this question tied so insistently to the sexed bodies, practices, and identities of the region's people?' (1). As an attempt to address this question, Smith refers to the volume contributors who look 'across the Caribbean, including its extended diasporic and coastal parameters' and 'speak from within but also challenge the assumptions of feminism, literary and cultural studies, queer studies, and anthropology' (1). The collection stands as an important contribution to the vast field of literature that explores the complexity of sexuality in the Caribbean. Re-thinking the role of sexuality in the making of a Caribbean identity, the volume considers numerous texts across various disciplines, from parliamentary legislation to films and the visual arts, in its explorations of the past and present 'structuring

signposts' that design and shape the discourses of the Caribbean sexual identity. This interdisciplinary method, Smith argues, allows the contributors to 'discuss the sexual practices, identities, and desires that have violated what many people in the region deem to be Caribbean norms of heterosexual respectability' (1). My readings of the queer Caribbean narratives in this book work in a similar fashion, where queer tactical diaspora allows me to 'speak' from a range of disciplines, locations and time periods, defying firm grounding within any one particular study. In fact, my engagement with the discourses of 'proper' and 'improper' Caribbean sexuality, where I argue that tactics introduce mobility as well as local historicity to the existing scholarship, is suggestive of Smith's collection in which she argues that 'Caribbean discourses of sexuality constitute a still understudied topic that can be illuminated by regional, local, diasporic, and multi-disciplinary lenses'. This tactical fusing of spaces, disciplines and time periods shows that 'these discourses mark a paradigmatic shift in the way the Caribbean is demonstrating to itself and to the world what it means to live in and with the present moment of globalization' (1).

I include here Smith's collection in that it features perspectives on not only 'sexuality' in the Caribbean space but also on gender, particularly in terms of my later discussion of creolisation and syncretism. In her chapter on women performing gender and sexuality in Suriname, Omise'eke Natasha Tinsley argues that although Jean Bernabé et al. in their discussions of *créolité* 'repeatedly reference storytelling and religion as "saying something" about indigenous ways of knowing', they 'systematically pass over other distinctively Creole lexical pools that might also be read as vehicles of subordinated knowledge' (241–242). What Tinsley is referring to is not the theorisations of race and ethnicity by the ways of Afro-Creole lexicology but the 'absence of gender within Creole languages' and 'the culturally specific grammars of gender and sexuality in the Caribbean' (242). In her reading of performance poetry produced by Surinamese *mati*, in which she looks at Sranan terminology and imagery, Tinsley argues that 'through the rhythms of repeating and shifting constellations . . . these Surinamese working-class women voice Creole conceptual frameworks for engaging women's sexuality in West Indian landscapes' (242). My readings of Creole identities in this book, especially in connection with my theorisations of space, echo Tinsley's contention that, 'in order to theorize Creoleness we

do not have to sidestep gender and sexuality ... and in order to speak of Creole gender and sexuality we do not need to import Northern queer theory' (250). In addition, my use of tactics adds mobility to Tinsley's grounding of the complexities of female sexual behaviour within the Caribbean space, destabilising the distinction between here and there.³ By emphasising indigenous epistemologies *as well as* movement between territories, queer tactical diaspora ushers a re-symbolisation of attachment to a particular territory. According to Smith, Tinsley's analysis 'refutes both those who contend that it is impossible to live in the Caribbean as a queer subject and those who would use the fact of queer subjects' residing in the Caribbean to deny that homophobia exists' (15).

The space of the Caribbean meta-archipelago

Antonio Benítez-Rojo's concept of the meta-archipelago will serve as an extension, and a crucial part of, my work on tactical diaspora. In addition, I believe that the work of Henri Lefebvre can be used as a springboard for an involvement with non-Western geographers such as Benítez-Rojo. Lefebvre offers a way of theorising the politics of space as it is perceived, conceived and lived. Identifying three 'moments' in the production of space—*spatial practice*—*representations of space*—*representational spaces*—Lefebvre interconnects these moments in order to emphasise a renewed approach to perceiving space. Spatial practice, according to Lefebvre, refers to the ways we perceive ourselves within our surroundings and the means by which we appropriate and utilise this space. This socially produced space is described as *perceived* space, open to limits, description and measurement. Within this space, we find symbols and ideas (i.e. representations of space) that are associated with knowledges and institutions. This is a dominant space that tends to work towards a verbal intellectualisation of *conceived* space, where signs, codes and knowledge are constituted through the deciphering of the spatial practice, resulting in control over the production of spatial knowledge. Representational spaces are relational spaces that are directly *lived* through their associated images and symbols.⁴ These spaces are seen as distinct from the other two in that they contain the elements of both but 'need obey no rules of consistency or cohesiveness. Redolent with imagery and symbolic elements, they

have their source in history of each individual belonging to that people' (41). Arranging these moments allows Lefebvre to suggest that, contrary to the traditional view that space is lived before it is conceptualised, representation precedes practice and the perception of space. In other words, rather than defining individuals through space, Lefebvre examines how individuals/bodies *create* or *produce* space. My overall aim with this is not to introduce a critique of Lefebvre's theories but to add the notions of gender and sexuality to the production of social space. The task is certainly not an easy one, but by appropriating these theorisations of space and those of queer theory, we can see how Shani Mootoo's novel, which I will analyse in the next chapter, constructs new notions of home and belonging.

The concepts of space found in Lefebvre and Certeau point to the practice of the everyday, which functions both as a means of domination in the late capitalist world but also as a possibility of resistance. Utilising tactics instead of strategy, we are able to better understand the Caribbean as a space with *and* without borders, where fluidity *and* rootedness coincide in the space *between* Foucault's understanding of utopia and heterotopia. According to Edward W. Soja, the trialectics of spatiality-historicity-sociality of Lefebvre's theories of space exhibit the ability to disintegrate the dual mode of thinking about space as Firstspace (concrete materiality of spatial forms) and Secondspace (thoughtful representation of human spatiality in mental forms). This points towards a 'thirding' of the spatial imagination which complicates the material and mental spaces, ultimately pushing towards Thirdspace, which Soja sees as 'simultaneously real and imagined and more (both and also...)' (11). According to Soja, 'the exploration of Thirdspace can be described and inscribed in journeys to "real-and-imagined" (or perhaps "realandimagined"?) places' (11). My focus on the betweenness of spaces points towards a consideration of the Caribbean inhabiting a meta-archipelago—*but with sexuality as the focal point*. Consisting of a chain of islands, the Caribbean, according to Benítez-Rojo, has been seen throughout history as a harmonious unity of islands, charted on a map as diverse but still in unison with its geographical surroundings. Diverse and heterogeneous, the Caribbean invites us to consider it as a place of syncretism and uprootedness, lacking historical continuity and historiography. This view, however, runs the risk of simply repeating the colonialist demand that the heterogeneity and fragmentation of the islands can

be reduced to a single entity, geographically situated in a neat array of disjointed wholes. This neo-colonialist view is incapable of capturing the richness of the Caribbean reality, in that the Caribbean possesses neither a centre nor a boundary. It is a fluidity that reinscribes the sense of belonging, significantly re-mapping Western notions of territory and identity. According to Benítez-Rojo, the Caribbean is not a collection of islands but a mixture of different phenomena such as 'unstable condensations, turbulences, whirlpools, clumps of bubbles, frayed seaweed, sunken galleons, crashing breakers, flying fish, seagull squawks, downpours, nighttime phosphorescences, eddies and pools, uncertain voyages of signification' (2) that cannot be joined in an easy symbiosis. Benítez-Rojo employs movement and fluidity as a means of transforming the Caribbean archipelago into a meta-archipelago, where middles form a decentred whole without abandoning the historical and cultural sharedness of the region. Within the space of the Caribbean archipelago, within its 'generalized instability of vertigo and hurricane, one can sense the features of an island that "repeats" itself, unfolding and bifurcating until it reaches all the seas and lands of the earth, while at the same time it inspires multidisciplinary maps' (3).

The repetition of the islands and the involvement of bodies in the production of space invite us to consider the role of sexuality within the production of lived space. Especially significant are the physical and psychological borders that signify the construction of diasporic space. But how can/does sexuality destabilise these borders? To better illustrate the constraining gendered/sexed production of the social spaces/borders, I want to pair Lefebvre's analysis of social space with Judith Butler's analysis of identity as performative. If tactical diaspora exhibits the interstices between space and body, then combining the theorisations of Lefebvre and Butler would serve as a theoretical and a practical tool for the investigations of the representations of space/discourse in the production of concrete abstractions/the citation of norms. Mutually constituted, space and identity serve as tools for the representation and the discourse of bodies, where both the production and the constitution of bodies constitute development of performative spaces. Coupling the production of social space with performative acts of gendered and sexed bodies presents us with the possibility of redoing and re-imagining the interstices between place and body. I do not suggest that Lefebvre's theorising

is purely practical and Butler's purely theoretical. Both are critical of the all-encompassing view that material effects cannot be separated from the construction of identity and social practice. Whilst Butler focuses on the discursive constructions of normative sexuality, arguing that they often have material effects inseparable from social reality, Lefebvre focuses on social practices as they are played out within the construction and production of space. Both theorists, however, pay close attention to the discursive elements that, whilst dominating the production of space and appearing to be fully intelligible, often serve to obscure the spatial and material elements in the construction of identity and social space. The dis-membered Caribbean body, by the means of appropriation of Lefebvre and Certeau's theorisations of space, along with Butler's notions of gender performativity, is re-membered and reassembled in new geographical configurations.⁵

Remaining where we are

In *My Garden (Book)* (1999), a series of essays concerning gardens and plants, Jamaica Kincaid writes about the history of gardens, different gardening catalogues, garden books, and her own gardens. Particularly, Kincaid is interested in the garden and its connection to history, colonisation and imperialism, and the way the mourning and the re-membrance of the garden can function not only as an act of resistance but also as a means for appropriating the Western institution of botany to voice an untold history of exploitation. As we will see in the next chapter, in *Cereus Blooms at Night*, Mala's garden becomes a site on which we can delve deeper into the notion of the Caribbean paradisaal garden and interrogate the myths of place and the 'self-conscious thematization of the conventions of ethnographic, travel, and scientific exploration narratives' (Casteel 18). In removing the strategic place, Kincaid ushers a theoretical as well as a material heterotopic space for new desires and subjectivities found at the interstices between space, body and time. For Kincaid, as well as Certeau, space is an effect and a practice rather than a given structure. Kincaid's *Garden* is more about the practice of gardening and garden making rather than her actual garden. Although Kincaid and Mootoo draw on past experiences in order to awaken memory as a means of recapturing the past, both writers experience difficulties,

pain and frustration in the process. Especially Kincaid's gardening process, which causes great worries and involves failed attempts at growing plants, can be seen as a creative but also an unproductive and a difficult practice that, although unsuccessful and filled with worry, brings joy and satisfaction in its fruitlessness:

How agitated I am when I am in the garden, and how happy I am to be so agitated. How vexed I often am when I am in the garden, and how happy I am to be vexed. What to do? Nothing works just the way I thought it would.

(2001, 14)

Kincaid's enjoyment of vexation about the failed attempts to employ the garden as a site for pleasure points towards the refusal of the pleasures of imagination as a means of re-'capturing' (i.e. a means to know and to 'understand'). As a result, the use of imagination exclusively does not offer a constructive critique of colonialism and instead points to neo-colonial Enlightenment concepts of knowing. Similarly, Édouard Glissant offers anti-essentialist readings of the Caribbean space. In his 1981 collection, *Caribbean Discourse: Selected Essays (Le Discours antillais)*, in which he theorises the notions of the postcolonial, Glissant writes:

What is the Caribbean in fact? A multiple series of relationships... In the Caribbean each island embodies openness. The dialectic between the inside and the outside is reflected in the relationship of land and sea. It is only those who are tied to the European continent who see insularity as confining. A Caribbean imagination liberates us from being smothered. (139)

Glissant puts forward a renewed way of *understanding* and *knowing* the Caribbean space where the will to understand and to know space leads away from knowledge. In other words, Glissant warns against employing the imagination to understand the Caribbean. In a similar vein, Kincaid rejects the pleasures of imagination to re-capture the past and the present. Thus, reading Glissant and Kincaid together suggests a new approach to understanding postcolonial space. In addition, we can compare Glissant's view of the Caribbean to Benítez-Rojo's notions of the meta-archipelago, which reveals an

interesting correlation between the histories of the openness of the Caribbean with the historical 'facts' of the colonisation of that same region. For Glissant, the Caribbean is a site of convergence of the histories of colonialism, negritude and pan-Africanism. Glissant calls attention to the fluidity and transformation of identity, and by looking at the complexity of Caribbean space he investigates the historical and political density of the Caribbean and the postcolonial world. Moreover, Glissant brings in both nature and human involvement in the creation of the Caribbean identity, placing human agency in the construction of its landscape: 'The crab-filled swamps, the flatness of the plantations, the factories overgrown with grass: the land contracts, and the cactus, and the cold-out sands' (9).⁶ Glissant's incorporation of identity within the theorisations of space correlates to Benítez-Rojo's repeating island which, serving as a bridge between South and North America and thus reinforcing the closeness of history and imagination, is 'a machine of spume that links the narrative of the search for El Dorado with the narrative of the finding of El Dorado; or if you like, the discourse of myth with the discourse of history' (4). Both Glissant and Benítez-Rojo look at the narrative of the Caribbean landscape as a means of gaining knowledge, not from the Eurocentric notions of a postmodern condition, but from a renewed understanding that stems from both the local *and* the global, the historical *and* the mythical contexts. According to Glissant,

It is difficult to separate theoretically the notion of oppressive dignity from the oppressive reality of private property. This makes sublimation necessary. This explains why Western philosophy and ideology all aim for a *generalizing universality*.... A generalizing universality is ambitious enough to allow for the sublimation of individual dignity based on the reality of private property. It is also the ultimate weapon in the process of depersonalizing a vulnerable people. The first reaction [against this] is the stubborn insistence of remaining where you are.

(1999, 138–139, emphasis in original)

In fact, Glissant's call for staying put does not imply a nationalist closure. Instead, remaining where we are allows us to gain knowledge about the crossing of cultures in a way that would account for and include the culture and politics of the particular region.

Moreover, by looking at landscape as a result of human agency and vice versa (i.e. a Caribbean landscape that is shaped both by nature and human involvement), we can connect Glissant's work to Lefebvre's (and Soja's) theories of space. In contrast to the anti-colonial nationalist practice of linking culture to landscape and claiming a non-European landscape as a foundation for an inherent national identity, Glissant proposes a postcolonial theorisation of landscape that critically *reworks* the European traditions of rootedness without adhering to the negritude literature of a prelapsarian past.

The openness of Glissant's landscape can also be seen as an invitation to a radical anti-essentialist view of the postcolonial condition, rooted in the imagined conceptions of perceived space (Secondspace). Isabel Hoving, analysing the connections between the theorisations of (lived) space by Glissant and Kincaid, suggests that, when read together, the two authors present a cross-cultural world where heterogeneity stands as 'an invitation to refrain from any quick understanding.... If one reads these texts as if they are about roads to insight they can be heard to invite us to *stay, to live* in the complexity of specific places, places that are always cross-cultural transnational, interdisciplinary' (135, emphasis in original). Hoving views Glissant's insistence on remaining where we are as a specific knowledge practice where the cross-cultural world is represented as highly concrete and at the same time highly abstract: 'I would describe such knowledge practice as situated, as interdisciplinary (for such knowledge production one needs political analysis, historiography, botanics, poetry, cultural analysis etc.), as dialogical; as inevitably politically aware, and aiming at political insights; but also eager for the idiosyncratic' (135).

Accordingly, Kincaid's exploration of the Caribbean landscape, and subsequently the Caribbean garden, adds the local and the global to Glissant's work, making the transition towards transnationalism (specific, concrete relations) without neglecting the postcolonial (general cultural characteristics) effects of the globalising world. Regarding Kincaid's explorations as a *practice* is a highly apt term for further examinations of how she employs the landscape as a means of theorising space. Kincaid's space is a practice of a Lefebvrian kind. Situated *between* the perceived and conceptualised, *between* the real and the imagined, Kincaid's gardening process/practice exposes the real effects of the colonial transplantation, denaturalising the connection

between landscape and inherent identity. Simultaneously, it exposes the failure of imagination to generate pleasure, since the desire to see and understand the garden inevitably leads to the regeneration and a continuation of the Enlightenment ideals of mapping knowledge. As a consequence, Kincaid presents neither an anti-essentialist nor an Enlightenment vision of the Caribbean landscape. In fact, for Kincaid, they both represent the colonial dream of the well-structured Garden of Eden in which the native landscape is in need of taming and control. For Kincaid, the idea of the Edenic garden symbolises domination and control, and rather than taking recourse to an anti-colonial discourse of opposition, Kincaid does away with the image of the Garden. Closing the essay 'The Garden in Eden', she admits that 'Eden is...so rich in comfort, it tempts me to cause discomfort; I am in a state of constant discomfort and I like this state so much I would like to share it' (2001, 229). Situating herself in the Thirdspace between the Firstspace of the anti-colonial discourse and the Secondspace of the Enlightenment ideal, Kincaid emphasises that what gives her pleasure is the notion of acting. 'What to do?', she keeps asking herself. The pleasure she gets from gardening lies not in the visual beauty of her garden but in the fact that discomfort, although bringing vexation and nuisance, is productive as it forces her to find new spaces and directions.⁷ Much like Lefebvre, Kincaid does not look for pleasure in the perceived or the conceived spaces—creating new spaces in the spaces in-between results in the discovery of a new set of complex spaces that act as a springboard for future actions. This space is different from that of Glissant, but by adding the dimension of the lived space, which is shaped by the material, political, historical and economical processes, to the theories of space offered by Glissant, Kincaid exhibits the possibility for the creation of Thirdspace and therefore a new set of concrete, material and uncontrollable actions.

Tradition in depth

With Glissant's insistence on remaining in the Caribbean, I do not propose a non-Western perspective as that which is 'alternative' or 'different' to the West. Rather, I simply wish expand the theories of space beyond the borders of Euro-America. Although the 'creolisation' of culture and language has been a prevailing preoccupation in

literary criticism within the space of the Caribbean, several other theories, such as syncretism and *créolité*, have also found their foothold in the articulation of difference and social diversity as a part of the Caribbean heterogeneity. Wilson Harris's study of *syncretism*, Glissant's *antillanité* or *poétique de la relation* (cross-cultural poetics), and Jean Bernabé, Patrick Chamoiseau and Raphaël Confiant's *créolité*, although different concepts and modes of scrutiny, all share the belief in the liberating dynamic of creolisation.⁸ The concept of hybridity, as developed by Bhabha, is an intermediary force that unsettles the 'knowledge'-based conclusiveness of colonial representation by producing spaces in-between the dominant paradigms where unauthorised and denied knowledges emerge and become audible/visible. Creating a cultural clash between the 'old' and the 'new', the in-between of culture produces social inequalities between the dominant national culture, paving way for 'the emergence of an "interstitial" agency' that creates a 'dialectic that does not seek cultural supremacy or sovereignty' (Bhabha 1996, 58). In the context of the Caribbean, much in the same manner as with Bhabha, only within a particular geography, the concept of creolisation has been seen as a specifically Caribbean issue dealing with the in-between states of belonging. Thus, as much as hybridity is a non-localised term so is creolisation a term belonging strictly to the Caribbean. Common to these theorists, however, is the belief in the liberating process of creolisation originating from non-hierarchical and unrestricted interaction of cultures: 'It is from this dynamic that creolization becomes a power for reversing the processes of acculturation (or assimilation), deculturation, discontinuity, and marginalization that have affected the entire Caribbean' (Balutansky and Sourieau 5).

Wilson Harris argues that the potential of syncretism, which is based on the heterogeneity of all cultures and societies, is constrained and denied by acts of homogeneity. Without dichotomising, the role of coloniser and colonised Harris posits the cross-cultural capacity of creoleness as a means of exposing and illuminating the otherness within the mental images of homogeneity:

It is necessary to make clear within the fabric of imaginative exploration . . . that homogeneity is a biological hypothesis that relates to all mankind to a basic or primordial ancestor, but as a cultural model, exercised by a ruling ethnic group, it tends to become

an organ of conquest and division because of *imposed* unity that actually subsists on the suppression of others.

(1983, xviii)

Rediscovering the cultural resources based in the mythological past, the Caribbean creoleness allows for the rejuvenation of a heterogonous community. Although he contends that monolithic discourses silence differences, Harris does not valorise heterogeneity as an 'authentic' voice of the Caribbean. Instead he points towards the incompleteness of all images, whether they are homogenous or heterogonous:

The paradox of cultural heterogeneity, or cross-cultural capacity, lies in the evolutionary thrust it restores to orders of the imagination, the ceaseless dialogue it inserts between hardened conventions and eclipsed or half-eclipsed otherness, within an intuitive self that moves endlessly into flexible patterns, arcs, or bridges of community.

(1983, xviii)

The importance of Harris's theory is seen in its relation to Glissant's 'language of landscape', which the latter perceives as crucial for the missing African cultural recognition in the Caribbean. For Glissant, the significance of landscape is evident in his insistence that Caribbean writers should establish a dialectic between culture and the natural world: 'people did not relate even a mythical chronology of this land to their knowledge of this country, and so nature and culture have not formed a dialectical whole that informs a people's consciousness' (1999, 63). Much in the same manner as Kincaid's investigations of the hybridity and creolisation of plants, Harris suggests that the natural world is not simply a geographical setting for human history but a vital part of the symbolic language. Harris calls for writers and poets to deepen their perception of landscape and to consider Caribbean space as a dialectical relationship between the human and nature. His critique of the stasis of place and time points towards the two ideas that are crucial to understanding his writing: the 'victim stasis' and the 'novel of consolidation of character'. Undermining linear time, space and sequence, Harris employs syncretism as a means of altering the conventional understandings

of memory and identity. Speaking about the Caribbean novel, Harris remarks that 'there are certain areas of the world in which one is aware that people who live there are conscious of themselves as persons who have been exploited' (quoted in Drake 7). However, he also remarks that the traditional Western narrative is inadequate in capturing these facts: 'The facts are true, but a syndrome occurs which in relating itself to the facts becomes something other than the facts. A certain psychological stasis is born, what I call the "victim stasis"' (Drake 7). The narrative of the relationship between the victim and the victimiser creates a homogenous and stifling setting in which both the victim and the victimiser become involved in a perpetual cycle of historical repetition:

An alteration needs to occur in the texture of the novel to allow these juxtapositions to play in such a manner that the creation of a vision through and beyond stasis, which I see as immensely pertinent to the late twentieth-century novel, may occur through an alternation in the settled fabric of realism that consolidates victor and victim... without that subjective alternation the community is doomed to perpetuate an endless reinforcement of conflict.

(Drake 7)

As an attempt at working on the traditional binaries, Harris's fiction contains the narrative structures and dialogic settings that serve as focal points for the encounter between the victim and the victimiser, the self and the Other, the native and the alien, where the dialogue between the seemingly opposing entities results in a recognition of the interchangeability of these very concepts.

Since the intersection between the familiar and the unfamiliar is 'alien' to the classical nineteenth-century realist novel, Harris reworks the European realist novel by means of opening the syntax of classical realism and introducing a reopened 'nature' of human society in relation to forces neither natural nor social but situated somewhere in-between. Related to Bhabha's belatedness—a 'time-lag'—Harris's writing forces us to read differently, somewhere in-between time and space. Serving as a 'hole' in modernist thought, Harris's work is an 'interrogative space' (Bhabha 1992) in which a pre-Columbian, New World African past is recalled into a language of place that Harris himself terms 'iconic landscape' (quoted in Emery 111). Harris's use

of the term iconic 'immediately spatializes what we expect to be narrativized temporally and lends a ritual connotation to the space set into view, the landscape as sacred memorial image and as a setting for acts of memory' (Emery 111). For Harris, the landscape implies that nature is 'co-productive with human culture', and cultural texts are 'produced and read through a "view" of nature which opens onto a profound cross-cultural and cross-spatial imagination' (Emery 111). This means that, in terms of space, we must 'probe the function of roots as a criterion of creativity and capacity to digest and liberate *contrasting spaces*' (1981, 57, my emphasis). The move towards contrasting spaces implies a breakdown of both the homogenous setting of the victim stasis and the consolidation novel. In fact, the turn to landscape exhibits the ability to re-naturalise social relations as well as reveal the natural landscape 'as a cultural text co-existent with the eroded histories of "obscure individuals" and to counter the dominant history of conquest through the resurrection of "conquered peoples"' (Emery 112). The use of landscape in Harris's writing extends to the writings of Shani Mootoo and Jamaica Kincaid, as the focus of *Cereus Blooms at Night* and *My Garden*, although constructed as a reconstruction of a singularly Caribbean setting, lies not on the particular geographic or historical boundaries of the West Indies but is related to a multi-relationality of the postcolonial and a transnational space. Most importantly, via 'contrasting spaces', Harris points towards a reconsideration of the imperialist paradigm of the pre-Columbian/post-Columbian, in that it only allows for history to be situated on either side of the line. Harris's spaces re-envision the Caribbean present via repeated crossings over this dividing line. The rewriting of colonising fictions involves an inclusion of differences and contrasts and, via communal efforts, suggests alternatives to hegemonic devices of homogeneity that continue to dominate in the Caribbean and other postcolonial regions.

The reflections on the impact of space on history and identity made both by Western (Lefebvre, Certeau) and 'non-Western' (Harris, Glissant) theorists⁹ attest to the importance and the imminence of the move away from generalised debates regarding postcoloniality towards more historically and geographically specific forms of discourse analysis. More precisely, the move enables us to focus on the contested/contrasted spaces that are racialised, sexualised and gendered, in that, as we have seen above, space is a vital factor in the

production of power and history. The move towards the Caribbean involves remaining in the Caribbean space and simultaneously questioning the Eurocentric imaginative logic of the Caribbean bordering on the pre-Columbian/post-Columbian divide. By looking at sexuality within theorisations of Caribbean space, we can turn toward an emphasis on diasporic queerness as a method for deconstructing the dichotomous logic of the dominant Euro-American paradigms in theorising local and transnational sexuality. By turning towards a 'native tradition of depth' and away from the European novel of consolidation of character, we are able to analyse Caribbean space in less traditionally postmodern and more transnational and dialogic terms. According to Harris,

The post-modernists have discarded depth, they have discarded the unconscious, thus all they are involved in is a game, a kind of game, whereas what I am saying is not just a game. I am convinced that there is a tradition in depth which returns, which nourishes us even though it appears to have vanished, and that it creates a fiction in the ways in which the creative imagination comes into dialogue with clues of revisionary moment.

('Literacy and the Imagination—A Talk' 27)

Applying the traditions of depth to our discussion of queer and diaspora invites us to consider the spatiality of Caribbean narratives in terms of syncretism, where sexuality becomes a dichotomous contrasting space in need of further investigation.

One important aspect of my study of the notions of Caribbean space in *Cereus Blooms at Night* is the consideration of the rhetoric of nationalism and the requirement of consolidated identities based on categories of sex, gender, race and colour. The realism of the post-independence anti-colonial narratives, which favoured itself as opposed to and different from the colonial narratives of oppression and domination, was based on the nineteenth-century classic realist texts. Despite being centred on Caribbean instead of European landscapes, these narratives failed to overturn the colonial imperative of encoding monolithic national identities and hierarchical gender systems.¹⁰ The articulations of Caribbean creolisation emphasise the cultural, racial and linguistic differences and the dynamics of cross-cultural possibilities for resistance and creativity. However, looking

at these significant factors runs the risk of relegating the notions of sex and gender to a status lesser than those of culture and 'race'. The images of heterosexual exoticism and masculinist images of Antillean identity, in particular, lead us to consider some of the Caribbean women's writing and their response to the existing theories of creolisation. The development of new, feminist modes of speaking of Caribbean difference and heterogeneity exhibits the possibility of contesting masculinist articulation of Caribbean nationhood by focusing on the issues of privilege, authority and status within the neo-colonial paradigms. Rather than opposing the hierarchical discourse of family established by the nineteenth-century colonial ideology, these theorists work against the hierarchical systems of gender categories, limitations and hegemony. In a manner akin to Harris's, feminist theorists utilise the connection among peoples who have experienced/are experiencing similar colonial or neo-colonial oppression as a way of cutting across geographical and political boundaries. Instead, these writers employ Harris and Glissant's notions of geography (landscape in particular) as a means of making connections with the 'native peoples' who still stand inscribed in the Caribbean landscape. In his attempt to encourage Caribbean writers to re-establish the dialectic between landscape and history, culture and nature, Glissant reminds us that in the absence of African cultural recognition the Caribbean landscape is 'its own monument: its meaning can only be traced on the underside. It is all history' (1999, 11). Adhering to Glissant's emphasis on landscape as an important factor that places emphasis on the Caribbean rather than European perspectives, post-independence feminist Caribbean writers employ landscape as a central metaphor for the re-imagination of the Caribbean literary narrative. The important difference between Glissant/Harris and these writers is that the latter place emphasis on gender and sexuality as well as race and colour.

Gender and syncretism

Erna Brodber, a Jamaican who left her place of birth for the United States during the nationalist era of the 1960s, shares Jamaica Kincaid's objective of re-imagining Caribbean geography alongside Caribbean narratives in her fiction. More important is Brodber's creolised view of the Caribbean, in which the Caribbean landscape, the Caribbean

archipelago and the cross-cultural communities, all work to place a Caribbean identity within the geography of the Caribbean as opposed to the colonial view of identity caught between 'motherlands'.¹¹ Utilising and reworking Harris's ideas of the healing characteristics of syncretism, Brodber focuses on narration and structure as a means of dealing with the multiple voices and communities that occupy and inhabit the gendered space of the Caribbean. This is especially significant for my discussion of Mootoo's text where narration, structure and voicing play a vital role in the articulations of Caribbean space, identity, nationhood and belonging. Brodber's novel *Myal* (1988) is a text that emphasises syncretism by focusing on those liminal contrasting spaces where partiality and multiplicity are the means for creating resistance against the homogenous elements that stifle the heterogeneous community's rediscovering its own sedimented cultural recourses. Although highly influenced by Harris, Brodber takes syncretism a step further by exploring the sexual exploitation of women and the historical, political, economic and spiritual violence and crises in the context of colonial annexation of Jamaica. Brodber constructs her novel around a crisis/rejuvenation dyad, where the violence caused by the colonial control of Jamaica results in spirit thievery (zombification) and, as a consequence, a marking of colonialism, patriarchy, nationhood and control on the bodies of the two women. Much in the same way as Anita suffered spirit possession from a secret obeah man, Mass Levi, Ella's own spirit is being 'thieved' by Selwyn Langley, who uses Ella for his own imaginative colonisation of her community. The two women in the novel, Anita and Ella, are both victims of spirit thievery as their voices are silenced and denied and, according to Gina Wisker, it takes 'an exorcism of misleading education practices as well as an exorcism of illegitimate power practices and an exorcism of our reading practices to enable a new, constantly metamorphosing, dynamic set of alternative readings to emerge' (411). By examining the simultaneity of oppression, Brodber employs the theme of spirit thievery to embody racial, sexual and colonial domination. More importantly, by employing two female protagonists, Brodber manages to reread Harris's syncretism as a means of healing the community, and by keeping gender at the forefront, Brodber reveals the connections between patriarchy and colonialism. As the various members of the community gather their resources to heal Anita and Ella, we are presented with the

religion of myalism as the medium for resisting the psychic and material violence of imperialism and neo-colonialism. As the characters unite (although separately) in their efforts to combat obeah, they also change the history of the religions, in that the myal community creates space for the involvement of members of different religions—Ole African (necromancer), Reverend Simpson (Baptist minister), Maydene Brassington (White wife of Methodist minister), Mass Cyrus (myalist) and Miss Gatha (Kumina priestess). As these characters join forces to combat the larger spirit thievery of colonialism, we witness the cross-cultural and syncretic elements of the Caribbean heterogeneity. By including Maydene, an ostensibly colonial subjectivity, into the group of community healers, Brodber follows in the footsteps of Wilson Harris in her refusal of the victim/victimiser dyad, emphasising multiplicity and heterogeneity as a means of healing the community from imperialist forces.

My aim is not to produce an analysis of Brodber's text but simply to point out that syncretism, in the manner articulated by Harris and developed further in Brodber's novel, allows us to view *Cereus Blooms at Night* as a part of this syncretic project. Brodber's emphasis on multiplicity is reminiscent of Mootoo's narrative of Mala's abuse. Both novels defy coherent narratives as a way of re-capturing the past. In addition, Brodber follows in the footsteps of Wilson Harris and suggests that communal interpretation of an event yields more constructive results. In *Cereus*, we are not sure who articulates what, as Tyler appears to be a highly unreliable narrator. In *Myal*, we are reminded several times that 'the half has never been told'. Apart from the apparent warning against closed interpretations, the phrase also suggests that diverse strategies and different perspectives are necessary for a change and a healing to occur.¹² The importance of partial knowledge is evident in the novel. Like in *Cereus*, we are not presented with an omniscient narrator. Instead, the narrator appears to share many traits with Mootoo's narrator whose knowledge is both limited and fragmented. Much like in Kincaid's *Garden* and Mootoo's *Cereus*, imaginative readings of the colonialist critique are refused, and the reader is encouraged to gradually piece together the story from the information received from various characters. Instead of creating an imagined space as a setting for her story, Brodber creates a space of representation where dialogue and difference broaden the scope of the novel. The heterogeneity of community and the

multiplicity of points of view, as well as the partiality of knowledge, emphasise Brodber's continuation and reworking of Wilson Harris's call for poetics of difference as a means of opening the imperialist and neo-colonial homogeneity. By accenting the cross-cultural capacity of syncretism to expose the otherness within the heterogonous community, Brodber re-reads this model through a feminist critique of communal crisis and posits gender at the forefront of the struggle.

Brodber, in the same manner as Wilson Harris, Édouard Glissant and Jamaica Kincaid, repositions some of the postmodern theoretical configurations through which issues of identity and place are constructed. As a parallel and a counterpart to the traditional meta-narratives of global migrancy, Brodber's fiction reterritorialises the Black Atlantic model by paying close attention to locally specific geographies. In other words, Brodber is attentive to Glissant's call for 'remaining in the Caribbean' as a means of intervention into the theoretical debates over the interaction of local and global, and by utilising Caribbean creolisation she manages to link the geography of creolised identities to a historical past. Therefore, by focusing on small communities within the Caribbean, we are given an opportunity to view place not as static and originary, but as both 'rooted' and 'routed'. Similarly, and as I mentioned earlier, by looking at the connection to place in relation to geography *as well as* history, we can view the island of Lantanacamara in *Cereus Blooms at Night* as both a localised and yet profoundly diasporised space. Although Harris points to syncretism as a heterogonous element that works against the homogenous imperatives within neo-colonising paradigms, it is important to note that despite the diverse experiences, voices and histories that have shaped the Caribbean, differences of class and gender still point towards reserved privileges and social exclusions. These differences stem from the lack of investigation of other cultural elements that play a crucial role in defining the relationship between the West and the Caribbean. Tracing *other* European stories and histories is one of the main themes of *Myal*, particularly those that are silenced or disavowed by the prevailing dichotomies of race, gender and sexuality. According to Gilroy, the Black Atlantic traces how 'the history of blacks in the West and the social movements that have affirmed and rewritten that history can provide a lesson which is not restricted to blacks' (223). For Brodber, this history is open and unrestricted from the very beginning. Interrelational and intersubjective,

Brodber's Caribbean community is geographically and historically open to the routed as well as rooted ebb and flow of peoples. Working within the Caribbean as a means of recovery of the Black experience and its connection across the African diaspora, Brodber acknowledges the European Other as an important constituent of a community and a nation. By incorporating contrasting spaces in terms of geography, sexuality and belonging, Brodber theorises the *rooted* local as well as the *routed* transnational.

2

Shani Mootoo's *Diasporas*

Movement of bodies across various places is one of the central themes in Shani Mootoo's *Cereus Blooms at Night*, as its focus on sexuality and the Caribbean diaspora is crucial to the discussions of cultural and sexual belonging.¹ I look at Mootoo's novel as a text that re-imagines and reforms not only belonging but also bodily and social space. By creating an inhabitable space, thus re-imagining and displacing belonging, the novel points to the significance of movement of various bodies across various spaces and the encounters that occur between them. I trace the recurring themes of belonging and cultural and sexual citizenship in the novel, as they are closely connected to the notions of culture, place and body. Decolonisation, in Mootoo's novel, is a tactical way of subverting and displacing heteronormative narratives, as it makes space for alternative modes of affiliation and the seemingly impossible desire to emerge and begin to challenge, to unsettle, to queer.

Cereus Blooms at Night

Cereus Blooms at Night is set in the town of Paradise on the fictional, dreamlike Caribbean island Lantanacamara. Colonised by the 'Shivering Northern Wetlands' (SNW), the town's schools, missionary churches and sugar plantations have all been created and named by the colonisers. All of the characters in the novel live on and across various physical and psychological borders, which exhibit multiple sites of exile and dislocation. One of the central characters, Mala, has Indo-Caribbean parents who are descendants of indentured labourers

brought from India to fill the economic void created by the abolition of the slave trade, whilst the White Christian Thoroughlys have come from the SNW to educate the 'uncivilised' Indians at their mission school. Meanwhile, Mala's mother develops a passionate relationship with a White woman named Lavinia, which results in her leaving Mala, her sister Asha, and their Mission-educated father, Chandin, during the escape from the island, first to the SNW, then to Canada. Asha's trajectory of movement is equivalent to her mother's, as she too leaves the island for the SNW and then goes to Canada. This time, however, it is to run away from her father's rape and abuse. Meanwhile, Ambrosia, the daughter of Mala's suitor, Ambrose, is 'transformed' flawlessly into a man, Otoh, who falls in love with Mala's nurse, Tyler. Tyler, escaping the dangers he faces on Lantanacamara, leaves and receives an education abroad where his 'perversion' acts as a distraction from his 'foreignness'. These boundary crossings emphasise not only the multiplicity of identity on Lantanacamara but also the decolonising politics in the Caribbean landscape. Thus, the notions of citizenship on Lantanacamara are closely tied to the notions of what constitutes natural and unnatural sexuality. Moreover, the sites of multiple identities and histories, only visible through travel, through distance from the site of erasure, call attention to the importance of geography, of place and space and the multiple transformations various bodies go through during the process of acquiring citizenship. Sexuality, in *Cereus*, is what links the various identities and narratives, challenging the imperial and neo-colonial assumptions of what constitutes sexuality, and investigating the questions of knowledge, power and representation and the violence inherent in those assumptions. More importantly, within these violent geographies Mootoo exhibits faith and belief in a citizenship inclusive of gay, lesbian and transgendered subjectivities by creating a queer space within the Caribbean diaspora. This citizenship, however, does not represent a complete history of national belonging but points more in the direction of an epistemic crisis, questioning the possibility of an all-inclusive and absolute record of belonging. Here, Mootoo sets forth a queer alternative to Berlant and Freeman's notions of the Queer Nation. In *Cereus*, this involves multiple sites of connection and affiliation, based not on nationality and/or sexuality but on desire and affinity across the history of slavery, colonialism and exploitation. The novel points towards

an unknown and unpredictable future, eschewing all-knowing and resolute epistemes, whether they are queer or not. Mootoo refuses to romanticise queerness through a vision of an all-inclusive site of diasporic belonging.

Cereus is a novel fraught with different histories. Sexuality is merely one of many narratives that permeate the novel. Closely tied to sexuality, however, are the stories of exile, resistance, incest, rape, queer desire and the multiple legacies of imperialism, such as colonial science, missionary theology, slavery and indentured labour. Also prominent is the language of natural history with its emphasis on identification, classification and normativity. Consider, for instance, the narrator's scientific description of Mala's unruly garden: 'At first, Aves, Hexapoda, Gastropoda, and Reptilia burrowed instinctively into nooks and crevices. They realized eventually that they had no cause to hide. Mala permitted them to roam boldly and to multiply at leisure throughout her property' (1999, 128). The scientific language describing the various plants, birds and insects, which is maintained throughout the novel (although not preserved in its original manner), embodies the novel's complex relationship with colonial and neo-colonial scientific discourses. Interestingly, the very normativity of the colonial discourses produces sites of insurgency and counter-history within the language of natural science, turning it upside down and muddling the untainted garden of colonialism. Even the colonial landscape of Lantanacamara, with its transplantation and hybridisation, is preserved only to be used to usher a new, queer cartography, where a re-membered past and an alternatively realistic present are reworked, coexisting side by side in an ambiguous physical space. Remembrance of the colonial past is hereby presented not as a historically 'correct' rendition but as a mechanism and a catalyst for new modes of queerness and affiliation.

Mootoo's *Lantanacamara* is patterned after pre-independence Trinidad and Tobago. According to Sahadeo Basdeo and Brinsley Samaroo:

During the period of Indian indentureship to the British, French and Dutch Caribbean (1838–1920) approximately 500,000 *girmityas* (agreement signers) made the long journey of just over 10,000 miles across the *kala pani*. Most of the labourers remained in the region after the end of their bondage. About 25 per cent

returned to India after fulfilling their five or 10-year contracts. Today, the descendants of the indentured workers are spread over the whole Caribbean space, forming a majority in Guyana and substantial minorities in Trinidad and Tobago as well as Suriname. (96)

They note that whilst some 144,000 East Indian immigrants arrived in the Caribbean between 1838 and 1917, 40 per cent of the current population in Trinidad (1.2 million) is East Indian. More importantly, in terms of cultural belonging, Basdeo and Samaroo note that 'the question of numbers in the Caribbean scenario is important in that the larger the numbers of East Indians, the greater has been the tendency to maintain an Indian identity' (96). I will discuss what this 'Indian identity' entails in the subsequent pages. On the island of Lantanacamara, however, cultural belonging is reserved solely to the heterosexual notions of family kinship and affinity, where gay men's and lesbians' inclusivity in culture is denied by the homophobic and heterosexist allocations of Caribbean cultural citizenship. The various transformations and movements on the island exhibit the incompatibility of queer identity and the Caribbean decolonising politics. However, because of characters' multiplicity of identity, the novel complicates the divide between natural and unnatural sexuality. Importantly, the troubling of the divide between 'perverse' and 'natural' is mirrored in the landscape where metamorphoses of identity reflect the metamorphoses of the backdrop of Lantanacamara. The island thus becomes a site for the articulation of a utopian queer community, linking queer subjects to the official history of imaginative decolonisation. This utopian community, however, does not represent an alternative history of sexual 'deviants' but offers a site for a re-creation of identities. The unpredictability of sexuality on Lantanacamara parallels other border crossing identities, such as Otoh who, after 'flawlessly' metamorphosing into a man, becomes attractive to both men and women and has 'the ability to imagine many sides of a dilemma...and the vexing inability to make up his mind' (1999, 110). Moreover, the meaning of his name—an acronym for 'on the one hand, on the other hand'—reflects the in-betweenness of identity and indicates the mutability of sexuality. I suggest that Otoh's non-normative gendering hints at queerness as the quintessential example of the colonial condition. The questions

of sexual identity are closely linked with the notion of liminality as the novel disrupts the ideas of naturalness and perversity. Naturalness is best exemplified in the descriptions of the 'natural' world of Mala's garden, where birds, insects and plants are allowed to roam freely. Mala's house is not only surrounded by nature but also by the smell of decay from the bodies of insects and the decaying corpse of her father. The vivid life found in the garden is contrasted with death, only to reinforce the sense of life and energy that Mala experiences there: according to the narrator, the scent had the aroma of 'life refusing to end. It was the aroma of *transformation*' (1999, 128, my emphasis). Transformation, the metamorphosis of identity and the linking of characters to the natural world do not only apply for Mala; the unfolding of the rare cereus flower occurs as Mala, Otoh and Tyler are brought together in the novel. Furthermore, upon entering her garden, Otoh mistakes Mala 'for a shrub' (1999, 155). The association between Mala and the other (queer) characters links them with the natural world, situating queer identity within Caribbean space.

Working on Black women's writing and the re-negotiation of identities, Carole Boyce Davies remarks: 'My mother's journeys redefine space. Her annual migrations, between the Caribbean and the United States, are ones of persistent re-membling and re-connection . . . Hers is a deliberate and fundamental migration that defies the sense of specific locations that even her children would want to force on her' (1). Crossing the geographies of belonging enables Davies's mother to traverse boundaries, to redefine space and geography and, ultimately, to defy the terms and rules of dominant discourses. Interestingly, Davies points to her mother's agency, her activeness and her migratory subjectivity. Davies's mother incorporates several identities, not all of which are constituted as harmonious. In fact they are anything but. Correspondingly, in *Cereus*, the dominant discourses are the ones concerning 'reality' and 'true' representation of the natural world, of time and space, and the way knowledge is generated and transmitted. Placing the fictitious island of Lantanacamara at the heart of the novel enables Mootoo to defy these discourses, to reflect upon knowledge, reality and representation and to push beyond what is known, in order to imagine, redefine and re-member differently. Lantanacamara, as an imaginary island, is *not* Trinidad but merely a version of it. It is not an already-known place. Rather, it is a space unnamed, unimagined and unspecified

from the dominant (Wetlandish) point of view. Lantanacamara and ultimately the Caribbean become spaces outside the norms of the colonisers' episteme. Similar to Davies's mother, Mootoo provides her Black female characters with subjectivity that is conceived outside the terms of domination and subordination. The in-betweenness and smoothness of space in Davies and Mootoo suggests that Black female writing cannot be structured in terms of one specific place. It exists across geographies and times, eluding specification. Davies argues that 'in the same way as diaspora assumes expansiveness and elsewhere-ness, migrations of the Black female subject pursue the path of movement outside the terms of dominant discourses' (37). Asserting agency within her characters to remember differently, Mootoo not only exhibits defiance against dominant discourses, but by crossing the bounds of place, time, history and consciousness, she pushes against the silences of the untold and towards imagining a different future. Shattering the boundaries of the geopolitical spaces traditionally defined through citizenship, Mootoo creates new diasporic spaces, *tactical* spaces, where home and belongingness can be attained by the means of redefining identity away from exclusion and marginality.

Citizenship, especially in terms of sex and sexuality, is what generates the links between place, culture and belonging in Mootoo's novel. By engaging in a critique of homophobia in a Caribbean space, Mootoo creates a semi-utopian space for her queer characters, and asserting a sense of ownership over the Caribbean cultural space, she explores the connections between sexuality and the nation-state. In terms of diaspora, however, one could argue that Mootoo's creation of a semi-utopian space in which movement and migration undermine the restrictive binary of local/global, overlooks the locally social and the historical contexts in postcolonial Trinidad and Tobago. This would inevitably (and perhaps expectedly) locate her text within the postcolonial literary tradition of writing back to the colonial centre the 'normativity' of the colonial discourses/texts on sexual and cultural belonging. In the following sections, I will show that Mootoo's texts—indeed all of the texts in this book—are materially grounded in their respective historical and cultural contexts. And although the continuous movement and border crossings expose Mootoo to the charge of positioning her characters as transitional subjects lacking specific material subjectivity, I will argue

that Mootoo grounds her characters within the continuing legacies of colonialism, slavery and indentureship.

In her analysis of nationalism and sexuality within the Caribbean space along with a reading of legal texts in Trinidad and Tobago and the Bahamas, M. Jacqui Alexander points out that the Caribbean states, in order to assert their legitimacy, naturalise heterosexuality by criminalising gays and lesbians by the means of exclusion from the Caribbean citizenship. Marking sexual inscriptions upon non-procreative bodies, these states enforce racialised legislation as a part of the attempts at a decolonisation and reconstruction of the self. Arguing that the criminalisation of these bodies functions as a technology of control, Alexander contends, nonetheless, that the stigmatisation of non-procreative sex is not just about sex. In fact, it is more related to the notions of what kind of sexuality imperils the nation and what kind promotes citizenship. According to Alexander,

not just (any)body can be a citizen any more, for *some* bodies have been marked by the state as non-procreative, in pursuit of sex only for pleasure, a sex is non-productive of babies and of no economic gain. Having refused heterosexual imperative of citizenship, *these* bodies, according to the state, post a profound threat to the very survival of the nation.

(6, emphasis in original)

Posing a profound threat to the survival of the nation, these bodies are viewed as anti-national and in need of regulation. Policing the sexual and reinscribing the inherited constructions of masculinity and femininity, the state transmits the need for transnational capital in terms of both commodification of sexual bodies and of regulation of what it means to practise 'natural' sexuality. According to Alexander, citizenship continues to be premised within heterosexuality and heteromascularity. Thus deviant sexualities are produced in the service of a transnational economy. In the contexts of Trinidad and Tobago, sexuality and propriety are the dominant discourses that are transmitted from the colonial past into the postcolonial present. Ironically, the transition from the colonial era to the postcolonial one is mediated by an anti-colonial nationalist movement which *preserves* the notions of propriety and morality established in the colonial era. The Caribbean nation-states' attempt at a fortification

of the sense of a national identity circumvents the flow of global processes that are rapidly transforming the ways that nations imagine themselves. Undermining privatisation and the transnational economic restructuring, these states denounce 'deviant' sexualities, such as homosexuals, prostitutes and sexualised women, as the exclusive source of the dissolution of the nation-state.

The archetypical source of state legitimation is thus grounded in the notions of the heterosexual family, which the state views as fundamental to nation building. Fixing heterosexuality, however, involves a distinction between natural heterosexuality and unnatural promiscuous sex, which is reinforced by the fiction about promiscuity and the unnaturalness of gay and lesbian identity. As a result, non-conjugal heterosexual relations, such as rape or incest, are conflated with same-sex relations, establishing a link between criminality and homosexuality: 'by criminalizing perverted heterosexual sex, the legislation aims to expunge criminal elements from the heterosexual so that it could return to its originary and superior moral position' (Alexander, 10). Eroticising the dissolution of the nation, the state produces mythic versions and visions of Trinidad and Tobago where there were ostensibly no lesbians, gays or people with AIDS. The conflation of sexuality and international capital are the processes that, evoking the colonial discourses of morality and propriety, constitute the notions of the state and respectable masculinity. As the colonial rule included racialising and sexualising the population, it also meant that the racial categories and hierarchies of Blackness and Whiteness were naturalised. More precisely, Whiteness was naturalised, whilst Blackness and Black bodies were sexualised, thus criminalising Black masculinity. Collapsing identities into bodies, colonial rule sexualised Black women's bodies as having an 'unruly' and wild sexuality, whilst the Black male exhibited a hypersexualised identity, demonising Black bodies and subjecting them to control. Inheriting from the colonial rule the notions of civilisation and morality based on sexualised and gendered norms, the anti-colonial rhetoric of the postcolonial nation-state exhibits precisely the moralistic and White middle-class ideology that was the basis for the colonial rule:

It would indeed require a complicated set of cognitive and ideological reversals for the British to turn the savage into the civilized, to turn those believed incapable of rule into reliable rulers. Herein lies

the significance of socialization into British norms, British manners, British parliamentary modes of governance; into conjugal marriage and the 'science' of domesticity.

(Alexander, 12)²

Female sexuality, in particular, is the site where the socialisation into respectability helps shape colonialist middle-class beliefs about the body, normality and virility. The import of the imperialist definitions of morality is evident in the production of a specifically East Indian national identity in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Viewed as a challenge to the solely Afro-Trinidadian definitions of national identity, the East Indian nationalist discourse was similarly centred on the imperialist definitions of natural and unnatural sexuality, mainly in terms of women's sexuality in relation to popular culture. Gopinath notes that the bases for the nationalist claims to East Indian identity in Trinidad were the ideas of sexual propriety and the disciplining of 'deviant' sexualities. The increasing popularity of chutney, a form of popular music and dance performed by Indo-Trinidadian female family members as a wedding celebration preparing the bride-to-be for her role as a wife, caused in the early 1990s a furore in the articles and columns of Trinidad's East Indian newspapers (Gopinath 2005, 161). Centred on the issues of private and public space, the chutney controversy revolved around the notions of the Indian women's performance outside the confines of their homes and in the sphere of public space. The move from the private to public instigated immediate criticism from the culturally conservative Hindu organisations in Trinidad, denouncing chutney and its roots as improper and indecent. Tejaswini Niranjana argues that the East Indian nationalist discourses created the notion of a 'pure' Hindu identity by denouncing chutney as 'vulgar' and 'obscene', expressing immorality and lack of propriety. More importantly, the public dance performed by middle-aged Indian women exposed the discursive regulation of Indian women's sexuality not only as heterosexual but also as virtuous, chaste and private. At the heart of the debate lay the colonial claims for respectable female sexuality, enclosed within the confines of the home, formerly introduced during the Indian indentureship in the Caribbean: 'Indian tradition (and Indian women) in Trinidad become to be defined as that which is not, cannot be allowed to become, African' (Niranjana 130). Consequently, the consolidation

of East Indian Trinidadian nationalism over its African counterpart re-enacts the heteronormative and colonialist notions of female sexuality within the space of public culture, resorting to discourses of sexual propriety and civility. Thus the consolidation of Trinidadian postcolonial nationalism demands a coincident production of both unruly sexualities and female nationalist subjects, demonstrating the necessity and the centrality of discourses of women's sexuality to nationalist definitions of Indianness in Trinidad. According to Niranjana, at the base of the discourses of women's sexuality stands chutney as an embodiment of Indian women's sexual autonomy from the Hindu male elite. Chutney, representing the fear of miscegenation between Indian women and Afro-Trinidadian men, becomes 'a metonym for the supposed increase in the relationships between Indian women and African men' (128). Gopinath, on the other hand, is critical of the presumption that 'Indo-Caribbean women's sexuality is always and everywhere heterosexual' (2005, 163), urging alternative ways to imagine women's sexuality that may exceed the heterosexual parameters set out by national discourses. Gopinath reveals the necessity for examining queer *female* desire which is rendered *impossible* within the diasporic and state nationalisms that dictate the disciplining female sexuality and legislate heterosexuality. In her attempt to expand the feminist readings of chutney as a diasporic cultural practice which run the risk of replicating the nationalist framings of sexuality as heterosexual, Gopinath insists on a queer feminist reading that pinpoints those bodies, desires and subjects which are deemed impossible within the dominant diasporic logic: 'These queer incursions into diasporic public culture reterritorialize the home by transforming it into a site where non-heteronormative desires and practices are articulated and performed' (2005, 164). Similarly, *Cereus Blooms at Night* produces alternative forms of affinity and affiliation that exceed the pathologisation of 'uncivilised' or 'unruly' sexualities. Since non-heterosexual and queer identities are produced and pathologised by the nationalist discourses on Lantanacamará, *Cereus* becomes a record of alternative identities and sexualities that emerge from the confines of morality and propriety. Indeed, Mootoo's novel works its way from the discourses of contemporary postcolonial nationalisms back to the colonial past and towards new modes of affiliation based on affinity, shared sexuality and national queerness.

The political and the legal categories used by state-nationalisms to render certain identities as criminal or anti-national find their archetypal source of state legitimisation in the heterosexual family, where the consolidation of domesticity works as a basis for proper citizenship. Indeed, looking at the level of productivity in certain bodies, the state managers sanction heterosexual conjugal monogamy by warding off non-productive sexualities that threaten to corrode their efforts in the construction of a 'pure' nation. Women's sexual agency and erotic autonomy are seen as a challenge and a threat to the ideological notion of a nuclear family which perpetuates the fiction that the family is the foundation for a healthy society. The political and the legal categories that contribute to the erosion, denial or criminalisation of certain groups or identities are one of the focal points of *Cereus Blooms at Night*. The various sites of exile and dislocation experienced on Lantanacamara contribute to Mootoo's exploration of those identities that have been erased by the dominant discourses. By centring a female character, Mootoo's novel relates to Alexander's discussion of heteropatriarchy within the state, where the colonial inheritance infiltrates the decolonising politics of the postcolonial nation-states by forefronting patriarchy and civility, whilst simultaneously deploying forced regulation against non-approved forms of femininity. The female diasporic subjectivity in Mootoo's novel challenges the masculine articulations of nationhood and belonging by revising and re-imagining the geographical and historical discourses that control and regulate Caribbean female sexuality. As I mentioned earlier, looking at sexuality as a mobile tactic of deterritorialising the relationship between diaspora and queer requires a renewed focus on movement and migration where the restrictive binary of local/global is released towards a synthesis between the two categories. *Cereus* presents movement between geographical territories as a significant factor for the challenge to the neo-colonising notions of 'proper' sexuality and nation building. The non-heteronormative sexualities, so abundant in the novel, travel between, within and away from the space of home, transforming the notions of belonging and rootedness.

Tactical diasporising can be found in Mootoo's definitions of Lantanacamara as a national allegory of Trinidad. By naming a town Paradise, Mootoo reflects on and re-creates the imperialist notions of

the Caribbean as the biblical Garden of Eden, a pastoral motif of a recovery of a lost essence. The historical associations of the garden with the science of botany as a colonial project point towards an allegorical characterisation of the novel, where the associations above are merely a commentary on European exploration narratives of the Caribbean. Serving as an extended metaphor, an allegorical narrative functions as a mediator between past and present and fact and fiction, speaking cultural and historical truths via the medium of stories, fables and other narratives. Through fiction, allegories work as a site for memory, remembrance and re-membering. Consequently, the island of Lantanacamara is abundant with stories from the past, all of which are entangled with history and the present. But the idyllic garden of *Cereus* is shown to be tainted by colonisation, exploitation, decay and death. As a result, Mootoo's invocation of the Caribbean's association with the paradisaical garden is a tactical move of invoking past histories in terms of an allegory, in order not to simply retell the past but to cross the bounds of history, truth, consciousness, time and space, and bring forth alternative voices, unknown truths and silences that continue to resonate in the present. However, the novel is not 'simply' allegorical either, despite its portrayal of an individual story of domination and abuse as a metaphor for the imperialist control of Caribbean space. Rather, as May argues, 'Mala's story is both individual and collective, private and public: Mootoo asks readers to hold both storylines in mind, to juxtapose the different forms of "family" violence, to draw the lines of connection across various forms of displacement' (2006, 108). Both personal and public, Mala's story juxtaposes the novel's two 'storylines' not as opposites but as connected with one another. Mootoo contrasts the two narratives to draw the lines of connection between them, inviting the readers to the collective memory on Lantanacamara, escaping the confines of time and place, yet without discarding their impact on the bodies of her characters.

In 'Third World Literature in the Era of Multinational Capitalism', Fredric Jameson argues:

All third-world texts are necessarily, I want to argue, allegorical, and in a very specific way: they are to be read as what I will call *national allegories*, even when, or perhaps I should say,

particularly when their forms develop out of predominantly western machineries of representation, such as the novel.

(69, emphasis in original)

Certainly, there are risks involved in projecting postmodern theories onto Caribbean space. Nonetheless, I employ here a Western definition of the national allegories of the so-called 'third world' only to reveal its Eurocentric underpinnings. This is vital for the subsequent readings of queer diasporic narratives, as they employ Eurocentric definitions of diasporic narratives only to deconstruct them by the means of queer tactical diaspora. Jameson's claims that '*the story of the private individual destiny is always an allegory of the embattled situation of the public third-world culture and society*' (69, emphasis in original) are clearly disputed in *Cereus*, in that the generalising statement about all 'third world' literature, which creates a tidy opposition between the 'first' and the 'third' world, presupposes an equality and sameness between all the subjectivities, desires and affinities within the 'third world' nation. Mootoo's novel does not quite fit into the category of a national allegory. Rather, it works to dissolve and challenge the nationalist and imperialist notions of 'first' and 'third' worlds, introducing tactical space as a means for re-creating and re-membering place differently, metamorphosing the materiality of place and destabilising the distinction between home and away, 'here' and 'there'. Mootoo employs the image of the garden as a metaphor and a site of hybridity where history, geography, botany, politics and personal narratives intertwine. Thus, I read Mootoo's novel as appropriating Paul de Man's notion of 'allegory of reading' to a postcolonial context, revealing the classical philosophical oppositions within Western readings and understanding of texts and dissolving those towards a more complex knowledge and interpretation of the personal and public histories of colonisation in the Caribbean. De Man views the history of literature as consisting of heterogeneous moments, each exhibiting temporal and liminal differences that work towards a deconstruction of closed circuits of meaning and ontological accounts of history, pointing towards 'limitations of textual authority' (99). In the context of *Cereus*, however, we can see how allegory allows personal narratives to stand for larger political and historical conditions on Lantanacamara. Mootoo uses the garden as a metaphor

that connects subjectivities and identities in terms of personal and collective memories.

Bodies, spaces and the garden

Employing tactics as a method of creating fertile grounds for redefining space enables a formation of cross-cultural and non-heteronormative connections between spaces and bodies. In *The Autobiography of My Mother* (1996), Jamaica Kincaid writes:

It was that time of day when all you have lost is heaviest in your mind: your mother, if you have lost her; your home, if you have lost it; the voices of people who might have loved you or who you only wish had loved you; the places in which something good, something you cannot forget, happened to you. (70)

The close connection between Kincaid's mourning of her mother and of a home/homeland demonstrates that the ability to remember 'the places in which something good, something you cannot forget, happened to you' goes beyond the traditional narratives of remembrance. Here, re-membrance allows a creation of new sites and modes of affiliation. Akin to Davies's recollection of her mother's journeys, Kincaid bestows upon her own mother and herself an active agency by which an alternative remembrance is possible due to its traversing of boundaries. This re-membrance becomes less a psychological condition of loss and more a political tool for unearthing silenced histories and alternative notions of citizenship, sexuality and the nation-state. Tactical re-membling removes strategy's grasp on place and instead ushers a discursive as well as material space for new desires and subjectivities found at the interstices between space/body/time. Mala's garden is fruitful and unruly. In it we find rare birds, insects and various plants. Indeed, Mala seems more in touch with the vegetable life than with the rest of the inhabitants on Lantanacamera. Mootoo's landscape is an ironic one: appealing to the imperialist notions of the Edenic garden, Mootoo calls into question the assumptions about identity and place by exposing the myths of the garden to the outside world of history and exploitation. Mootoo's treatment of the garden is closely connected to contemporary debates concerning place and identity; or, more precisely, the connection between identity and a

particular territory. The site where this connection becomes disengaged, however, is when the moving body comes into contact with the various geographies of inhabitation. Mootoo's centring of the garden, I believe, challenges Western theorisations of space by looking at the history of the concept of the garden, focusing on the modern tropes within postmodern discourses. According to Casteel,

The garden is not easily assimilable to a postmodern reading of space, for in contrast to 'non-places' such as airport lounges and theme parks which are characterized by their ephemerality and lack of concern with identity...the garden suggests fullness and density, foundations and origins. Unlike the borderland, another favourite of recent criticism, the garden points towards interiority and enclosure as well as towards edges and margins. (13-14)

This theory offers a historically specific application of the term 'nomad' in which the Caribbean setting creates the backdrop for the colonial articulations of botany and botanical visions of the Americas. For many cultures across time, the garden has functioned as a site of self-reflection, or 'cultural reflexivity' (Crozier 627), as well as a space for the articulation of economic and social relationships. The garden is also connected to the notion of hybridity, both in the metaphorical sense (the hybridisation of cultures) and the literal and historical sense (racial hybridity). However, the garden in Mootoo's and Kincaid's work functions as not only an imperial trope but also as paradise, a slave plantation, a burial ground and a site of remembrance and mourning. Evoking the themes of movement, exile and displacement, Mootoo's garden, via its connection to regeneration and femininity, produces sites of resistance and affiliation, pointing towards a re-evaluation and restructuring of the Western concepts of the garden as a gendered and colonisable space. Particularly significant is the utility of the garden to establish the link between human beings and the natural physical world. John Dixon Hunt suggests that the garden as a cultural object, apart from altering its surroundings by its presence, is a 'bridge' between art and nature. Invented in societies undergoing quite dramatic transitions, the gardening tradition can be understood as cultural 'texts', like art or paintings, representing the world beyond their beds.³ As an important addition to

Hunt's contention, Crozier notes that gardens 'can be experienced from within as well as observed from without, something that applies equally to contemporary and extant historical gardens' (628).

The European pastoral vision of the New World as the new Eden becomes an important tool for considering the notions of the garden and what it came to symbolise within Caribbean space. More importantly, in reflections upon the tactical usage of space in *Cereus*, we should turn our attention towards negritude literature and the search for the pre-colonial origins of Caribbean writing. Negritude, a literary movement of the 1930s, began as a protest among French-speaking African and Caribbean Black thinkers and writers living in Paris against the French colonial rule. With its leading figures, Léopold Sédar Senghor (elected first president of the Republic of Senegal in 1960), Martinician Aimé Césaire and Léon Damas from French Guiana, the movement looked at critically at assimilation and Western values and began to reassess African culture. According to J. Michael Dash, 'modernity first manifested itself in the Caribbean with independent Haiti's utopian dream of technological progress. Modernity was an emancipatory discourse. It signalled the end of the oppressive hierarchies of the Old World and the Recognition of a New American spatiality' (61). No longer oriented towards technological progress, the modernist discourses within Caribbean space at the turn of the twentieth century pointed towards a fantasy of rediscovery of a mythical Caribbean past. The existentialist theorisations of the 1930s, motivated by the reactions to the catastrophe caused by World War I, were closely related to the nationalist movements in the Caribbean. Moreover, as modern technology was associated with machinery of horror, Caribbean negritude turned towards a radical poetics of rediscovering the connection between the natural world and Caribbean space. Influenced by the Harlem Renaissance, the negritude movement appropriated the Old World vision of the New World as the place of lost origins that could be recovered by challenging the epistemology of the scientific knowledge and celebrating a new, natural reality. Aimé Césaire, for instance, discards plurality and hybridisation in the Caribbean, arguing for a politics and a poetics of origination and a new beginning. According to Dash, Césaire's 'Poetry and Knowledge' (1945), which questions Eurocentric knowledge and proposes poetry as a starting point for the new beginning, where purity can be rediscovered by discarding metamorphosis and

change, is an essay about 'an apocalyptic self-invention, a radical other who, while breaking with an older tradition of modernity and fleeing the oppression of modernization, founds a new, original reality' (63).

The notion of the rediscovery of the lost paradise is crucial for understanding the significance of the garden in Caribbean space and a history that has occurred in this space. Even more significant is the *lack* of the cultural and historical specificity, resulting in the obliteration and silencing of subjectivities and identities that adhere to different notions of citizenship and belonging. The myth of the Caribbean prelapsarian past becomes nostalgia for a dreamlike, bygone era where unity can be revived and relived, where the New World, drawing on African origins, would become a new Eden, eschewing not only the mechanical and the technological advances but also any historical or artificial influences. This New World is indeed imaginary—it is a search for a Caribbean utopia. Challenging the Western oppressive system of knowledge is hereby replaced by a new, closed system of alternative knowledge, which is remarkably similar to that of the West. Moreover, the new imaginative world of the Caribbean is closely related to the Western notions of the discovery of the Garden of Eden in the Americas as the brave new world. This new world, the *other* world, would be an *absolute* world, distinct from any Western influence or authority. The replication and re-appropriation of the European vision of the New World by poetics and the renewed contact with nature reinscribe the binary of nature/culture and reinforce the primitive/civilised binary of European approach towards the New World. The pastoral motifs of a lost essence obstruct a more historically and culturally specific engagement with the actual conditions of the Caribbean. The appropriation of the gardening motif in *Cereus Blooms at Night*, however, engages and deconstructs the Western notions of the Garden of Eden without obfuscating the cultural, historical and hybridising conditions of Caribbean space. I suggest that Mootoo's novel reinscribes and reworks one of the great (and more traditional) New World pastoral narratives, namely, Jacques Roumain's *Masters of the Dew* (1944). In *Masters*, the main protagonist is on a quest for a lost paradise: Manuel, a Haitian hero, in pursuit of a lost time, returns to his motherland after a period of exile to heal the Haitian community and implement a new knowledge and a different set of meaning to the villagers of Fonds Rouge. Devoid of historical and social context, the novel fits within the New World

pastoral narrative of a lost paradise where a new order and truth can be inscribed. Dash's impressive reading of *Masters* identifies a strong influence of anthropology as a part of the strong Latin American tradition of the rewriting of time, space and identity. Imposing a new narrative that has no traces of (or need for) any historical or social verification, Roumain's novel, under a strong anthropological influence, proposes a new beginning and a new origin for Haitian society, seemingly far removed from the Western discourses of modernist and technological advances responsible for the two World Wars and the occupation of Haiti. According to Dash,

in his desire to articulate a new truth about Haitian society, Roumain conceives of a language, or rather a metalanguage, that would reorient the primal images of sun, tree, earth, man, and water. This new discourse is grounded in the land and etched into the surface of the landscape by the cutting edges of various tools. (78)

Interestingly, whilst Manuel becomes the 'father' of the new society, all diversity, which is seen only as a fragmented state of fallen world, vanishes. Wielding absolute power, the figure of the transmitter of knowledge of culture becomes the author of the Haitian prelapsarian truth. History starts anew with the new leader. Much like Césaire's poet, Roumain's hero employs an Edenic vision as a starting point for a new arcadian society. Challenging Western notions of knowledge and categorisation, which are viewed as oppressive and colonising, the New World pastoral inserts an Adamic motif of the lost paradise as a new hegemonic system that eschews history in favour of a New World Other and its unanimous voice. The absoluteness of the expression of the arcadian order, which serves as a means for combating the Western tyranny of reason, leads to a formation of another closed system of 'primordial' values.

The importance of Roumain's text for our discussion of Mootoo is twofold: not only does it provide the historical and cultural background in terms of the New World pastoral narrative of a lost paradise; more importantly, Mootoo employs Roumain's text to oppose the colonising patriarchal images of the (heterosexual) female in the minds of anti-colonial writers. In other words, Mootoo exposes the imposition of the authoritative voice of the New World Other as distinct and homogenous, devoid of any involvement with Western

values or reasoning. It is also shown to be not only ahistorical and ethnographic, but also, ironically, imperialist, patriarchal and neo-colonialist. Here, I introduce a quote from Dionne Brand's 1994 collection of essays entitled *Bread Out of Stone*, in which she writes:

In male writers' work like that of Jacques Roumain or Earl Lovelace or George Lamming the female body is either motherly or virgin, which amounts to the same thing—like land to be traversed or owned. Their descriptions are idylls, paeans, imaginary, and inescapably about territory, continent. (34–35)

Brand evokes Roumain as a reference point, a text which *should* and *must* be criticised for its positioning of the Black female body in relation to the male speaker. In Roumain's text the Black female body is situated, imagined and must ultimately be owned: 'The female is made for a man, carnally knowledgeable in the essential female body but young, hapless, inexperienced, waiting for inevitable control and ownership' (35). Mootoo's text can be seen in a similar vein where she implicitly invokes these early texts in order to write back to them, not only separating the Black female body from its male 'owner' but queering it, inserting queer desire there which is thought impossible. As we will see in the next chapter, the invocation of queer female desire is not simply a method of writing back; it is closely tied to anti-colonial and anti-neo-colonial struggles to oppose racism and homophobia in the shape of political action. In *Masters of the Dew*, according to Brand, 'the woman [is] a country, virginal, unspoiled land, [she is] territory for anti-colonial struggle' (35). In need of change, however, are not the anti-colonial imperatives but their methodology: 'These are not writers with bad intentions, but their approach to the Black female body is a redeemer of the violated, and builder of the binary pedestal' (35–36).

Before expanding Mootoo's use of the garden and delving deeper into the details about her means of historicising the Caribbean, it is necessary to introduce a critical history of *Cereus Blooms at Night* and the various analyses of Mootoo's transformation of the New World pastoral narratives. My arguments about the metamorphosing of the materiality of place and the destabilising of the distinction between home and away, which introduces a tactical space as a means for re-creating and re-membling place differently, are a continuation

of the existing critical scholarship on not only Mootoo's works but also on the general theorisations of space, diaspora and queer theory. In her analysis of Mootoo's *Cereus Blooms at Night* and Gisèle Pineau's *The Drifting of Spirits*, Sarah Philips Casteel remarks: 'The mutual interdependence of place and displacement is signalled in Pineau's and Mootoo's novels by the fact that, although both novels take place in the Caribbean, the Caribbean location is set against the backdrop of a diasporic, global context ...' (25). Moreover, focusing on the garden as a site of this displacement, Casteel observes that, in the traditional New World pastoral,

the garden is the place where exile comes to an end. Pineau and Mootoo, on the other hand, highlight the historical dimensions of the garden—its relationship to colonial rule, the plantation system, and the circulation of plants and people—so that the garden itself becomes the signifier of exile and displacement. (25)

Several other critics note the themes of history and displacement in Mootoo's novel. Vivian M. May remarks that 'Mootoo plays with [the] paradisaical motif, neither inverting it nor dismissing it but, rather, subverting it' (2004, 3). Noting the importance of knowledge and the scientific language in the novel, May pinpoints the sites of strategic and wilful ignorance in Reverend Thoroughly as a means of objectifying others with the intention of maintaining ontological inequality. Although adopting Chandin as his 'son', it becomes clear that the Reverend does not consider his relationship with Chandin in familial terms. Utilising Chandin, who has managed to adopt SNW mannerisms, grammar and behaviour to an uncanny extent, as a means to promote their church and missionary schools, the Thoroughlys develop a system of wilful ignorance, where Chandin's utility appears twofold: he functions both as a symbol of appropriate assimilation for the other Indians in labour camps, and as a model of the in-need-of-rescue non-Christian Other. However, wilful ignorance is not only reserved for the Thoroughlys. The 'open secret' of Chandin's rape of his daughters is known to everyone on Lantanacamara, yet the silence surrounding the rape deafens the island. The community's knowledge of Mala's suffering and the subsequent inaction of the inhabitants in preventing Chandin's rape, which is attributed to the

'suffering' Chandin was 'subjected to' by his wife, exemplifies the wilful ignorance of all other moral issues except the ones concerning sexuality and propriety. According to May,

passive in the face of knowing what they would rather not-know, and therefore, in the end, choosing not to know, the community has shunned Mala and has participated in her violation via wilful ignorance. Passivity is another locus of wilful ignorance, another means by which the status quo is maintained.

(2006, 116)

The notions of belonging in *Cereus* are investigated by Heather Smyth, who argues that Mootoo 'challenges formulations of Caribbean culture that rely on an assumed parallel between Caribbean or African-based culture and heterosexuality on the one hand, and between European or imperialistic culture and homosexuality on the other' (143). Arguing that Mootoo's work brings forth renewed notions of cultural citizenship, severed from the homophobic and heterosexist allocations of Caribbean cultural space and more attached to the anti-racist politics of including Caribbean gay men and women into the citizenship, Smyth emphasises movement as the means of accentuating the fluid forms of identity and border crossing in *Cereus*. Presenting sexuality as a fluid form of identity, Mootoo parallels sexual indeterminacy with other forms of boundary-traversing subjectivities, emphasising identities that live in the space of the 'in-between', both in terms of sexuality and liminality: 'Through a "both/and" approach to sexuality, Mootoo uses the flexibility of queer identity as a decolonizing tool' (151). This liminality provides Mootoo with a site for the investigations of sexuality by the means of utopianism, where queer subjects can find space for the performance of their identities. The utopia is not a traditional one, however. Lantanacamara, a site fraught with history, violence, colonialism and abuse, also becomes a site where decolonisation does not require uniformity but demands a diversification and a deeper understanding of Caribbean experience.

Paralleling sexual indeterminacy with boundary crossing, and the appropriation of the gardening motif in *Cereus Blooms at Night*, with its focus on space and the dialogue with history, is closely associated with Foucault's notions of heterotopia; that is, places that are

both sites and counter-sites. As an extension of the earlier argument that the garden functions as a site of self-reflection, Mootoo's garden also functions as a *mirror* space caught between a utopia and a heterotopia. According to Foucault,

between utopias and these quite other sites, these heterotopias, there might be a sort of mixed, joint experience, which would be the *mirror*. The mirror is, after all, a utopia, since it is a placeless place. . . . But it is also a heterotopia in so far as the mirror does exist in reality, where it exerts a sort of counteraction on the position that I occupy.

(1986, 24, my emphasis)

As an extension of Foucault's argument, the appropriation of the garden as both paradisaical and historical allows Mootoo to articulate a new narrative of belonging, where the connections to the geographies of place are retained in a slightly different manner. Mirroring creates a new and different reality and through pastoral imagery, Mootoo reworks the rootedness and hybridity of the garden towards a renewed understanding of belonging rooted in *both* traditional narratives *and* a more complex and flexible theory on space.

Creating a fictional island setting allows Mootoo to mirror a different reality. Pushing back against what is 'real' and what is not, the island of Lantanacalara, like that of the writing of Jamaica Kincaid, signals the 'reality' of hybridity and creates a heterotopic space where history, connection and affiliation are reflected in both real and unreal dimensions. Mootoo's garden bears a resemblance to Kincaid's in that it allows the writer to draw on past memories and to reawaken memory into an active agent for recapturing the past and transforming it into a dynamic force capable of reconnection and rehabilitation. In Mootoo's novel, *memory* itself becomes hybridised, and because it exhibits the possibilities for connection with the past, it needs to be reawakened. For Mootoo, Mala's garden, located within the larger context of Caribbean space, becomes a site of memory, where movement and boundary crossing intersect the sexual and the social disenfranchisement found on the island of Lantanacalara. Memory, however, must be seen in connection with space, in that boundary crossing and the multiplicity of identity within the Indo-Caribbean context of the novel exhibit the

ability to alter our understanding of the concept of queer diaspora. If Mala's garden functions as a heterotopic space, it does not, however, disavow the psychological and the physical sensations of a home. The notion of 'home', or of feeling at home, is closely related to the notion of borders, whether they are physical or psychological. Home spaces and borders, which are abundant in Mootoo's novel and are almost always related to heterosexuality, are constantly being constructed and destructed. The White missionary home of Ernest Thoroughly, the 'native' home of Chandin's parents and Chandin's own home in which he incarcerates Mala and Asha are spaces that are reworked and deterritorialised by the means of movement. Then there are outside home spaces, like Britain and Canada, which serve to place the island of Lantanacamara into the larger context of diaspora and diasporic movement. Common to them are the borders constructed in terms of colonial domesticity, patriarchy and heteronormativity.

Considering the Caribbean as a Thirdspace and a space *in-between* is vital to our understanding of space and territoriality in Mootoo's novel. In fact, we could identify the island of Lantanacamara as a *counterspace* due to its fragmentation and non-centredness. Mootoo's novel displaces traditional territorial markers of identity by locating and dislocating Lantanacamara and its inhabitants within and outside the larger context of the trialectic between the Caribbean, Canada and Britain. Moreover, we might compare Bhabha's notion of 'cultural liminality *within the nation*' (2004, 148, emphasis in original) with Elsie Mohanty's comment about her son's/daughter's sexuality ambiguity within the space of the Caribbean diaspora: 'you are not the first or the only one of your kind in this place. You grow up here and you don't realize almost everybody in this place wish they could be somebody or something else' (1999, 238). Elsie's comment links the binary structures inherent in colonialism with the sexual politics of a postcolonial nation, emphasising the importance of boundary crossings not only in terms of racial and social alienation but also in terms of sexuality. Moving beyond the traditional emphasis on race, Mootoo focuses on the importance and the ramifications of going 'beyond' one spatial territory and on to another. In *Cereus*, characters living on the margins are grouped and placed at both the centre and on the periphery of the social affiliation of both Lantanacamara and the Caribbean. This tactical displacement and repetition reworks the

Caribbean space which is traditionally seen as inhabiting an immobilised present. In other words, the Caribbean space becomes a site where the mobile future (in this instance represented in the image of Canada) is returned to the present and reworked from within.

How does the repetition of the borders of the lived space on Lantanacamara work? After Asha runs away from the house in which she and her older sister are caught, Mala is left alone in the house whose borders are determined by its powerful master Chandin. Building a restricted territory for his two daughters, Chandin uses chicken wire to construct a space in which he would possess and dominate his children but also guard them (and himself) from the outside intrusion of Sarah and Lavinia's eventual return. The creation of physical borders turns the Ramchandin home from homely to unhomely. The strict policing of physical borders of this perceived space does not result in a more powerful sense of security. On the contrary, the reinforcement of borders creates a space that is unstable, repressive and violent. Chandin's Firstspace, however, is not only limited to the confines of the Ramchandin residence. In his attempt to re-create the domestic family life based on the image of the Thoroughly home, Chandin re-enacts the Caribbean history of domination and enslavement, resulting in sexual abuse and violence within the confines of the constructed borders. According to Bhabha, 'the recesses of the domestic space become sites for history's most intricate invasions. In that displacement the borders between home and world become confused; and, uncannily the private and the public become part of each other, forcing upon us a vision that is as divided as it is disorienting' (2004, 13). The division and the repetition of borders between public and private spaces attest to the power in creating and maintaining the relationship between centre and margin in terms of belonging to a nation and a home. Ostracised from feeling comfort within the confines of her father's home, Mala is also displaced from the centre within the public realm of the playground: not wanting 'bad people' in the playground, Walter creates a border by drawing a line in the sand, separating himself from Mala by the means of the physically visible border in the ground. As a result of this border formation, Mala is displaced from the centre to the margin due to her family history. For Mala, the homely place does not exist. Both the public and the private spaces have, with the creation and maintaining of borders, become unhomely and uncanny.

Whoever has the ability to create and enforce borders also gains access to power and control. Mala's attempt to create her own space is thwarted by Walter who, ridiculing her failed effort, re-establishes himself as the creator of borders: 'Is you how draw the line? Or me? I draw the line. I go where I want. Who have stick in their hand? You or me? Go home. Go!' (1999, 86). According to Justin D. Edwards, 'this line in the sand is a provocation, but it also maps out a vision of land that divides the spaces of centre and margin, privilege and ostracization' (137). Banished from the homely home, Mala cannot go home, for such a place does not exist. Instead, after her father's death (we as readers must assume that he died of injuries or starvation), Mala becomes the one who controls and organises space. Terrified of her father's return, she takes up residence on the veranda outside the house, creating a space that would keep her far enough away from not only Ramchandin inside the house but also the inhabitants of Lantanacamara outside the residence compound. Thus Mala's space on the veranda becomes a liveable Thirdspace, caught in-between the symbolic and the natural worlds. Sheltered from the Firstspace of the outside world, Mala seems to inherit her mother's garden as a feminine space of refuge from the symbolic world. In this liminal space, Mala establishes a connection with the natural world of birds, insects and plants, trying to heal her damaged female psyche. This image of the garden situates it within Lefebvre's conceived space, in which 'projections into the empirical world from conceived or imagined geographies' (Soja 79) are made entirely via thought. In this view, Mala's garden, ripe with natural imagery, becomes a Secondspace which, according to Soja, 'is the interpretive locale of the creative artist and artful architect, visually or literally re-presenting the world in the image of their subjective *imaginaries*' (79, my emphasis). Although Mala appears to be in full harmony with the natural world of the garden, 'The wings of a gull flapping through the air titillated her soul and awakened her toes and knobby knees, the palms of her withered hands, deep inside her womb, her vagina, lungs, stomach, heart' (1999, 126–127), she is nevertheless tied to the symbolic order of culture. As she waits for the cereus flower to bloom in the moonlit night, Mala is described as a 'concert director...witnessing the slow dance of huge, white cereus buds', remaining merely an attentive spectator, attending a beautiful performance, a 'choreography of petal and sepal' (1999, 134). Mala's garden is not a place outside

history. It is firmly situated within the history and geography of the Caribbean. Moreover, in terms of Lefebvre's theorisations of space, it comprises both a perceived place (a place pervaded by the foul odour coming from the downstairs sewing room) and a conceived space (Mala's remembrance of her traumatic childhood and the subsequent physical anxieties she experiences in the garden). Mala's creation of her own space on the veranda, however, places her in an in-between space where she could represent the world via her own artistic imaginary. After the choreographed display of the blooming cereus, Mala, according to the narrator, 'kept her eyes closed. Fortified by the night's display she wove memories. She remembered a little and imagined a great deal' (1999, 142). Thus, in *Cereus Blooms at Night*, Mootoo creates a literary and a fictional counterspace where the Caribbean, by the means of its non-centredness, allows for a formation of spaces of representation that signal openness and a mode of in-betweenness that resist dominance, subordination and knowability. For Lefebvre, spaces of representation are intertwined with the real and the imagined. They are spaces of the periphery and the centre, in which struggles for liberation and emancipation are performed individually and collectively, through the mind as much as the body. According to Lefebvre,

Representational space is alive: it speaks. It has an affective kernel or centre: Ego, bed, bedroom, dwelling, house; or: square, church, graveyard. It embraces the loci of passion, of action, of lived situations, and thus immediately implies time. Consequently it may be qualified in various ways: it may be directional, situational or relational, because it is essentially qualitative, fluid and dynamic. (42)

Mala's garden, being the macrocosm of the wider context of the Caribbean, occupies the space between reality and fantasy, between magic and realism, where neither one nor the other takes on the dominant role. It is a place where magical realism provides different standpoints not only from a temporal perspective—taking us to the past and back again to the present—but also from a spatial one. Otoh is the only one who dares to enter Mala's counterspace on the veranda. But his entry into the space between the unsafe 'outside' and the locked-down 'below' of the house entails a remembrance and a

breaking into the violent past of her childhood. As Mala reconstructs the elaborate rescue of the innocent Pohpoh via her daydreaming, Otoh enters the garden, which is described as a 'lost jungle, and except for the odours he would have sworn he was in a paradise' (1999, 155). When he finally sees her, Mala is sitting 'in a rocking chair, beside the tree, her eyes closed. Her figure was all but lost in the blueness of the mudra's trunk' (1999, 155). Otoh's invasion of Mala's counterspace is at first described as a continuation of the hallucinatory visions of both Otoh and Mala, in which Mala dreams about Pohpoh whilst Otoh stares in disbelief at the old woman for whom his father had such high regard. As the odd couple begin to dance to the sound of Dixieland jazz, the space of Mala's veranda turns into a fairy tale vision of a couple dancing and remembering past times. As she leads him from the space of the veranda to the daunting space of the cellar, the fairy tale vision turns into a gothic nightmare, resulting in a public invasion of Mala's residence by the outside space of Lantanacamara.⁴ Warding off the invasion of her private space, Mala returns briefly to the imaginary of rescuing Pohpoh by sitting under the mudra tree but the physical invasion of the Ramchandin residence results in her fantasies remaining just that. Without the physical and the psychological space of the veranda, Mala's counterspace shatters, and as a consequence, her identity fractures, resulting in the division between the adult Mala and the child Pohpoh. The islanders' entrance into the house also causes a temporal disturbance where the division between the past and the present is blurred. Mala's remembering becomes influenced by the intruding police officers whose actions result in a reconfiguration of her memory: 'Mala remembered. She heard the voices of the police. She reconfigured what they said to match her story of how she saved Pohpoh that day' (1999, 75). Moreover, as both the police and Mala view the decomposing body, they see it is as both dead and alive. To the young Pohpoh, Ramchandin is not only alive, he still poses a threat, whilst the police see the body as evidence of a crime and Mala's unstable mental condition. The blurring of borders and the creation of liminality and non-centredness creates a counterspace in which an artistic imaginary represents the world in a non-linear and fragmented space. This space, however, works against an incursion of one space into the other. In fact, it works in-between spaces of magic and realism, neither rejecting the realism of the death of Ramchandin

nor subordinating the temporal dislocations and artistic imaginaries of Mala's remembrance to the state of a mental condition. Overall, the homely sensation of the Ramchandin residence is only made homely by the creation of another space, situated in-between the borders of magic and realism. In *Cereus*, the creation and the maintaining of borders act as a means of both sustaining and deconstructing the relationship between centre and margin, in terms of not only national but also sexual belonging. More importantly, however, the novel attests to Lefebvre's assertion that representational spaces are alive and dynamic, resisting domination from perceived and conceived spaces of Lantanacamara and the Caribbean, whilst remaining grounded in their cultural specificity. The combination of Otoh's view of Mala's garden as a paradise and the horrific discovery of Ramchandin's corpse underneath the house attests to the illusiveness and the reality of life on Lantanacamara.

The intrusion of public space into the 'paradise' of Mala's garden along with its subsequent destruction forces Mala to construct new borders in order to protect herself from the outside world. Piling furniture in front of the window in the Alms House, Mala reconstructs the physical borders of her childhood. According to Tyler, 'Every night Miss Ramchandin would build and every morning I would deconstruct' (1999, 78). In order to find and construct a counterspace that would keep her safe, Mala replicates borders made of chairs and tables that kept Ramchandin locked in the cellar below the house. In order to shelter from him Mala 'locks' Ramchandin away from her, creating a safe place for her to construct a countersite in which she would be able to cope with the remnants and the memories of her traumatic childhood. This involves not a symbolic process of dealing with language of representation but an artistic attempt at capturing the horrors of the past by means of creating a space in which representation is reworked from the sites of the 'real' and the 'unreal'. In fact, Mala speaks the unspeakable. For upon his entrance into the cellar and his encounter with Ramchandin's body, Otoh is unable to speak. It is not until after they leave the unutterable space of the cellar and enter the space of the veranda that Mala begins to talk, asking Otoh: 'Do you want water?' (1999, 164). Still, Otoh is unable to speak, and only after escaping the Ramchandin residence beyond Mala's territory (into the symbolic world of the island) is he able to utter the words: 'a body, *it* have a body in the house'

(1999, 166, my emphasis), relegating Mala once again to the state of a mad woman. Thus escaping the double illusion of objectivism and subjectivism situated in the perceived and conceived spaces of representation, Mootoo installs counterspaces as a means of dealing with the traumas of the past and documenting the history of abuse and violation caused by the personal and private history of colonialism in the present.

How does Kincaid's lived space relate to *Cereus Blooms at Night* and the national and sexual politics of Lantanacamara? By means of writing, Mootoo presents the microcosm of Mala's garden and the macrocosm of the island of the Caribbean as a lived space where coherence and transparency are in short supply. Not only do most of the inhabitants of Lantanacamara live on or cross social and sexual borders, but the territorial borders of the island are also illusive. Mootoo's novel also lacks complete unity and coherence. The juxtaposition of Mootoo's narrator/relater Tyler and Jamaica Kincaid, with their insistent efforts to relate as well as to disturb and to confuse, exhibits the importance of lived space, as they attempt to relate the imaginative act of writing with the physical act of gardening/material frustration. Moreover, the space of in-betweenness and the sense of suspension with which we as readers are faced correlates to Glissant and Kincaid's cross-cultural world represented not as real or imagined space but as a lived space. Mala's story and that of the island of Lantanacamara do not result in unity. In fact, as a site on which one can act, it becomes a space which is unknown and unmapped but where one can examine and rework historical, cultural and sexual 'practices'.

As Nurse Tyler takes upon himself the task of reconstructing the history of abuse buried deep in Mala's mind, we are presented with the notion that the past/truth can be rediscovered and preserved by the means of narration only. Tyler's story appears in the form of an open letter to Mala's sister, Asha, in which he tries to reconstruct Mala's seeming unintelligible ramblings into a coherent narrative of her violent past. Soon we discover that Tyler is an unreliable narrator who, being involved in his own issues of sexual identity, sees the need to repeatedly remind himself to keep his focus on Mala's story. The complexity of Mala's story, however, does not allow for a coherent narrative, regardless of how much Tyler tries to appeal to our imagination. Just as much as Mala's identity story is split

between the innocent Pohpoh and the adult Mala, so is Tyler split between narrating his own and Mala's story. Attempting to keep the past and the present apart, Tyler attempts to appropriate and segregate the spaces between himself and Mala, between the past and the present. Although aware that 'being the narrator who also existed on the periphery of the events, I am bound to be present' (1999, 3), Tyler still attempts to create a coherent narrative and place the unspeakable acts into a language that can be understood. This is seen in Mala's disjointed words, which are recognised as nonsense by Tyler: 'She rambled under her breath all day and night'. However, not long after, Tyler realises that in Mala's chattering there is a narrative that needs to be recorded: 'I began to recognise in her mutterings elements of legendary rumours. I had Mr Hector run me the errand of acquiring a notebook, and I started to jot down everything she said, no matter how erratic her train of thought appeared to be' (1999, 99). Since Mala's traumatic memories cannot be expressed in verbal language, Tyler undertakes the task of 'sifting, cutting and sewing' the fragments of the story, giving the reader cause for vexation as we are not completely sure who articulates what and when. Reminiscent of Kincaid's aggravation about the failed attempts to employ the garden as a site for pleasure, Mootoo, it seems, expresses similar emphasis on the refusal of the pleasures of imagination as a means of re-'capturing' the past. Ostensibly Tyler's narration-making process of knowing and relating is to a certain extent unsuccessful, but by vexing her readers Mootoo refuses to offer a constructive critique of colonialism via the use of imagination. Instead she creates a space of representation in which she manages to 'relate' the traumatic past of not only Mala but also the entire island of Lantanacalara. As I have mentioned earlier, this complex allegory—where Mala's story is presented as both private and public—does not imply that Mala's rape is, in the words of May, 'simply metaphorical, a synecdochical stand-in for a long history of domination and violation in the Caribbean' where her 'individual story gets reduced to its utility to teach us something about diaspora, exile, and the dysfunctional "family" of empire on a larger scale' (2006, 108). Instead, the novel's allegorical setting allows for multiple histories (both private and public) of exploitation, violence and abuse to interlock. This also goes the other way—the lived space allows Mootoo to broaden the scope of the novel from the national and sexual

politics of Lantanacamara to the concepts of multi-relationality in the postcolonial space.

Here, I return to Butler's notions of gender performativity as well as Lefebvre and Certeau's theories of space, as a means of re-memembering and reassembling the dis-membered Caribbean body. By looking at Tyler who, apart from being one of the 'queer' characters in the novel, occupies the important role of a 'relater' of the story of Mala Ramchandin, we are able to find and excavate the 'subversive bodily acts' within the production of social space and the sexed bodies on Lantanacamara. Through Mala *and* Tyler, we are able to re-memember and reassemble the Caribbean body into new geographical configurations.

Describing his own gendered identity, Tyler portrays himself as 'not a man and not ever able to be a woman, suspended nameless in the limbo state between existence and non-existence' (1999, 77). This intermediate and ambiguous state of being caught between opposing categories points to a space within Mootoo's text where dislocation based on belonging allows for a creation of sites where queerness, non-belonging and ambiguity are reworked in favour of different sexual subject formations. This ambiguity, however, depends on how we view the 'shared queerness' that Tyler senses between himself and Mala. Although it reflects a range of estrangements found on Lantanacamara, Tyler's queerness may also be construed as undermining Mootoo's non-normative subject formation. This can be seen in Tyler's view of himself as an effeminate homosexual male, confirming not only his own but also Mr Hector's view that homosexuals are not fit for construction work: 'I saw him watch curiously, as I struggled with the weight of some items and the awkwardness of others' (1996, 10). Portraying himself as the stereotypical (effeminised) homosexual, Tyler reinforces his sense of non-belonging by re-affirming his more fitting role as a caregiver: 'But I was anxious to begin nursing again' (1996, 11). Most striking, however, are Tyler's reflections upon the appearance of men at the Alms House. Not only do the men appear to him as 'heroic' in their uniforms, the 'narrowness of their waists' and their close-fitting clothes spark a 'fiery heat' in Tyler's cheeks. Here, his preoccupation with the men's 'Herculean size and strength' directs the ambiguity surrounding Tyler's identity and the 'shared queerness' between him and Mala

towards a homophobic view of homosexuals as being debauched and excessively lecherous.

Nonetheless, as various characters experience non-belongingness the novel appears to present Lantanacamara as a space for a utopic community of outsiders who, by mutual recognition, find selfhood and a sense of belonging on the island. Otoh, who seems to embody the distinctively racial and sexual formation instigated by the contradiction of the colonial condition, shares Mala and Tyler's queerness due to his non-normative gendering: 'even the nurse and the doctor who attended his birth, on seeing him later, marvelled at their carelessness in having declared him a girl' (1999, 110). Despite the ostensible connection between Lantanacamara's outsiders, Mootoo does not allow a coherent narrative of structure and closure in her 'relating' of the national and sexual politics of Lantanacamara. Tyler's plea for Asha to return to her sister at the end of the novel remains just that. In fact, the connection between Tyler and Mala depends on their estrangement from the island. Moreover, as their connection strengthens, it is expanded to the characters around them. Mr Hector, the gardener of the Paradise Alms House who, upon seeing the 'cross-dressed' Tyler is reminded of his forced separation from his older 'kind of funny' brother, also establishes a connection with Tyler: 'Well, I never! If I didn't know better ... I wish my brother could meet you too. Christ where he is, I wonder? Where my brother? By any chance, you know my brother?' (1999, 248). This connection is both similar and divergent from that between Tyler and Mala, in that Mr Hector's longing for his brother is directly connected with Tyler 'every time I see you, my heart does break ... Is like you bring Randy back to me, boy' (1999, 72-73), as well as it is aggravated by the immediate lack of consolation and solace that this connection generates. The sense of 'community' between Mr Hector and Tyler, which results in the resurrection and the exacerbation of the severed ties between Mr Hector and his brother, creates a space for a renewed sense of knowledge and belonging. Here, the dislocation from the national and the geographical boundaries results in a failure to heal and also a possibility of a creation of new belongingness, imploding the traditional heterosexual modes of affiliation with a nation-state. Like Kincaid, Mootoo vexes her readers by not assuaging the sense of loss and non-belongingness and, in turn, exacerbates the sensation of

estrangement that facilitates the formation of community forged via disidentification with and the contradiction of national and sexual spaces.

Awkwardly, the utopian space for Lantanacamara's outsiders is once again undermined by Tyler's (homosexual) lasciviousness. The first time the reader is 'formally' introduced to Mr Hector is when Tyler meets him weeding a flowerbed. Whilst the former is 'stopped shirtless on his haunches', Tyler notices that he is 'too lean for a man of his fatherly age' (1996, 67). Later on, as they are talking, Tyler notices the 'loose, thin flesh on his arms and on his belly' and the 'sun-darkened skin and rugged muscles of a man accustomed to hard labour' (1996, 69). Tyler's sexual fascination with Mr Hector climaxes with Tyler confessing feelings of dizziness: 'Why did I want to come face to face with him in some dark room, some dark night? ... Why did I so desperately want to offer myself up to him and make promises that will cause him to swoon with desire?' (1996, 70). Here, Tyler's suggestive libidinousness and his excessive preoccupations with men do little to dismantle the stereotypical characterisation of a homosexual. Grouped with his self-confessed view that he does not live up to the demands of conventional masculinity, Tyler's sexuality undercuts Mootoo's project of undermining homophobic ideologies of 'proper' sexuality.

Notwithstanding the contradictions of Mootoo's working *against* and *with* the normative formulations of sexuality identity, Tyler describes himself as that which cannot be known or categorised: 'I was preoccupied with trying to understand what was natural and what was perverse, and who said what and why' (1999, 48). This generates, in terms of sexuality, an excess of categorisation between the natural and the unnatural, and in return produces spaces in-between the knowable and controllable Firstspace and its imaginative representation of Secondspace. In short, Mootoo and Kincaid resist the notion of imagined space, in that the transnational space of the Caribbean, be it on Lantanacamara or in Vermont, cannot be fully grasped or understood. Their Caribbean is that of Benítez-Rojo's meta-archipelago, where the opaqueness of its landscape and its characters makes it an impossible space. The density of such a space produces unanticipated modes of affiliation and collectivity that do not guarantee national modes of belonging. Instead, they create space for the queer racialised subjects to reproduce 'those desires,

practices, and subjectivities that are rendered impossible and unimaginable [caught between Firstspace and Secondspace] within conventional diasporic and nationalist imaginaries' (Gopinath 2005, 11). Benítez-Rojo's meta-archipelago is a space in which characters are opaque to each other and where transparency is replaced with ambiguity. More importantly, we can connect Tyler, as a queer character and relater of Mala's story, to Glissant and Kincaid's notions of the Caribbean as that which cannot be fully grasped from any one vantage point. Tyler's own personal history, which is intertwined within Mala's narrative of her violent past, shows that within this space where characters are opaque to each other, there is space for affiliation rooted in ambiguity. The shifting of narrative between past and present, magic and realism, attests to the refusal of transparency, where the rejection of visibility becomes a productive element for a reconceptualisation of Caribbean space. The notion of opaqueness of the Caribbean can be seen in Kincaid's garden:

I had begun to dig up, or to have dug up for me, parts of the lawn in the back of the house and parts of the lawn in the front of the house into the most peculiar ungardenlike shapes. These beds...were odd in shape, odd in relation to the way flower beds usually look in a garden....I wanted a garden that looked like something I had in my mind's eye, but exactly what that might be I did not know and even now do not know. And this must be why: the garden for me is so bound up with words about the garden...that any set idea of the garden...is a provocation to me.

(2001, 7)

Kincaid's garden lacks the unity used to control it. The joy Kincaid gets from the provocation of the inability to fully grasp the garden results in the realisation that the Caribbean garden, by the means of its shape, resists control of the imagination and insists on acting upon it: 'it dawned on me that the garden I was making (and am still making and will always be making) resembled a map of the Caribbean and the sea that surrounds it' (2001, 8). Here, we witness Kincaid's exploration of lived space as that which belongs to the Caribbean geography but which cannot be understood as having a fixed shape. The anti-aesthetics of the garden, its refusal of the shapely, can also

be found in Glissant, who laments the loss of shapelessness, in that it results in the termination of action. He calls for acting upon and the refusal of the shapely landscape in the same manner that Kincaid remembers her shapeless garden:

All these flowers have disappeared...The land has lost its smells....The flowers that grow today are cultivated for export....But they are heavy also, full, lasting....These flowers delight us. But they have no fragrance. They are nothing but shape and color. I am struck by the fate of flowers. The shapelessness yielding to the shapely.

(1999, 51–52)

Both Glissant and Kincaid employ lived space as a means of representing the Caribbean landscape not as a real Firstspace or the imagined Secondspace but as a lived transnational space. This is directly linked to my arguments on tactical diaspora which ‘diasporises’ Eurocentric concepts of space, exposing their grounding in the Euro-American colonial imagery. The Caribbean meta-archipelago, as described by Benítez-Rojo, is not a harmonious unity of islands but an amalgam of different phenomena, ‘rooted’ in the historical and cultural sharedness of the region. Correspondingly, the language of landscape found in Kincaid and Glissant suggests that the landscape of the Caribbean is both highly abstract and tremendously material, something that also becomes apparent in the shapelessness of the characters in Mootoo’s *Cereus Blooms at Night*.

Although Glissant and Kincaid invite us to look at the landscape whilst ‘remaining where we are’, they do not propose a nationalist closure nor an anti-essentialist approach towards understanding the Caribbean. Instead, they warn us against imagination as a postmodern means of ‘capturing’ the postcolonial. In the same manner, Mootoo, by ‘queering’ her characters, implodes both the imaginative logic of the Caribbean as a place of syncretism and uprootedness, lacking historical continuity and historiography, and the realistic view of the Caribbean being a harmonious unity of islands, ravaged by its colonial past. By appropriating Mootoo’s diasporic tactics towards Kincaid and Glissant’s invitations to view Caribbean space by remaining *within* the Caribbean’s geography, along with Judith Butler’s notions of gender performativity, it is

possible to see the complexity, the in-betweenness and the existence and non-existence of the space of the Caribbean. Moreover, by centring sexuality within the production of lived space in the Caribbean, Mootoo invites us to investigate the interstices of place and body by the means of tactical displacement and repetition in the novel. By delving deeper into the character of Tyler, especially by looking at the complexity and the opaqueness of his identity in relation to other characters on Lantanacamara, we can work towards a postcolonial redefinition of sexuality and belongingness. By considering Glissant and Kincaid's refusal of the imaginative logic of the Caribbean, it becomes possible to emphasise diasporic queerness as a method for deconstructing the dichotomous logic of the dominant Euro-American paradigms in theorising sexuality locally and transnationally. By queering sexuality *and* space, a dynamic reading of Mootoo's novel emerges. A reading that, whilst employing Western notions of sexuality, space and identity, is also critical of existing textual discourses as a route to understanding the postcolonial. Remaining *in* the Caribbean and by employing the notions of Thirdspace, Mootoo manages to remain critical of any singular understandings of the Caribbean whilst simultaneously making space for alternative readings and interpretations of sexuality, affiliation, subjectivity, culture and national belonging that are not visible (imaginative) within the standard mappings of space, nation and diaspora.

As a final note on Mootoo's novel, I want to add one more problematic element—the lack of explicit representations of non-normative sexual acts. Whilst Chandin's rape of his daughters—the 'open secret'—is depicted explicitly 'Glaring and breathing heavily like a mad dog, he pinned her hands to the bed and forced her legs apart' (1996, 67–68), other (homosexual) encounters are only implied. We are told of Tyler's excitement about receiving Otoh at the alms house and their tour of Mr Hector's gardens. What we are not told in any explicit terms, however, and what is only hinted at, is their apparent sexual encounter which takes place in the cane fields. On one of his regular visits, Otoh is taken to the periphery of the grounds, where Tyler informs us that only propriety restrained him 'from detailing just how alluring cane can be when a falsetto trill long trapped in your heart is bursting forth' (1996, 123). Whilst Chandin's incestuous rape, which in itself is a heterosexual act, is depicted in explicit terms, the non-normative sexual act between

Tyler and Otoh is situated at the periphery of both the geography on which it takes place and its literary representation. In fact, Mootoo positions their sexual encounter as that which concerns and is only relevant to Mala: 'Although Mala Ramchandin was by no means our sole topic of conversation, I will dwell mainly on those discussions concerning her' (1996, 123). Thus, Mootoo's exclusion of the homosexual act situates the heterosexual act (however 'unnatural') at the centre, whilst the numerous non-normative acts are relegated to the periphery.

Valmiki's Daughter

I began this chapter by arguing that the movement of bodies across various places is one of the central themes in Shani Mootoo's novel, *Cereus Blooms at Night*, as it emphasises the role of sexuality in the discussions of cultural and sexual belonging in the Caribbean diaspora. The female characters in the novel, by the means of queer affinity and desire, destabilise and alter the Caribbean geography. *Cereus* localises, diasporises and alters space, placing and displacing the island of Lantanacamara in and out of the trialectic between the Caribbean, Canada and Britain. Whilst *Cereus* is centred on the language of landscape, especially due to its setting in the town of Paradise on the fictional, dreamlike Caribbean island Lantanacamara, in Mootoo's most recent novel, *Valmiki's Daughter*, the action unfolds on the named island of Trinidad among members of the affluent Indian class whose ancestors rose out of their positions as indentured labourers in the cane and cacao fields. As in her first novel, Mootoo's attention to sexuality and travel is crucial to the discussions of cultural and national belonging in Trinidad.

Mootoo's eponymous character is a well-respected physician – married to Devika with two daughters, Viveka and Vashti – who, despite his extensive womanising, has a passion for men. Valmiki's first love was Tony, a fellow student at medical college, whom Valmiki left despite their plans to spend their lives together, as Valmiki was determined that upon qualifying he would return home and 'fall into whatever role was expected of him' or at least 'adopt some form of numbing complacency' (2008, 67). His eldest daughter, Viveka, a 20-year-old student at the University of West Indies, although romantically involved with the mixed-race Elliot, is uncertain about her

own sexuality. Nayan Prakash, a friend of Viveka's, whose family owns a cacao plantation, has recently returned from Canada with a degree and a French wife who becomes a token of respectability and admiration of the entire town. In addition, she becomes the object of Viveka's sexual desire as the two women contemplate leaving Trinidad and having a family together. Once again the sites of multiple identities and histories, only visible through travel and sexual experience, call attention to the importance of geography, places and spaces. Although we may object to Mootoo's somewhat cursory investigations of race and class, it is sexuality which links the various narratives and identities, investigating imperial and neo-colonial notions of what constitutes normative sexuality. *Valmiki's Daughter* explores the questions of knowledge, power and representation based on 'proper sexuality'. More importantly, it exposes the risk and danger of creating queer space within the Caribbean geography.

Mootoo's shift from naming a town Paradise in the fictional island of Lantanacamara to specifying the 'reality' of the factual town of San Fernando in the island of Trinidad works as a means for reallocating the focus of her investigation into the 'realities' of sexuality in the Caribbean. If Lantanacamara serves as a national allegory of Trinidad, the town of San Fernando is Mootoo's way of foregrounding transnational capitalism in the construction of 'proper' masculinity and femininity in Caribbean space. More importantly, her mock tour-guide tone addresses the question of tourism and the role of transnational capital in shaping the view of 'proper' sexuality in Trinidad. As suggested in my analysis of *Cereus Blooms at Night*, Alexander argues that by policing and constructing inherited meanings of masculinity and femininity the state transmits the need for transnational capital in terms of the commodification of sexual bodies. However, since citizenship in Trinidad and Tobago continues to be premised within heterosexuality and heteromascularity whilst sexuality and propriety simultaneously remain the dominant discourses transmitted from the colonial past into the postcolonial present, the anti-colonial nationalism maintains the notions of propriety and morality established in the colonial era. Thus the state denounces 'deviant' sexualities, such as homosexuality, prostitution and sexualised women, as the source of the dissolution of the nation-state. At the same time, Mootoo's mock tour-guide, written in the second person, serves as a structure for the novel as all four sections

frame the narrative by addressing the reader directly. Each of the four sections entitled '*Your Journey*' speaks to the movement of the reader as he/she 'tours' the Trinidadian landscape. The direct address to the non-Trinidadian reader distances the narrative at an exotic remove. This frames the narrative as a travel brochure, serving as a means for Mootoo to expose life in Trinidad to non-Trinidadian readers in a layer of irony and subversion. *Valmiki's Daughter* works not as a holiday catalogue for Western tourists but as an investigation of the effects of history and landscape on the notions of 'proper' sexuality in Trinidad.

The move towards employing street and town names in the novel is exemplified in the first section of the first chapter entitled 'San Fernando, 24 Hours', where we are introduced to the Trinidadian landscape and the major characters in the novel. The description of the characters, however, adopts the same mock tourist-tone as it introduces the Krishnus and the Prakashs in an objective manner, only scraping the surface of their intricate personalities: 'It is here you find the residences of the city's more prosperous citizens, including Dr. Krishnu—who, with his wife and their two children, lives in an architect-designed house' (2008, 13). Mootoo's tone matches that with which she describes the town of San Fernando:

If you stand on one of the triangular traffic islands at the top the Chancery Lane just in front of the San Fernando General Hospital (where the southern arm of the lane becomes Broadway Avenue, and Harris Promenade, with its official and public buildings, and commemorative statues, shoots upwards), you would get the best, most all-encompassing views of the town.

(2008, 7)

The objective and distanced tone of the description of the town is undercut, however, by the seriousness of the encounter between Valmiki's youngest daughter Vashti and her sister's former friend, Merle Bedi, who now lives on the street 'giv[ing] her body to men, right here in the promenade, behind statues at night and in the bushes in the day, in exchange for a cigarette or money to buy a flask of rum' (2008, 22). The narrator reveals Vashti's inner thoughts as she runs into Merle, thinking: 'But if she is doing this sort of thing, what they say about her can't be true then. It can't be so that she is a buller.

If is women she like, how come she doing it with man?' (2008, 23). Vashti questions the rumours of Merle's homosexuality by highlighting the paradox of the town's view of her and their disdain for her promiscuity. Immediately after, however, Vashti's thoughts return to the realities of the situation as she thinks that 'maybe is not a bad thing, then. That might cure her. And from such a family, too. It is killing her parents. No wonder they put she out the house'. Here, 'promiscuity' (Merle Bedi) and 'innocence' (school children going for lunch) are closely positioned, complicating the division between spaces of propriety and impropriety. This correlates with Eng's notion that both queer and diaspora compel us to rethink the question of home and belonging, not only in terms of migration as homecoming but also in regard to queering home as a site of a queer possibility: 'suspended between an "in" and "out" of the closet—between origin and destination, and between private and public space—queer entitlements to home and a nation-state remain doubtful' (1997, 32). Mootoo's insertion of Merle's queerness into the public space of 'promenades' and 'statues' complicates the division between propriety and impropriety in terms of private and public space. In *Cereus Blooms at Night*, Walter draws a line in the sand, displacing Mala from the centre within the public realm of the playground. In *Valmiki's Daughter*, Merle, who was once included in the sphere of propriety and 'proper' femininity, is expelled from the private sphere of domesticity due to the anguish she suffered from Miss Seukeran's rejection. Seemingly caught between and outside of these worlds, Merle's character serves as a reminder of the severe penalty one faces if caught transgressing the constructedness of the social norms. Moreover, since Merle develops her love for Miss Seukeran within the public ground of the school—a space that informs the colonial view of 'proper' masculinity and femininity—the novel stresses the importance of queering the public colonial spaces as a means of destabilising the dichotomy between private/public and propriety and impropriety. Even the school children themselves are aware of the constructedness of the divide between these formations. As they head out to lunch, the narrator informs us:

When they [the school girls] cross the boundary line of the gate that separates the world of commodities and desires from that, supposedly, of learning and restraint, the girls seem, one by one,

to take a vertiginous step, to misstep, falter, and land a little off to the side, or illogically, too far forward.

(2008, 20)

The narrator's description of the division between spaces continues at the end of the encounter between Vashti and Merle in which Vashti, refusing to take a note from Merle to Miss Seukeran, enters the convent which, we are told, 'shares a wall with the cinema next door and if you listen just now, you will hear the lunchtime programming begin' (2008, 24). The fragile division between the space of the convent and that of the cinema attests to the tenuous boundary between designated spaces, especially in terms of the production of 'proper' masculinity/femininity and sexuality within those spaces. Ultimately, like in Mootoo's first novel, the division and the repetition of borders between public and private space attest to the power of creating and maintaining the relationship between centre and margin in terms of belonging to a nation and to a home.

In *Cereus Blooms at Night*, we are witness to the divisions between Mala's garden and that of the public space of Paradise. As the reader 'tours' the Trinidadian landscape in Mootoo's latest novel, he/she is introduced to the divisions of spaces based on social standing and financial income. '*Your Journey, Part Two*' frames Part II of the book, as it introduces the reader to Luminada Heights, a prosperous quarter of San Fernando where the Krishnus and the Prakashs live. The narrator, speaking directly to the reader, describes Luminada Heights as a 'social lesson in itself' as it tells us 'something more about town and country' (2008, 187). As opposed to her first novel where the fictional, dreamlike Caribbean island Lantanacamara serves as the background for the exploration of the notions of sexual belonging and multiple sites of exile and dislocation, Mootoo frames her latest novel in Trinidad explicitly in order to introduce the reader to the workings of the contemporary Trinidadian society. Within the narrative and Trinidadian society, we find the Krishnus and the Prakashs who are not only the victims of the racial, sexual and class-related divisions of Trinidad but who also uphold these boundaries. As the narrator takes us to Luminada Heights, marking out the social divisions between the impoverished and the prosperous, we are introduced to the changing landscape as the view of the Gulf of Paria changes the higher we climb in altitude:

Slowly, perhaps, but surely, these lands with exceptional views, on which squatters live in huts and shacks with no running water or electricity, will give way to the kinds of homes that are built just a little farther on—the ones with gardens designed for entertaining, all angled just so, to take advantage of the view of the gulf.

(2008, 188)

Placing the Krishnu residence within the prosperity of the Luminada Heights, Mootoo sets the scene for the exploration of the racial *as well as* social elements in the construction of cultural and sexual belonging in Trinidad. If, in *Cereus Blooms at Night*, the cultural belonging on the island of Lantanacamara is reserved solely for the heterosexual family of kinship and affinity, where queer inclusivity in culture is denied by the homophobic and heterosexist allocations of Caribbean cultural citizenship, *Valmiki's Daughter* explores the workings of the same notions within the context of contemporary post-independence Trinidad where transnational capital comes into contact with the politics of decolonisation.

The exoticising gaze

Speaking directly to the American and European tourists who journey to Trinidad in search of a holiday—'Imagine you are a tourist let down from the sky, blindfolded, in the middle of a weekday . . . your senses would be bombarded at once' (2008, 7)—Mootoo directly references Jamaica Kincaid's text *A Small Place* (1988), in which the narrator chronicles the experiences and thoughts of the reader as a hypothetical tourist in Antigua.⁵ Kincaid addresses the reader as 'you', describing what the reader might see and think as a visitor to the island: 'If you go to Antigua as a tourist, this is what you will see' (2000, 3). This approach works to 'typecast' the reader in the eyes of the Antiguan, in that the reader is seen not as an individual but as a stereotype. Moreover, Kincaid's literary technique also compels the reader to consider the ways in which he or she in reality corresponds to the stereotype of the typical tourist. Kincaid's reversal of the traditional gaze from the West to 'the rest', showing the tourist-readers the spectacles they make of themselves in the eyes of the Antiguan, can be also found in Mootoo's novel, as she invites the readers to partake in the journey through the aural and visual

melee of people, sounds and smells in the beautiful landscape of Trinidad. Much in the same way that Kincaid favours ordinariness by rejecting the normative otherness of small places, Mootoo disrupts the exoticising gaze of the White Western tourist by relocating and restructuring Trinidad from a theoretical (mappable) space to an inhabitable place of dwelling. At the core of both texts, we find the status of the Caribbean in the global economy, as both authors focus on tourism as a means for exoticising the Caribbean.⁶

In addition to tourism, *A Small Place* also addresses the issues of diaspora. Fusing tourism with colonial practices, Kincaid introduces the ocean, not as a place of relaxation and wonder but as a risk to one's health. Subverting the neo-colonial images of the see-through water of the Caribbean beaches, Kincaid turns the ocean into a nauseating mass, as she exposes the result of the colonial practices: there is no sewage system! The result is the pollution of the colonial ideal of the lost Paradise by excrement and urine:

You must not wonder what exactly happened to the contents of your lavatory when you flushed it. You must not wonder where your bathwater went when you pulled the stopper. You must not wonder what happened when you brushed your teeth. Oh, it might all end up in the water you are thinking of taking a swim in; the contents of your lavatory might, just might, graze gently against your ankle as you wade carefree in the water, for you see, in Antigua, there is no proper sewage-disposal system.

(2000, 13–14)

Beginning with the polluted image of the clean Caribbean Sea, Kincaid moves on to the image of the Black slaves, brought from Africa on the perilous ocean: 'But the Caribbean Sea is very big and the Atlantic Ocean is even bigger; it would amaze even you to know the number of black slaves this ocean has swallowed up' (2000, 14). Here, Kincaid links travel, tourism and diaspora by alluding to the Middle Passage where millions of enslaved Africans lost their lives en route to slavery. Moreover, by connecting this information with the section on the sewage system, Kincaid employs the notions of the ocean as a link between waste and lost African lives. In the second section of the text, the contemporary tourist is linked with the

past British coloniser, as the personal lives of the tourists are tied with the culture, politics and history of Antigua. Apart from expressing anger at the British, Kincaid attacks her fellow Antiguanus for perpetuating the power relationship between the coloniser and the colonised. Still celebrating Queen Victoria's birthday, the Antiguanus, Kincaid argues, display a distorted historical narrative, as they are unaware of both the symbolism of the holiday and the image of the monarch as the force that imposed the loss of Antiguan culture. According to Kincaid, one can only understand Antigua's current situation through an awareness of history and/of colonisation, in that twentieth-century tourism can only be understood in the context of nineteenth-century imperialism. As an example of contemporary exploitation of Antigua, Kincaid uses Barclay's Bank to link the establishment of Western economic institutions with nineteenth-century slavery and colonisation:

The Barclay Brothers, who started Barclay's Bank, were slave-traders. That is how they made their money. When the English outlawed the slave trade, the Barclay Brothers went into banking. It made them even richer. It's possible that when they saw how rich banking made them, they gave themselves a good beating for opposing an end to slave trading.

(2000, 25–26)

Linking nineteenth- and twentieth-century exploitation of Antigua, Kincaid highlights the continuing forms of imperialism in the Caribbean.

By drawing links between colonisation, migration, consumption, tourism and representation in order to track different forms of material mobility that constitute Caribbean space, Mimi Sheller broadens the concept of travel in and out of the Caribbean to include various kinds of mobility:

The ties that bind the Caribbean to other places . . . are premised on everyday practices of consumption that occur through economies of movement, touch, and taste in overlapping fields of economic consumption, political consumption, and cultural consumption. In recognising such circuits of consumption it becomes evident

how various mobilities are crucial not only to the formation of world systems of trade and production, but also to the constitution of world systems of consumption. (4–5)

Sheller does not look at the Caribbean as a particular mappable space. Rather, she sees it as ‘an effect, a fantasy, a set of practices, and a context’ (5). This investigative tactic is suggestive of Benítez-Rojo’s meta-archipelago. Unlike Benítez-Rojo, however, Sheller adds a substantial emphasis on ‘the emotive and figurative moorings of the colonial relations that shaped economic, cultural, material, and human exchanges between the North Atlantic region and the Caribbean’ (7). Sheller employs Alexander’s arguments about the commodification of sexual bodies in Trinidad and Tobago to point out that the nineteenth-century origins of imperial sex tourism informs the contemporary production of the Caribbean as a site of pleasure. The Western consumption of Black and Brown bodies, according to Sheller, which introduced the body as a site of conflict and control in the nineteenth century, can be found in the contemporary forms ranging from package tours to sex tourism. What is particular to these contemporary bodily gazes is the proximity of the consuming and the consumed bodies, as travel and tourism bring the imperial centre and periphery closer together. The notion of the Caribbean as a site of relaxation reinforces the imaginary geography in which the Caribbean becomes a site of careless pleasure, unconstrained by civilisation and more ‘in touch with nature’:

Still standing, looking out the window, you see yourself lying on the beach, enjoying the amazing sun (a sun so powerful and yet so beautiful, the way it is always overhead as if on permanent guard, ready to stamp out any cloud that dares to darken and so empty rain on you and ruin your holiday ...)

(Kincaid 2000)

More importantly, in terms of sexuality, the European fantasies of the tropics, which are closely allied with the experiences of transgression, are directly linked with sexual encounters with the exotic ‘others’. The sexualisation of exotic bodies, according to Sheller, has become a standard tool of Caribbean tourist promotion in which sex tourism turns the long history of sexual exploitation under colonial rule into

a contemporary neo-colonial fantasy of 'embodied racism[s]' (165). Sheller argues:

These 'embodied racisms' draw on a long history of objectification through the tourist gaze and the circulation of travel texts...[which] are not simply historical documentation of the colonial relation...but are the narrative and imaginative subtext to contemporary forms of relation between Northern consumers and Caribbean (sex) workers. (165)

The objectification of the sexualised/racialised Other occurs in a chocolate-coated tourist gaze: 'You think of these incredible... women, ranging in colour from white chocolate to dark chocolate, available to you at the subtle nod of your head or touch-of-your-hat' (165). The image of the chocolate signifies the status of the sex workers as commodities manufactured as tropical pleasures for the European and North American tourists.

Unlike in her previous novel, where the questions of race are closely connected with her explorations of non-normative sexuality, Mootoo's investigations of race in *Valmiki's Daughter* appear diffused and sporadic. In fact, it is in the image of chocolate, which serves as a motif throughout the entire book, that we find Mootoo's strongest involvement in the issues of race and class. Whilst a great portion of the novel is dedicated to Valmiki and his daughter, Nayan, the son of a successful cacao farmer, takes on the role of a storyteller who relates his experiences as a student in Canada. It is here that we find Mootoo's strongest engagement in the issues of race and class, although his experiences are not dramatised but are conveyed in the form of various dialogues. After seeing Anick's parents' enjoying high-quality chocolate, Nayan begins dreaming of refining his cacao so that it would surpass that of the rival countries and become the main ingredient in the world's top-ranked chocolates. For Nayan, Anick's parents—Armand and Mimi Thiebert—represent the high culture and class to which he aspires, and although he was able to gain respect whilst studying in Canada, Nayan felt that he lacked self-confidence during his stay in France. The respect he enjoyed in Canada, however, was based on his wealth. According to him, his friends accepted him 'in good part because of how flush—and generous—he was even while he appeared to be what the

mother of one of them had flirtatiously called “charmingly unpretentious” (2008, 242). Although aware that his friendship with his Canadian friends was made possible due to his wealth, Nayan’s stay in Canada did not offer the kind of experiences that Trinidadians like himself sought. More precisely, Nayan found the question of income less important in Canada than in Trinidad: ‘There was too much blending of all the races and classes on the streets of Toronto. It seemed as if almost anybody—with hard work or a good dose of luck—could make leaps in economic status’ (2008, 241). The opportunity to climb the social ladder due to higher income disrupts the class divisions between higher- and lower-class citizens in Trinidad—something that forces Nayan to search for propriety and respectability elsewhere. In terms of sexuality, however, we see the perpetuation and the simultaneous reversal of the colonial gaze, as it becomes apparent that Nayan has found the source of respectability in Anick—proving that his attraction to her is based solely on class:

What truly pleased him was the fact that he, a brown-skinned fellow from a smallish town in Trinidad, was walking through the famous institution, in Paris, with a beautiful Frenchwoman, repeating after her French words whose meanings he cared less about than that she was exaggeratedly forming them with her lips, showing him the position of her tongue, touching her throat, as she tried to explain to him how to make a sound or pronounce a phrase.

(2008, 213)

The exoticising gaze of the West is hereby reworked into the exotification of the cultural norms of Western ‘high’ culture on behalf of the non-Western male. Important to note is Nayan’s focus on Anick’s tongue, throat and lips, which reveals his exotic/erotic image of the Western female. Ram Prakash, Nayan’s father, who opposes Nayan’s marriage, is also impressed by Anick’s social standing: ‘he was not unaware of the prestige Anick’s Frenchness, her beauty and charm, brought to his family’ (2008, 233). Because Nayan views French culture as superior or ‘uncontaminated’ by the ‘blending of races and classes’, he reinforces the cultural and economic divide between the West and the rest. In *Valmiki’s Daughter*, the exoticising gaze is not

entirely reversed from the active rest to the passive West. After her relationship with her former lover Anna Marie ended, Anick was harassed by several men at a restaurant in Whistler in Canada. But Nayan was different and 'unusual'. We are told that apart from Nayan being 'nice enough, foreign enough' for Anick, he was also 'sufficiently different from the other men' (2008, 232), which was one of the reasons why Anick let him approach her. Anick's view of Nayan as different and 'foreign' reinforces the view of the 'other' inasmuch as it places her as a culturally dominant European compared to the culturally inferior Trinidadian. Once in Trinidad and initially disliking the overwhelming attention of the local community, Anick begins to take pleasure in the luxury she is now able to acquire due to Nayan's wealth: 'She had joined a family with what seemed like a bottomless pool of cash at their disposal. She began to have her clothing designed especially for her by a well-known designer in the north of the island' (2008, 234). Anick's enjoyment of Nayan's wealth highlights that the cultural as well as economic dominance of the West is evocative of Jamaica Kincaid's arguments on the accessibility and the consumption of Caribbean culture and bodies for the enjoyment of the Western tourist. In Mootoo's novel, however, even the reversal of the imperial gaze from the colonised onto the coloniser reinforces the cultural dominance on the part of the West as the local inhabitants themselves uphold this division. The dominance is seen in Anick's 'empowerment' as her interaction with other people reduces Nayan's sense of self to the culturally inferior: 'He felt as if Anick were trying to reeducate him in her ways, to her liking' (2008, 234). Nayan's 're-education', however, must also be seen in terms of gender and sexuality, as Anick's mobility is only granted on the basis of her race and social standing: 'Nayan felt acutely that Anick was embarrassed by him and his family.... He was no longer Ram Prakash's son. He was Anick's husband' (2008, 235). In contrast, Shanti, the wife of Nayan's friend Baldwin (Bally) Kissoon, does not have the freedom to socialise or choose her role in society. As Bally himself reminds Nayan: 'children tamed a woman.... You know why I marry Shanti?... You don't see them hips, boy?... I know she isn't a beauty queen, but she born to be a mother' (2008, 248–249). Bally's advice relegates a woman to the role of a mother, and if Nayan wishes to preserve his superiority in marriage, he should have children. According to Bally, Nayan should not 'waste time in that department. It will

occupy your wife' (2008, 249). Apart from the apparent issues of the notions of 'proper' femininity within Caribbean space, the issue of proper sexuality makes its mark upon Nayan, as he begins to remind himself that Anick's prior romantic relationship has indeed been a queer one.

If Mootoo reworks the exoticising gaze of the West in terms of exoticisation of the norms of Western high culture on behalf of the non-Western male, she adds to the transfiguration of the exoticisation from male to female and from class to sexuality. This is seen in the figure of Viveka who, once again, employs the notion of Thirdspace as a means for deconstructing the cultural and sexual divide between the West/Caribbean and homo/hetero. One of the first instances of queer desire between Anick and Viveka revolves around the issue of language. When Viveka invites Nayan and Anick to dinner (an invitation Nayan turns down due to a 'previous engagement'), the two women find themselves on the patio bonding over philosophy, literature and fine arts. Subsequently, as Anick initiates the French conversation practice they had begun by phone, Viveka feels an intimacy she never experienced: 'it was as if they had been in a movie theatre, watching something beautiful yet a little illicit, and suddenly the movie had ended and the lights had come on' (2008, 258). The subtly erotic exchange between the women attests to the importance of creating sites of queer affinity caught between the real and the imagined. Just as the two women were initiating their queer interaction, 'Nayan rolled his car up . . . Anick appeared suddenly sober in the glare of his presence' (2008, 258). Nayan's entrance immediately installs the realness of Firstspace, as the two women revert to their 'usual selves'. As Nayan and Anick exit the scene, Viveka lies in her bed, thinking of what had transpired between her and Anick. Her recollection of the night's events shows the amalgam of, at times, contrary sensations: '[Viveka] felt a suffocating weight in her chest, heat coursing up and down her body. In the quiet that fell between her and Anick, Viveka's legs tensed. She wanted to cry and laugh at the same time' (2008, 259). Since a confession of her desire for Anick would result in the expulsion from her family and the society around her, Viveka seeks alternative readings and interpretations of sexuality, unimaginable within the standard mappings of space, nation and sexuality. This is seen in the events during, and immediately after, the queer encounter between the two women.

As Nayan approaches the premises, the erotic tension between the two women intensifies: 'There was an awkward moment, and then Anick said, "I feel something. Do you feel what I feel?" ... "An earthquake?" Viveka had snapped over a chuckle of indignation, and just then Nayan's car had pulled up outside' (2008, 259). Moreover, we are told that the queer tension between the two women is due not only to the eroticism of the situation but also the immediate danger it entails, as a disclosure of the their relationship is a threat not only to the heterosexual workings of the Trinidadian marriage but also their own place within the Trinidadian society.

Viveka's sexual feelings for Anick should also be seen in relation to Nayan's gaze in terms of the exoticisation of the high-class White female. If Nayan, the Trinidadian male, desires Anick for her social standing and respectability, Viveka desires Anick in part because she is the female object of her queer desire and in part because of Anick's femininity. In short, Viveka's desire for Anick cannot solely be seen in terms of queer desire, in that she too performs the exoticisation of the Western female in terms of sexuality. Mootoo's reworking of the Western exoticising gaze into an exoticisation of Western high culture from a heterosexual male point of view is not the only instance where Western notions of respectability and 'proper' sexuality are exoticised. For Mootoo constructs her novel around the issues of transnational capital and the commodification of sexual bodies in relation to world systems of consumption. More importantly, she reframes the argument by reversing the colonial gaze from the West to 'the rest'. As a consequence, Mootoo's novel must be seen in connection to the nineteenth-century origins of imperial sex tourism as well as the context of indentured labour, in that the proximity of the consuming and the consumed bodies brings the imperial centre and the colonial periphery closer together. Mootoo clearly positions Viveka's sexuality queerly, in that the sensations she exhibits when with Anick significantly differ from when she is with her boyfriend Elliot. Reliving her previous encounter with Anick, Viveka is overcome with feelings of immense sexual desire. However, the day after her rendezvous with Anick, Viveka once again shows that she is aware of the consequences of queer desire, as she is relieved when Anick tells her that she will be unable to visit Viveka any time soon: 'This was a small but painful relief to Viveka. Thoughts of Merle Bedi's fate played in her mind' (2008, 261). The

intrusion of the realities of Firstspace positions Viveka as a character who comprehends the dangers of homosexual revelation. Moreover, the excitement of the awakened queer desire in Viveka is reminiscent of the pleasure and agitation Nayan experiences when Anick socialises with the Trinidadian business elite. The image of the White Western female generates feelings of both excitement and danger:

As the next few days passed, Viveka oscillated between two poles. She decided one minute to still whatever thoughts and feelings Anick Prakash had stirred in her. Such thoughts and feelings were dangerous tricksters out to trip her up and land her, like Merle, out on her own, family-less. And Anick Prakash, being the root of such thought, was even more dangerous. A troublemaker. Brave. Stupid. Disrespectful of Trinidad, its people, its ways.

(2008, 261)

Viveka's confusion relegates Anick outside the Trinidadian space, which is seen as pure and having its own traditions, to the position of an outsider wreaking havoc on Trinidadian society (interestingly, Viveka thinks of Anick as brave!). However, the desire to see and speak to (and touch) Anick Prakash shows signs of the fusion of First-, Second- and Thirdspace, as they all play a significant part in shaping Viveka's reality. The time apart from Anick allows Viveka to contemplate her situation not only regarding her relationship with Anick but also Helen and her interest in volleyball. Withdrawing from all of the above, Viveka becomes conscious of the situation as she becomes 'appalled at her herself—appalled that she had not been affronted by Anick's disloyalty to her husband, to Viveka's friendship with Nayan, to the Prakashs' closeness to the Krishnus. She didn't know who she felt more loathing for, herself or Anick' (2008, 262). As Anick withdraws from Viveka, leaving her in a state of confusion and uncertainty, Viveka reminds herself of Merle Bedi and the consequences of betraying her family for an outsider—one that does not belong to Trinidad the same way she does. However Viveka's feelings of betrayal are connected to Anick's beauty and her embodiment of what both Viveka and her mother see as the embodiment of 'proper' femininity.

Sheller's arguments on the proximity of the consuming and the consumed bodies can be traced in Devika and Viveka's view of

Anick's White body. Devika, a traditional upper-class island housewife, and her daughter, a more 'progressive' and 'unladylike' looking student who enjoys playing volleyball with other women, are both in awe of Anick's beauty and her ladylike features. Upon meeting Anick for the first time, Devika notices Anick's peculiar pronunciation of English words and her impressive appearance: 'Devika watched the model-like features of the young woman, her long neck, minute waist—stomach flat, flat, flat—and the provocatively protruding pelvic bones' (2008, 140). Devika's ideas of what constitutes 'proper' femininity clearly differ in the image of Anick compared to her own daughter Viveka, who she sees as plain and not exhibiting ladylike traits. Viveka, albeit directly opposed to her mother's view of femininity, is also impressed with and attracted to Anick's expression of femininity. As she sees Anick for the first time, Viveka cannot help being affected by Anick's beauty: 'Anick was even more beautiful than anyone had said she was. Viveka found she couldn't look her in the eyes' (2008, 198). The exoticisation of Anick becomes for Viveka more than just a matter of appearance—it becomes a matter of culture, class and identity. Viveka's disassociation from her mother's notions of 'proper' femininity as well as priding herself in her distinction from those women is hereby diminished to a mere fantasy, as Viveka herself realises that standing next to Anick 'had put the lie to this illusion' (2008, 199). It becomes clear that Viveka views Anick as one possessing and embodying 'proper' femininity, despite her aspirations to disassociate herself from these notions. Moreover, due to Anick's femininity and her esteemed position within the business elite of San Fernando, Viveka is positioned as being outside of 'proper' femininity and does not belong within male or female genders. Viveka becomes genderless and the category of gender namelessness is precisely the queer Thirdspace she attempts to create in order to negotiate her queer sexuality within heteronormative Trinidadian expectations of sexual desire.

Diasporic movements

In the same manner as Kincaid links travel, tourism and diaspora in *A Small Place*, Mootoo, in *Valmiki's Daughter*, employs the chocolate motif to call attention to the Indian diaspora in Trinidad and Tobago. In the section 'Viveka and Nayan and Anick', where Viveka is invited

to dinner at Nayan and Anick's home, Nayan narrates the story of how he met Anick and how he went to France to meet her parents. Interestingly, chocolate appears to be the instigator of the narrative of the history of Trinidad, allowing Mootoo to establish the diasporic elements of her latest novel:

Anick returned with a slice of chocolate cake for each of them just as Nayan was saying that he enjoyed telling Anick about the toucans and the leaping howler monkeys that one heard and saw while sitting on the porch of Chayu, the family house on the forest-like cacao state.

(2008, 211)

The use of the chocolate motif associates Anick with the long history of French colonisation of Trinidad, as it links her to the position as a former coloniser: 'he uttered to Anick the words *agouti*, *lappe*, *anthurium*, *baliser*, *mapipire*, *chaconia*. And Anick... was mesmerized. She had recognized words related to the forest and to the cacao trade as French, and then he had remembered that cacao was one of the principal products of the French colonizers' (2008, 211). The perpetuation and the simultaneous reversal of the colonial gaze, a theme I developed in the previous section, from Nayan to Anick to Nayan must be seen in the colonial and diasporic history of Trinidad: 'Nayan and Anick had been tickled by the notion of kinship in that early Indian-French history. Chocolate, he told Viveka, details and tales of the cacao estate, the remnants of its Frenchness, and all that a tropical island had to offer, were the method and madness of his courting' (2008, 211). Here, the exoticisation of Anick on the part of Nayan (as well as Viveka) introduces queer sexuality into the discussion of Indian diaspora in the Caribbean. This serves as a link to the overall theme of my argument—connecting sexuality, nationhood and identity.

The diasporic elements in Mootoo's novel are made explicit in Nayan's encounter with Anick's parents, who inquired about his origins. Not wishing to reveal that he is a descendant of indentured field workers, Nayan says that 'his ancestors had immigrated to Trinidad less than a century ago, from northern India'. Upon being asked if they went as indentured labourers after the abolishment of slavery, Nayan is forced to admit that the estate 'had been in the family

for three generations, bought from a French planter in the 1930s' (2008, 214). Janet Henshall Momsen and Pamela Richardson note that 'although cocoa was planted with varying success throughout the 18th and 19th centuries in Jamaica and the Windwards, the scale of production was never to match that of the larger island of Trinidad' (485). As cocoa became 'Trinidad's staple export by the beginning of the 18th century', the latter part of the same century 'saw a series of efforts to populate the island and increase agricultural production' (486). Many of the contractors were, according to Momsen and Richardson, 'Venezuelan *panyols*' but the group also included 'Creoles and Africans and, from the 1870s, East Indians who had completed their period of indenture' (487). Eventually, at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century 'cocoa provided a relatively comfortable livelihood for many peons, Creoles, and East Indians and made fortunes for the larger French Creole planters' (487). In *Valmiki's Daughter*, Mootoo positions Nayan and his estate as a continuation of the colonial history of cocoa production in Trinidad. Since labour has been a central element in the production of cocoa in the British Caribbean—from plantations being owned by free Blacks and free coloureds at the end of the eighteenth century to being owned by small farmers after the abolition of the slave trade at the beginning of the nineteenth century—Nayan's estate works as a reminder of the colonial history of Trinidad, especially in terms of slave-produced commodities. Mootoo's description of the Indian diaspora in Trinidad is closely tied to the exoticisation of Anick, both on the part of Nayan, who views her in terms of culture and social standing, and Viveka, who expresses her queer desire towards Anick in terms of 'proper' femininity. By positioning Anick as the link between the two characters, Mootoo interweaves Indian diaspora into Caribbean space by intersecting the narratives of class, race and sexuality. Moreover, by bringing transnational capitalism into the construction of masculinity and femininity in Caribbean space, Mootoo manages to reflect the postcolonial state of Trinidad and its own perception, as a former colony, of the construction and policing of normative heterosexuality.

Whilst sexuality and propriety remain the dominant discourses transmitted from the colonial past to the postcolonial present, the diasporic elements in the novel reveal the perpetuation of French colonial authority over Trinidad. After Ram Prakash suffers a heart

attack, it is decided that Nayan and Anick should move to Chayu in Rio Claro as a way of ameliorating the tension that has built up between them. Anick welcomed the idea in that she now had the chance to 'restore Chayu—not to the way the Prakashs had kept it, but to its [French] origins' (2008, 273). During the restoration of Chayu, on the gable of entrance to the house, an incised text reading *Le Ciel de Chaillou* is discovered. Like in *Cereus Blooms at Night*, in which the town of Paradise recreates the imperialist notions of the Caribbean as the biblical Garden of Eden, in *Valmiki's Daughter*, Mootoo inserts Chayu/Chaillou as a pastoral motif of a recovery of a lost essence. After learning of the real name of the plantation house, Anick 'told her father of the discovery' ... [to which] he immediately replied, 'But of course, Chaillou must refer to David Chaillou, France's first official chocolatier, appointed to the court of chatholic Queen Marie Therese' (2008, 279). The historical association of Chayu with the French colonial project acts as a mediator between the past and the present, speaking cultural and historical truths, much like Mootoo's notions of Lantanacamará acts as a national allegory of Trinidad, working as a site for memory, remembrance and re-membering. As Mootoo invokes the Caribbean's association with the paradisaical garden in *Cereus*—a tactical move of re-telling the past as a means of crossing the bounds of history and truth—in *Valmiki's Daughter* she continues to explore the notion of colonial authority as a metaphor for the imperialist domination of Caribbean space. To Anick, discovering the name of the house was 'like unearthing an umbilical cord to France. It gave her a humorous sense of "right of presence"' (2008, 279). Anick's privilege as a French woman, married to the owner of one of the largest properties in Rio Claro, is one of the elements that facilitates the perpetuation of the colonial presence in Trinidad and the coloniser's 'right of presence' in the Caribbean. Moreover, the presence of Viveka in Chayu attests to the importance of sexuality within the colonial/postcolonial space. In the following episode where Viveka enters Anick's room and looks out the window and says 'Is too dark, but in the daytime when you can see the rows of cacao, is *the most beautiful sight*' (2008, 292, emphasis in original), her French past is linked with the vision of the cacao, the plantation, and the Caribbean with divine beauty, revealing the imperial vision of the Caribbean as heavenly site.

Importantly, Mootoo installs queer sexuality as a vital element of Chayu in the scene where Anick shows Viveka the view from the bedroom window. This encounter will foreshadow further queer encounters, and more importantly, it will intertwine the elements of desire, sexuality, colonialism and diaspora into the physical and metaphysical space of Chayu. Seeing as Anick considers the garden as a space of her own, a space which defies heteronormative control, the garden and the forest serve as sites of queer desire. This is seen in the subsequent paragraph where we are witness to the emerging desire between Anick and Viveka. Making their way deeper into the forest, Anick pulls Viveka, 'gripping her hand tighter yet ... Blood pounded in Viveka's hand, and her ears and cheeks turned hot. She could hardly breathe' (2008, 293). The encounter climaxes with Anick pulling 'Viveka's head toward her' and before Viveka realises what had really happened (Anick kissed the back of her head) 'Anick released her hand from over Viveka's eyes'. If Chayu symbolises the colonial authority of France over Trinidad, the space around it serves as a symbol of queer desire, shown in the increasing queer encounters between Anick and Viveka. Sneaking off into the forest appears to be the means by which the two women are able to pursue their desire. Importantly, leading up to their 'full' sexual encounter, in the midst of the cacao plantation, the women finally get a glance of it—'*une cabine*'. A shack, which was previously used by the workers on the plantation, had been made (by Nayan) into Anick's private space. Here the two women submerge their queer desire deep within the colonial remnant of indentured labour. Apart from representing a queer Thirdspace, Mootoo installs the shack at the site which connects Trinidad's postcolonial present with its colonial past, inserting queer sexuality into Caribbean space as well as historicising the queer markings of White and non-White bodies.

In order to address the question of how self-critical queer diaspora can create new transnational spaces of belonging, we must focus on the method of queer diaspora itself. In other words, we are required to look at sexuality both as a mobile entity and as a mobile tactic of deterritorialisation. Thus, interrogating the multiple intersections between place and body as well as queer *and* diaspora allows us to reconsider queer and diasporic cultural texts within the framework of diaspora and migration studies as well as textual and cultural analysis.

The genre of queer diasporic fiction, like Mootoo's novels, allows for a troubling of hegemonic and heteronormative notions of sexuality based on the colonial structures. However, as the scene of the queer encounter between Anick and Viveka at Chayu illustrates, challenging heteronormativity must not disregard cultural specificity or the colonial resonance in the postcolonial present, with special emphasis on the diasporic elements that constitute the making of a diasporic community.

Decolonising V. S. Naipaul

In *Black Skin, White Masks*, Fanon writes:

Let me observe at once that I had no opportunity to establish the overt presence of homosexuality in Martinique. This must be viewed as the result of the absence of the Oedipus complex in the Antilles. The schema of homosexuality is well enough known. We should not overlook, however, the existence of what are called there 'men dressed like women' or 'godmothers'. Generally they wear shirts and skirts. But I am convinced that they lead normal sex lives. They can take a punch like any 'he-man' and they are not impervious to the allures of women—fish and vegetable merchants. In Europe, on the other hand, I have known several Martinicans who became homosexuals, always passive.

(1968, 128, n.)

Antillean homosexuality is, according to Fanon, a European export; this is due to the Oedipus complex being culturally and psychologically foreign to the Antilles. In other words, homosexuality does not exist in the region. The only digression from this 'fact' is the presence of cross-dressing men who, despite being attracted to other men, possess 'proper masculinity' and therefore cannot resist heterosexual women. Clearly, Fanon reinserts heteronormativity and 'proper' masculinity within Caribbean space, excluding the homosexual as a European and foreign form of sexuality.⁷ As I mentioned earlier, because she is positioned as being outside of 'proper' femininity and masculinity, Viveka becomes genderless. This allows her to embody a queer Thirdspace as a way of negotiating her queer sexuality within heteronormative Trinidadian expectations of sexual desire. Due to

her failed disassociation from her mother's notions of femininity, Viveka attempts to rework this into a strong point by resuming contact with Helen and taking up volleyball again. More importantly, we are told:

She would study, too. She was refining her goal of becoming a literary critic, and was currently enjoying the notion of becoming a Naipaul scholar. She would embark on a study of early East Indian communal life in Trinidad . . . It would be one small step toward understanding Naipaul's work and Naipaul himself.

(2008, 263)

Viveka's emphasis on V. S. Naipaul's writing in terms of the communal life in Trinidad must be seen in connection to her queerness and gender namelessness. In fact, Viveka's queer desire for Anick can be seen as a response to and a continuation of Naipaul's framing of the Trinidadian sexuality within a heteronormative notions of masculinity, femininity and sexuality. Taking my cue from Fanon's argument about homosexuality in the Antilles, I begin this section by arguing that in *Valmiki's Daughter*, Shani Mootoo installs the queer character of Viveka as a response to V. S. Naipaul's 1961 novel *A House for Mr Biswas*. This is a novel set in Trinidad which traces the life of its protagonist Mr Mohun Biswas as he tries and fails to find a home by building his own house. Although Naipaul's novel is about the theme of creating a home in a postcolonial state, the overall framework of the novel is reminiscent of Fanon's framing of colonial masculinity in terms of the absence of the Oedipus complex. Thus Biswas's failure to create a home is also a failure to create and sustain a postcolonial masculinity. As Gopinath argues, Mr Biswas's attempt to construct a house 'is simultaneously an attempt to construct a fortified masculinity that can withstand the emasculating power of women and the general chaos of colonial existence' (2005, 71). Interestingly, Gopinath argues that, in terms of gender, Naipaul's novel

underscores Fanon's assertion that the oedipal drama fails to hold the same explanatory power for racialized male subjectification given the black father's inability to access phallic power: the hapless Mr Biswas is consistently characterized as embodying a

degraded, weak, and soft masculinity that leaves his son without a model of viable masculinity to inherit.

(2005, 71–72)

Fanon's framing of sexuality within Caribbean space is a decolonising assertion of the homosexual absence. Just as Fanon views the Oedipus complex as non-existent in the Caribbean, Mootoo's intertextual framing of failed heterosexuality in the character of Viveka acts as a response both to Fanon and Naipaul's assertions of masculinity and natural heterosexuality within Caribbean space. Naipaul frames the character of Mr Biswas as emasculated, impotent and fragmented, placed at the mercy of the Tulsis and especially the overpowering control of his mother-in-law, the matriarch Mrs Tulsi. Inasmuch as Mr Biswas finds himself within the contested space of being a colonised male subject and under the authority of an emasculating woman, Naipaul continues Fanon's investigations of the impact of colonialism on failed racialised masculinities.

Earlier in this chapter, I argued that in *Cereus Blooms at Night*, Mootoo contests Jameson's argument that all 'third-world' texts are allegorical in nature. By employing the image of the garden as a metaphor and a site of hybridity, where history, geography, botany, politics and personal narratives intertwine, Mootoo challenges Jameson's view of national allegories, in that the tactical space of Mootoo's novel metamorphoses the materiality of place and destabilises the distinction between home and away. By appropriating Paul de Man's 'allegory of reading' in a postcolonial context, Mootoo exhibits a complex intertwining of personal and public histories within Caribbean space. According to the literary critic Vijay Mishra, *A House for Mr Biswas* can be read as a 'diasporic allegory' which, apart from being a rewriting of Jameson's national allegory, are 'texts that situate themselves as mediated aesthetic renditions of the experience of the plantation-Indian diaspora, which experience does not mean that "indenture history" is a static backdrop' (94). For Mishra, Naipaul's text is a 'mixed, sprawling, quasi-epic, "hyphenated" text, so very sad and tragic and yet bursting with immensely comic moments' (94). Worthy of note, however, is Mishra's insistence that Naipaul's text is an epic, an argument based on Amitav Ghosh's contention that the novel displaces and then re-creates 'the Indian' with

the space of Hanuman House, insinuating an 'epic relationship but without an epic text'. The importance of Mishra's reading of *A House for Mr Biswas* is that the 'transference/transformation [in Naipaul's text] means that India gets internalized and then projected onto another geographical space without so much as a hint of dissonance' (94). In *Cereus Blooms at Night*, on the other hand, Shani Mootoo uses the garden as a metaphor that connects subjectivities and identities in terms of personal and collective memories, reworking it into an allegory that allows personal narratives to stand for larger political and historical conditions on Lantanacalara. *Cereus* works as a quasi-epic but Mootoo's novel, although imaginary, is ripe with dissonance, for it appropriates the gardening motif without obfuscating the cultural, historical and hybridising conditions of Caribbean space. In fact, dissonance is the force that drives Mootoo's novel, for it opposes nostalgia for a dreamlike bygone era where unity can be revived and relived, where the New World, drawing on the Indian origins, would become a new Eden. In *Cereus*, Mootoo places dissonance at the heart of her novel, as it complicates the notion of belonging on the part of the subjectivities and identities that adhere to alternative beliefs in citizenship and belonging. According to Ghosh, if an 'absent epic' were ever to be written 'it would be a shabby, bedraggled, melancholy kind of an epic—but still formally, an epic it would have to be' (quoted in Mishra 94). Mishra, building upon Ghosh's contention, argues that in the diaspora, even an epic undergoes 'a whole series of displacements that result in the construction of new sites of metaphors'. He then continues:

But the shabbiness of the displacement has another kind of epic authority because the textual source of the originary symbols is not the text of Sanskrit high culture (the absent epic text of Ghosh) but 'degraded' epic fragments from the *Rāmacaritamānas* of Tulsidasa, a late-sixteenth-century vernacular rendition of the Valmiki *Rāmāyaṇa* in Avadhi—and this, too, as memorially reconstructed by the indentured labourers. Consequently, it is an already contaminated epic, in the Avadhi vernacular, that gets written out in the 'infinitely reproducible space' of Hanuman House in *A House for Mr Biswas* through an act of pseudo-sacralization. (95)

For Mishra, Naipaul's novel represents an already displaced text in that the traditional Sanskrit texts are modified, their 'context and historical specificity lost to another kind of utility' (96). However, although Naipaul's text can appear both as an uncontaminated (absent epic) and a contaminated (shabby in a positive sense) text, the space of the novel does not allow a deconstruction of colonial and postcolonial masculinity in terms of natural and unnatural heterosexuality. Despite the fact that the space of Naipaul's novel is 'an arena... where the history of the old Indian diaspora is played out' (Mishra 96), Naipaul nevertheless frames masculinity and natural heterosexuality within Caribbean space, not allowing queerness to enter as it is not 'inherent' to this space.

Mishra's reference to the *Rāmāyaṇa* brings us to Viveka's father.⁸ If Naipaul constructs an absent epic in the form of *A House for Mr Biswas*, Mootoo builds her 'epic' on a character who, besides being the 'patriarch' of the household, is also a person who exhibits and performs queer sexuality. According to Gopinath, 'Naipaul recognizes that within a colonial system of gender, possessing a viable masculinity is intimately tied to the ownership of property in the form of an idealized domestic space' (2005, 73). The domestic space of Mootoo's novel, however, is governed by Valmiki's wife Devika, who not only suspects that her husband is seeing a man, but is also confronted with that fact. 'Naipaul also recognizes that both masculinity and housing are invariably denied to the colonized male subject' (2005, 73), continues Gopinath. The access to masculinity and housing for Valmiki, however, is denied, not because of his status as a previously colonised male but because of his sexual orientation. In fact Valmiki's access to domesticity and masculinity is prohibited by his status as a colonised male and because of the social and cultural workings of the Trinidadian society. Although the poet Valmiki is revered as a 'first poet' of Sanskrit poetry, writing poetry in San Fernando is viewed as a feminine trait. During the narrator's mock tour-guide description of the city, we are told that:

A tall, thin man, of Indian origin...circles the box [speaker's corner]... He is balding. And he appears to be talking to himself.... He had been a bright young English literature teacher who wrote what some people called poetry... Other teachers at school ridiculed him, his family teased him, and his students lost respect

for him. They joked behind his back that he was a mamsy-pamsy writer of flowery lines.

(2008, 17)

The unnamed man's access to masculinity and housing is clearly precluded, not by the fact that he is 'of Indian origin', but because writing poetry is seen as an effeminate occupation, not worthy of being a career. The notion of what constitutes 'proper' sexuality, it seems, is the factor that determines access to masculinity and housing. As a well-respected physician and a member of the Trinidadian upper class, Valmiki does not crave domesticity and access to housing. Masculinity, on the surface, is also not that which he desires, in that he appears to be a compulsive womaniser. In fact the root of Valmiki's plight is the sensation of being trapped. Valmiki realises that acting out colonial and postcolonial masculinity is merely a performance—one that he does not even enjoy, as he bemoans his decision to leave Tony. Moreover, Valmiki realises that his decision to make overtures to Devika, which ensured him the treatment of admiration and respect, resulted in shaping him into the image of a married man 'trapped in everyday Trinidadian limbo' (2008, 69). Marriage, signifying the end of adolescence and a destination for the 'natural' development of a man, is the cause of Valmiki's entrapment. The hero of Mootoo's epic, a well-respected physician, realises that his respectability stems from his social status and his abiding to the mores of respectability. Thus, the character of Valmiki serves as a response to Naipaul's hero, Mr Biswas, who is not granted access to masculinity and housing based on the fact that he is a colonised man. Mootoo's hero, on the other hand, does not enjoy access to housing, as he realises that the ownership of property, although ostensibly granting access to respectability, does not ensure access to masculinity—it merely entails the death of the human spirit.

Certainly, the notion of 'proper' masculinity is a matter that has troubled Valmiki from his early childhood, especially in terms of his relationship with his father. As a way of proving himself to the three boys from school who have ridiculed him, Valmiki lets the boys inside his father's barn. After milking one of the cows and giving each of the boys a bottle of freshly squeezed milk to take home, Valmiki feels as he has proven and sustained his masculinity. This, of course, is tied to the hierarchies of class as the boys were children of labourers

on the sugar-cane estates. Consequently, during the barn adventure, Valmiki suddenly realises that he has 'the power to be more benevolent than they' (2008, 35). Valmiki's sense of empowerment stems from the feeling of superiority, and he achieves this by allowing them to participate in an activity which they otherwise would not have been able to take part in due to their social status. However, Valmiki's efforts backfire as his father punishes him for his actions. Valmiki's punishment, it seems, was a consequence of exactly that which he was encouraged to do—prove his masculinity. Moreover, Valmiki's excessive attempts at acquiring the status of a dominant male is, in a financial sense, seen as a failure: 'You BETTER LEARN the VALUE of business FAST, you hear?', says Valmiki's father. More importantly it is closely tied to corporeal punishment: 'And take THIS! For not being MAN enough to STAND UP to those boys, for LETTING OTHER children lead you into doing wrong' (2008, 38). Valmiki's negotiation of masculinity fails in that his allowing the boys into the barn is seen as a feminine trait whereby Valmiki, instead of *allowing* the boys into the barn, is in reality *coerced* into doing so. In his father's view, Valmiki is a feminine boy unable to sustain a masculine stance. Here, Valmiki realises that carrying out the difficult task of performing postcolonial masculinity appears to be an impossible undertaking.

The heroes in Mootoo's and Naipaul's novels appear to share the struggle of acquiring masculinity. Mootoo, however, frames Valmiki around queerness and failed masculinity, responding to the patriarchal and heteronormative framings of colonial masculinity and domesticity in Naipaul's novel. *Valmiki's Daughter* is a novel which complicates the notions of belonging within Caribbean space in that its characters are torn between adhering, on the one hand, to the values of 'proper' sexuality and cultural belonging, and on the other to their queer affinity and desire. As Mootoo explores the workings of queer sexuality experienced by individual family members, she also frames the novel within a long history of Indian-Trinidadian writing, exposing the complexities of postcolonial belonging and the impact of colonial notions of masculinity, femininity and sexuality in contemporary Trinidad. Mootoo employs queer tactical diaspora in order to queer a previously unmarked and unquestioned Caribbean heterosexuality, arguing that homosexuality is neither a European export nor an indigenous identity. Sexuality, whether queer or heteronormative, is rendered as a marker of affinity, desire and affiliation.

Important to note, however, is the impact of class and transnational capital on sexual desire, in that the negotiation of postcolonial identity in terms of sexuality cannot be devoid of these markers. The impact of Indian-Trinidadian writing on Mootoo's novel is seen, as I have previously mentioned, in the intertextuality of Naipaul and Mootoo. Apart from the explicit mention of Naipaul, the importance of Naipaul's text comes into view in the character of Valmiki's deceased son, Anand, who died at age five. Anand, of course, is also the name of Mr Biswas's son in *A House for Mr Biswas*. The naming of Mr Biswas's son is worthy of mention: 'Shama gave birth to a son. He was not given the names that had been written on the endpaper of the *Collins Clear-Type Shakespeare*. Seth suggested that the boy should be called Anand, and Mr Biswas, who had prepared no new names, agreed' (1992, 184). As the character of Mr Biswas is modelled on Naipaul's own father and the character of Anand on Naipaul himself (Gopinath 2005), the inclusion of a character of a son called Anand in *Valmiki's Daughter* is an important element for the exploration of postcolonial masculinity in the postcolonial Caribbean space. Naipaul's Anand is subjected to his father's business, abuse, neuroticism, and the belief and disbelief in religions—elements which he employs in order to alter his own behaviour and understanding of the world. Fanon argues: 'Because it is a systemized negation of the other, a frenzied determination to deny the other any attribute of humanity, colonialism forces the colonized to constantly ask the question: "Who am I in reality?"' (*The Wretched of the Earth*, 182). The importance of Anand's naming is accentuated as both fundamental and ironic, in that it displays the contrast between the traditionalism of the Hanuman House and Mr Biswas's Eurocentric avocation. Ultimately, the name given to the child is the Sanskrit word for 'happiness', which is so terribly unlike its bearer, who is weak, doleful and maudlin. Consequently, Anand becomes the one who is affected by his father but who also shares his father's quest for a house, deconstructing both himself and his father as he attains awareness of the world through his father's failures. Likewise, Anand is subjected to the influence of multiple mothers, fathers, aunts and uncles, as he negotiates his way through manifold influences. Valmiki's Anand, on the other hand, dies at the age of five. The circumstances surrounding his death are unclear—we are told via Viveka's confused recollections that he died around the time

the Krishnus held a party, around which she saw Valmiki 'on top of Pia Moretti' (2008, 168). For Valmiki, on the other hand, the death of his son is closely tied to his sense of his own masculinity, as the wish to escape his current life triggers an imaginative response to the sensation of feeling trapped:

If his own son were still alive, he couldn't help but think—...he would have that second got into his car and taken the boy out of school, driven with him to the foot of the San Fernando Hill or into the forested lands of the central hills, and taken him hunting, or at least to catch birds there.

(2008, 39)

Thus, Mootoo's epic hero not only fails to perform masculinity—Valmiki performs queer sexuality and mourns the choice of leaving his true male lover for the 'proper' sexuality to which Frantz Fanon and V. S. Naipaul attest. By 'killing off' Valmiki's male successor, Mootoo inserts, in the character of Viveka, a queer femininity within Caribbean space as she stands to inherit Valmiki's masculinity. Thus Viveka and Anand become foils in their attempts to achieve postcolonial masculinity. Anand, being a 'sickly' male child, never achieves this goal, and his role is passed on to Viveka who recognises the influence of her father on her performance of gender roles. The previously mentioned dissociation on behalf of Viveka from her mother's notions of femininity situates her closer to her father, in terms of her views on femininity and her physical appearance. The sardonic phrase 'Thanks, Dad', as she looks at herself in the mirror, shows Viveka's awareness of her proximity to her father, despite the fact that she attempts to distance herself from both parents. During the course of *Valmiki's Daughter*, in which Viveka begins to spend more time with Anick, Devika voices her disapproval of her daughter's increasing interest in a married woman. Interestingly, her dissatisfaction with the course of events is seen as a direct result of Valmiki's queerness: 'It is you who is to blame. You know damn well that you are the one who has brought this on us.... You and your daughter are going to ruin us' (2008, 341). For Devika, Valmiki's direct heir is his daughter, whom she views as having inherited his 'disease' and is the cause of the dissolution of at least one marriage. Here, Mootoo places within a long tradition of Indian-Caribbean

writing a queer female character who installs queerness at the heart of Caribbean space. Thus she reveals the constructedness of 'indigenous' Caribbean sexuality and exposes the patriarchal and neo-colonial notions of 'proper' sexuality and gender roles in the decolonising writing of Fanon and Naipaul. The ghosts of both writers and their literary creations haunt Mootoo's novel as her queer characters are directly influenced by the characters of the Indian-Trinidadian past: 'In Devika's eyes, Viveka had begun to dress exactly like the person she kept hoping her daughter would not turn into. With no discussion, let alone permission, Viveka cut her hair short Now Devika, too, saw the ghost of Anand in their daughter' (2008, 340).

In *Valmiki's Daughter*, Mootoo places emphasis on the reversal of the colonial exoticising gaze, where the norms of Western 'high' culture become sources of respectability and higher social standing. Whilst her explorations of race and class are somewhat timid and fluctuating, Mootoo succeeds in unveiling the proximity of both the consuming and the consumed bodies as well as normative and non-normative sexuality. Here, the notion of Thirdspace becomes a means of deconstructing the sexual and cultural divide between the West/Caribbean and homo/hetero. In addition, she employs Viveka as a character who responds to V. S. Naipaul's framing of the Trinidadian heteronormative sexuality. Embodying a queer Thirdspace, Viveka negotiates her queer sexuality within heteronormative Trinidadian expectations of sexual desire and thus writes back to earlier representations of Caribbean and sexual identity.

3

The Movements of Dionne Brand

The notion of the sea, that fluid mass that encloses and renders all geographical locations as islands, enables us to focus on a new, dynamic model of geography. The project of *rooting* and *routing* place allows for a more nuanced and intricate investigation of the relationship between land and sea. Glissant's view that landscape is history, in terms of a geographical emphasis from the Caribbean rather than European perspectives, can also be appropriately applied to the sea. Edward Kamau Brathwaite's theory of *tidalectics* is particularly important for the articulation of Caribbean geography and history as well as island history and syncretism within Caribbean space. According to Elizabeth M. Deloughrey, tidalectics is a 'methodological tool that foregrounds how a dynamic model of geography can elucidate island history and cultural production, proving the framework for exploring the complex and shifting entanglement between sea and land, diaspora and indigeneity, and routes and roots' (2007, 2). By extending Glissant's 'stubborn insistence on *remaining where you are*' as a first reaction against the Western philosophy's generalising universality, Brathwaite develops a renewed theorisation of geography which takes on an 'alternative' historiography to linear model of colonial progress. Like the work of Mootoo, Kincaid, Glissant and Harris, Brathwaite's theory of the sea offers an insight into the heterogeneity of community by accenting the cross-cultural capacity of syncretism and aquatic metaphors. Common to these theories is the idea of movement based on ebb and flow, suggestive of Benítez-Rojo's meta-archipelago. Brathwaite's tidalectics, however,

expands this idea to encompass the autonomy of the historical and geographical elements between islands. What connects the syncretic elements of the Caribbean islands is the idea of the submarine roots. Glissant writes: 'Submarine roots: that is floating free, not fixed in one position in some primordial spot, but extending in all directions in our world through its network of branches' (1989, 67). Tidalectics re-roots/re-routes the Black Atlantic and opens the isolating imaginary of the island towards alternatives to confining myths of island genealogy. The fluidity and the perpetual movement of the sea, analogous to Brodber's reworking of Harris's poetics of difference, decentres the imperialist and neo-colonial homogeneity, and accents the syncretism/tidalectics as a cross-cultural power for exposing otherness and difference within the heterogonous community. Deloughrey writes:

Focusing on seascape rather than landscape as the fluid space of historical production allows us to complicate the nation-state, which encodes a rigid hierarchy of race, class, gender, religion, and ethnicity for its representative subjects. Because the surface of the ocean is unmarked by its human history and thus cannot be monumentalized in the tradition of colonial landscapes, a turn to the seas as history can produce an equalizing effect. (21)

Shifting the focus to seascape, or island landscapes, allows for a change in the cultural and geographic production of islands—migration within and between the Pacific and the Caribbean islands is a significant trope for the investigation of roots and routes within these geographies. However, sedimentation and border policing, despite being at the centre of the tidalectic examinations, reveals itself to be a significant element in the process of migration and settlement as constitutive of the relationship between diaspora and indigeneity, sea and land. Therefore, tidalectics cannot, and must not, be seen as a valorisation of fluidity and movement as a space beyond territorialisation.¹ Employing the notion of tidalectics creates a fluid space for the interrogation of routes and roots, with special emphasis on sexuality. This space, although related closely to Western philosophy, is here reworked via a conflation of Benítez-Rojo's meta-archipelago and Glissant's notion of submarine roots into a cross-cultural amalgam of a submarine rhizome.

In Another Place, Not Here

I begin this section by shifting the focus from land to sea by examining the idea of tidalectics, or what I call *language of seascape*, as a means for knowing and 'mapping' postcolonial space differently. Subverting and displacing postcolonial and neo-colonial deployments of normative sexuality allows for alternative modes of affiliation and desires to emerge. Therefore, I focus my subversion and destabilisation by looking closely at Dionne Brand's novel *In Another Place, Not Here* (1996) as a text that employs diaspora and queerness as a means for rethinking the problematic of home and belonging in terms of displacement and sexuality. It is a text that voices the oppression, racism and neo-colonialism of female and queer African/Caribbean bodies in Canada.

What is the space of *In Another Place, Not Here*? Who belongs in *In Another Place, Not Here*? Exploring the questions of belonging and the creation of places/spaces, Brand's text poses the question: where and what is home? Rooms, streets and places are abundant in the novel, but the issues of national belonging and identity are left in the open. Creating space for the Caribbean queer stands before numerous challenges, but by writing, imagining and envisioning, Brand presents a text that exhibits the possibility of altering space altogether. Brand's representations of space are reflected in the non-linear narrative of the novel, as the first part of the section 'Elizete, beckoned' introduces the unnamed Caribbean island resembling Grenada and to the story of Elizete, who as a child is abandoned by her unnamed mother in the yard of a prosperous but iron-fisted mistress who feeds and clothes the child. When the mistress dies, Elizete is given in marriage to Isaiah, a stern farmer who whips her when she strays away from the farm. Taking refuge from the bleakness of the situation, Elizete daydreams of a flight away from the farm; that is, until Verlia enters the island and transforms Elizete's life. In the midst of Elizete and other characters' longing for home, for escape and for the sense of belonging, the narrative progresses in a repetitive motion of back and forth, from side to side, echoing the repetitive motion of the waves of the sea. Both the narrative and the characters' imaginations are immersed in the fullness of the sea and the realness of the Middle Passage: 'All the way here, Adela, registering the stench of the ship, must have memorize the road to find she

way out.... For Adela was remembering that and long before that, back to the ship' (1996, 21). According to Herbert S. Klein, in the sixteenth century, 'America became the great market for some 10 to 15 million African slaves in the course of the next five centuries, and it was in the New World that African slavery most flourished under European rule' (21). In Brand's novel Adela's remembering goes back 400 years, throughout Caribbean colonial history, but it is Elizete who in snippets tells the story of Adela who was taken against her will and transported to the Caribbean. Even though she knows Adela through stories passed down through her family, Elizete feels a strong spiritual connection with her. Adela's sense of connection with Africa is here contrasted to the estrangement and loss within Caribbean space. The sense of place, closely connected to the fluidity of the sea, becomes mediated and subsequently unlocatable, taking on different and contradicting forms. For Adela, the barren and unyielding space of the Caribbean is segregated from the 'place she miss'. Amidst the placelessness of the island and the personal dissolution, we find the Atlantic as the force that beckons, both physically and spiritually. Recalling the trauma of the Middle Passage, the ocean emerges as a site of an imagined community, whilst on the other side of this aquatic space lies Africa, a place both imaginable and unimaginable, and a frequent occurrence in the tales passed down by old women. Adela's refusal to recognise the geographical space of the island also results in her forgetting her language. Having no other way of remembering her, Elizete recalls Adela's name as the only means of keeping her memory. In fact Adela's loss of name occurred much earlier with her forced displacement from Africa: 'She could not hold on to the turquoise sea what bring she here. Everything pour out of she eyes in a dry, dry river. Everything turn to lime and sharp bones, and she didn't catch sheself until it was she true name slipping away' (1996, 22). Here, Brand employs complicated metaphors linking dryness ('sharp bones') with loss of identity ('name slipping away') as a means of exposing the impossible and contradictory space of the Middle Passage ('dry river'). These metaphors are important in that they elucidate but also differentiate the various characters' estrangement and loss within Caribbean space. If the Middle Passage for Adela results in loss of identity and ultimately death, for Elizete it is a new beginning, as she takes on the task of reconnecting the severed links between her and the earth, making Nowhere

into a Somewhere, into a Here. Elizete's narrative of Adela's disintegration is described in her shutting off from the space/place of Here. For Adela, Caribbean geography does not exist, since she exists in a state of isolation. Much like the imaginary space of the tropical island isolated from the outside world, Adela's remoteness results in her body shutting down: 'Her heart just shut. It shut for rain, it shut for light, it shut for water and it shut for the rest of we what follow. Adela feel something harder than stone and more evil than sense. Here.' (1996, 22). Again, we see complicated metaphors at play. Adela locks out the liquid imagery of rain and water, resulting in a refusal of the things to come. For Elizete, however, this imagery plays an important part in her re-connection with the Caribbean space. In order to overcome the sensation of placelessness, Brand bestows upon Elizete an element of an attachment with the earth, nurturing the relationship between Elizete and the island within the image of birth and mothering. The relationship between Elizete and the island stands in contrast to Adela's isolation, and in a tidalectic manner of investigating the imaginary space of the tropical island, it offers a critical view of the relationship between history and land, as well as land and sea. Foregrounding the shared histories of Caribbean geography in a way that it encompasses the interrelations between island/continent and island/island, Brand employs the notions of the landscape only to foreground the oceanic elements of its constitution. Adela's sensation of something harder than stone points not only to her dissolution and loss but also to the eventual reworking of the stone/hardness trope by introducing the idea of fluidity, non-fixedness and tidalectics into the cross-cultural accounts of home, belonging and affiliation.

The character of Elizete exhibits qualities that resemble those of Kincaid, in that her explorations of connection do not rely on conceptualised notions of belonging. Rather, Elizete discovers that exploring the spaces in-between allows her to create a new set of complex lived spaces. In this way, she is able to create Somewhere out of Nowhere. Elizete's discovery of the necessity of creating new spaces did not come willingly. Contemplating running away from the hardship of the sugar cane field and an abusive master, Elizete dreams of Maracaibo, imagining it to be place like nowhere else. After learning about Adela's affliction and the consequences of running away, Elizete changes her mind, concentrating instead on spaces within

spaces. Communicating with Adela spiritually, Elizete realises that she must fill the void by giving names to the natural world around her. Trees, plants and stones, the surroundings that left Adela lost and disillusioned, are given names, importance, meaning and most importantly, a sense of belonging: 'If I say these names for Adela it might bring back she memory of herself and she true name. And perhaps I also would not feel lonely for something I don't remember' (1996, 24). Important to note here are the modal verbs 'might' and 'would' (along with 'must' in the previous quotation) emphasising doubt and uncertainty about Elizete's project. In addition, the use of the adverb 'perhaps' underlines Elizete's plans for her own future—hopefully she will not succumb to the same fate as Adela. This is seen in the following passage, which elucidates Elizete's feelings of agitation and discordance with the place she inhabits: 'Though often and still I know the feeling what Adela feel when she reach, the purposelessness of recalling come big in my throat, for the place beautiful but at the same time you think how a place like this make so much unhappiness' (1996, 25). Here, Elizete explicates the contradictory feelings towards the Caribbean space by adding the real dimension of the island. This serves as a means for overcoming the binary of viewing space as either perceived or conceptualised. Like Kincaid, Brand exhibits the possibility of creating a new set of concrete, material and uncontrollable actions that rework and re-theorise postmodern notions of belonging, identity and place. Moreover, Elizete's naming serves as a deconstruction of essentialist and anti-essentialist ideals of geography and space; she remains conflicted about 'here' but realises the ability to form a connection with place allows her to travel beyond here and to another place 'there'.

The representations of space and the notions of home and belonging to create a connection with the land are seen in Elizete's affiliation with the samaan tree. Indigenous to India and brought to the Caribbean in the nineteenth century by the British as part of the colonial project, the samaan tree stands high in front of the house. Resembling a woman with her hands in the air, the tree becomes a symbol of the nurturing relationship between Elizete and the land. The reclamation and naturalisation of the samaan tree, as well as the imagery of protection connected to it, create a space for a rebirth and a reconnection between her and the land. Overcoming Adela's affliction of loss and the lack of attachment, Elizete achieves, by

the means of creating alternative spaces, a familial relation with her surroundings. Brand's use of space-within-space results, as is seen in Kincaid's fiction, in the creation of a new set of complex spaces that act as a springboard for future actions. By already knowing the name of the samaan tree (we do not know how she learned of its name), Elizete herself becomes a character with the ability to name, to connect and to relate—in essence, to be born into 'this place'.

Dark oceans

The repetitive and ocean-like motion of *In Another Place, Not Here* introduces us not only to the realness and the trauma of the Middle Passage but also to the sea as a catalyst for the psychological and physical escape from loss, dissolution and pain experienced by female characters in the novel. Apart from connecting Elizete with Adela, the sea also joins the two women via the land and, as we will see later, the richness and fullness of the sea also parallel the character of Verlia. Who beckons Elizete in the beginning of the novel? More precisely, what beckons her?

The character of Verlia serves as the embodiment of Brand's articulation of liquid imagery. In the beginning of the novel, when Elizete first lays her eyes on her, Verlia is not only engulfed in watery images—she becomes water: 'From the word she speak to me and the sweat running down she in that sun . . . I look up. That woman like a drink of cool water' (1996, 3). It is significant that Elizete's desire washes over Verlia partly because of the sexual attraction Elizete feels towards her and partly because of Elizete's view of Verlia as a metaphor of escape and freedom from the backbreaking work of cutting and harvesting sugar cane. Elizete's initial sighting of Verlia, which always occurs at earth-level—she consistently remarks 'I look up'—is immersed in the queerness of lesbian desire and the revolutionary socialist imperatives. The fact that Verlia is like a 'drink of cool water' elevates her from the level of the sugar cane field and, more importantly, connects her to the opening word of the novel: grace. In Verlia, Elizete sees divine grace as it beckons her from across the field. For both women grace signals a profound relationship between the two women. A relationship filled with beauty, transcendence and sexual desire. However, the romantic imagery of Verlia as Elizete's saviour, 'elevating' her from off the ground level,

is immediately undermined by the realness of the field, as Elizete sinks her machete in her foot. The materiality of the body and the field marks the relationship between Elizete and Verlia with danger and adversity. Moreover the anxious interaction between the two women brings into focus the patriarchal imagery of female body as it problematises the relationship between the woman and the land. In the same way that Mootoo reworks the gardening motifs of the Caribbean by reinscribing and reworking the New World pastoral narratives of Jacques Roumain, Brand pairs the earth imagery (Elizete) with the water imagery (Verlia) in order to employ and shift the focus from female bodies onto the historical and cultural workings of the Caribbean. If the depiction of women in Roumain's texts is laden with the idyllic imagery of Edenic virginity, the interaction between Elizete and Verlia in Brand's novel is immersed in the images of queer desire which conjure associations with exploitation, memory, freedom and revolution.

Brand's language of seascape and her focus on the unnamed island in the Caribbean attest not only to the importance of the rhythmic movements of the sea but also to the creation of a queer space of belonging. As I noted earlier, the creation of space is expressed in the taking possession of the land, by naming and claiming one's place in it. In the same way that Elizete claims land in the Caribbean, Verlia, with her involvement in the Black Power Movement, lays claim to the world of Toronto/Canada. Described as a city divided into two parts—the White and the Other—Toronto is a space where ownership cannot easily be asserted. In a remarkable reversal of geography, however, Toronto becomes a fluid territory that defies ownership and knowability: 'If you live here you can never say that you know the other world, the white world, with certainty. It is always changing on you though it stays the same, immovable' (1996, 180). The city's refusal to be named is paralleled in Elizete's sense of alienation as she walks the streets of Toronto. Elizete's blindness is reminiscent of Adela's distanced and unseeing relation with the Caribbean island as Elizete's loss of connection with the city stems from its unreal nature. For Elizete, the city is simply not there. It is not 'here'—it becomes Nowhere: 'After months she still saw no birds *to speak of* or the same birds, no river *to speak of*, no mountains *to speak of*, no grass *to speak of*, no moon *to speak of*. Especially no moon. And no ocean or sea' (1996, 68, my emphasis).

Brand is careful not to suggest that the city does not exist; by emphasising the phrase 'to speak of', Brand suggests that the moon, the ocean and the sea *are* there but just not to an extent worth speaking of. In addition, as Elizete desperately tries to get to the sea, which she sees as a marker of familiarity and attachment, Verlia sees the city's inhabitants as submerged so deeply that they do not notice one another. The use of liquid imagery in the descriptions of both the island and Toronto exhibits Brand's complex theorisations of belonging in/and space, as places themselves appear to be both existent and non-existent. As Brand expands the representations of space and those of sexuality beyond the geographical borders of Euro-America, she makes clear that the use of language, especially the language of tidalectics and seascape, can remake and redo space. Verlia's laying claims to Toronto and her connection to the Black Power Movement reflects Brand's own migration to Canada (she left Trinidad in 1970 at the age of 17, just after the uprising in Trinidad). Similar to Brand's own escape from Trinidad and a subsequent settlement in Canada, Elizete's sense of belonging within the space of Caribbean is made possible with her insistence upon naming and laying claim to the land. Verlia's sense of belonging, however, is situated in the revolutionary anti-White world tactics of the Movement. The oscillation between the two strategies, as well as between land and sea, roots and routes, and past and present, illustrates Brand's watery engagement with the cartographic mapping of belonging across spaces and oceans. The contrasting spaces of both the island and the city of Toronto function as tools for deconstructing the hegemonic devices of homogeneity as the interplay between the beach and the ocean as a circular and repetitive movement of ebb and flow erodes the psychological borders between the two places. According to S. P. Sylvester, African Caribbean Canadian writers such as Clare Harris, Marlene Nourbese Philip and Dionne Brand 'manipulate the English language to express their dissatisfaction with not only with the language in which they write, but also the Federal policies of multiculturalism as well as the problems of racism in Canada' (8). The fluid and unknowable world of Toronto creates a parallel to Brathwaite's continual movement of the sea as a cyclical model for disintegrating the relationship between the dialectic of inside/outside and land/sea. Brathwaite's insistence that nation language resists the linguistic and cultural system of hegemony is reflected in Brand's

use of language to create maps, identifications and place.² Elizete's desire to weave family stories, to name, reminds us of the importance of naming and the transformative power of language to create a coherent narrative of roots and belonging in a place. Mapmaking by the means of tidalectics allows Brand to construct a new space in which sexuality, apart from exhibiting the ability to alter geography, creates a new language for understanding sexual desire. My arguments on Brand's mapmaking correspond to Sylvester's arguments about Brand's manipulation of language. In addition to this, Sylvester notes that African Caribbean Canadian writing aims to 'restore the image of Africa that was lost due to colonization and subsequent de-colonization of the African continent.... [It] attempts to recreate the history of Africa and deconstruct the past...' (9).

In Brand's novel, the rendering of the desires, practices and affinities between the female characters presents an alternative landscape/seascape, caught between the impossible geographies of the West Indies and North America. Brand's depictions of geography are similar to those of Mootoo and Kincaid in that the geography of *In Another Place, Not Here* mirrors 'reality', pushing back against what is 'real' and what is not real, and creates a space where history and connection point in several directions. Whilst Mootoo employs the image of the garden to draw on past memories, Brand uses the image of the sea to connect with history and recapture the past. 'Grounded' in the movement of the sea, a movement that transforms marginal spaces into creolised spaces of differences and connection, Brand's novel incorporates Brathwaite's notions of nation language and tidalectics as well as queer sexuality and affiliation to resituate the sense of identity of its characters, deconstructing and creating spaces within spaces as well as acting as a resistant force against the dominant hegemony, racism, patriarchy and imposing heterosexuality. Viewing space as both real and unreal, literal and imaginative, Brand uses language to re-create a map and exhibit the importance of language for the process of mapmaking, obscuring identity boundaries and expanding the criteria for belonging. More importantly, however, Brand's use of language points to the limits of language itself, examining the potential of language to both reproduce history's violence and to open up its potential for transformation. The intangibility of the liquid imagery not only transgresses the heterosexual, patriarchal and hegemonic discourse of identity and

belonging, but also points to the limits of portrayal and the crisis of representation.

In *A Map to the Door of No Return* (2001), a theoretical and semi-autobiographical meditation on memory, travel, belonging and identity, Brand describes the doorways through which people were taken onto slave ships: 'Imagining our ancestors stepping through these portals one senses people stepping out into nothing; one senses a surreal space, an inexplicable space. One imagines people so stunned by their circumstances, so heartbroken as to refuse reality. Our inheritance in the Diaspora is to live in this inexplicable space' (20). Serving as a metaphor for the slave ships on their way from West Africa, the door of no return is a horrific place of forgotten origin imbued with slavery, violence and capitalism. Apart from childhood memories and family stories, *Map* also contains colonial ships' logs and maritime chronicles. One of these letters is by William Bosman, a Dutch sea captain, which provides an eyewitness account of the mechanisms of the African slave trade at the beginning of the eighteenth century. Brand quotes:

When these Slaves come to Fida, they are put in Prison all together, and when we treat concerning buying them, they are all brought out together in a large Plain; where, by our Chirurgeons, whose Province it is, they are thoroughly examined, even to the smallest Member, and that naked too both Men and Women, without the least Distinction or Modesty. Those which are approved as good are set on one side; and the lame or faulty are set by as Invalides, which are here called Mackrons.

... You would really wonder to see how these Slaves live on Board; for though their number sometimes amounts to six or seven Hundred, yet by the careful Management of our Masters of Ships, they are so regulated that it seems incredible: And in this particular our Nation exceeds all other Europeans; for as the French, Portugese and English Slave-Ships, are always foul and stinking; on the contrary ours are for the most part clean and neat.

(2001, 22–23, italics in original)

Later in the text, however, Brand adds: 'The door, of course, is not on the continent but in the mind; not a physical place—though it is—but a space in the imagination' (2001, 96–97). Both

a physical and a psychological place, the door becomes a paradox: how does one remember what one has been taught to forget? Signifying routes/roots of the Middle Passage, the door itself becomes, in its realness and unrealness, an absence. In order to write, name and map this absence, Brand employs the image of the ocean and the sea as a means for exploring the submarine routes/roots of the Middle Passage. The emphasis on absence and the spatiality of the door/submarine roots points to the possibility of reworking and transforming the limiting space of forgetting into an enabling space of remembrance. Employing maps through water is Brand's way of enabling the creative inheritance of the door to open the unyielding materiality of history and unhinge the creative possibility of the door. Identifying Jamaica Kincaid's writing as 'unfixing the fixed'³ (*Bread Out of Stone*), Brand uses the image of water and fluidity to unfix the constricting materiality of the door and to liquefy the colonising epistemology of the language used to describe the Black experience and the African consciousness. 'We have no ancestry except the black water and the Door of No Return. They signify space and not land' (2001, 61), writes Brand. Tracing ancestral genealogy as it exists in the imagination, Brand investigates the ability of maps and mapping to creatively subdue the sense of loss and to provoke a sense of self-creation and make explicit of a particular connection to place and history.

The notion of unfixing the fixed and living between inside and outside requires us to delve into Brand's depictions of space, if we are to decipher the complex and ambiguous workings of *In Another Place, Not Here*. The concept of creativity and self-creation, as we have seen earlier, lies in the use of language and naming in order to surpass the condition of loss and detachment. Constructing countersites within the spaces of the real and unreal becomes Brand's artistic attempt at capturing the horrors of the past.⁴ In a manner akin to Mootoo, Brand situates her characters between the perceived and conceived spaces of representation and installs counterspaces as a means of dealing with the traumas of the past and documenting the history of loss, detachment, racism and violence in the present lives of the descendants of the people who passed through the door of no return. Brand's creative work is a map of Adela, Elizete and Verlia's life, their desires and affinities as well as their sense of detachment and loss. Creating maps, however, involves a creative engagement with the

surroundings, both terrestrial and aqueous. But how does one map the sea? In the section entitled 'Museums', Brand merges Glissant's theory on space and diaspora with local historical context of Trinidad and Tobago:

You arrive at a small white museum by climbing or driving up the steepest hills in the town [of Scarborough]. Up this hill was once a fort. Fort King George . . . Moving up the staircase . . . of the museum where this novel begins, I am distressed, in Glissant's sense, and also curious, which is pleasure.

(2001, 196, 199)

Here, Brand installs the museum as a space that once housed the British colonial military, reminding us of the local historical context of Trinidad and Tobago. However, as she ascends the stairs going up to the second floor of the museum, she notes the works of eighteenth-century cartographers including maps, 'astronomic observations made on the land, latitudes taken at sea' (2001, 199). In the midst of this local colonial context, Brand extends her observations to incorporate conceived spaces (maps, latitudes) as a way of emphasising the significance of colonial imagination as a means of 'capturing' the region. 'These cartographers', Brand argues, 'they were artists and poets. They were dreamers and imaginers as surely as I' (2001, 199–200). This is how Brand creates counterspaces as a means of dealing with the traumas of the past. By documenting the history of loss Brand conducts her own investigations of diaspora and the Middle Passage, where water is both feared and loved. Both in history and the imagination, the aqueous and fluid characteristics of the sea mark out an equivocal terrain for the bridging of the past and the present: it marks the hope for a home and a desire for belonging as well as a refusal of a singular origin. In addition, the sea marks out the necessity of re-memory and the rediscovery of the Middle Passage. With this in mind, we can begin to examine Brand's appropriation of the practice of mapping as a means for laying claims to space, history and memory.

Even though both *A Map to the Door of No Return* and *In Another Place* engage with the complexities of seascape to explore the submarine routes/roots of the Middle Passage, Brand's 1999 novel *At the Full and Change of the Moon* employs to a much greater extent the image

of the ocean as a space for the rediscovery of the Middle Passage. Gopinath's call for the necessity and the importance of examining queer female desire rendered impossible within diasporic and state nationalisms appears to be answered in *At the Full*, as the reclaiming of home, kinship and collective identity emerges as a site of queered affinities and ancestral lines. The diagram that maps Marie Ursule's familial lines, before the novel even begins, exhibits Brand's use of spatiality and sexuality where the patriarchal paradigms of imperial cartography are resigned to the sidelines. Kamena's character is pushed to the periphery as the ancestral tree diagram traces the matriarchal ancestry where sexual activity allows for the creation of transgressive and homely spaces. Orchestrating a mass suicide of slaves on a plantation, Marie Ursule sends her daughter Bola with Bola's father Kamena to a secret free place on the island as she prepares for the rebellious act of resistance by releasing her body from the space of colonisation. In *Flight to Freedom: African Runaways and Maroons in the Americas* (2006), Alvin O. Thompson notes that 'the desperate desire for freedom drove enslaved persons to commit suicide' (92). In this 'supreme recourse', Thompson notes, 'suicide often became an act of war, intended to deprive the enslaver of a valuable labour resource'. More importantly, Thompson argues, 'it was believed that committing suicide would facilitate quick return to Africa' (92). We can tie this to Marie Ursule's exclamation as she is about to die as punishment for her insubordination: 'This is but a drink of water to what I have already suffered' (1999, 24). Thus the return to Africa in *At the Full* occurs both literally and figuratively—literally, as slaves commit mass suicide; and figuratively, as Bola turns a site of oppression into a site of resistance. Moreover, in Bola, Brand bestows a figure of the sea as the force that, much like the oceanic force of Verlia's world pounding at the shores of the White world of Toronto, abrades the landscape of colonialism. Once again, in a remarkable reversal of geography, Bola and the sea, like Verlia and water, become virtually interchangeable entities. Not only is Bola characterised before the novel begins as the one 'whose eyes wept an ocean', but after Bola sees the sea, 'walking into a house was like walking into a wall, a barrier to the open' (1999, 44). Bola's father, on the other hand, who is present in the ancestral diagram but is not incorporated into the lineage, does not form a bond with the water. In fact, during his search for Terre Bouillante—his failed cartographical attempts to

find his way back to the Maroon colony led him on an impossible mission—he had turned into a skeleton. For Kamena, the sea is heavy like tears. Fleeing it, Kamena heads inwards into the landscape, away from the present and into the traumatic past of the Middle Passage. Thompson notes that Maroon communities resisted enslavement and brutalities which was ‘an attempt by enslaved persons both to reduce the power of the enslavers and to acquire some power for themselves’ (9). This, according to Thomson, involved seeking and finding spaces for successful resistance: ‘*Marronage* was the most extreme form of such resistance, since it involved opting out of the system of oppression altogether and establishing a new kind of society in which the former enslaved persons took (or sought to take) control of their own lives and destinies’ (2006, 9, emphasis in original). Although Kamena searches for his Maroon colony as a space of resistance, he nevertheless attempts to follow the traces of trauma. These attempts, we are told, will prove to be useless, as he dies of starvation whilst trying to remember the past. Unaware of the present and with his eyes turned towards the past, Kamena’s detachment from the sea signals his disidentification, disillusionment and ultimate death. For Kamena, the Maroon settlement becomes a site of oppression, but for Bola, who arrives at the convent where nuns enslaved her mother, the settlement becomes a site of resistance. Although the nuns died long ago, Bola still feels their presence in the dusty ruins of the convent. However, as the time passes, Bola’s connection with the sea slowly erases the nuns’ control of Culebra Bay and creates her own space. Culebra Bay, a site of both oppression and resistance, attests to Brand’s representations of space in which the imperial and patriarchal mapping of ancestral lines is reworked in favour of a fluid cartography where the creation of in-between spaces demands an engagement with both the land and the sea. In the case of *Terre Bouillante* and Culebra Bay, Brand once again confirms that water and the sea are both feared and loved.

Bola’s fluid character, much like that of Verlia, seems to answer Gopinath’s call for queerness within heterosexuality and patriarchy. Not only have Bola and those in search of the ocean replaced the dusty remains of the nuns, but more importantly, Bola has also replaced their sexuality with that of her own. The chaste and virtuous sexuality of the nuns is replaced by Bola’s numerous sexual cravings. Bola’s sexual encounters, however, do not merely stand in

contrast with the imperial notions of chaste sexuality—Bola's sexuality populates Culebra Bay, breaking the apparent dichotomy between chastity and lasciviousness. More importantly, the roots and routes of Bola's sexuality result in the creation of queer desire found in the character of Cordelia, who is overridden by a sudden lust. Her desire, which appears as something bestowed on her, is submerged in liquid imagery. Cordelia's husband, the quiet and decent Emmanuel Greaves, who, at the moment Cordelia asks him to marry her, becomes 'bathed in gold dust', is relegated to the same place/space as Kamena. Not understanding and fearing Cordelia's sexual desire, Emmanuel becomes associated with dryness and passivity, eventually being submerged under Cordelia's lust and desire. The lust in Cordelia's body distances her from the orderliness of Emmanuel, releasing the fluid workings of her body towards a queer desire of being 'unfixed'. Subsumed by Cordelia's body and lust on Sunday mornings, Emmanuel becomes alienated from their house, which becomes a site of resistance against the notions of 'proper' sexuality. Cordelia's lust creates a space within the domain of the 'proper' domesticity for the impossible female desire to emerge. Searching for the sea, Cordelia reverses the oppression of the Greaves residence into a space of sexuality, queerness and female empowerment. She employs her sexual energy to mould Emmanuel as she sees fit, her body turning into water. Here again, the sea serves as both a figure of oppression and domination as well as a site of resistance and queer desire.

I do not wish to present laudatory readings of Brand's works. In this book, I argue that Brand's spaces are highly theoretical *as well as* locally rooted. In other words, Brand's texts present constructions of Caribbean, Canadian and diasporic identity that work, not in opposition to, but alongside local diasporic contexts. Whether it is Culebra Bay or Grenada or Toronto or Canada, these places are refigured by Brand's use of tidalectics. This refiguring constructs maps that sketch the outlines of both Canada and the Caribbean and the relationship between them. For instance, as Elizete, in *In Another Place, Not Here*, looks towards the water, she decides to 'get away from the mall and the Gladstone' and begins to walk the streets 'trying to get out to the sea' (1996, 56). Elizete's pursuit of the sea is intertwined with her spatial claim to the city of Toronto. Here, spatial theory and local context interweave. According to Rinaldo Walcott,

In Another Place is literally and symbolically a historical and contemporary map/guide to (Black) Toronto. Bathurst, St. Clair Avenue, Oakwood, Danford, Regent Park, Avenue Road, Yorkville, Yonge Street, these names exist alongside names of places and spaces in the Caribbean. The Gladstone Hotel, Van Dong Restaurant, Canadian National, factories, rooming houses, barber shops, parks and dance halls (The Paramount), are signifiers which locate place, names that reconfigure and claim, make one's presence felt.

(1997, 47–48)

Both literal and symbolic, Brand's work redraws Canadian urban landscape. Both *In Another Place*, *Not Here* and *At the Full and Change of the Moon* trace a historical map. Brand employs the language of the dry barren city where Elizete finds herself in Canada partly because of Verlia, the object of her queer desire, whilst Eula's being in Canada is partially the result of Bola's lust and the arbitrariness of the travels undertaken by her numerous offspring. In both novels, women's *sexuality* allows for the redrawing of maps and finding in-between spaces that claim *both* the Caribbean seascape *and* the urban landscape of Canada. Theoretical and locally rooted, Brand's work re-creates Caribbean and Canadian space/place. By the means of the language of seascape, the city of Toronto is constructed as an island, surrounded by the fluid workings of the other world. More importantly, Brand inserts Black presence in Toronto as her character Verlia finds a room in a house on a street off Bathurst. According to Walcott, Bathurst 'is important for a number of reasons, chief among them being the assertion and insertion of a black presence in Toronto, one that refuses to be silenced, to be made invisible and to exist solely on the margins of North American society' (1997, 47). In *Bread Out of Stone* (1994), a collection of essays exploring the issues of power, geography, race, gender and sexuality, Brand writes an entire essay on Bathurst, giving it home-like qualities: 'Bathurst Subway. I say it like home... Funny how home is the first place you look for if you are running from it, you are nevertheless always running toward it' (67). Feeling 'at home', Verlia views the White world of Toronto as submerged in the ocean, just as Brand, in her essay on Bathurst, describes the first migrants of Blacks arriving on Bathurst Street in the 1960s:

They first took you to Bathurst and Bloor to locate you, your place, the point from which you would meet this country. And your relationship to it was clear since this was the only oasis of Blacks in the miles and miles to be learned of in the *white desert* that was the city.

(1994, 68–69, my emphasis)

Brand's emphasis on the dryness of the city, with its barren landscape, makes the city a deserted and a lifeless space as well as a fluid territory that defies ownership. Once again, the water/sea imagery becomes ambiguous in that it is both feared and loved, as the landscape of the city turns from island to the sea, constantly changing shapes and meanings. The fluidity of her character manages to incorporate and re-inscribe not only the nationalist workings of the Movement as well as the boundaries of Blackness but also the physical borders of Canada. In terms of Black Canadian writing, Brand's works are important because, as Walcott notes, they 'concern themselves in no small detail with mapping a black Canadian poetics of space' (1997, 46). These efforts are significant, Walcott argues, 'because the historians and the sociologists have not been able to furnish black Canada with a discourse that recognizes an almost five-hundred-year past, and it is up to those of us engaged in other aspects of cultural work to articulate what that means' (1997, 46). In other words, Brand's works, although mostly imaginative and fictional, offer interesting and creative (and thus more complex) constructions of Caribbean, Canadian and diasporic identity. They insert and formulate a fluidity within the very constitutions of Caribbean and Canadian subjectivity. Thus, Brand formulates a Black Canadian discourse conscious of both the local historical contexts as well as the limitations of national boundaries.

Where does the fluidity of Brand's map lead us? Brand's queer tactics of mapmaking, as we have witnessed, lie not in the geographical configurations of territory but in the cultural and historical formations of community where syncretism, synthesis and affiliation allow for a new poetic space of home. Elaborating on the traumas of the door of no return, Brand writes: 'I am constructing a map of the region, paying attention . . . to the *unknowable*, to unintended acts of *returning*' (2001, 19, my emphasis). Brand's emphasis on the returning acts of the sea points towards her occupation with the image of

the sea as uncanny. The notion of the sea as that which is repressed can be seen in her evocations of the Middle Passage, where which she first heard the word 'Sargasso' in a history class when she was a child. In those books, the Middle Passage described the treacherous waters where cargo, ships and sailors were often lost. Here, Brand evokes the water as something to be feared and dreaded—she depicts the deceitful path from European points of view, a path that carries death with it. Waking up and finding herself at a point of asphyxiation, Brand repeats the terrifying sensations of loss, anxiety, alienation, despair and, most importantly, death. In *The Arrivants* (1988), an epic-poetic trilogy about the African-New World diaspora, Brathwaite writes of the Middle Passage: 'For the land has lost the memory of the most secret places./We see the moon but cannot remember its meaning./A dark skin is a chain but it cannot recall the name/of its tribe' (164). Brathwaite's Middle Passage is similar to Brand's in its evocation of the horrific passage and the traumas of the past. For Brathwaite, there is no connection between the past and the present; the memory is absent. For Brand, however, the uncanny sea suggests otherwise in its evocation of loss and the tracing of the severed ties between past and present. The sea as a fluid, watery path evokes the Middle Passage *as well as* the desire for home and belonging. At the end of *At the Full*, for instance, Bola speaks of the moon, filling it with meaning, and more importantly, departs from Brathwaite's notions of the moon as devoid of meaning:

Everything get measured here by the moon. And when it was a good moon, as it was big and round and the rim of it was white with clouds, they say that it was not a good day for the leaving. A good day was at the end of the moon's rounds when the evening come dark, so dark as they could pass the medicine without discovery.

(1999, 296)

Brand takes the title of *At Full and Change of the Moon* from Thomas Jefferys, geographer to King George III, who writes his observations of Tobago:

The currents near Tobago are very strong and uncertain especially between this island and Trinidad. At the full and change of the moon the sea will rise four feet perpendicular....If you make

Tobago toward evening and are afraid of running in with it you must not by any means lay to but fstand to e/y southward under an easy sail otherwise e/y current which always sets to e/y North west or north east will probably occasion your losfing sight of the island and if it set north west would perhaps carry you so far to e/y leeward that you should not be able to fetch it again.

(quoted in Brand 2001, 200, 201)

Brand notes that Jefferys' language is poetic and lyrical, secure in its own authority yet playful and gentle: 'I am stunned as I read it with its lisping s's, I am fascinated by its unintended irony, I am in love with its cadence' (2001, 201). In this piece of local history—Trinidad and Tobago's colonial past—Brand constructs a new poetics of space and identity which is filled with meaning in the late twentieth century. Although she is envious of Jefferys' language, of its 'authority in apprehending what others cannot apprehend, its command of the geography of the oceans—How wilting! How majestic!' (2001, 201–202), Brand realises that this 'gorgeous prose' is deceptive, as it eradicates its real directions—landing safely the ships that bring slaves to the island. Here, Brand disrupts and destabilises Jefferys' prose, taking his observations and giving them to her characters so they can continue misreading them. In other words, Brand not only shows the way to slavery—she utilises the local historical contexts as a way of connecting the past with the present. Thus, *The Door* becomes a creation space/place for Blacks in the diaspora. In terms of contemporary Canadian cityscape, however, Brand reverses the geography of Toronto as a fluid territory that defies ownership and knowability. As I discussed earlier, the abrasion of the city of Toronto allows for the creation of a queer space of belonging where origins are contested and ruptured, where the submersion of people within the dark deep waters of the city defies any pre-set notions of a Canadian origin. The queer ripping apart of Toronto is the effect of the collision of multiple identities that share the community of Atlantic routes/roots and who are able to create spaces of resistance within the uncanny spaces of the city. Resisting being claimed by history, drawing new maps within haunting territories and allowing for new affiliations to arise, Brand constructs new modes of thinking belonging, geography and sexuality that point us in new directions and new ways of thinking about maps.

Queering the Black Atlantic

'In another place, not here', Brand writes in *No Language Is Neutral* (1990), a collection of poetry that fuses language with the history of slavery as well as female same-sex eroticism, 'a woman might touch/something between beauty and nowhere, back there/and here might pass hand over hand her own/trembling life' (31). By calling attention to the lack of spaces for a Black lesbian feminist, Brand reterritorialises the normalising strategies of the conventional 'queer' geography, both physically and metaphorically. She critiques the discourses of not only origins and traditions but also the established politics of immigration and home-space. Brand's musing about the lack of comfortable spaces for the Black lesbian is more than just a metaphorical call for the substantiation of queer and hybrid identities. It is a concrete and painful experience that engenders desire and resistance as well as loss and despair.⁵ Dionne Brand's emphasis on the ocean serves as an important step towards imploding the narrow conceptions of Blackness, origins, sexuality and belonging. As it excavates the metaphorical and the historical records of the Middle Passage, Brand creates new maps, metaphorical as well as physical, placing fluid identities at the centre. Brand's fluidity, however, stands in contrast to the 'fluidity' of Euro-American queer studies in that her liquid imagery is not a postmodern expression of the constructedness of gender but a material baggage that continues to haunt the queer Black experience in the present. Brand's writing queers queer studies, not as another academic exercise of deconstruction but as an involvement and an exploration of the unimaginable, the all-encompassing, the ever-present.

In *Gender Trouble*, Butler writes: 'Perpetual displacement constitutes *fluidity of identities* that suggests an openness to resignification and recontextualization; parodic proliferation deprives hegemonic culture and its critics of the right to claim naturalized or essentialist gender identities' (1999, 176, my emphasis). Butler's metaphors of fluidity, however, do not appear to move outside the unmarked North American geography—questions of race and colour are conspicuously absent from her early formulations of 'gender trouble'. In addition to Gopinath's original question, 'whose queerness?', I would like to ask: whose fluidity? According to the queer theorist Brad Epps,

Queer theory tends to place great stock in movement, especially when it is movement against, beyond, or away from rules and regulations, norms and conventions, borders and limits. . . . It is not alone, yet queer theory . . . presents movement, *fluid movement*, as the liberational undoing of regulatory disciplinarity. For it is my contention that by insistently setting its sights on *fluidity*, by taking it as that which at once denies and affirms disciplinary power, queer theory performs a little magic of its own.

(413, my emphasis)

Although the 'magic' of queer theory seems to be its disloyalty to any regulatory discipline, its preoccupation with unmarked Whiteness and naturalness of Euro-American identity paradigms sabotages the promise of liberational fluidity and designates colour to the periphery of the global north. In the 1999 preface to *Gender Trouble*, Butler acknowledges that 'racial presumptions invariably underwrite the discourse on gender in ways that need to be made explicit', and her addition calls for an engagement with the issues of race and gender. Despite the acknowledgement that 'the question to ask is not whether the theory of performativity is transposable onto race, but what happens to the theory when it tries to come to grips with race' (xvi), Butler assigns the role of race a secondary position in relation to the already established theory. Thus the fluidity of identity performs poor magic, for the theories of race, postcoloniality and, most important, history are not viewed as central to queer theory but as a subsequent addition. Yet placing diaspora alongside queer—not as an addition but as a constituting factor—allows us to bring to the surface that which has been *submerged* and *silenced* by the Whiteness of queer theory. The fluidity of queer theory, as we have seen, is not as fluid as it appears to be. Making it fluid requires us to dig deep into the history and geography of sexuality and race.

Brand's interest in the workings of history is illustrated in her exploration of the cultural production of the present by means of rupturing. Re-capturing past memories in contemporary Canada, Brand expresses her desire for 'relief from the persistent trope of colonialism. To be without this story of captivity, to dis-remember it' (2001, 42). Being released from captivity is, then, to record what takes place on the other side of the Door. This spatialised image is more than just a metaphorical musing over the state of fluidity of the Black

diasporised subject. For Brand, 'queering' diaspora is about queering the body in space and abrading the space of belonging through water imagery: 'To reclaim the Black body from that domesticated, captive, open space is the creative project always underway' (2001, 43). The magic of queer theory is not the magic of fluid movement against rules or regulations but recognition that 'sexual difference is no more primary than racial or ethnic difference and that one cannot apprehend sexual difference outside of the racial and ethnic frames by which it is articulated' (Butler 2004, 10). Creating new maps through history and desire rooted/routed in the Middle Passage and the Black Atlantic adds the materiality that queer theory fails to address. Bringing the Caribbean and the Atlantic to Canada queers the open spaces of North American belonging and ruptures Eurocentric notions of fluidity based on unmarked models of sexuality and humanity. Instead, Brand installs the Caribbean and African diaspora in the unmarked spaces of Toronto, tracing the specific and the historical contours of Black queer existence. The creation of Black spaces of resistance perpetuates her uncanny city, turning it into both a desert and a sea, reterritorialising the material engagements that shape racialised, gendered, nationalised and sexualised subjectivities and affiliations within the Black diaspora.

In Another Place adds to the dryness/fluidity dyad by means of the geographical and metaphorical positioning of Toronto's Bathurst Street as a site of Black presence and resistance. It 'stand[s] in as a ritualistic locus for migrant Caribbean peoples... who live in the in-between, neither here nor elsewhere, redraw[ing] and rechart[ing] the places/spaces that they occupy' (Walcott 1997, 45). Likewise, the Black festival and parade Caribana embody the realness of the body, the Black queer experience and the haunting presence of the Door. Both geographies point towards representations of space in which the creation of spaces of resistance is connected to the image of the sea as a site of release as well as captivity. Brand asks: 'How to describe this mix of utter, hopeless pain and elation leaning against the door? Caribana, on Lakeshore Boulevard, in the city of Toronto' (2001, 41). Re-sketching the outlines of the city, the significance of Brand's inclusion of Caribana is twofold: to map the relationship between the Caribbean and Canada, and to reveal the historical and cultural alienation and loss within the Black subjectivities in Toronto. Brand writes:

The carnival itself is situated in slavery. It was a celebration of Black liberation from forced labour... Here, dancing along the lakeshore, there is ecstasy, abandon, the graceful intelligence of the body. Well, perhaps it's not such a paradox after all. Though the meanings are always slipping.

(2001, 41–42)

By pointing to the slippage in meaning, from ecstasy to abandon, Brand emphasises the marginalisation of the Caribbean diaspora: what appears to be a claiming of space and ownership slips, in reality, into a cultural placement of the Black consciousness on the periphery of the 'White world' of the city. Walcott argues that 'while the festival has a strong Caribbean trace, it is uniquely Canadian... Caribana is a good example of how blackness becomes Canadianized all the while pointing to outside the national boundaries—a diasporic cultural expression' (1997, 135). Here, Walcott points to the Canadian discourse of heritage, which is directly linked to the notion of Canadian multiculturalism. In other words, if in Canada, '“Caribbean” is really a pseudonym for blackness', then the festival of Caribana both 'brings Caribbean culture to Canada' and 'positions the Caribbean as outside Canada' (1997, 135, 136). Conversely, I would argue, the fact that the carnival is situated on the 'shore' of Lake Ontario, which is conceived as the symbolic sea, could point to another slippage in meaning—a queer meaning—where the fluidity of the water transforms the dryness of the White city and inserts Black presence as a wave that washes over the desert, creating a new, historical map of the city. In this context, Elizete's search for the water potentially leads her to the local 'Atlantic'—Lake Ontario—where water, once again, serves as a site of oppression and resistance: 'Each day she travelled another street further and further into the maze; she thought that she could smell the sea as she moved along the grid of pavements and alleys and houses all the same' (1996, 53). As she walks through the streets of Toronto, searching for her grace, her rupture and eventually that which is on the other side of the Door, Elizete digs deep into the history and geography of sexuality and race. Thus through the character of Verlia as well as Elizete, Brand adds cultural specificity to queer theory, although the latter is never explicitly mentioned and is only present when we add those fluid slippages to the backdrops of both Canada and the Caribbean.

Sugar and salt

The interlocking relationship of the island and the sea in Toronto symbolises the fluid meanings that defy transitional readings of space and sexuality. Here, I focus on the images of sugar and salt as symbols of Brand's ambivalent, yet provocative, means of tactically using language, turning it against its own assumptions and foundations. In fact, the relationship between sugar and salt becomes, in a way, a relationship between land and island, landscape and seascape. 'She she sweet, sweet like sugar' (1996, 4), exclaims Elizete when she sets eyes on Verlia in the cane field. Later in the text, we are told that Verlia 'would wake up with a need to taste sugar' (1996, 147). The significance of the sugar imagery can be traced to the history of the cultivation of the crop. In the Caribbean, according to Arthur L. Stinchcombe,

The sugar-frontier period, that is, the period in which much of the land and population come to be occupied in raising sugar cane and boiling sugar, greatly increased the intensity of cultivation wherever it happened. A moderately propitious environment for sugar...usually increased population by a factor of between 5 and 10...because sugar was so much more labor intensive per acre than the other crops. Up until the 19th century this involved importing slaves on a large scale, completely swamping the population that had been there before.

(1995, 10)

Brand's use of sugar imagery links the history of sugar harvesting with the present oppression in sugar plantations. Elizete's backbreaking work of cutting and harvesting sugar cane makes a direct connection with the 'frontier period', during which not only were the sugar workers and planters 'recent immigrants', but they were 'usually overwhelmingly male'. Thus, by installing two female characters within the overwhelmingly male domain of harvesting sugar, Brand re-members and re-envisions the frontier-period. During this period, according to Stinchcombe, 'both kinds of recent immigrants died very rapidly in the Caribbean, and the sailors and the slaves died at about the same time, very high rate in the Middle Passage' (10). In *In Another Place*, however, the sugar and sweetness are, by the

means of liquid imagery, attributed to sites of comfort and pleasure. More importantly, in the character of Verlia, Brand combines the notions of water and sugar to confront the static, landlocked hegemony of the White world. Finding herself in the midst of Whiteness, Verlia sees this geography as the 'sublime territory of rage. Such rage it would hawk and spit out a glass-throated ocean, islands choking; so much it would long for a continent to wash up on and to chastise' (1996, 43). The liquid imagery of Verlia's world, washing up against the shores of the White world, is related to her involvement in the emancipatory Black Movement, which on 'May twenty-fifth, nineteen seventy-three' is described as a 'crowd gathering like a sea, the skein of it situating from the park at Christie and Bloor to Harbord and Bathurst' (1996, 167). Important to note, however, is Brand's use of the sugar imagery in the description of Verlia and the Movement:

She marched in the middle of it, near the front trying to look serious but wanting to laugh for the joy bubbling in her chest, the crowd around her like sugar, sugar is what she recalled, shook down her back by her sister, sticky and grainy...and the shock and strangeness of her skin shaking sugar. The crowd like sugar down her back...all of her feels like melting into it, sugar. "Power to the People!" The crowd and her voice sugaring...They invent sugar. She marches along with the crowd, without the pain in her chest.

(1996, 167–168)

The sensation in Verlia's chest—the liquid sugar—is the result of her submission into the collective identity of the Black crowd. It is also a sublime territory of rage, unthinkable and unimaginable to the White world. Meredith Gadsby argues that the meaning of sugar in the Caribbean—its rise from luxury item to mass commodity—depends on its 'representation': 'Those who controlled European society during the period of slavery certainly also controlled the meaning of sugar to the populations of enslaved Africans. For these people, therefore, sugar "meant" exploitation, abuse, theft of bodies, and of course death' (2006, 42). The appropriation of the 'meaning' of sugar can be seen in Verlia's linking of the image of sugar to her Black identity. Here, the narrator explains the relationship between the two worlds in terms of the geographical parallel between herself and her

aunt and uncle: 'She cannot see... how they think that she should live with them quietly dying in acceptance... cutting herself off from any growing, solidifying when she wants to liquefy, to make fluid, grow into her Black self' (1996, 148–149). The sweetness of Verlia's Black self incorporates the images of sugar and Black identity, suggesting not only the sensation of comfort and empowerment but also the link that connects the past with the present. Although sugar connotes the experience of abuse, Gadsby argues, 'Caribbean peoples have devised ways to use the concept, both literally and metaphorically, as protection against future abuse' (2006 43–44). The backbreaking work of harvesting sugar cane on the plantation—with its evocation of historical slavery—is by the means of liquid (sugar) imagery transposed into the present-day Toronto and reworked into an emancipatory struggle. It is the figure and the notion of collectivity that enables Verlia to experience the sensation of emancipation and struggle. Reading anti-colonial theories and social critiques of the bourgeois society, Verlia finds the quote that will serve as a guiding principle for her fluid relation to the White world: 'In the struggle for liberation "Individualism is the first to disappear"' (1996, 158). Ridding herself of her individual subjectivity, Verlia becomes part of the collective movement. This transformation, however, is not solely metaphorical. Brand's efforts to expose materiality in present theories of identity, sexuality and space are seen in the materialisation of the fluid character of Verlia. Confined in a prison cell, Verlia finds herself surrounded by concrete walls, which causes her to panic and feel asphyxiated. When released, Verlia contemplates saying something to the police officer who undid her shoulder, 'something tipping off the tongue full of all her anger but peaceful in the end', but eventually decides to use her corporeality, and 'her finger marking his face, an old gesture marking an enemy... she spat on the floor in front of him. "Never have a day's peace. Look for me everywhere"' (1996, 184). McCallum and Olbey characterise the sense of collectivity expressed in the Brand's novel as a continuation of the neoslave narrative which 'retell[s] the stories of slavery in narratives marked by postmodern formal innovations' (1999, 163). More importantly, they argue that the utopianism in Verlia's emancipatory actions—apart from being subverted and turned into a tragedy at the end of the novel—lies 'in the articulation and exploration of the persistent markings of the past on the present' (1999, 179).

Verlia's sweetness and fluidity, her sense of collectivity and political action, are once again contrasted with the character of Elizete who, apart from being associated with the earth, is also related to the crystalline substance of salt. In fact, all female characters in the text are associated with salt, which becomes a figure of connection, preservation and memory. Gadsby argues that not only sugar but also salt and the 'historical and cultural symbolism of both... have permeated the African diasporic consciousness' (2006, 43). Looking specifically at the metaphor of 'sucking salt', Gadsby argues that the image of (sucking) salt means 'to survive, to live to see another day, to pull something decent out of nastiness' (2006, 2). More importantly, the image of salt carries 'a simultaneously doubled linguistic sign of adversity *and* survival' (2006, 3, emphasis in original). In *In Another Place*, the image of salt is closely connected to the Middle Passage and the sense of abandon. Left in the yard of the old mistress, Elizete is at first shooed away from the door, 'Go away girl. Go away spirit', but having nowhere to go Elizete 'stood still, scared of moving, scared of standing still, her face scarred *salt*. The woman peering at her from the kitchen. The woman beckoned' (1996, 45, my emphasis). Elizete's connection to the sea and salt is ambivalent—although she searches for the sea as a place of connection, it also serves as a painful reminder of the history of the Middle Passage, attesting to Brand's emphasis on fluid meanings. Closely related to geographical space, the sea and salt appear as a force that beckons, refusing to let go as the old woman summons from the space of the kitchen. If Verlia is drenched in a shower of sweet imagery, Elizete is embalmed in the imagery of salt which appears as a haunting sensation, a relic of history that calls her from all sides, seasoning the experience of rootlessness, separation and exile. Among the glassy buildings of Toronto, Elizete is haunted by a strange sensation which she cannot identify or trace: 'When she arrived, before she knew herself and it came tied to a tree, standing against the wall, filling the water bucket at the stand-pipe, beckoned across the yard when darkness was gathering and her face crusting into *salt*, now walking this street in another country' (1996, 53, my emphasis). Employing both liquid and dry imagery, Brand uses the salt as a metaphor of the sea and the Middle Passage. This attests to the materialisation of the metaphor, giving the symbol of diaspora a historical context. Elizete's haunting sensation is the same uncanny feeling Brand feels towards the 'return' of the sea.

Like Brathwaite's, Brand's sea is ubiquitous; it haunts, connects and contains bodies through both memories and the material conditions of the Black Atlantic. However, by delving into the specificities of the Black Caribbean experience in Canada, Brand explores the significance of the sugar/salt imagery by constructing a map of the region, and paying attention to the uncanny, the *unknowable* and the multiple doorways for the creation of a poetics of home. Looking back to the legacies of slavery, Brand points towards 'elsewhereness', where the Eurocentric categories of origins, cartography and belonging are reworked into a diasporic vision that is not easily locatable. The slippages in meaning and the ambivalence of the notions of fluidity and solidity of salt and sugar are Brand's means of articulating presences, subjectivities and histories found across a variety of borders and boundaries.

In *Black Salt* (1960), a collection of poems about memory and forgetting, Glissant excavates the meaning of sea and salt in the Caribbean imaginary, attributing the two to the silencing of the suffering of the Middle Passage. It begins: 'To the Sea/For the salt it means/Brilliance and bitterness once again' (61). The relationship between splendour and bitterness indicates the closeness of pleasure and pain in the sea. The vastness of the water becomes a theme in the memory of the Black diaspora, haunting the Black subjectivity and lingering in the imagination. Formed by it, Glissant confronts the sea as a survivor of its silences: 'There—on the delta—is a river where the word piles/up—the poem—and where salt is purified' (61). Here, Glissant takes on the role of the navigator who sails towards pure (unsalted) waters, giving 'word' to those who have been silenced on the sea. Looking at the usages of the metaphor of 'sucking salt' in recent Caribbean fiction—from Toni Cade Bambara's *The Salt Eaters* (1992), Earl Lovelace's *Salt: A Novel* (1996), Fred D'Aguiar's *Feeding the Ghosts* (1999) to Nalo Hopkinson's *The Salt Roads* (2003), Gadsby argues that the cultural and historical significance of salt in the Caribbean creative imagination goes back to the Middle Passage, which 'is where the African-New World preoccupation with salt found its beginnings' (35). In relation to D'Aguiar's novel, for instance, Gadsby writes:

sea and salt conspire to devour bodies and destroy collective memories of slavery. They cannot however, devour the souls of

these Africans, even as they claim them. The sea, then, consists of simultaneous narratives of exile, hardship, and home—for as it destroys and devours, murders, dismembers, and separates, it becomes home to these bodies and souls buried in its depths. (35)

On the other hand, Gadsby also emphasises the 'curative benefits of salt' found in Babmara's text, which traces a Black community's search for the 'healing properties of salt' (41). Going back to Brand's text, *Elizete*, closely related to the earth, is also shaped and haunted by the sea, whose salt eats away at her face. However, when she arrives in Toronto, *Elizete* transposes her sense of non-belonging and rootlessness onto the White city, reversing the relation in the geography between the Caribbean and Canada:

If you live here you notice that nothing ties people together.... Things are made up. Not one face here tells you a story.... They do not say, I have come back as my great-great-grandmother... salt turned my blood thin and made me weak.... If you live in this city, nobody knows anybody so you could be anybody.

(1996, 65–66)

As Toronto becomes engulfed in salt imagery, Brand turns into a navigator who steers her characters through the unknowable and uncanny city streets. Reversing the geography of Toronto from a landlocked city to a glassy island, Brand inserts queer desires and affiliations within the history of the Black Atlantic and North America. Queer desires are present for the purpose of exploring the underpinnings of power, not only in terms of sexuality but also in terms of history, discourse and knowledge. 'I think that women learn about sexual pleasure from women', writes Brand. The codes of heterosexuality are 'only necessary where there is variation, questions of power. The need to regulate reveals the possible. Despite all this, I think we catch a glimpse, we apprehend a gesture' (*Bread Out of Stone*, 33). This gesture is possible through language and the fluid workings of action and desire. Like Glissant, writing the unwritten and voicing the silenced, Brand uses poetics to excavate the queer desire that is rooted in the history of exploitation, abuse and death. Verlia, who moves in a fluid, shapeless manner, embodies the queer desire that confronts the Black Atlantic, despite its horror, making a connection

to that which is lost, producing a different map and a different geography. Verlia becomes Glissant's river, where the word exposes the possibility of sweetening the salt and transforming Toronto into a queer delta:

Sometime she feels Abena fold her wholly and they are stooping, doubled and kneaded in sweat and where she begins and Abena ends the skin does not break off, yet it does, but rides in oil and rolls. The floor is wet with their sweat and oil and the slick of limbs and their shake and sudden, sudden sweet hastes. Her own mouth suddenly too, soft and greedy, in its own suck and circles. So much water. The room is full of water. Her hands are salt. Her hands are slippery. And the room is so full of water she is frightened.

(1996, 187–188)

Salt serves as a unifying element through which the female characters smell and taste the bitterness of the Middle Passage. The sweetness and the saltiness of the room with the two bodies inextricably entangled together demonstrate the complexity and the connectedness of history and desire. Brand's answer to Glissant's delta is a queer rupture where the paradox of the door of no return is reworked into a queer excavation of submarine routes/roots. Thus, Brand places emphasis on absence in order to transform the limiting space of forgetting into an enabling space of remembrance. Unfixing the solid constricting materiality of the Door, Brand employs queer language to liquefy Black identity in the diaspora and provoke a sense of self-creation to construct a map for the Black subjectivities living in the fictional world of the diaspora. Therefore, the physical space of Toronto becomes a territory that needs to be unhinged, reconstructed and made into a fluid geography, bringing the Middle Passage closer to its shores. The uncanny Door, however, despite its unknowability, calls for action and resistance towards being entirely claimed by history. By creating alternative maps, which are rooted/routed in the same history, Brand foregrounds the possibility of change. Creating her own tidalectics, Brand employs the sea and salt to root her characters with the same history but with a *collective consciousness*, creating spaces for political action and resistance. Her characters use language to resist and to challenge that which is

rendered impossible—belonging based on a forgotten origin. Tracing ancestral genealogy which exists in the imagination, Brand's ambiguities create maps that creatively subdue the sense of detachment from place and provoke a connection to place and history. Queer desire enables a voicing of the silenced subjectivities and a confrontation with the Middle Passage as that which haunts the imagination of Black identities in the diaspora.

4

Queering the Bildungsroman

How does creating tactical space challenge binary thinking in terms of cultural and sexual belonging? I will answer the question by taking a closer look at H. Nigel Thomas's 1993 novel *Spirits in the Dark* and Jamaica Kincaid's 1983 novel, *Annie John*. Using what I call *language of sealandscapes*, Thomas and Kincaid challenge and subvert the European literary tradition of the *Bildungsroman*. In other words, by using tactics, both authors create contrasting spaces that rework space and sexuality and break down the homogeneity within and between the colonising and the colonised worlds. Queer tactical diaspora allows Thomas and Kincaid to rewrite colonising fictions by queering the male tradition of the coming out narrative as well as to insert queer female desire within Caribbean space. Through tactics, Thomas and Kincaid are able to create queer resistance to colonial and gender conventions and to route/root their novels deep within Caribbean space.

Cereus Blooms at Night and *In Another Place, Not Here* create fictional settings to construct and mirror reality; thus, a heterotopic space is represented, where the reawakening of memory connects history with the present. Unhinging and reconstructing physical space becomes a means for making geography fluid, introducing hybridity and porous boundaries through numerous movements and intersections. H. Nigel Thomas's quest novel *Spirits in the Dark* (1993) takes place on the fictional Caribbean island of Isabella. It traces the life of Jerome Quashee, a member of the impoverished Black underclass, from early childhood to middle age. Strongly resembling St Vincent, the island becomes a backdrop for the historical,

sexual, racist, gendered and colonial context of the pre- and post-independence Caribbean. Cultural belonging, whether in the fictional Trinidad, Grenada or St Vincent, appears to be reserved solely for the heterosexual family where any 'homosexual/deviant' behaviour is severely punished. Attending to the differences and contradictions within the Isabellan society, Thomas's novel creates a utopian vision of an inclusionary queer society by interrogating the contrasting spaces found on the island. By forefronting the encounter with European norms the novel points towards Africa as a psychological necessity for overcoming double consciousness and psycho-cultural dislocation, as well as a means for achieving psycho-spiritual wholeness. Targeting Africa as spiritual healing, however, undeniably exposes Thomas to the charge of presenting an idealised and somewhat nostalgic ending. Standing as an example of postcolonial literary decolonisation, Thomas's novel appears to advocate a regeneration of lost African heritage which stands in contrast to the Eurocentric colonial values. In this chapter, however, I will argue that despite these points of contention—the favouring of binary oppositions—Thomas uses syncretism to allow a reproduction and a re-opening of cultural texts in a cross-cultural and cross-spatial imagination. Thomas's text lays claims to an imaginative daring where space and sexuality are reworked to focus on roots, not to imply universality but to re-naturalise social relations. Focusing on contrasting spaces, Thomas incorporates culture, space and time in his exploration of the colonial and imperial legacies on Isabella Island.

These arguments are based on Thomas's examinations of oppressive political structures as well as heterosexist, patriarchal and Eurocentric ideologies. Thomas attempts to imagine a decolonised and inclusive Caribbean identity. Walking in the footsteps of Wilson Harris, Thomas re-envision the Caribbean present through repeated crossings over the dividing line between an indigenous 'natural' sexuality and a 'foreign' queer subjectivity. The binary opposition between Eurocentrism and spiritualism is there only as a framework for Thomas's project of rewriting colonising fictions. For it is through these that he explores the differences between and within cultures, pointing towards syncretism and the community as alternatives to hegemonic devices of homogeneity that continue to dominate Isabella. The novel thus exposes the incompatibility of queer

identity and the Caribbean's decolonising politics by depicting an intricate Thirdspacing of the lines between Caribbean and European, inscribing a decolonised 'indigenous' gay subject within the text whilst not allowing the utopian gesture to overshadow the island's homophobia. Exhibiting acute sensitivity to the ambiguous and contradictory spaces within Isabellian culture, Thomas points to these spaces as potentially offering new, enabling social and cultural relations.

Language of sealandscape: Spirits in the dark?

Thomas's rewriting of colonising fictions by continually crossing the dividing line of indigeneity and foreignness, is perhaps best exemplified in my reading of *Spirits in the Dark* as a Caribbean *Bildungsroman*, in which the author traces the journey of Jerome Quashee from childhood to manhood, from innocence to experience, and from confusion to clarity. Belonging to the impoverished underclass, Jerome finds himself in a society that de-values Blackness and privileges Whiteness and colonial values. The representation of childhood is central to Thomas's novel: the staging of a young man/child trying to make sense of the chaotic reality that surrounds him is an ostensible continuation of the European nineteenth-century coming-of-age novel which describes the development of a single protagonist in a linear plot structure. Moreover, the evolution of a child from one state to another is an image reiterated in the colonial enterprise and the imperialist project. According to Jo-Ann Wallace, the idea of the child—a not yet fully evolved subject—was a '*necessary precondition of imperialism*' (176, emphasis in original). Wallace notes that the West 'had to invent for itself "the child" before it could think a specifically colonialist imperialism' (176). The European narrative form of the *Bildungsroman* in *Spirits in the Dark* is closely related to Wilson Harris's call for the breaking down of the *victim stasis* by reworking the European 'novel of consolidation of character'. Harris argues that the 'landscape of imagination' can be used as a response to the postmodernist understanding of cultural crisis by undermining linear time, space and sequence. Therefore, by employing syncretism as a means of altering the conventional understandings of memory and identity, Thomas follows Harris by incorporating the master codes of imperialism in order to sabotage and rework them.

One of the ways of sabotaging the codes of imperialism—what Harris describes as the homogenous relationship between victim and victimiser—is the revision of the syntax of classical realism and a re-opened ‘nature’ of human society in relation to forces situated in-between the social and the ‘natural’. Like Harris, Thomas positions his novel in the lag between time and space, where the iconic landscape revises the European *Bildungsroman* and inserts a dialectical structure. More precisely, the character of Jerome, who experiences several mental breakdowns, realises that his psychic convalescence can only occur if he sheds the Eurocentric colonial values and embraces his African cultural and spiritual legacy. Jerome’s re-opening of his African ‘nature’ sabotages the traditional *Bildungsroman* by mimicking its dialectic between protagonist and society/family, and by inserting colonialism as a non-dialectical component within the dyad of coloniser/colonised. Because Jerome, despite his intellect, cannot escape the racism and inequalities of Isabellian society, Thomas foregrounds the angst of the colonised subject resulting from double consciousness. Caught in the victim/victimiser dyad, Jerome is fixed in a metaphorical in-between space. It is only when he attempts to resolve his angst by looking towards Africa for spiritual healing that Jerome is able to confront colonisation by adopting and adapting the literary expressions and attitudes of non-European traditions.

Spirits in the Dark is a novel situated in the space between the language of landscape and language of seascape. By incorporating into his novel the language of sealandscape, Thomas continues Glissant’s tradition of ‘remaining in the Caribbean’. However, Thomas also adds the important aspect of the language of sealandscape which identifies the European imaginative logic of the Caribbean that borders on the pre-Columbian/post-Columbian divide. The language of sealandscape rejects this logic in favour of sedimented cultural resources located outside Caribbean space. It broadens the theorisations of Caribbean geography outside Euro-America whilst expanding the workings of queerness to incorporate Caribbean narratives of postcolonial sexuality. By incorporating Africa as the source of Jerome’s spiritual and psychological health, Thomas calls for a heterogeneous community for liberating homogenous spaces and working towards a postcolonial redefinition of history, identity and sexuality. Mimicking the European colonial discourse of temporal progression

from primitivism to enlightenment, Thomas's text points towards Thirdspace—a space in-between intellectualism and spirituality—as a space of psychic healing from double consciousness. Jerome's progress from intellectualism to spiritualism reverses the European developmental logic and reinserts African legacy as a significant and necessary element of psychological healing from the colonial dislocation. Resisting colonising processes, he suggests, involves an interrogation of colonial intellectual developments as well as a re-discovery of the African cultural and spiritual legacies. One such intellectual development is evident within the space of the public library where we are introduced to the role of language in colonial subjugation. Entering the town library and insisting on reading a book, Jerome is reprimanded for his 'bad English':

'There's no such thing as *mantain*. That's bad English. And you mustn't say *t'ing*; the proper word is *thing*' ... When he walked the half mile home he thought about bad English and good English and decided that he would speak good English, the English the librarian spoke. Not the English his mother spoke, for she said *mantain* and *t'ing*.

(6, emphasis in original)

The exchange between Jerome and the librarian attests to the intellectual coercion within the colonial education system that normalises the subordination and mental confusion of the colonised. Moreover, the language of colonial development adds to self-hatred and the devaluation of the native self on the part of the colonised. Jerome's acceptance of 'good English' fuels his oppression; his insistence on British speech patterns, according to his mother, alienates him from his people. This does not only apply to Jerome but to all the characters who, by adhering to the colonial logic of intellectual enlightenment, accept the notions of 'good' and 'bad' English. Jerome's intellectual development does not begin until Chapter 2, where we are introduced to the public library. Behind the library, which is surrounded by the natural images of weed, cattle and dung, lies the 'churning, angry, blue Atlantic' (5). Here, Thomas couples Jerome's mental state with the language of sealandscapes: situating the library, as a means of colonising the people of Isabella,

alongside the Atlantic, Thomas juxtaposes Jerome's intellectual and spiritual development. By prefiguring Jerome's spiritual development on the opening pages of the novel, Thomas presents a reversal of the conventional European *Bildungsroman* and the identificatory development of spiritual healing situated across the Atlantic. Thus he reverses the direction of the Middle Passage, pointing towards the sea *and* the land as catalysts for psychological and physical escape from the loss, dissolution and pain experienced by colonised peoples in the novel.

The Thirdspace found in Thomas's novel revolves around the dichotomy of intellectualism/spirituality, which is replayed in the imagery of the land and the sea. Creating a space in-between the dichotomy involves an interrogation of the European Enlightenment ideas of development and the conflicting impulses of colonisation. Glissant's call for remaining in the Caribbean is reflected in Thomas's emphasis on the distinction between the city and the countryside. During one of Jerome's first encounters with the city, we are told of his amazement with the crowdedness of the capital and the difference in landscape between the city and the countryside: 'It was a new experience. Instead of the large plains of sugar cane, sometimes green, sometimes brown, he now looked at the buildings crowded upon one another' (15). The dichotomy between city and countryside is explicit but the following description of the people in the city resembles Elizete's haunting encounter with the city of Toronto: 'Most times the people's faces seemed as blank as the asphalt streets on which they were standing or walking' (*In Another Place* 15). Jerome's sense of difference and alienation from the capital situates him, like Elizete, within the language of landscape. But beyond the description of the city, Jerome's relationship to the sea is a marker of familiarity: 'The sea, too, was calm, almost like water in a tub. Not like the Atlantic where he came from. It shouted, it pounded the shore, it made you know it was there' (15). Within the contrasting spaces of city and village, Thomas inserts the Atlantic as a force that surrounds the city, abrading its shores like the symbolic Atlantic—Lake Ontario—pounding at the shores of Toronto. A little later when Jerome walks to the edge of the promontory, he sees 'the sea become its usual royal blue, the land green, and the mountains grey'. This is followed by an internal monologue (written in

italics) of the narrator who, in the present, recounts his relationship to the sea:

The sea had always fascinated him. Since he was around eight he'd often climb the hill a hundred yards outside his village to look at its corrugated blue, white-flecked surface. When it pounded the shore on windy nights it left him with a vague haunting fear. In August, when it was calmest, he would go into the shallow parts because there were whirlpools just outside the shore and bury his body in it and enjoy the sac-like feeling of the water around him.

(10, emphasis in original)

As in Mootoo's novel, the ocean is always present; it sways menacingly (it 'pounds'; it instills fear), both on the shores of the fictional islands and within the minds of the characters. In the above quotation, the sea brings forward feelings of fascination, fear and pleasure. This creates a space in-between where the sea is continuously coupled with the descriptions of the land. As a result, it presents the possibility of altering traditional understandings of geography and space. It is only *because* of Jerome's psychic breakdown that he is able to recognise the collective crises that stem from double consciousness. For Jerome, embracing his African legacy involves an interrogation of *both* the colonising and the decolonising aspects of Caribbean identity. The oscillation between the two allows Thomas to deconstruct the hegemonic devices of homogeneity with the interplay between the land and the ocean as a circular and repetitive movement of ebb and flow that erodes the psychological borders between Eurocentricity and African spirituality. More importantly, Thomas employs sexuality as yet another means of resisting the binary thinking of universal and native sexuality. Creating what Timothy Chin calls 'interstitial space' (138), Thomas interrogates the relationship between Jerome's queer sexuality and the restrictive sexual structures in *Isabella*. Jerome's psychic breakdown—his 'descent into madness'—reflects his unstable position as both a Caribbean colonial subject and a homosexual.

Jerome's sexuality comes to view in his self-imposed isolation *in* mother earth, as he descends into the dark cave, depriving himself of all the senses. This journey is both physical and metaphorical as his descent into mother earth is also a walk backwards into his

childhood ('This cave was exactly as his mother's womb would have been') (3). Going back *into* earth/his buried psyche, Jerome reflects on the colonial educational system, the imposed heterosexuality and his homosexuality, and eventually emerges from the womb with a new understanding of his African heritage. Whilst dreaming in a state of hunger (he decided to fast), Jerome sees his grandmother standing on a wave and pointing towards a 'smoke-grey outline of land'. Upon her asking him if he sees the land in the distance, Jerome replies with the question: 'This is heaven?' (202). The movement from a dream-state to reality points seemingly towards an understanding of geography situated in a journey from Lefebvre's Firstspace to Secondspace. Jerome's new understanding of his sexuality, however, does not inscribe him with the discourse of an 'indigenous' homosexuality. Although Jerome emerges from the cave with the realisation that he had 'put the sex part o [his] life "pon a trash heap just fo" please society' (198), this does not suggest that he is a decolonised indigenous gay subject who has come to terms with his homosexuality. On the contrary, the utopian undertones are undercut by Pointer Francis, who reminds Jerome of the pervasive homophobia on the island:

Yo' just come back from the journey, fresh and clean, yo' seeing the world a little bit like a little child. Think 'bout it and I sure yo' will agree with me that is better to keep those things to yo' self. . . . most o' the brethren ain't grown enough fo' understand why you is how yo' is and fo' accept yo' as yo' is.

(212–213)

Emphasising Jerome's childlike qualities (perhaps naiveté?), Pointer Francis suggests that Jerome's view of the world is still 'fresh and clean' and thus not completely thought through. In addition, by indicating that Jerome's brethren have not 'grown enough' to understand who he is, Pointer Francis attributes the state of childlikeness to Isabella as well. Thus, this way both Jerome *and* Isabella still see the world in a rigid binary of homo- and heterosexuality. However, by pointing out that Jerome's isolation was merely a 'journey', not an end point, Pointer Francis suggests that Jerome's coming to terms with queer sexuality on Isabella is not a totalising process. Rather, it is a narrative of becoming. In other words, by rejecting the utopian idea

of a decolonised indigenous gay subject, Thomas instead foregrounds the 'in-between' as an inhabitable space where binaries can be broken down. This 'contrasting space' is seen in Jerome's recollection of the market women who, whilst selling their food, 'would be seated like queens on wooden crates, surveying their heaps of tannias, dasheens, yams, sweet peppers, carrots, string beans' (19). Amongst the women, there was a man they called Sprat who got more customers than the women and thus, because of the fierce competition between the vendors, is the target of homophobic remarks and insults. Despite the adversity and the competition between Sprat and the women, Jerome observes that 'Sprat loaned Melia [one of the women with whom he was quarrelling] ten dollars to buy some ground provisions somebody was selling at a bargain'. In addition, observing that one day Sprat was not at the market, Jerome learns that Sprat was at home with a flu and that 'three of the women had been to see him. One said he would be out the next week and she was buying supplies for him that day' (22). The display of social relations that go beyond the homophobic ideologies of heteronormativity attests to the implosion of the binary between homo and hetero. These sites of ambiguity and contradiction are spaces where differences are lived and negotiated. This contradictory and impossible space enables unanticipated modes of affiliation and collectivity that do not guarantee national modes of belonging but instead, according to Gopinath, create space for queer subjects to reproduce desires and practices that are rendered impossible and unimaginable within conventional diasporic and nationalist imaginaries. The creation of these spaces involves a thirding of the spatial imaginations where contradictions overcome binary thinking and re-imagining Caribbean space inhabitable by those who do not 'belong'. Much Mootoo's and Kincaid's Caribbean, Thomas's Isabella becomes opaque and not fully grasped or understood. Negotiating contradictions involves new connections and affiliations that unsettle/queer the homogenous and stifling binarism of normative heterosexuality.

Queer spirits

The formative coming out story of a Western gay identity is an archetypal narrative of development from a stifling heterosexuality to a liberating homosexuality. Ken Plummer notes that coming out refers to a 'process of moving from a heterosexual (and

confused) identity, telling the stories of other given in childhood, to a strong, positive and accepting sense of identity as gay being given to one through awareness of the gay community in later life' (84). Although he places gay identity formation and a gay community at the core of the coming out narrative, Plummer adds that it is also a 'momentous, frequently painful experience in any gay person's life.... Experiencing it will dramatically reshape the life-route: life will never be the same again' (84).¹ These seemingly opposite accounts of the coming out narrative—a process as well as an event—are crucial to our understanding of the *Bildungsroman* as a Western genre of identity formation, a better understanding of the self. If a coming out story is 'a tale concerned with establishing a sense of who one really is' (Plummer 85–86), constructing a narrative of one's identity becomes the main goal of the storyteller who adjusts the elements of the plot to fit the story and constructs, by the means of appropriating the past and the present, a coherent whole. Therefore, the storyteller is a revisionist, rewriting and re-appropriating the elements to construct an identity detached from the binaristic journey from shame to pride, which fixes a stable view of the pre-outed self. In *Spirits in the Dark*, Jerome's coming out narrative and element of the modernist *Bildungsroman* are Thomas's means of suturing the two predominantly Western concepts of identity formation within the contextual space of the Caribbean. By queering the European model of conversion from confusion to clarity, Thomas re-envisions and revises the *Bildungsroman* and queers the male tradition of re-inscribing masculinity in the form of a coming out narrative. In other words, Thomas places at the centre of his novel a male character who, by the means of his sex and gender, presents a story of identity formation within the context of colonialism seen through the lens of anti-colonial notions of sexuality and 'proper' masculinity.

Written in the third person, *Spirits* is a novel told by an omniscient narrator who, as the ultimate 'authority', conveys Jerome's story of sexual awakening and orientation. Thomas's use of a third-person narrator upsets the conventions of the first-person narratives of coming out in that these favour a more personal articulation of sexual subjectivity. Not only is the narrative told by a narrator who may or may not be the adult Jerome—it begins *in media res*, thus disrupting the linear narrative. The narrative follows Plummer's arguments, a process of moving from one place to another, mimicking

the coming out story but altering it in order to rework and displace the conventions of identity formation. Jerome's story is a narrative of becoming, a never quite completed process in which the individual constructs himself/herself as a subject of discourse. Testing the conventions of the Western coming out story, Thomas disintegrates the binaries of identity/community, heterosexuality/homosexuality and primitive/enlightened by incorporating Western conventions and queering them with elements of the Caribbean/West African traditions. Whilst *Cereus Blooms at Night* and *In Another Place, Not Here* centre on female characters who, by the means of community, affinity and queer desire, destabilise and alter both the Caribbean and the Canadian geography, Thomas's novel is unique: it is a masculine narrative that negotiates the emerging gay manhood of its protagonist, Jerome Quashee. *Spirits in the Dark* is centred mostly on the decolonising notions of masculinity, heterosexuality and nationalism, eschewing the means used by Mootoo and Brand which insert queer femininity into the heterosexual spaces in the Caribbean. Instead, Thomas works against compulsory heterosexuality, patriarchal stereotypes and phallogentric institutions, destabilising them through the Western *Bildungsroman* and the traditional male narratives of coming out. This method is significantly different from the earlier novelists in that, although it attempts to exhibit the process of gender production, maintenance and reinvention, it still remains timid about its commitments towards destabilising heterosexuality within the female sphere—none of the few female characters in the novel exhibit any signs of 'queerness'. In addition, Daniel Coleman notes that 'even gay narratives such as...*Spirits in the Dark*...which obviously do rebel against compulsory heterosexuality, do not put forward settled commitments on questions such as postcolonial resistance, Canadian multiculturalism, or equitable gender relations'. In fact, Coleman argues that 'the political commitments in these male narratives are ambivalent at best' (24). To add to this argument, we could compare Thomas's nostalgic positioning of Africa as spiritual healing to Brand's aims of restoring the lost image of Africa and the African continent—although both authors look towards Africa, Brand's manipulation of the English language not only creates alternative maps but also expresses racism in Canada. In addition to finding the writings of male immigrant authors of colour in Canada to be less politically clear, ambiguous, and even

shifty, Coleman goes further, to argue that 'the ambivalent position of the straight male Canadian writers of colour—privileged on the axis of sexuality and gender, marginalized on that of race—undermines the kind of certitude the women writers develop in the face of disenfranchisement on all sides: gender, race, ethnicity, and class' (24).

The first occurrence of queerness in Thomas's novel appears alongside notions of masculinity/compulsory heterosexuality as well as the intersectional geographical space. The narrator's description of Jerome's childhood friend Errol juxtaposes Jerome's emerging homosexuality with Errol's ideas of 'proper' masculinity:

Many times he wondered how different his life would have been if he had been like Errol. *He did not want to think about Errol. At twelve Errol quit school to work in the fields. Years later he loaded and unloaded a truck . . . And he [Jerome] dreamt about him [Errol] when he had his first wet dream. Peter was the only other guy that happened with.*

(12, emphasis in original)

In Thomas's novel, according to Coleman, 'the young protagonist's growing recognition and acceptance of his own homosexuality displaces his gender, race, class, ethnicity, and even nationality in ways that question the prior claims of each of these categories of identification' (167). Coleman's argument focuses on Jerome's emerging queerness within the intersectional space of Isabella, where hard manual labour is submerged under the formative notions of race, class, ethnicity and, ultimately, masculinity. Jerome's sexuality, whether hetero or homo, is firmly incorporated into race, class and ethnicity, as well the material living conditions on the island. The following passage shows that 'proper' masculinity is also connected to geography and space. During the school holiday, the narrator recounts the first encounter between Jerome's emerging homosexuality and the imposing heteronormativity on the island:

At nights during the august holidays from high school . . . he [Jerome] sometimes stood behind the hibiscus hedge to listen to Errol and the other boys bantering. There was an open extension to their hut, where the man who lived with Errol's mother kept his donkey. In front of it was a pile of stones where his mother

bleached her clothes. Errol and his friends sat there, especially on moonlit evenings, and talked and talked. One night while he listened, Pinchman was saying, 'Man, me drop me trousers and she see what curl out, and she bawl, "Murder, haul back on yo' trousers!"'

'So what yo' do?' Errol asked.

'Man, me hit she 'pon the backside, and me say, "Shut up!" and me push she down and me open she leg and me shove it in and she double up under me.'

They all laughed, even he. (12)

Sitting outside the hut—a traditional female homespace of domesticity—the boys converse about 'proper' and 'improper' sexuality and masculinity. The public space outside the hut is occupied by the man who lives with Errol's mother (in actuality it is his donkey who occupies the space), whilst Errol's mother is only referenced as inhabiting the public space in terms of labour. The boys' gendered spatialisation of the public sphere relegates the domestic sphere to femininity and tradition and effeminises Jerome as the banter intensifies to incorporate masculinity and heterosexuality (contrasted with the feminised homosexuality):

'But serious now, wha' wrong with Jerome?' Pinchman asked. 'He got nothing in his trousers,' Errol said. 'I hear that when yo' read too much book, it does shrivel up and break off.' Mullet said, 'Pamela say she pulled him down 'pon she one time, and he get up an' run an' bawl fo' his mother.' (13)

The traditionally 'outer' male space of progress, politics and materiality is hereby contrasted with effeminate homosexuality, naturalising the former and relegating the latter to the periphery. In Thomas's text, however, the binary between the outer and the inner, natural and unnatural, is reworked through the geographical queering of both spheres. Hiding behind the hedges, Jerome is drawn to the male-dominated banter, listening to himself as the topic of conversation and relating his own emerging homosexuality to the boys' ideas about 'proper' masculinity. Thomas, however, ends this scene with

Jerome dreaming about Errol and having his first wet dream. Here, he reconfigures the gendered male/female space by revealing how non-normative and queer desires and pleasures arise within highly masculine and heteronormative spaces.

Pleasures in-between: *Annie John*

Adding to my arguments about the reconfigurations of queer desire, I introduce to my analysis, Jamaica Kincaid's 1985 novel *Annie John* as a text that queers the coming out narrative of its female protagonist, thus complicating the relationship between the traditionally male *Bildungsroman* and the typically female queering of desire across diasporic space. The change in focus from a male to a female protagonist works as a tactical response to Fanon's assertion that homosexuality is a European export. Therefore, I frame H. Nigel Thomas's *Spirits in the Dark* and Jamaica Kincaid's *Annie John* as individual responses to Fanon's assertion of the homosexual absence in the Antilles. Fanon's construction of Black masculinity is predicated on the assumption that Black femininity is naturally heterosexual. Based on his own interpretation of women's sexual fantasies, Fanon asserts that the 'person I love [a Black female] will strengthen me by endorsing my assumption of my manhood, while the need to earn the admiration of the love of others will erect a value-making superstructure on my whole vision of the world' (1968, 31). Fanon's theory of Black masculinity is predicated not only on the (natural) heterosexuality but also the submission of the Black female who, by the means of her feminine desire for a male, recovers the masculinity of the colonised male. As a consequence, Fanon's theorisations of 'proper' Antillean masculinity and femininity dispossess the female desire of any agency, particularly in terms of queer desire. The inclusion of *Annie John*, a novel which inserts female homosexuality into Caribbean space, challenges Fanon's heteronormative and phallogentric decolonising politics. *Annie John* traces the development of the title character, who progresses from childhood into adulthood (from the age of 10 to the age of 17). Annie's development, however, is immersed within the notions of colonial masculinity and femininity and, more importantly queer sexuality. Where Thomas's novel focuses on the male protagonist and the decolonising notions of masculinity and 'proper' sexuality, Kincaid's text queers the traditional

male narrative as it bends the *Bildungsroman* into a narrative of desire between girls, queering the progression of the male coming-of-age narrative. 'I loved very much—and so used to torment until she cried—a girl named Sonia', says Annie John (1997, 7). Her first confession of love for Sonia, a slow-witted girl whom Annie adores and pesters at school, includes elements of attraction as well as cruelty.

I would . . . stare and stare at her, narrowing and opening wide my eyes until she began to fidget under my gaze. Then I would pull at the hair on her arms and legs—gently at first, and then awfully hard, holding it up taut with the tips of my fingers until she cried out.

(1997, 7)

Annie's fascination with Sonia, imbued with hostility as well as attraction, is reminiscent of Jerome's attraction to Errol, in that homosexual desire is expressed through domination and violence based on desire. In both cases, the queering of normative heterosexual behaviour occurs within the realm of the surrounding material conditions—the interplay between Annie and Sonia occurs in the schoolyard; that is, within that institution which serves to impose and continue colonial values and principles. Here, Kincaid uses tactics as a way of emphasising the contrasting space between the school (Firstspace) and queer desire (Secondspace). Through tactics, Kincaid creates a contrasting Thirdspace that implodes colonising homogeneity. Similarly to Thomas, Kincaid uses Thirdspace to allow unanticipated modes of connection and affiliation. But more importantly, Kincaid's novel is both a counterpart as well as an antithesis to *Spirits in the Dark*; it follows the chronological development of a protagonist, queering its way through colonial constructions of masculinity and femininity, and simultaneously focuses on a female character.

Queering normative sexuality within the scope of the coming out narrative, Kincaid documents the material conditions of race and class. Just as important, though, is the fact that Annie finds and develops her love for Sonia at school—a public space which informs the colonial vision of 'proper' masculinity and femininity. 'At recess, I would buy her a sweet—something called a frozen

joy—with money I had stolen from my mother's purse' (1997, 7), Annie says. In this passage, we are told that her desire for Sonia is developed within the compounds of the school, but she disassociates *and* ties her queer desire to her mother; her mother is not found on the premises but the money she steals from her situates her within the mother/daughter relationship. In addition, because Annie and Sonia are poor and Black Antiguan girls, Annie's 'affluence' (having money to buy sweets) becomes a subversive mimicry of the colonial power on behalf of the girls; the power relationship between them is submerged in queer desire found at the heart of one of the most formative and heteronormative spaces in Annie's life, the school. Annie's queer attraction to Sonia is formative of her lesbian sexuality and identity, but whereas Thomas depicts Jerome's emergent homosexuality, Kincaid represents Annie's sexuality as a rejection of colonial identity and 'proper' sexuality. In fact, whilst Annie's desire for her female friends occurs within a series of repetitions and reprisals, her resistance to heteronormativity and colonial domesticity is not a reactionary one. Showing her daughter how to store linen, for instance, Annie's mother expects her daughter to live in a house—'Of course, in your house you might choose another way' (1997, 28)—and use the linen folded and stored neatly. Annie's response, however, is to make the bed in her own way, noting: 'I had placed the bedspread on my bed in a lopsided way so that the embroidery was not in the center of my bed, the way it should have been' (1997, 29–30). Annie's re-appropriation of the values passed on to her by her mother within the scope of the quotidian is a re-visioning of colonial domesticity. For by rejecting homemaking, Annie re-visions and pluralises the normalcy found in the colonial household.

Annie's re-visioning is an important response to the conventional constructions of femininity and sexuality. In relation to Thomas's novel, which invokes and challenges the traditional *Bildungsroman*, Kincaid's representation of Annie queers the European tradition by subverting the temporal progression of the coming out narrative; Annie does not take on a gay/lesbian identity or point to a time when she can locate her emerging queerness. Immediately after her re-visioning of 'proper' domesticity, Annie describes her encounter with the all-girls' class in her school: 'I like a girl named Albertine, and I liked a girl named Gweneth. At the end of the day, Gwen and

I were in love, and so we walked home arm in arm together' (1997, 33). This passage is important not only because it exhibits queerness found at the compound of the school but also because the sequence of events in which Annie replaces Sonia with Gwen mimics the temporal progression of the *Bildungsroman*. The row of *phases* that Annie goes through is suggestive of the coming-of-age narrative, which positions her queer desire as a stage on the road to marriage. However, Annie's falling in love with Gweneth is described as a series of multiple events, eschewing an orderly narrative progression by 'unfixing the fixed'. Since we are unable to find the 'origins' of Annie's love for Gweneth, we are also unable to excavate the 'causes' of its effect. Any simple progression towards a coherent narrative of self is subverted by Annie's attempts to narrate her own life. Since there are several highly elusive origins, Kincaid's novel unfixes the constricting notions of colonial femininity and sexuality even as she constructs the narrative within the frame of an ostensibly coherent temporal progression. This literary construction, however, is important for my argument about altering, through the language of sealandscapes, traditional understandings of geography and space. The creation and re-creation of a narrative of self as a literary construction, in terms of the coming out story, is crucial for both *Annie John* and *Spirits in the Dark*. Re-scripting the paths drawn by the colonial notions of 'proper' sexuality, both authors employ tactical diaspora to construct narratives that dislocate the fixedness of the Caribbean through repeated crossings of the diving line between 'natural' and 'unnatural' subjectivity, and point towards the incompatibility of queer identity and Caribbean decolonising politics.

The rewriting or writing back that occurs in both novels queers the male tradition of the *Bildungsroman* as they establish queer desire as an alternative to homogenous heterosexuality. Beginning his novel *in media res*, Thomas eschews the progression of the coming out narrative; Kincaid, on the other hand, allows Annie to rewrite her own story, refusing the etiological narratives of origin. When combined, both novels offer a different understanding of sexuality—one which rejects the colonial notions of 'proper' gender and inserts a queer narrative that modifies Western constructions of cause and effect. Because Thomas's novel remains timid about its commitments to destabilising heterosexuality within the female sphere, we can read Kincaid's novel as adding queer femininity to Thomas's text, whilst

employing similar ways of queering compulsory heterosexuality in the Caribbean. One of Thomas's approaches to destabilising patriarchal and phallogocentric institutions is to employ the language of sealandscape where the language of sea and landscape, found in the writings of Édouard Glissant and Wilson Harris, identifies the European imaginative logic of the Caribbean but rejects it in favour of sedimented cultural resources located outside Caribbean space. Language of sealandscape is also present in Kincaid's novel, for it fluidly reproduces alternative life narratives. In an assignment given to her by her teacher, Annie produces a written narrative of her life, mimicking the autobiographical Western narratives of origins and causes. Before recounting a swim with her mother to the class, Annie tells of the 'truth' of her and other girls' stories: 'Things went on ... all so playful, all so imaginative. I began to wonder about what I had written, for it was the opposite of playful and the opposite of imaginative. What I had written was heartfelt, and, except for the very end, it was all too true' (1997, 41). Annie's narrative involves an element of reality and fantasy—Firstspace and Secondspace—as she attempts to find a space in-between the realities of Antigua and the imaginativeness of the fantasies of the Caribbean. Annie's story, in which her mother swims beyond her reach, is marked by a panic and fear of the menacing ocean that surrounds her. Like the Atlantic in *Spirits in the Dark*, the ocean in *Annie John* is a frightening mass of water. Describing her mother as a 'superior swimmer', Annie links her mother to the Atlantic: 'When she plunged into the seawater, it was as if she had always lived there' (1997, 42). Subsequently, she describes herself as her mother's direct opposite: 'I, on the other hand, could not swim at all. In fact, if I was in water up to my knees I was sure that I was drowning' (1997, 42). Annie's traumatic encounter with the sea, which leaves her with the fear of being separated from her mother, causes her to dream and visualise the Atlantic as the force that separates her from her parents. Annie's story is important, for it exhibits Kincaid's use of tidalectics as both an investigation of the materiality of the Middle Passage as well as a possibility for creating new connections within queer desire. This is seen in Annie's writing of her own ending in which her mother returns to comfort her. Not only does she alter the progression of events, Annie also connects her story to Gwen, thus rewriting her life story. Annie delights in altering the path drawn by her mother, fusing the creative

process of determining when events begin and end, with the queer love found at the all-girls' school. Using tidalectics, Kincaid employs the homogenous coming out narrative only to queer it; she allows her protagonist to subtly follow her mother's path in order to alter it slightly. Thus, through (queer) tactics, Kincaid re-members and re-inscribes both the geography of 'home' and 'away' and the developmental model of non-heterosexuality. More importantly, Annie's revision of colonial femininity and domesticity is a process which does not have a beginning. Describing the girls' shared sexuality as a course of action that is merely a part of the daily routine in the all-girls' school, Annie trivialises her deviation from the heterosexual model of development, breaking down the boundary between homosocial and homoerotic behaviour: 'It was in a nook of some old tombstones—a place discovered by girls going to our school long before we were born—... that we would sit and talk about the things we said were on our minds that day. On our minds every day were our breasts and their refusal to budge out of our chests' (1997, 49–50). Extending the girls' homoerotic behaviour beyond the compounds of the school (into the public space of their after-school activities), Kincaid queers the normative heterosexuality of colonial Antigua. Furthermore, Kincaid suggests that the girls' creation of Thirdspace is not a new tactic but rather a long tradition of Thirdspacing conducted by generations of schoolgirls and their ancestors. Here, Kincaid employs queer tactical diaspora to queer normative heterosexuality and emphasise local historicity as important elements of Caribbean sexual identity. Through tactics, Kincaid ties the resistance to heteronormativity to the resistance of former slaves against their former colonial masters. Although it could merely stand in as an alternative route to heterosexual adulthood, the girls' queer involvement is not relegated to the status of inferiority or subordination; it is a strong and preferred alternative to the otherwise 'universal' heterosexuality. This is seen in the girls' exclusion of boys from their homoerotic play: 'On hearing somewhere that if a boy rubbed your breasts they would quickly swell up, I passed along this news. Since in the world we occupied and hoped forever to occupy boys were banished, we had to make do with ourselves' (1997, 50). Gender exclusivity is preferred and Annie makes it clear that their desires are closely connected to history and taking control of colonial geography: 'What perfection we found in each other, sitting on

those tombstones of long-dead people who had been the masters of our ancestors!' (1997, 50). This passage illustrates her rewriting of history and the deterritorialisation of colonial geography as well as colonial control of bodies and desires. Moreover, as Annie elaborates, the resistance to history, to colonialism and to slavery is closely connected to her resistance to heteronormativity: 'We were sure that the much-talked-about future that everybody was preparing us for would never come, for we had such a powerful feeling against it, and why shouldn't our will prevail this time?' (1997, 50). The amalgam of queer female resistance to heteronormativity echoes Thomas's novel, for the resistance to colonial constructions of gender (as well as the temporal formation of 'proper' identity) is found in the reworking of the binaries between homo- and heterosexuality as well as natural and unnatural. As Jerome hides behind the hedges in *Spirits in the Dark* and listens to the boys' male-dominated banter, he is drawn to their conversation, which provokes the desire of his wet dream. This is done not as a defying act of resistance against the colonial or domestic orders but more as a quotidian performance of illuminating the fragile dividing lines between homo- and heterosexuality. Much in the same manner, Annie, who develops a love relationship with Gwen through their daily walks to school, reconfigures colonial domesticity through a reworking of daily routines. In both novels, the reconfiguration of gender and sexual spatialisation is firmly incorporated with the issues of race, class and ethnicity, as well the material living conditions on the islands. Annie's resistance to her mother's 'proper' femininity cannot be divorced from the historicity of revolts of former slaves against their former masters, which functions as an extension and an expression of a slave revolt. If *Spirits in the Dark* reveals the development of non-normative desires and pleasures within the most masculine and heteronormative spaces, *Annie John* reconfigures those spaces that are seen as formative of 'proper' sexuality and subject development. Moreover, as Annie ostensibly appears to aspire to some of the qualities advocated by her mother, she queers those very notions by rewriting them to suit her own needs and pleasures. Talking about her love for Gwen, Annie remarks: 'I said I could not wait for us to grow up so that we could live in a house of our own' (1997, 51). Annie's aspiration to become the writer of her own life (she compares herself to Enid Blyton) appears not as a continuation of a colonial literary tradition but as an appropriation

of them. Annie situates her desires, sexuality and femininity deep within Caribbean space, carefully appropriating Western traditions of literary and personal development to suit her desire. Writing her own future, Annie employs the traditions that have colonised her ancestors and rewrites them so they are neither directly oppositional nor merely complicit.

Kincaid's firm positioning of her novel and her characters within Caribbean space is only one element of her re-appropriation of the Western literary tropes. By fusing Caribbean space with the subversion of Western literary traditions, Kincaid creates a queer resistance to the colonial social and gender conventions that position same-sex desire as a temporary stage in a developmental sequence. As Annie's love for Gwen fades after she begins to menstruate, it is superseded by a new desire for the Red Girl. The shift to another object of desire defies the temporal progression model as it delays Annie's 'eventual return' to heterosexual desire. This time, however, the object of her desire is a girl who occupies a space outside social convention where social transgression and gender nonconformity are not hidden from view:

What a beautiful thing I saw standing before me. Her face was big and round and red, like a moon—a red moon. She had big, broad, flat feet, and they were naked to the bare ground . . . And on top of that, she had such an unbelievable, wonderful smell, as if she had never taken a bath in her whole life.

(1997, 57)

Focusing on the Red Girl's face, feet and smell, Annie reveals that her attraction to the Red Girl should not be seen merely as a rejection of colonial norms as it displays an assertion of will independent of her mother. Rather, for Annie, it signals a strong *sexual* attraction. The Red Girl's sexual autonomy is reminiscent of that of Xuela Richardson in Kincaid's 1996 novel *The Autobiography of My Mother*, who, via her 'indecent' appearance and smell, resists the interpellation and social conformity imposed on Caribbean women: 'I loved the smell of the thin dirt behind my ears, the smell of my unwashed mouth, the smell that came between my legs . . . Whatever about me caused offense, whatever was native to me . . . —those things about me

I loved with the fervor of the devoted' (1996, 32–33). In that scene, Xuela's resistance moves from social autonomy to sexual pleasure.

The re-appropriation of the Western canon found in Kincaid's novel points towards a geographical deterritorialisation of Western literary traditions. As Thomas's novel indicates the contrasting spaces within Isabellian society, Kincaid's novel aims to occupy colonial geography by re-appropriating the Western literary traditions and placing Caribbean space at the centre stage. The language of sealand-scape found in *Spirits in the Dark* is evident in Jerome's self-imposed isolation in 'mother earth', during which he fasts and imagines his grandmother appearing: 'She held his hand and they were standing in a shore where waves were crashing loudly. "Come," she said. But he was afraid, always afraid of deep water, he remembered. "Well, yo' not going to get there if yo don' walk the water"' (202). Jerome's anxiety about the water is reminiscent of Annie's fear of the sea. Both characters view the ocean as a force that is menacing, separating the characters from that which is known and familiar to them. In *Spirits in the Dark*, however, Jerome overcomes his fear of the ocean by relying on the guidance of the Spiritualists to connect him to his 'African heritage'. Jerome's ritual experience transforms and redeems him, enabling him to confront the oppressive political and restrictive sexual structures on the island and imagine a decolonised Caribbean reality. In Kincaid's novel, the dismantling of restrictive sexual and gender structures takes place through a sexual seizing of space, where the relationship between the land and the sea serves as a decolonising reterritorialisation of Western literary traditions. Finding pleasure in-between and within the oppressive colonial spaces allows Annie and the Red Girl to mimic and to alter the correlation between coloniser/colonised and the West/the Caribbean. Annie and the Red Girl occupy an old lighthouse as the spatial geography on which their queer relationship takes place. Here, Kincaid implicitly incorporates Virginia Woolf's novel *To the Lighthouse* (1927) as the correlating text in which characters attempt to find a room of their own. Interestingly, much of Woolf's novel builds upon a rhythm that mimics the sea. In the section entitled 'The Window', for instance, the harmony in the relationship between Mr and Mrs Ramsay comes and goes, resembling waves in the sea going back and forth. It is the image of the lighthouse, however, that is pertinent for my discussion of

Kincaid's re-appropriation of geography. Not only is the lighthouse a forbidden place for Annie; it is a symbol of her mother's propagation of colonial rules:

The Red Girl and I walked to the top of the hill behind my house. At the top of the hill was an old lighthouse. It must have been a useful lighthouse at one time, but now it was just there for mothers to say to their children, 'Don't play at the lighthouse,' my own mother leading the chorus, I am sure.

(1997, 58)

Annie re-appropriates the geography of the lighthouse as she makes it a playground for her same-sex love. The lighthouse, of course, was used by colonial powers to navigate the slave ships and as such Kincaid invokes the history of Antigua as an important station for the colonial powers' merchant ships. Serving as an intermediary between the land and the sea, the now dilapidated and abandoned lighthouse stands as a reminder of the decline of the colonial rule. However, Annie's mother forbids the re-appropriation of the lighthouse. In this she participates in the continuation of colonial rule over the island. 'Whenever I did go to the lighthouse behind my mother's back, I would have to gather up all my courage to go to the top, the height made me so dizzy' (1997, 58), Annie says of her previous attempts at taking control of the colonial space. This time, however, with the Red Girl and the love between them Annie is able to reterritorialise the colonial space: 'Now I marched up boldly up behind the Red Girl as if at the top were my own room, with all my familiar comforts waiting for me' (1997, 58–59). As the girls enter the lighthouse, they gain a new vantage point and, via language of sealandscape, see the island differently: 'At the top we stood on the balcony and looked out towards the sea. We could see some boats coming and going; we could see some children our own age coming home from games' (1997, 59). As the girls overlook the island and its inhabitants, they also gain authority over it, taking control away from the colonising powers and offering the love between two girls as a way of gaining ownership of the island. The lighthouse can be compared to Brand's museum in Scarborough, Tobago, which was once a space that housed the British colonial military. Whilst Brand creates counterspaces as a means of dealing with the traumas of the past,

Kincaid's characters gain a new perspective on both the island and boats 'coming and going'. The intertextuality between Kincaid's and Woolf's (and Brand's) texts is seen in the establishment of an alternative geography—one that allows a creation of Thirdspaces/rooms in the Caribbean where queer women can write and develop and, by the means of queer affiliation, create a space of habitation.

Thomas and Kincaid employ male and female queer desire, respectively, as a means of re-appropriating the Western canon by queering of the *Bildungsroman* as well as inserting a queer presence within Caribbean geography. This is not to suggest that Thomas's emphasis on masculinity could or should be placed within a different historical and cultural background from that of Kincaid's female-centred text; on the contrary, both Thomas's and Kincaid's texts work as responses to Fanon's decolonising assertion of the homosexual absence within the Caribbean space. Whilst *Spirits in the Dark* is centred mostly on the decolonising notions of masculinity, heterosexuality and nationalism, *Annie John* positions queer femininity into the heterosexual spaces in the Caribbean. And whilst Thomas's novel destabilises the Western *Bildungsroman* and deconstructs compulsory heterosexuality, patriarchal stereotypes and phallogentric institutions, Kincaid's text fuses Caribbean space with the subversion of Western literary traditions, thus creating a queer resistance to the colonial social and gender conventions that position queer desire as a temporary stage in a developmental sequence. We may emphasise the risk of Thomas's suggestion of a purely 'African' or 'spiritual' heritage, which invariably situates Eurocentric colonial values as its opposite. However, it is through the contrasting spaces that Thomas reworks space and time and implies not universality but a re-naturalisation of social relations. Similarity, in *Annie John*, the girls' crossing the line between homosociality and homosexuality is just as threatening to patriarchal masculinity as is the case with boys' crossing of the same line in *Spirits in the Dark*. Hence, both works position a queer presence as a Thirdspace in-between the geographies of the West and the rest.

5

Reshaping the Past in Lawrence Scott's *Aelred's Sin*

So far, we have seen how Caribbean writers successfully situate queerness within diasporic narratives. We have also witnessed Mootoo's diasporising her queer Caribbean narrative by attaching and detaching the island of Lantanacamara and its inhabitants to the trialectic between the Caribbean, Canada and Britain. By challenging the colonial relegation of same-sex desire as either a temporary stage of identity formation or as belonging only to the space outside the Caribbean, these Caribbean writers make an important contribution to the disciplines of queer and diaspora studies. Continuing my emphasis on the Caribbean queer narratives, I want to call attention to Lawrence Scott and his 1998 novel *Aelred's Sin*, who develops this approach by using the Atlantic to connect the landscapes of Les Deux Isles and Wales. Before I elaborate on this in the following sections, I would like to draw attention to the ways Scott's novel places emphasis on writing as a means of homosexual recognition. Here, the Caribbean queer narrative is a place where, through writing, a tactical homosexual identification can be articulated. Later in this chapter, I will also focus on Scott's intersecting of queer and diaspora studies, as his fiction enables a reconsideration of queer and diasporic cultural texts within the framework of diaspora studies.

Aelred's Sin, which won the Commonwealth Writer's Prize for best book in 1998, explores homoerotic love in the Caribbean and in a Benedictine Monastery in England. Its narrator, Robert de la Borde, arrives in England in 1980s from the imagined Caribbean setting of Les Deux Isles (Scott's fictional name for Trinidad and Tobago) after hearing about the death of his older brother, Jean-Marc, who left Les

Deux Isles at the age of 17 to join Ashton Park Monastery in the 1960s. Throughout the novel, Robert re-traces the steps of his brother who takes on the name of Aelred, after a twelfth-century Cistercian monk, Aelred of Rievaulx (1110–1167), whose book *Spiritual Friendship* (1167) explores erotic love between men and the possibility of an intimate friendship within the 'uncorrupted' context of the monastic existence. Tracing the intersections between male–male desire and the 'genre of dialogue', that is, the intertextual philosophical discussions ranging from Plato to the present, Robert S. Sturges notes that "Friendship" is the term most often used to describe the subject matter of these dialogues' (13). Sturges argues, however, that it cannot be assumed that the term applies to the modern notion of friendship, which excludes erotic desire: 'But for Plato in the *Lysis*, *philia*, usually translated "friendship" but also including other forms of bond and affiliation, to some extent also implies *eros*, or desire, which can include erotic desire in the modern sense' (14). Cicero's *On Friendship* has, according to Sturges, had a profound influence on Aelred of Rievaulx's *Spiritual Friendship*. It allowed the young man, who was 'participating in loves that were also "vices"' to 'imagine another kind of male-to-male relationship than those in which he was then engaged' (51). It is precisely this genre of dialogue that enables Robert to reconstruct Jean-Marc's life through his letters, memoirs, journals, anecdotes and interviews. In Scott's text, however, identification does not entail male-to-male desire. By 're-membling' Jean-Marc's life, Robert comes to terms with the death of his older brother and his own homophobia. Robert's reassembling of his brother's life serves a twofold purpose. First, it exhibits the queer diasporic re-membling which re-creates and metamorphoses the materiality of place. Second, it initiates a revisiting of Robert's own role in his brother's life, connecting him, through his own guilt and trauma, with Aelred and the characters Ted and Benedict. Overall, Robert's reconstruction of Aelred's life is another example of the role of tactics in the workings of queer diaspora. Not only does queer tactical diaspora alter territory and displace notions of heterosexual origins, but it also combines the movement of sexuality with the developmental passage from one fixed boundary to another, thus inserting queer sexuality within the distinction between home and away, 'here' and 'there'. Accordingly, Robert's tactical revisiting and reconstructing of his brother's life in the Caribbean and England adds another dimension to the literary

project of Scott's book: it connects the reader with both Aelred and Robert, as Robert realises his role in shaping Aelred's life as well as the predicament of the late realisation of his faults. Robert's tactical reconstruction of his brother's life emphasises the role of writing as a means of identification, for he discloses the intricacies of stories that are interwoven within each other, underlining the multi-layered narrative structure of *Aelred's Sin*. His task is to 'uncover' the untold stories, one of which is his brother's queer desire. This, as we will learn, is only one of possibly countless stories that offer an insight into Jean-Marc's life. Obviously, it is too late for both brothers but through writing Robert is able to gain insight into his role in shaping his brother's destiny. More importantly, he is able to connect his brother's journals with those of Aelred of Rievaulx, linking the two Aelreds and re-interpreting their writings to signify love and affinity rather than transgression and impropriety. At this point, we may object to Robert's understanding of his brother's life and his death from AIDS as derived through letters and memoirs only. Positioning writing as the only method through which a meaningful connection between Robert and Jean-Marc can be achieved, Scott is exposed to the risk of placing Robert, not Jean-Marc, as the centre of the story. For it is Robert's guilt and regret that connects him not only to Aelred but also to Ted and Toinette. Moreover, Robert's acceptance of his brother is a device through which we as readers come to identity and sympathise with *Robert*, putting his previous ignorance and homophobia at a distance. As we will see later in this chapter, it is Jean-Marc's *own* construction of his life which is far more intense and transgressive.

Before I explore Scott's structuring of *Aelred's Sin*, I would like to return to the languages of sealandscapes. For Scott begins his novel with a prologue, in which we find a description of the Caribbean landscape:

High above the plains, sheer from the valleys, the forested mountains climbed to summits in the clouds. This was a wild place. The green enamel cracked into rock face and crumpled under the force of cataracts, waterfalls, cascades. The rivers surged around ancient stones, pulling at the roots of old trees; dragging at the mountains, at their might and wildness. (17)

Scott juxtaposes the Caribbean landscape with wilderness, and he appears to mimic the European literary tradition of the folk tale, which contains, among various other motifs, the descriptions of dreamlike places. The fantastical, 'unreal' depiction of the Caribbean is, of course, evocative of the European pastoral vision of the New World as it corresponds to the motif of a recovery of a lost essence. Scott's framing of the novel in terms of the New World pastoral tradition places it within the Caribbean literary tradition, where Western literary traditions are imitated for the purpose of subverting and altering them. Interestingly, Scott continues the New World pastoral with the positioning of Christianity in Caribbean landscape: 'On one of those plateaux, which you come upon with astonishment and relief, wild grasses blowing in the breeze, trees called Immortelle, a small band of men built a cloister and a church in glass and mud' (17). Here, Scott intersects Christianity and gardening as a part of the British colonial project. Interestingly, in this 'wild and uninhabitable place', the monks, we are told, 'harnessed the natural fertility of the ground for the provision of food and beauty.... They fashioned spaces of light and shadow; shade from the heat, gardens with flowers and shrubs' (17–18). Taming the wilderness and inhabiting the uninhabitable places, the monks install peaceful and gentle 'civilisation' in this uncultivated space. Moreover, trying to 'detach themselves from the mortals', the monks become 'attached to higher qualities', creating not civilisation but a piece of divinity on earth: 'This was a paradise, a cloistered heaven'. More importantly, by not limiting themselves to merely inhabiting a small portion of the land, the monks 'built a school for boys. They hoped that some of these young boys would join them' (18).

The prologue not only introduces us to the idyllic imagery of Caribbean landscape but also interlocks with many themes discussed in my other readings. For Scott's treatment of Caribbean space in the first two pages of the novel represents the landscape as closely connected to the contemporary debates concerning place and identity, and which will link identity and territory throughout the novel. The discussion of dwelling also suggests that movement, and especially the idea of the moving body, enables disengagement with and a displacement of the connection between identity and territory. This appears in the description of the 12-year-old boy who 'left the old

wooden school, which smelt of coconut oil and which leant against the big stone church of Notre-Dame de Grace to go to the school in the mountains, following his best friend and the ideals of the monk, Dom Maurus' (18). Framing the boy, who will later on be identified as the main character Jean-Marc, as belonging to Caribbean space emphasises his transition to England and the displacement and transformation he goes through in the process. In fact the narrator tells of the boy's first movement from 'the land of the sugar-cane fields and the old racatang town which tumbled down to the sea' to the monastery, where he became 'sick, homesick. He wouldn't eat' (19–20). The boy's despair and displacement prompts the monastery infirmarian, Dom Placid, to tell him a story about another boy of great beauty and manners (later identified as Saint Aelred), who was schooled with the sons of the King of Scotland, at the King's request. Interestingly, it is Saint Aelred's troubled relationship with young boys, and especially with one particular youth, which sparks an intense interest in Jean-Marc. Aelred's decision to join a monastery in order to 'confess his love without fear' and his subsequent writing of *Spiritual Friendship* as a guide on how 'a love of one man for another may be embraced, how their hands may touch and how the kiss of love may be given' (23–24) instigates the little boy's pursuit of love, connecting him with Aelred and the territory where Aelred's love takes place. The series of events reveal the multiple narrative frames that relate directly to the depictions of landscape and the overall theme of writing as homosexual identification. For Robert's framing of his brother's story, in which Jean-Marc is situated firmly in the Caribbean landscape works as a two-pronged response to the homophobia and intolerance Jean-Marc faced as a young boy on Les Deux Isles. First, it locates queer desire in the Caribbean space, counteracting the decolonising politics of the postcolonial nation-state, which emphasises the transgression of homosexuality and promotes heterosexual citizenship. Second, Robert, by beginning his brother's story with an emphasis on sexuality, exhibits homosexual identification through a queer narrative written by a heterosexual author.

It is Robert who uncovers the ignored and silenced histories. In the chapter titled 'The Portrait', Jean-Marc discovers a painting in Ashton Park, depicting a little Black boy kneeling 'in a decorative manner at the duke's feet' (77).¹ The boy, 'dressed in red satins and gold silks', who is 'smiling up to the duke' was 'a diminutive, his master's

doll' (78). The duke, on the other hand, is 'not even looking at the boy; he looked out over the world beyond the frame of the painting' (78). Jean-Marc becomes infatuated with the painting, especially the representation of duke's superiority and the dehumanisation of the Black boy: 'The admiration in the boy's eyes was the same as that in the face of the master's dog which knelt at his feet on the other side of the painting. It was looking up plaintively' (78).² Moreover, as Jean-Marc gazes into the portrait he feels his own face 'superimposed upon that of the boy whose face shone from beneath, so that the black face seemed to be his own' (78). As Jean-Marc metamorphoses into the Black boy, he recalls past memories of accusations from his childhood friends of his 'superior' social status: 'all you French Creole!' (79). Instantaneously, Jean-Marc's recollection of the accusations from his Black friends merges with the memories of his Black nurse Toinette, who narrates the story of Mungo—an African boy who is transported to the Caribbean and attempts to escape slavery. Here Scott intersects the dehumanisation of the Black body with the dehumanisation of the queer body. This is seen in the coupling of the boy's name, *Mungo*, with Ashton *Park*. The reference to the Scottish explorer Mungo Park and the African Association works as a method for linking the British colonial project with Aelred's position as a postcolonial subject. Later in the novel, Jean-Marc discovers a grave marked with the letter J, and he begins to create a narrative of the life of the boy in the picture, calling him Jordan. His references to River Jordan allude to the main mission of the African Association: to discover and map the origin and course of the Niger River and ultimately find the lost city of Timbuktu. Here we witness the 'shared histories' I examined in the previous chapters but also the participation in multiple histories, each transposed onto the other. As Jean-Marc re-constructs the narrative of Jordan's life, he uncovers dialogues between the postcolonial tropes of displacement, slavery and racial difference. Lee Easton and Kelly Hewson note that 'what connects Aelred's memories to theirs [his Black friends, Mungo and Jordan] is not so much a "shared racial essence" but what Gilroy calls "shared histories and geographic movements"' (2004, 89). Scott frames the 'The Portrait' as an identificatory device, as the creation of narrative serves as a means of identification. By disclosing the intricacies of stories that are woven together, Robert uncovers the untold story of his brother in the same way as Jean-Marc, by the means of imaginative reconstruction,

creates the story of Jordan (whose name is both imposed and provisional, thus demonstrating the impossibility of recovery of his real name). The two 'narratives' share the tropes of identification, queerness as well as historical/geographical representations, particularly in terms of the conflation of *Mungo* and *Ashton Park*. Another shared history, one that adds material grounding to Scott's text, is the inclusion of the Black Power Movement in Trinidad and Tobago in 1970. Recalling J. M.'s observation about the absence of significant African names and places in Trinidad ('We wiped out their history'), Robert admits not only that he had not paid attention to this fact but that at the time he may have said 'And a good thing too' (108). Here, Robert alludes to the Black Power Movement which in 1968 'swept across the Caribbean' and 'briefly rose to a crescendo in the "1970 Revolution" in Trinidad and Tobago when a mass movement climaxed in an aborted army mutiny against the government of Eric Williams, the famous historian and erstwhile anticlinal nationalist' (Meeks 197). The mass movement is seen in Robert's recounting of the day before his father's death, when he informed J. M. about the incident where they came into contact with the Power Movement: 'You missed something, I told him. They came right into the yard, about a hundred people, Indian and Negro. Their leader shouted for Dad to come out and talk to them. All the time the crown shouted, Power! They called for la Borde' (110). The name Black Power came 'from the effervescent struggle for social justice in the United States' but it also had multiple roots, the primary tributary being Marcus Garvey's Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) and the Rastafarian movement. It was the social rights movement in the United States, however, that served as a 'catalyst that brought these nascent trends together' (Meeks 198). By the early 1970s, according to Meeks, 'Black Power had become a powerful force in various Caribbean societies. A burgeoning movement guided by notions of black nationalism and wedded to an anti-imperialist sense of autonomous Caribbean development, it was accompanied by populist and community-based notions of political participation and mobilization' (201). Robert's recollection grounds Scott's text within the social and cultural history of Trinidad, and it marks *Les Deux Isles'* transition from a colonial to a postcolonial nation: 'It was the final end of the old ways. I remember J. M. saying that' (111). Thus, through the reconstruction of the past events, Robert uncovers dialogues between the tropes

of displacement slavery and the social and cultural histories of the Les Deux Isles (Trinidad and Tobago). Through writing, Robert is able to 'unearth' and 'unlearn'. He becomes 'an earth digger', 'a word eater' (111).

Mirroring histories

Robert's account of his brother's life is a means for homosexual recognition; that is, the awareness of queer sexuality is understood through the practice of writing. Apart from instigating heterosexual 'tolerance' of homosexuality, the Caribbean queer narrative is a conduit for the identification of queer sexuality where the process of mirroring enables a queer perspective. This mirroring corresponds to the workings of tactical diaspora, where memories of the past are mobilised in order to displace originary homelands. In addition, the process of writing and the subsequent creation of narratives work as a significantly potent means for employing the developmental model of non-heterosexuality. Indeed, by destabilising spatial boundaries through queer tactical diaspora, Scott inserts tactics within the wider debates on queer and diaspora studies, for mobility and local historicity emphasise the inseparability of race and homosexuality in the postcolonial discourses on identity and belonging. The overall structure of *Aelred's Sin*, where Aelred's outward projection (from Les Deux Isles to England, from monastery to the world outside) is reflected in the backward glance of his own memoirs and journals as well as his brother's literary production, is reminiscent of the Western coming out narrative. The employment of developmental homosexuality in *Aelred's Sin* works as a method of linking race with homosexuality; queer tactical diaspora allows for an investigation and the deconstruction of the policing of racial and sexual borders. Recognising the collared and contained Black body in the portrait, Aelred realises that Blackness is under constant control, a fact which is juxtaposed with Father Justin's mantra: 'Never in twos, always in threes' (136). Whilst the latter exemplifies the strict regulation and surveillance of the gay body by the Church, the former is placed within the framework of White racial superiority. As Jean-Marc's friend Joe points out, the State has taken over the role of controlling the gay body: 'That's what it was like then, Joe says. You were arrested. You were imprisoned and fined. You were shamed, insulted, beaten

up. Not that it does not take place now' (173). In order to break down the carefully guarded line between homosocial and homoerotic behaviour, Aelred engages in explicit homosexual acts with Brother Edward, a White and blonde novice at the monastery. This is yet another instance of Scott's use of mirroring as a means for inserting queerness into the racial imaginary of Ashton Park. For Aelred's Caribbean lover's statement 'I'm blacker than you' stands in stark contrast to his new English lover Edward, who is described as 'tall with blond hair. He had bright blue eyes and very white skin' (158). Scott's mimicking of the coming out narrative as well as the inflection of the narratives of Jordan and Aelred, where inversion and doubling enable a recognition and sharedness of narratives, corresponds to the potential and capability of queer tactical diaspora to rework the strategic, staking claim to a nation and home and inserting queerness as a constitutive part of the community. More importantly, Scott's use of queer narratives (by a heterosexual narrator) exhibits the ability of queer tactical diaspora to trespass borders and incorporate space as a way of mapping out the interstices between place and body. Moreover, the use of inversion and doubling tacticality in *Aelred's Sin* highlights race and queerness within the wider debates on diaspora studies, in that it adds mobility and local history to the already existing scholarship.

We may say that *Aelred's Sin* responds to Terry Goldie's critique of queer theory and postcolonial studies and the focus on overarching categories such as 'race' and 'queer questions': '[It is] less than surprising that texts that represent the specific contexts of homosexual experience in what is usually constituted as postcolonial countries are almost never considered in this light' (22). Goldie is critical of the tendency to read 'race' and 'ethnicity' in a strictly African-American context: 'The universal homosexual is one feature of queer theory, in which the social configuration of homosexuality becomes a very minor element in contrast with a universal sexual orientation which not surprisingly looks very American' (21). In *Aelred's Sin*, the configuration of homosexuality occurs at the intersection of 'queer' and 'Black', as Aelred gazes at the picture of Jordan whilst Benedict stares at 'his naked legs' (81). Later in the text, Edward observes Aelred for the first time, and remarks to Benedict: 'He's very dark' (161). Here, Benedict and Edward gaze at and desire Aelred's Black body. In both cases, a transgression occurs where the queer body is read in

terms of race whilst the Black body is read in terms of homosexuality. Consequently, the intersection of Black and queer works as a means of diasporising queer desire and assigning homosexuality to the Black body. Thus, Scott's mirroring technique serves as a response to Goldie's call for a diasporised queer theory and Fanon's contention that homosexuality is a specifically White 'problem'. In terms of the conventional diasporic discourse, which is marked by a glance back to an idealised past, Scott's novel intervenes in the discourses of queer and diaspora studies by incorporating the questions of desire and the body within the histories of racist, colonialist and homophobic violence that still resonate loudly in the present.

So far I have questioned the validity in the postcolonial world of the workings of queer studies and their Eurocentric underpinnings, for they run the risk of universalising the experience of the unmarked White, male body. Since queer studies is mostly a Western academic exercise, it must be coupled with the overarching field of diaspora studies if it is to open its borders and become permeable to other contexts and disciplines. In *Aelred's Sin*, the coupling of queerness and diaspora is seen in the mirroring of the sodomisation of Jordan and Aelred/Jean-Marc, as both characters experience the same fate as a result of their 'otherness'—Jordan, an African slave, and Aelred, a homosexual. In fact, the act of sodomy acts as a force that maintains the unambiguous lines between White/Black and heterosexual/homosexual. 'Master Walter come back drunk from a drinking bout . . . He is stumbling around in the stable with his breeches down and he is calling wildly for his little nigger boy . . . He is standing over me' (368–369), Jordan's story goes. After the act of sodomy, Jordan relates: 'But I cannot sleep when Master Walter revive and he drag me to the room with the peeping hole and the contraptions and where he hang me against the wall to whip me. He remember who I is' (369). Here, White supremacy is exerted over the Black body by the means of sexual violence, whilst in the case of Ted and Jean-Marc the compulsory heterosexuality of the school is enforced by the same means. In both cases, male heterosexuality is rendered superior through the acts of sodomy and the subsequent feminisation of the enslaved Black body and the homosexual body; they are rendered impossible within the context of compulsory White heterosexuality.

The connection between queerness and the Black body in *Aelred's Sin* corresponds to the process of writing as a means of identification.

From the instant they are branded as 'bullers', Ted and Jean-Marc's bodies are marked as queer and consequently displaced from the heteronormativity of the school. For Ted and Jean-Marc, the identification of homosexuality results in increasing harassment and ostracisation, resulting in the gang-rape which, interestingly, is narrated in two versions: one in Robert's voice and the other in Jean-Marc's writing in his journal. In the first version, Robert overhears the senior boys bragging about raping Ted and Jean-Marc: 'They had it coming to them. If that's what they want. If that's what they like, the bullers. If that's where they want to take it. Let them. Did you hear them? Like they were asking for it. PLEASE was louder than STOP. Did you hear them?' (308). Whilst the boys view the rape as an act of deserved punishment, they also perceive Ted and Jean-Marc's cry 'please' as a request for more. Jean-Marc's account of 'The Raid', however, which is written in his journal, is different from Robert's:

We are both crying and looking at each other. Made to lie side by side face down. Stripped naked. Pinned down. We enter each other's eyes, watery. Here in this luminous eye we see only each other. This is where we have curled, into each other's eyes. To hide . . . We leave our bodies on the ground and ascend above them and look down. We look down. They are used by them. Utterly. We utter nothing. Someone says PLEASE. Someone says STOP. One goes in, one comes out. One goes in, one comes out. There is a crown in there.

(356, emphasis in original)

Jean-Marc's version differs from Robert's matter-of-fact account of the rape (according to Robert, Jean-Marc 'embellished' his version), attesting to the importance of narration and storytelling for the process of identification. Jean-Marc's account places heavy emphasis on crying as a means of expressing the pain he and Ted went through: 'We enter each other's eyes'; 'in this luminous eye we see only each other'; 'into each other's eyes'. In terms of narration, Jean-Marc's account is personal and lyrical; he uses metaphors of sight to express the close connection between him and Ted, and at the same time, he voices their pain through the image of disconnection with the situation: 'We leave our bodies . . . We look down. They are used by them'. In fact, Robert explicitly states that he is able to pick up Jean-Marc's 'implicit and explicit meanings in his writing', recognising that Jean-Marc's writing is poetic: 'his poetry is a poetry of pain' (358).

Through poetry, Robert is able to reconstruct Jean-Marc's life and experience homosexual recognition, which ultimately forces him to acknowledge his compliance in Jean-Marc's ostracisation and abuse. Importantly, the end of Jean-Marc's 'poetic' narrative of 'The Raid' demonstrates that it is not merely an overstated rendition of the gang rape, but it is just as 'factual' as Robert's account. After identifying Aelred's language, Robert acknowledges the impact of Aelred's poetry and the subsequent change to his view of homosexuality, queer desire and the diasporic queer body: 'I eat his words. I am drunk with his blood. Words of blood soak into desk tops, on to lavatory walls. Messages. They were marooned in their desire. I become a poet' (129). Aelred's language and his narration of what happened at the day of 'The Raid' attest to the space of language in the Caribbean queer narrative for homosexual recognition and tolerant identification. Scott's emphasis on Robert and Aelred connects the two characters in terms of homophobic abuse and violence, but also compassion and empathy. Although initially unable to understand Aelred's life choices, it is through writing that Robert gains an awareness of the sexual and racial dynamics that contributed to his own persecution of Aelred on Les Deux Isles. Through Aelred's 'poetry', Robert is able to see his own past through the eyes of his brother, a past where homophobia and Black oppression become sites of knowledge and awareness:

I feel sad and lonely. I wanted to take care of them now. I wanted the details of their love to be named. Aelred of Rievaulx had tried to name his sin, writing to his sister. This is hagiographic tale, not a pornographic story. It is of the passion of those whose young love was inspired by saints and who were wrestling with their nature. His words lead me. I eat them, before I can digest their meaning. I look out on his world. It falls under his gaze, now my gaze. (221)

Scott's emphasis on writing and homosexual identification, then, corresponds to queer tactical diaspora, for *Aelred's Sin* is a novel that transgresses the racial and sexual divides through empathetic identification, crossing national, racial and sexual borders. In *Aelred's Sin*, queer memories trespass borders and incorporate literary space as a way of mapping out the interstices between race, sexuality and identity.

Outing diaspora

Aelred's Sin is not a novel that illustrates queer theory. Nor is it a novel seen from the perspective of diaspora. Rather, defying a firm grounding within either diaspora or queer studies, the novel is queer and tactical in its goal of disrupting the Eurocentric notions of sexual diasporic narratives where the dichotomies between nation and diaspora, and heterosexuality and homosexuality, are maintained. Through a queer tactical reading the novel disrupts and dislocates these binaries, employing the same theories and methodologies that underpin them. Scott ties to the Western coming out story a diasporic narrative of gay development from heterosexuality (viewed as oppressive) to homosexuality (viewed as liberating and cathartic). As a result, the coming out story becomes a method of constructing a narrative of one's identity in which the storyteller adjusts the plot, by the means of appropriating the past and the present, to fit the story into a coherent narrative structure. The storyteller becomes a revisionist who rewrites and re-adjusts elements in order to construct an identity formation that is detached from the binary thinking of a transition from shame to pride. In Scott's novel, however, the storyteller is not Jean-Marc but his brother, who not only participated in violence against homosexuality but who is currently, according to himself, 'eat[ing] his [Jean-Marc's] words' (112). The novel's narrative structure, which rests Robert's awareness and acceptance of his brother's homosexuality, adds to the traditional coming out story by including self-criticism, for the novel's homoeroticism is overwritten by the once-homophobic man's awareness and recognition of an 'unnatural' homosexuality (Donnell). Interestingly, Robert highlights both the seemingly transitional narrative of Jean-Marc's life from the oppressive *Les Deux Isles* to the ostensibly liberated England, and the diasporic movement between the two territories surrounding it: 'I have the journals and now my own stories. I reconstruct, I tell his life. It begins to change something in me. It begins to change me writing this. Write it to understand it: that was his method.... I eat his words. He moves between here and there' (112).

The movement between here and there is established early in the novel through the difference between the landscapes of *Les Deux Isles* and England. Consequently, in the chapter entitled 'The Clothing', the young boy moves from being Jean-Marc de la Borde of

Le Deux Isles to Aelred of Ashton Park, England. Jean-Marc/Aelred's displacement is emphasised by his memories of home (Malgretoute), triggered by (the smell of) his brown suit and his white cotton shirt which

smelt of his home far away. They smelt of his mother and father, his brother and sisters, whom he had left. They smelt of his country. They smelt of heat and sunshine and haze and rising up to a blue sky above green can fields and the shade of the cocoa hills. (29)

Subsequently, the transition is followed by doubts about Ashton Park: 'What was he doing here? ... He smelt that smell of travelling in aeroplanes on the sleeve of his jacket. There was a musty smell of Ashton Park, then of his home Malgretoute: in spite of everything' (29). The movement from one territory to another is repeated once again at the end of the novel when Aelred begins yet another movement—out of the monastery and to a 'civilian' life with his lover, the former monk Edward. In the chapter called 'The Flat, Bristol', we are told of Jean-Marc's exit from Ashton Park and Edward's eventual death from AIDS. Thus the transitions between the stone church to the school in the mountains, to Ashton Park and ultimately to Bristol highlight a subjectivity on the move; that is, Jean Marc's body as a marker of difference, implicated in multiple contexts and mobilities of race, class and sexuality. As Jean-Marc's body moves from one territory to another, it demonstrates how queer diasporic fiction can create alternative formulations of home and diaspora. Jean-Marc's mobility allows him to form new sites of connection and affiliation—sites that are rooted in the Middle Passage, the Caribbean diaspora and postcolonial homophobia. By constructing a retrospective look at Jean-Marc's moves from the Caribbean to England through his brother's eyes, Scott destabilises the static place, and even more importantly he questions the developmental model of queer identity.

By focusing on the motif of coming out, I do not want to suggest that Scott's novel is simply an addition to the postcolonial technique of rewriting colonising fictions as a means of exposing the erasure of queer identity and the decolonising politics of the Caribbean. Rather, Scott employs diaspora not only as a method of subverting

the European literary tradition of the *Bildungsroman* but also as a means of merging queerness and homoeroticism—themes rejected by Fanon as being inherently European—with the field of diaspora studies. Contrary to Samuel Selvon, who represents the Caribbean diaspora with the language of hypermasculinity and sexualisation, where Black identity is exoticised by a dominant White culture, Scott presents a Caribbean diaspora intertwined with the conflicting issues of race, class and sexuality. *Aelred's Sin* exposes the racial and sexual underpinnings of both Les Deux Isles, as a previously colonised space, and the Ashton Park Monastery, the colonising force that relegates the Caribbean as the Other. Jean-Marc's access to a home is prohibited by the erasure of queerness within both the Caribbean subjectivity and the monastic life in Ashton Park. Therefore, his transitions from one space to another is a movement 'outward', towards a space that accommodates his queer desires. This is not to suggest that Jean-Marc's flight from Les Deux Isles should be read in terms of traditional understandings of homosexual impossibility 'at home' vis-à-vis queer promise 'abroad'. On the contrary, both Les Deux Isles and the monastic order of Ashton Park do not match Jean-Marc's codes of morality, which would regulate expressions of affinity and belonging. In both cases, Jean-Marc is forced to move to another space, this time the world outside the cloister, which, according to himself, is 'not much different' than the life in Les Deux Isles or in the monastery: 'We can't hold hands in the street. We worry about being caught sleeping together. It's worse...in some ways' (440–441). In the 'Epilogue', Joe expresses many of the 'ironies' surrounding Jean-Marc's 'coming out' in the 1960s. Before he does so, though, Robert narrates the scene in which Joe displays a photograph of Jean-Marc, Edward and himself:

1967! The year of consenting adults! Joe said cynically. On the steps of the student union in Bristol. That's where we all met. Edward read history, J. M. English and History and me, Sociology and Politics. We were educated for the sixties: '68 was Paris and Prague! We went through everything together. That story you've been piecing together, Joe said, is a horror show as far as I'm concerned.

(439–440)

The reference to the sexual liberalism of the 1960s alludes to the 1967 Sexual Offences Act in the United Kingdom which decriminalised private homosexual acts between consenting men above the age of 21. Since queer theory and queer studies problematise, through the poststructuralist lens, the gay liberationist and lesbian feminist understandings of identity, sexuality and power relations, the queer take on Jean-Marc's position would posit sexualities based on the notions of identity politics—'gay' and 'lesbian'—as being exclusive and too limited. The elusive and vague definitions of queer and queer politics may make it a powerful tool for challenging normative sexual knowledge. In addition, the linking of queer politics and nationhood appears to be a serious contender for the deconstruction of the discourses surrounding queer subjectivities' access to citizenship and national subjectivity. Although Berlant and Freeman posit Queer Nation as a tool for excavating the disjunction between citizenship and national subjectivity, the idea of Queer Nation is tied to the Western logic of citizenship based on sexual object-choice and individual self-identity. But if we decentre Euro-American paradigms founded on visibility, the displacement of Western sexual conventions and the reworking of queer pleasures and desires might be sensitive to non-Western territories.

In *Aelred's Sin*, though, the disjunction between the Euro-American notions of queer citizenship and non-Western queer desire is transposed onto the contrast between Jean-Marc's excitement of radical sexual liberalism in Europe and the seafront in Barmouth, Wales: 'It was hot. The hillsides near the estuary were purple with rhododendrons and shimmering with yellow gorse. High mountains sheer to the Irish Sea. In the distance mountains in haze. Reminds me of islands, J. M. said' (440). The scene at the seafront in Barmouth, working as an emblematic borderline space, is crucial for our understanding of *Aelred's Sin* as a novel that is critical of Euro-American paradigms of both sexual liberation and Queer Nation, for it merges nationality, sexuality and race by juxtaposing Les Deux Isles with Wales. This synthesis is done through the sea, especially the Atlantic, and exposes the materiality and trauma of the Middle Passage. In this, Scott employs the language of seandscape as a link that sutures the Atlantic with the coming out narrative in order to route/root his novel deep within Caribbean culture and space. *Aelred's Sin* depicts

the Atlantic as a way of connecting the landscapes of Les Deux Isles and Wales in order to complicate the relationship between ethnicity and national belonging by mixing sexuality with diaspora. This is shown in the following scene, when Jean-Marc attends a funfair and sees a 'black guy playing a steel tenor pan' (441). Here, several trajectories of identity connect Jean-Marc's status as a homosexual, an immigrant and a racialised Other to Caribbean space and diaspora. Jean-Marc's connection to the music is so powerful that he exclaims: 'God that music! I've not heard it in years. I would know it anywhere'. In his encouraging Jean-Marc to ask the man where he is from, Edward exclaims in jest: 'Bet his name is Jordan' (441). The inclusion of Jordan in the scene ties the colonial and postcolonial themes of mirroring that is present in Ashton Park, suturing Jean-Marc to Jordan (the African slave in the portrait), to Mungo (the runaway slave), to Ted (his mixed-race childhood lover in Les Deux Isles). Furthermore, the linking of the four figures is also achieved through representation of homophobic violence and the construction of body as a racialised Other. As Edward associates Jean-Marc with the Black Atlantic whilst the music is playing, the connection is reinforced by Jean-Marc himself who exclaims: 'Calypso, man! Hear that calypso music!' (441). On the one hand, Scott problematises the universal figures of Blackness and queerness by complicating the notion of a stable identity. On the other, he deconstructs the relationship between ethnicity and national belonging by diasporising the idea of Queer Nation.

If calypso highlights the Caribbean diaspora in Wales, connecting Jean-Marc via the Atlantic to Les Deux Isles, Edward's observation of the discriminatory sign on the seawall is yet another trajectory of exile. But this time it places Jean-Marc's status as Other in terms of sexuality. For the proximity of calypso and the homophobia of the colonial centre are made possible by the presence of the Atlantic—a force that is a site of connection and disconnection, belonging and misrecognition, familiarity and unfamiliarity. The duality of the Atlantic is also seen in Jean-Marc's association with calypso, as it exhibits both his connection to Les Deux Isles and his estrangement from the islands. Moreover, calypso highlights Jean-Marc's expulsion from Ashton Park, seen in Jean-Marc and Edwards's presence in Barmouth, and lastly, the discriminatory words written on the seawall underline his 'outing' as 'queer' by the colonial centre (the

'mother country'). In all three instances, Scott depicts the Atlantic as a vessel for exposing the failure of the 'coming out' theme to accommodate Jean-Marc's queer desires and provide him with a space of belonging that exists in-between the heterosexist codes that constantly control, constrain and relegate his Otherness. Once again the Western literary tradition and the coming out narrative are subverted and exposed as founded on Eurocentric and colonial paradigms of who belongs and who is 'outed' as the Other. Whilst Thomas and Kincaid create a queer resistance against the colonial and gender conventions that place same-sex desire as a temporary stage in identity development, Scott exposes the colonial and sexual conventions that exist in the postcolonial present, not as an overt act of resistance but more as a method of highlighting the importance of writing as a means of facilitating homosexual identification. This is an important step for the positioning of the Caribbean space within narratives of tolerant identification.

I have suggested that queer tactical diaspora works as a conceptual tool for analysing the discourses of tradition and purity within national and diasporic ideologies. This queer tactical space, in which we find new desires and subjectivities that are located at the interstices between space, body and time, is itself located between 'here' and 'there'. In Dionne Brand's writing, this is seen in the Caribana Festival, which highlights the 'realness' of the body and the Black queer experience, and Toronto's Bathurst Street, a space for Caribbean peoples caught in the in-between space of 'here' and 'there'. Both geographies rework and create new spaces in relation to the image of the sea as a site of release as well as captivity. Similarly, in the Barmouth scene in *Aelred's Sin*, Scott employs the ocean as a means for accentuating the marginalisation of the queer Caribbean diaspora, partly due to its location on the periphery of the 'White' world, and partly because of Jean-Marc's reluctance to speak to the musician. Echoing Brand's depiction of Caribana, which works as both a mapping of the relationship between the Caribbean and Canada, and as an uncovering of the historical and cultural alienation and loss within the Black subjectivities in Toronto, Scott's inclusion of the pan player at the funfair highlights Aelred's dislocation from his Caribbean home and mother country. Although it appears that Jean-Marc/Aelred's 'timidity' prevents him from learning the player's nationality, Scott places the encounter between the two

'countrymen' within the context of Jean-Marc's ancestral connection with the White plantocracy in Les Deux Isles as well as his personal history of sexual displacement and abuse. Despite Aelred's 'identification' with calypso and the Caribbean diaspora in Barmouth, he is still prevented from gaining access to the community of Caribbean diaspora based on his social status as belonging to the White Creole elite. Moreover, his 'sexual orientation' prevents Jean-Marc from connecting with the musician, for the history of colonial abuse and homophobic violence interweave in this crucial scene. If *Caribana*, which is 'situated in slavery', works as 'a celebration of Black liberation from forced labour' (Brand 2001, 41), the Caribbean diaspora in Scott's novel intersects dislocation from the 'mother island', the incompatibility of inherited religion and the inherent homophobia of the colonial centre. Whilst Lake Ontario is a 'symbolic Atlantic', allowing the fluidity of the water to abrade the dryness of the White city and insert Black presence into a new, historical map of the city, the scene in Barmouth demonstrates that neither coming out nor leaving a homophobic homeland engenders a sense of belonging for a White, Creole, queer identity. Instead, Scott suggests that Jean-Marc's racial, social and homosexual identities can only be articulated in a queer narrative of a Caribbean diaspora which re-excavates, restructures and rewrites his life. This restructuring, however, does not entail a reconstruction of his life 'as it really was' but only as partially routed/rooted in a specific cultural and historical context.

By the means of queer tactical diaspora, Scott is able to place a heterosexual narrator as a storyteller who re-integrates his older brother into the family structure, Caribbean space and the Caribbean diaspora in Britain, whilst the object of his narrative re-constructs another narrative; namely, that of Jordan. Taken together, the two narratives sustain each other, as Robert employs the story of Jean-Marc to better understand his brother, whilst Jean-Marc constructs the story of Jordan to better understand himself. The two seemingly independent narratives—the lost and silenced histories of the African presence in the Caribbean and the queer Caribbean diaspora in Britain—are joined together through queer tactical diaspora. As a consequence and as a testimony to the effectiveness of Scott's structuring of the novel in terms of homosexual identification, Robert's relationship to his brother and to the Caribbean is transformed. Robert's narrative of Jean-Marc's diaspora forces him to once again

'eat his words'. Writing queer diaspora, Robert learns, is a powerful force that makes him 'drunk with his [Jean-Marc's] blood. Words of blood soak into desk tops, on to lavatory walls. Messages. They were marooned in their desire. I become a poet. Cacao planter sing your calypso boy. Leave these matters to the poet. Then a world litany of abuse: queers, faggots' (129). Intertwining poetry and abuse, the queer Caribbean diaspora narrative gives voice to erasures of the past. If Selvon's highly sexualised and heteronormative narrative articulates a West Indian migrant experience in London as a collective subcultural community, Scott's novel talks back to this formulation of Caribbean and sexual identity by re-articulating the Caribbean landscape. Thus, by queer tactical diaspora, Scott's novel moves across geographical territories as well as across a wide range of theoretical paradigms.

Conclusion

In this book, I have focused on recent developments in Caribbean writing in which queer sexuality occupies Caribbean space. Investigating the historical processes that determine the social and cultural meanings of sexuality, I read these texts as exhibiting, exposing and changing the sexual representations of bodies as part of a decolonising process within Caribbean nation-states. By revealing the importance of procreative sexuality in terms of the strength and health of the nation-states, these texts offer an insight into the historical workings of 'proper' sexuality in determining who belongs to the nation and who is stigmatised as outside the heteronormative norm. Through representations of queer tactical diaspora, these texts appropriate and queer Caribbean space, reconceptualising it in terms of sexuality and affiliation. Queer tactical diaspora, then, helps us to reconceptualise the fields of queer and diaspora studies by exploring the interstices between them as well as their mutual shortcomings. These two ostensibly disparate fields exhibit the possibility of creating an entirely new field of academic research where social and cultural meanings of sexuality become the main objects of colonial, historical and literary study. The intersection of academic fields, however, does not entail their eradication. Rather, I seek to build on the already existing theories of queerness and diaspora, and by paying attention to the intricate interstices between them, I wish to add to both fields a new method of analysis.

I chose to look at one particular geographical space, namely, the Caribbean. My choice is based not only on the fascinating and highly complex history of the Caribbean as the Garden of Eden but also on

the multifaceted definitions of sexuality in this postcolonial region. Since cultural meanings of sexuality in the Caribbean appear in various shapes and are formed by the colonial understandings of gender and sexuality, investigating texts that challenge hegemonic formulations of sexuality become even more constructive when they include other aspects of identity formation. The formulations of home and away, belonging and stigmatisation, are some of the elements upon which Caribbean narratives shed light. Certainly, the Caribbean can be defined in multiple ways but my definition restricts it to certain island nations within Caribbean space including, for instance, Jamaica, Antigua, and Trinidad and Tobago. On the other hand, the idea that the Caribbean is a single place is not only misleading and erroneous—it also ignores various kinds of mobilities (people, texts, images, knowledge) within the region. My focus, however, as I have shown throughout my book, rests on the idea that the Caribbean geography is both real and imaginary, in that it has throughout history been denaturalised and re-naturalised as a ‘natural paradise’. In addition, the notion of a narrative with which my book deals is that of a fictional diasporic narrative; that is, belonging to the literary genre that proposes fiction as a means of formulating an alternative notion of home and diaspora. As a result, my notion of a queer tactical diaspora works as a means for adding to the genre of diasporic fiction a certain queerness that destabilises it, exposing it and making it susceptible to other cultural texts and academic fields. More precisely, the tacticality of queer tactical diaspora, as opposed to simply queer diaspora, makes it a strong candidate in the effort to disturb the imaginative landscape of queer diasporic fictions, since it is not confined to a certain genre or an academic discipline. Queer tactical diaspora, as I have shown in my book, introduces tactics, mobility and local historicity to the existing scholarship, as it at the same time deconstructs the developmental coming out story. Trespassing borders between home and away queer tactical diaspora exposes what is at stake when the body crosses multiple geographies.

I began this book with Alison Donnell’s call to critics, in which she urges greater emphasis on recent articulation of diverse sexual identities in Anglocreole Caribbean writing. Accordingly, I placed significant emphasis on recent queer Caribbean writing, following Donnell’s argument that

writers and critics have both initiated and negotiated the changing demands and orientations of right-bearing discourses across the twentieth century, offering distinctive and differentiated versions of nationalism, feminism, class politics and ethnic solidarity in such a way as to speak to and for the complexities of Caribbean history and place. (244)

By extension, I suggest that queer tactical diaspora crosses various theoretical paradigms and allows for a more agile and flexible investigation into the workings of normative sexuality in the Caribbean and the broader theories of diaspora studies.

Whilst diasporising queerness is not an uncomplicated process, the opening up of queer borders allows for a deconstruction of colonial structures of the 'the West and the rest' and a subsequent creation of transnational spaces in-between. The Western construction of sexuality based on temporality, where the closeted subject becomes aware of his or her emerging homosexuality, is one of the areas where queer tactical diaspora comes into view. By imploding the assumptions about the transnational gay and lesbian subject, queer tactical diaspora creates a space between the Western internalisation of gay identity and the non-modern practices of the non-West. Thus the articulation of sexual identity in the Caribbean becomes caught in this in-between space where affiliation and belonging become intertwined. As a result, the use and the effect of queer tactical diaspora in the in-between space is twofold. First, it interrogates the power structures that position colonial subjects as either closeted or oppressed. Second, it investigates the sites of pleasure that emanate from the creation of new geographies of desire based on affinity, shared sexuality and national queerness. Overall, queer tactical diaspora becomes a means for decentring Whiteness and Euro-American sexual paradigms as it points towards a tactical method of employing dissimilarity and dislocation as a way of theorising diasporic sexuality.

How do we employ the notion of queer tactical diaspora in future research? Once again, I return to David L. Eng, Judith Halberstam and Jose Esteban Muñoz, who posed the question: 'What's queer about queer studies now?' (1). Answering their own question with a 'renewed queer studies ever vigilant to the fact that sexuality is intersectional', the group responds: 'A lot' (3). Their answer is grounded in the belief that queer scholars who 'examine the limits of queer

epistemology, the denaturalizing potential of queer diasporas, and the emergent assumptions of what could be called queer liberalism...rethink queer critique in relation to a number of historical emergencies...of both national and global consequence' (1). The fact that queer studies rest on intersectionality exhibits the importance of including other forms of critique into investigations of sexuality outside the geographical and ontological space of Europe and North America. In fact, queer tactical diaspora does to queer diaspora what queer epistemology, queer diaspora and queer liberalism do to queer studies—namely, it employs a wider range of theoretical paradigms across various geographies. Queer tactical diaspora deconstructs the dichotomies between diaspora/nation and homosexuality/heterosexuality, for it enables close readings of texts that defy categorisation. Theories of sexuality, whether homo-, hetero-, queer- or trans-, must be done with an acute sensitivity and awareness of the cultural, social and geographical specificity. Otherwise, we as theorists run the risk of naturalising and reinforcing the centredness of the Euro-American identity paradigms, ultimately projecting Euro-American discourses of gay/lesbian and queer cultures to the 'non-West'.

If queer diaspora runs the risk of promoting European and North American definitions of what constitutes queer sexuality, how can tacticality provide answers to this challenge? The movement of bodies across geographical territories creates sites of resistance in terms of desire, affiliation and belonging. Thus, by disregarding these sites, we also discount the numerous 'alternative' formulations of sexuality, home and diaspora that stem from 'outside' Europe and the United States. As a result, decentring and diasporising the dominant Euro-American paradigms requires us to move across geographies *as well as* various academic fields. Tacticality also allows us to cross theoretical paradigms, making use of whatever means are available and necessary in order to interrogate the social constructions of transnational sexuality. This entails engagement in various forms of narratives, whether in the shape of fiction, narratives, memoirs or travelogues, as sources of information that propose and investigate formulations of home and diaspora that do not ascribe to dominant notions of sexual identity.

The continuation of the study of queer tactical diaspora to include geographies outside the Caribbean archipelago is the next step in a more wide-ranging study of queer diasporic narratives. An emphasis

on Asian or Indian diaspora in Europe, for instance, would also offer new insights into formulations of home, belonging and sexuality. This work has begun with investigations of Asian transnationalism and queer social movements in the United States, but this needs to extend beyond North America. Queer tactical diaspora is, then, a tool for broadening and diasporising queer investigations to include various geographies whilst sustaining social, historical and cultural critique.

Notes

Introduction

1. James Procter argues that in *The Lonely Londoners* Selvon provides his characters with a
discursive knowledge of the metropolis, a knowledge that has been acquired through a range of social institutional apparatuses in colonial Trinidad. [...] It is by illuminating the city as a discursive site that Selvon is able to open London up and make it susceptible to a rewriting, to alternative signifying processes. (52)
2. Procter links Galahad's love affair with the city's women to his love affair with the city itself: 'Both the female body and the "body" of the metropolis become eroticised "sites" of a fetishistic surveillance and exploration by "the boys"' (52).
3. I do not wish to dismiss the importance of the Black female characters in Selvon's novel nor do I want to ignore the significance of the boys' closeness and intimacy in the disorienting reality of post-World War II London. I only wish to emphasise the dominant masculine and racial discourses in his text.
4. The choice of using *queer* as the adjective to describe homosexuality or same-sex relations is based on its ability to cross categories and avoid classification. Although I use the term as an indicator of the oppositional space outside heteronormativity, I am aware, however, that being part of Western terminology and originating within a US context, the term possibly fixes sexual binaries.
5. The close readings of the two texts in juxtaposition to each other should be seen in terms of queer tactical diaspora, in that their use of salt goes along with my arguments on landscape and seascape where the image of salt serves as metaphor for the sea and the Middle Passage.
6. The same applies to the writings of Kincaid and Scott where the notions of diaspora involve different geographies such as the United States and the United Kingdom.
7. The hyphen in 're-membering' comes from Anne-Marie Fortier's *Migrant Belongings: Memory, Space, Identity* (2000) in which she argues that re-membering is 'the processes through which spaces of belonging—imagined and physical—are inhabited, in the literal sense of dwelling, in the sense of populating or "membering" spaces with ghosts from the past, and in the sense of manufacturing... subjects' (128).
8. Unlike Lauren Berlant and Elizabeth Freeman's notions of a Queer Nation (1993), which remains bound to the generalising logic of American citizenship based on sexual object-choice and individual self-identity, this book

takes on the project of decentring the dominant Euro-American paradigms and the globalisation of the 'queer' identity based not on visibility but on the displacement of the Western sexual conventions and the reworking of (queer) pleasures and desires that emanate from non-Western territories. Thus queer diaspora and queer Caribbean writing break down the logic of the global 'gay' identity, as they disintegrate the colonial narratives of development and progress that deem all 'other' sexual practices as underdeveloped and non-modern.

1 Queer Tactical Diaspora and the Caribbean Space

1. The question is posed in a special double issue of *Social Text*, which reevaluates 'the political utility of queer'. As the cover of the issue reveals, the contributors undoubtedly believe that queer studies (once again) are applicable as a social critique of the contemporary politics of identity, family, and kinship:

The contemporary mainstreaming of gay and lesbian identity—as a mass-mediated consumer lifestyle and an embattled legal category—demands a renewal of queer studies that also considers the global crises of the late twentieth century. These crises, which are shaping national manifestations of sexual, racial, and gendered hierarchies, include the ascendancy and triumph of neoliberalism; the clash of religious fundamentalisms, nationalisms, and patriotisms; and the return to 'moral values' and 'family values' as deterrents to political debate, economic redistribution, and cultural dissent.

(Description on cover)

2. Avtar Brah defines *diaspora space* as 'the intersectionality of diaspora, border, and dis/location as a point of confluence of economic, political, cultural and psychic processes' (178). Brah's central argument is that

diaspora space as a conceptual category is 'inhabited' not only by those who have migrated and their descendants but equally by those who are constructed and represented as indigenous. In other words, the concept of *diaspora space* (as opposed to that of diaspora) includes the entanglement of genealogies of dispersion with those of 'staying put'.

(181, emphasis in original)

3. I do not wish to suggest that queer tactical diaspora is built exclusively on male movement and experience. Tinsley's chapter, along with that of Evelyn O'Callaghan in the same volume, offers valuable insights into the issues of gender, space and the creole identity.
4. In Donald Nicholson-Smith's (1991) English translation of Lefebvre's (1974) *The Production of Space*, lived space is translated as 'representational spaces'. However 'spaces of representation' is the term most commonly used by Edward W. Soja (1996, 10) as a way of distinguishing it from

representations of space (conceptualised space). I will also use 'spaces of representation' as the term for lived space.

5. Although the impact of the work of Judith Butler on gender studies as a whole is immense, I will not go into great detail about the workings of performance and performativity. I simply include these notions as one of the numerous elements in the deconstruction of colonial notions of gender.
6. Isabel Hoving argues that by comparing the roots of mangroves with those of the European oak, Glissant points to the density of the entangled roots of the mangrove which, by living in soil and in water, stand as counterparts to the immobility and firmness of the deep roots of the oak. Hoving argues:

Glissant refers to Caribbean plants and trees to illustrate his model. Mangroves, for example, with their entangled roots and branches, living in water and in soil, function as the counterpart to the strong European oak with its deep roots and unambiguous trunk, which serves as a model for a strong, autonomous identity. Following Deleuze, Glissant differentiates *identité-racine* (root-identity) and *identité-relation*, and with the help of this last concept he invites us to understand identity as the effect of relations, rather than as the cause of relations.

(126–127)

7. Kincaid's 2005 travel narrative *Among Flowers: A Walk in the Himalaya*, documenting Kincaid's journey from the United States to Nepal to gather seeds for her garden in Vermont, employs similar notions of space. I argue that Kincaid text utilises the genre of the travel narrative to expose, through the language of travel and horticulture, the effects of material and figurative forms of colonial transplantation. See Pecic, (2011).
8. See Wilson Harris, *The Womb of Space: The Cross-Cultural Imagination* (1983) for a discussion of syncretism, and Jean Bernabé, Patrick Chamoiseau, Raphaël Confiant, and Mohamed B. Taleb Khyar (1990), for a discussion of *créolité*.
9. Born in British Guyana in 1921, Harris has spent most of his adult life in Britain. Similarly, Glissant, born in Martinique in 1928, divided his time between Martinique, Paris and New York before his death in 2011.
10. One of these postcolonial texts is V. S. Naipaul's 1961 novel *A House for Mr Biswas*. According to Gopinath, 'Naipaul is the father figure, canonized by a Western literary establishment and castigated by postcolonial writers and critics, who casts a long shadow over the field of postcolonial and diasporic literature' (2005, 69).
11. Another shared aspect between the two writers is the focus on gender and sexuality as a field that has generally been neglected in the 'creolisation theories'. Cf. Bernabé, Chamoiseau and Raphaël Confiant, Wilson and Brathwaite.
12. Each of the characters has a different interpretation of the meaning of the phrase: to Ella, it means the Grove Town unrest has not ended despite the rocks not falling on Anita's roof; to Dan and Willie, it means future resistance; to Euphemia, it means that rocks will fall again.

2 Shani Mootoo's Diasporas

1. *Cereus Blooms at Night* is Shani Mootoo's first published novel. It was a finalist for the 1997 Giller Prize, the Chapters/Books in Canada First Novel Award and the Ethel Wilson Fiction Prize. Her other novels include *The Predicament of or* (2001), *He Drown She In the Sea* (2005), which was long-listed for the international IMPAC Dublin Literary Award, and *Valmiki's Daughter* (2008).
2. In her pivotal work, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender, and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest* (1995), Anne McClintock argues:

In the colonies, the mission station became a threshold institution for transforming domesticity rooted in European gender and class roles into domesticity as controlling a colonised people. Through the rituals of domesticity, increasingly global and more often than not violent, animals, women and colonised peoples were wrested from their putatively 'natural' yet 'unreasonable' state of 'savagery' and inducted through the domestic progress narrative into a hierarchical relation to white men. (35)

3. In '*The Garden as a Cultural Object*', Hunt states:

gardens are created, adapted, or used to provide spaces and forms of a ritual or symbolic nature that inculcate certain values and norms of behaviour having an implied continuity with the past; indeed, they often seek to establish continuity with a suitable historic past that could be objective, not idealized but is largely factitious. (19)

4. Edwards argues that

gothicism has been used to represent atrocious acts that lie at the heart of a traumatic event. Gothic discourse is thus often invoked in the aftermath of a traumatic moment to represent the instability of fragmented self. Implied here is the gothic trope of the return of the repressed. Trauma, like the gothic, follows this pattern—the re-emergence of something terrifying that lies beneath the surface and threatens to forever haunt its host, unexpectedly rising up from the depths of the self or the community. (132)

As a consequence, Edwards contends that *Cereus* is gothic text in that Mala's traumatic event 'cannot be precisely grasped, never fully comprehended or articulated by Mala or Tyler' (133, emphasis in original). Thus, 'it shares with the gothic a language that tries to express something that can never be known.... In the figure of the trauma, we can recognize a history that is not directly referential—it is not graspable within the basic models of experience and reference' (133).

5. *A Small Place* is a narrative condemning the European cultural prejudice and the neo-colonial forces of tourism. In the text, Kincaid expresses displacement in terms of anger, discontent and loss, as she candidly explores the impact of slavery and tourism in Antigua. Patrick Holland and Graham

Huggan characterise *A Small Place* as a form of 'countertravel writing', in which the writer 'directs a sustained assault against the reader, designed not merely to jolt him or her out of a familiar sense complacency, but to associate that complacency with the process of travel and the genre of travel writing' (2000, 50).

6. Both texts emphasise Caribbean history and the implications of the tourist's gaze for the representation of Caribbean space/place. If *A Small Place* refuses to characterise and pinpoint a certain Antiguan identity, *Valmiki's Daughter* takes this approach further by highlighting the workings of sexuality within the Trinidadian space/place as it is inhabited by 'natives' of the island.
7. I do not suggest that Fanon had the entire Caribbean region in mind when he spoke of 'the absence of the Oedipus complex in the Antilles'. His argument was that the lack of the Oedipus complex is the reason homosexuality is unknown to Martinique.
8. Valmiki is the name of author of the ancient Sanskrit epic *The Rāmāyaṇa*.

3 The Movements of Dionne Brand

1. Specifically, the postmodern favouring of diasporic routes runs the risk of neglecting the historical roots in the midst of fluid transoceanic movement. A special emphasis placed on gender and sexuality counteracts the traditionally masculine agency of world travel, drawing attention to the gendered conflation of women with land and, as a consequence, land with national belonging.
2. Tidalectics, although a transoceanic tool, should not be seen as counterpart to the theories of space in Lefebvre, Glissant and Kincaid. In fact, the terrestrial and the aqueous spaces are closely related through what Brathwaite terms 'nation language'—a uniting (patois) language born out of the experience of slavery, plantation and oppression in the Caribbean. Nation language is 'an English which is not the standard, imported educated English, but that of the *submerged* surrealist experience and sensibility, which has always been there and which is now increasingly coming to the surface and influencing the perception of contemporary Caribbean people' (*History of the Voice*, 13, my emphasis). Employing nation language as a marker of cross-cultural fluidity enables the Caribbean writer to speak another language and to resist, by creating a subversive response to the linguistic and cultural system that imposed enslavement and oppression, the suppression of African history by the English language.
3. Discussing Kincaid's *Annie John* and *Lucy*, Brand notes: 'Both *Annie John* and *Lucy* are anti-colonial and anti-patriarchy texts, making critiques of both conditions simultaneously. But they also do something else. The heras break with the compelling conventions of both . . . Kincaid contents herself not with creating paradigms but with *unfixing the fixed*, with going about our business' (1994, 44, 45, my emphasis).
4. Elizete's naming as a formation of a space in-between space, as well as Verlia's laying claim of the space of Toronto, involves a creation of a

'space-within-space', similar to that of Mootoo in which representation is reworked from the sites of the 'real' and the 'unreal'. This is one of the instances where tacticality comes into full view.

5. Roderick Ferguson's call in *Aberrations in Black: Towards a Queer of Color Critique* (2003) for a lived space of the Black queer experience—queer of colour critique—works here as an important convergence of diaspora and queer that contests the Euro-Americanness of queer studies and posits Blackness and Black diasporic queerness at the centre, both as a Black 'branch' of queer theory and as a real and necessary action. Levelling a critique at queer studies and African diaspora studies, Black queerness locates itself in-between the two.

4 Queering the Bildungsroman

1. Plummer notes:

Finding the 'coming out' story is usually the most momentous moment in any gay and lesbian lie. Given both heterosexism and homophobia at work, those who may later in life 'go gay' will initially be socialised to believe that they are heterosexual; nagging feelings of being different may emerge very early in childhood or adolescence, but a clear sense of being gay will only unfold later. Gays and lesbians typically feel that they have been given all the wrong stories and that they are living a lie. (84)

5 Reshaping the Past in Lawrence Scott's *Aelred's Sin*

1. Scott's image is based on John Riley's 1690 painting *Charles Seymour, 6th Duke of Somerset*. For more information on this painting and others, see Dabydeen (1985).
2. 'The configuration of white master/mistress, dog, and black servant, is frequent in English painting', writes Dabydeen. In Riley's painting,

black servant boy and black dog adopt the same attitude of admiration for their Master. The black and the dog are mirror images of each other. . . . A hierarchy of power relationships is being revealed: the superior white (superior in social and human terms) is surrounded by inferior creatures, the black and the dog, who share more or less the same status. (26)

Bibliography

- Alexander, M. Jacqui (1994) 'Not Just (Any) Body Can Be a Citizen: The Politics of Law, Sexuality, and Postcoloniality in Trinidad and Tobago and the Bahamas', *Feminist Review* 48: 5–23.
- Appadurai, Arjun (2003) 'Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy' in Jana Evans Braziel and Anita Mannur (eds) *Theorizing Diapora*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing.
- Balutansky, Kathleen M. and Marie-Agnès Sourieau (1998) 'Introduction' in Kathleen M. Balutansky and Marie-Agnès Sourieau (eds) *Caribbean Creolization: Reflections on the Cultural Dynamics of Language, Literature, and Identity*. Gainesville: University Press of Florida.
- Basdeo, Sahadeo and Brinsley Samaroo (2008) 'Indo-Caribbean Political Leaders during the Twentieth Century' in Parvati Raghuran, et al. (eds) *Tracing an Indian Diaspora: Contexts, Memories, Representations*. New Delhi: Sage Publications.
- Benítez-Rojo, Antonio (1992) *The Repeating Island: The Caribbean and the Postmodern Perspective*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Berlant, Lauren and Elizabeth Freeman (1993) 'Queer Nationality' in Michael Warner (ed.) *Fear of a Queer Planet: Queer Politics and Social Theory*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Bernabé, Jean, et al. (1990) 'In Praise of Creoleness', *Callaloo* 13(4): 886–909.
- Bhabha, Homi K. (1992) 'Postcolonial Authority and Postmodern Guilt' in Lawrence Grossberg, Cary Nelson and Paula A. Treichler (eds) *Cultural Studies*. London: Routledge.
- Bhabha, Homi K. (1996) 'Culture's In-between' in Stuart Hall and Paul du Gay (eds) *Questions of Cultural Identity*. London: Sage.
- Bhabha, Homi K. (2004) *The Location of Culture*. London: Routledge.
- Brah, Avtar (1996) *Cartographies of Diaspora: Contesting Identities*. London: Routledge.
- Brand, Dionne (1994) *Bread Out of Stone: Recollections, Sex, Recognitions, Race, Dreaming, Politics*. Toronto: Coach House Press.
- Brand, Dionne (1996) *In Another Place, Not Here*. New York: Grove Press.
- Brand, Dionne (1998) *No Language Is Neutral*. Toronto: McClelland & Stewart.
- Brand, Dionne (1999) *At the Full and Change of the Moon*. New York: Grove Press.
- Brand, Dionne (2001) *A Map to the Door of No Return*. Toronto: Doubleday Canada.
- Brathwaite, Edward Kamau (1984) *History of the Voice*. London: New Beacon Books.
- Brathwaite, Edward Kamau (1988) *The Arrivants: A New World Trilogy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

- Brazier, Jana Evans and Anita Mannur (2003) 'Nation, Migration, Globalization: Points of Contention in Diaspora Studies' in Jana Evans Brazier and Anita Mannur (eds) *Theorizing Diaspora*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing.
- Brodber, Erna (2008) *Myal*. London: New Beacon Books. (Original work published 1988).
- Butler, Judith (1999) *Gender Trouble*. New York: Routledge.
- Butler, Judith (2004) *Undoing Gender*. New York: Routledge.
- Casteel, Sarah Phillips (2003) 'New World Pastoral: The Caribbean Garden and Emplacement is Gisèle Pineau and Shani Mootoo', *Interventions* 5(1): 12–28.
- Certeau, Michel de (1984) *The Practice of Everyday Life*. Trans. Steven Rendall. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Chin, Timothy (1997) '"Bullers" and "Battymen": Contesting Homophobia in Black Popular Culture and Contemporary Caribbean Literature', *Callaloo* 20(1): 127–141.
- Coleman, Daniel (1998) *Masculine Migrations: Reading the Postcolonial Male in 'New Canadian' Narratives*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Crozier, Michael (1999) 'After the Garden?', *The South Atlantic Quarterly* 98(4): 625–631.
- Cruz-Malavé, Arnaldo and Martin F. Manalansan (2002) 'Introduction: Dissident Sexualities/Alternative Globalisms' in Arnaldo Cruz-Malavé and Martin F. Manalansan (eds) *Queer Globalizations: Citizenship and the Afterlife of Colonialism*. New York: New York University Press.
- Dabydeen, David (1985) *Hogarth's Blacks: Images of Blacks in Eighteenth Century English Art*. Mundelstrup: Dangeroo Press.
- Dash, J. Michael (1998) *The Other America: Caribbean Literature in a New World Context*. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia.
- Davies, Carole Boyce (1994) *Black Women, Writing and Identity: Migrations of the Subject*. London: Routledge.
- Deloughrey, Elizabeth M. (2007) *Routes and Roots: Navigating Caribbean and Pacific Island Literatures*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.
- Donnell, Alison (2006) *Twentieth-Century Caribbean Literature: Critical Moments in Anglophone Literary History*. London: Routledge.
- Drake, Sandra E. (1986) *Wilson Harris and the Modern Tradition: A New Architecture of the World*. New York: Greenwood Press.
- Easton, Lee and Kelly Hewson (2004) 'Returning to Repair: Resolving Dilemmas of the Postcolonial Queer in Lawrence Scott's *Aelred's Sin*', *ARIEL* 35(3–4): 81–98.
- Edwards, Justin D. (2005) *Gothic Canada: Reading the Spectre of a National Literature*. Edmonton: University of Alberta Press.
- Emery, Mary Lou (1995) 'Limbo Rock: Wilson Harris and the Arts of Memory', *Callaloo* 18(1): 110–124.
- Eng, David L. (2003) 'Transnational Adoption and Queer Diasporas', *Social Text* 76, 21(3): 1–37.
- Eng, David L. (2007) *Racial Castration: Managing Masculinity in Asian America*. Durham: Duke University Press.

- Eng, David, Judith Halberstam and Jose Esteban Muñoz (2005) 'What's Queer about Queer Studies Now?', *Social Text* 84–85, 23(3–4): 1–17.
- Epps, Brad (2001) 'The Fetish of Fluidity' in Tim Dean and Christopher Lane (eds) *Homosexuality & Psychoanalysis*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Fanon, Frantz (1968) *Black Skin, White Masks*. Trans. Charles Lam Markmann. New York: Grove Weidenfeld.
- Fanon, Frantz (2005) *The Wretched of the Earth*. Trans. Richard Philcox. New York: Grove Press.
- Ferguson, Roderick A. (2003) *Aberrations in Black: Towards a Queer of Color Critique*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Fortier, Anne-Marie (2000) *Migrant Belongings: Memory, Space, Identity*. Oxford: Berg.
- Foucault, Michel (1986) 'Of Other Spaces', *Diacritics* 16(1): 22–27.
- Foucault, Michel (1990) *The History of Sexuality – Vol. 1: An Introduction*. Trans. Robert Hurley. New York: Vintage Books.
- Gadsby, Meredith M. (2006) *Sucking Salt: Caribbean Women Writers, Migration, and Survival*. Columbia: University of Missouri Press.
- Gilroy, Paul (1993) *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Glissant, Édouard (1998) *The Collected Poems of Édouard Glissant*. Trans. Betsy Wing. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press.
- Glissant, Édouard (1999) *Caribbean Discourse: Selected Essays*. Trans. J. Michael Dash. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia. (Original work published 1989).
- Goldie, Terry (1999) 'Queerly Postcolonial', *ARIEL* 30(2): 9–26.
- Gopinath, Gayatri (1996) 'Funny Boys and Girls: Notes on a Queer South Asian Planet' in Carole R. McCann and Seung-Kyung Kim (eds) *Feminist Theory Reader: Local and Global Perspectives*. New York: Routledge.
- Gopinath, Gayatri (2005) *Impossible Desires: Queer Diasporas and South Asian Public Cultures*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Hall, Stuart (2003) 'Cultural Identity and Diaspora' in Jana Evans Braziel and Anita Mannur (eds) *Theorizing Diaspora*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing.
- Harris, Wilson (1981) 'A Talk on the Subjective Imagination' in Hena Maes-Jelinek (ed.) *Explorations: A Series of Talks and Articles, 1966–1981*. Mundelstrup: Dangaroo Press.
- Harris, Wilson (1983) *The Womb of Space: The Cross-Cultural Imagination*. Westport: Greenwood Press.
- Harris, Wilson (1999) 'The Amerindian Legacy' in A. J. M. Bundy (ed.) *Selected Essays of Wilson Harris: The Unfinished Genesis of the Imagination*. London: Routledge.
- Holland, Patrick and Graham Huggan (2000) *Tourists and Typewriters: Contemporary Reflections on Contemporary Travel Writing*. Michigan: University of Michigan Press.
- Hoving, Isabel (2002) 'Remaining Where You Are: Kincaid and Glissant on Space and Knowledge', *Thamyris/Intersecting* 9: 125–140.

- Hunt, John Dixon (1991) 'The Garden as a Cultural Object' in Stuart Wrede and William Howard Adams (eds) *Denatured Visions: Landscape and Culture in the Twentieth Century*. New York: The Museum of Modern Art.
- Jameson, Fredric (1986) 'Third-World Literature in the Era of Multinational Capitalism', *Social Text* 15: 65–88.
- Kincaid, Jamaica (1996) *The Autobiography of My Mother*. New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux.
- Kincaid, Jamaica (1997) *Annie John*. London: Vintage Books (Original work published 1983).
- Kincaid, Jamaica (2000) *A Small Place*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux (Original work published 1988).
- Kincaid, Jamaica (2001) *My Garden (Book)*. New York: Farrar Straus & Giroux.
- Kincaid, Jamaica (2005) *Among Flowers: A Walk in the Himalaya*. Washington, D.C.: National Geographic.
- Klein, Herber S. (1998) *African Slavery in Latin America and the Caribbean*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Lefebvre, Henri (1991) *The Production of Space*. Trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.
- Luibhéid, Eithne (2004) 'Heteronormativity and Immigration Scholarship: A Call for Change', *GLQ* 10(2): 236–240.
- Man, Paul de (1979) *Allegories of Reading: Figural Language in Rousseau, Nietzsche, Rilke, and Proust*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- May, Vivian M. (2004) 'Dislocation and Desire in Shani Mootoo's *Cereus Blooms at Night*' *Studies in the Literary Imagination* 37(1): 97–122.
- May, Vivian M. (2006) 'Trauma in Paradise: Willful and Strategic Ignorance in *Cereus Blooms at Night*' *Hypatia* 2(3): 107–135.
- McCallum, Pamela and Olbey, Christian (1999) 'Written in the Scars: History, Genre, and Materiality in Dionne Brand's *In Another Place, Not Here*', *Essays on Canadian Writing* 68: 159–182.
- McClintock, Anne (1995) *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender, and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest*. New York: Routledge.
- Meeks, Brian (2009) 'The Rise and Fall of the Caribbean Black Power' in Michael O. West, William G. Martin and Fanon Che Wilkins (eds) *From Toussaint to Tupac: The Black International since the Age of Revolution*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.
- Mishra, Vijay (2007) *The Literature of the Indian Diaspora: Theorizing the Diasporic Imaginary*. London: Routledge.
- Momsen, J. H. and Pamela, R. (2009) 'Caribbean Cocoa: Planting and Production' in Louis E. Grivetti and Howard-Yana Shapiro (eds) *Chocolate: History, Culture, and Heritage*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons.
- Mootoo, Shani (1999) *Cereus Blooms at Night*. London: Granta Books (Original work published 1996).
- Mootoo, Shani (2008) *Valmiki's Daughter*. Toronto: House of Anansi Press.
- Naipaul, V. S. (1992) *A House for Mr Biswas*. New Delhi: Penguin.

- Niranjana, Tejaswini (2000) '“Left to the Imagination”: Indian Nationalism and Female Sexuality in Trinidad' in Mary John and Janaki Nair (eds) *A Question of Silence? The Sexual Economic of Modern India*. London: Zed Books.
- Pecic, Zoran (2011) 'Floral Diaspora in Jamaica Kincaid's Travel Writing' in Justin D. Edwards and Rune Graulund (eds) *Postcolonial Travel Writing: Critical Explorations*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Plummer, Ken (1995) *Telling Sexual Stories: Power, Change and Social Worlds*. London: Routledge.
- Said, Edward W. (1993) *Culture and Imperialism*. London: Chatto & Windus.
- Sánchez-Eppler, Benigno and Cindy Patton (2000) 'Introduction: With a Passport Out of Eden' in Benigno Sánchez-Eppler and Cindy Patton (eds) *Queer Diasporas*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Scott, Lawrence (2003) *Aelred's Sin*. London: Allison & Busby.
- Sedgwick, Eve Kosofsky (1990) *Epistemology of the Closet*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Selvon, Samuel (1981) *The Lonely Londoners*. Harlow: Longman Drumbeat.
- Sheller, Mimi (2003) *Consuming the Caribbean: From Arawaks to Zombies*. New York: Routledge.
- Smith, Faith (2011) 'Introduction: Sexing the Citizen' in Faith Smith (ed.) *Sex and the Citizen: Interrogating the Caribbean*. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press.
- Smyth, Heather (1999) 'Sexual Citizenship and Caribbean-Canadian Fiction: Dionne Brand's *In Another Place, Not Here* and Shani Mootoo's *Cereus Blooms at Night*', *ARIEL* 30(2): 141–160.
- Soja, Edward W. (1996) *Thirdspace: Journeys to Los Angeles and Other Real-and-Imagined Places*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.
- Stinchcombe, Arthur L. (1995) *Sugar Island Slavery in the Age of Enlightenment: The Political Economy of the Caribbean World*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Sturges, Robert S. (2006) *Dialogue and Deviance: Male-Male Desire in the Dialogue Genre (Plato to the Middle Ages, Plato to the Enlightenment, Plato to the Postmodern)*. Gordonsville: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Sylvester, S. P. (2006) *Language of Dissent: African Caribbean Canadian Women Writers*. Jaipur: ABD Publishers.
- Thomas, H. Nigel (1993) *Spirits in the Dark*. Ontario: Anansi.
- Thompson, Alvin O. (2006) *Flight to Freedom: African Runaways and Maroons in the Americas*. Kingston: UWI Press.
- Walcott, Rinaldo (1997) *Black Like Who?: Writing Black Canada*. Toronto: Insomniac Press.
- Wallace, Jo-Ann (1994) 'De-Scribing the Water Babies: "The Child" in Post-Colonial Theory' in Chris Tiffin and Alan Lawson (eds) *De-Scribing Empire. Post-Colonialism and Textuality*. New York: Routledge.
- Wisker, Gina (2007) 'Crossing Liminal Spaces: Teaching the Postcolonial Gothic', *Pedagogy* 7(3): 401–425.

Index

Note: Locators in bold indicate substantive treatment of particular works in the text.

- Alexander, Jacqui M., 42, 43, 46
- Benítez-Rojo, Antonio, *see*
meta-archipelago
- Bhabha, Homi
hybridity, 26
- Bildungsroman*, 136, 143, 144, 157
- Black Atlantic, 34, 103, 122, 124,
130, 131, 174
- Black Power Movement, 109–10, 164
- Brand, Dionne
A Map to the Door of No Return;
Middle Passage in, 112–14
At the Full and Change of the Moon,
114–17; Middle Passage in,
114–16, 120–1
In Another Place, Not Here, 102–33;
Black Canadian writing, 119;
counterspace in, 113–14;
liquid imagery in, 106,
108–12, 126–7; mapmaking
in, 120–1; Middle Passage in,
105–6
- Brathwaite, Edward K.
nation language, 110, 111
- Brodber, Erna, 31, 33
Myal, 32–3
- Butler, Judith, 20–1, 66, 70, 122–3
- Caribana, 124–5, 175–6
- Caribbean
sexualisation of bodies in, 79–81
as Thirdspace, 58–64
- Certeau, Michel de
strategy vs tactics, 15–16
- Césaire, Aimé, 51
- chocolate
as motif, 81, 87–90
- coming out narrative, 142–4,
149–54, 166
- Fanon, Frantz, 92–4, 99, 100, 101,
147, 157, 167, 172
- Foucault, Michel, 7
heterotopia, 56
- garden, 90, 161
Caribbean, 25
Caribbean paradisaical, 21–2
as Garden of Eden, 25, **49–72**
as heterotopic space, 57–8
shapelessness of, 69–71
as space, 50–1
- Glissant, Édouard
Black Salt, 130
Caribbean Discourse, 22–4
- Goldie, Terry, 166
- Gopinath, Gayatri, 3, 11, 44, 45,
94, 96
- Harris, Wilson
contrasting spaces, 29
creoleness, 26
novel of consolidation of
character, 27–9, 136
victim stasis, 27–8, 29
- Kincaid, Jamaica
Annie John, 147–57; and the
Bildungsroman, 147–50; and
coming out narrative, 150–4;
and Western literary tradition,
154–7; Thirdspace in, 148,
152–4
The Autobiography of My Mother,
49, 154–5

- exploration of the Caribbean
 landscape in, 25
My Garden (Book), 21–2
A Small Place, 77; diaspora in, 78–9
- language of sealandscapes, 134,
 136–9, 150–1, 155, 156, 160, 173
- Lefebvre, Henri
 spaces of representation, 61
 lived space, 20, 25, 59, 64–6, 69
- Maroons, 115–16
 meta-archipelago, 18, 19–20, 22, 68,
 69, 70
- Mootoo, Shani
 Cereus Blooms at Night, 36–72;
 counterspace in, 61–4; critical
 history of, 54–6; Firstspace in,
 60; narration in, 64–9;
 Secondspace in, 60
 Valmiki's Daughter, 72–101;
 exoticisation of bodies in,
 81–7; Thirdspace in, 84,
 93, 101
- Naipaul, V. S.
 A House for Mr Biswas, 93–101; as
 absent epic, 95–6
 negritude, 51
 New World pastoral, 51, 52–3,
 109, 161
- Park, Mungo, 163–4
- queer diaspora, 3–4
 Queer Nation, 37, 173, 174
 queer tactical diaspora, 5–6, 98, 134,
 152, 159, 165–6, 170, 175,
 176–7, 178, 179–80, 181, 182
- Roumain, Jacques, 52, 109
- salt
 image of, 129–33
- Scott, Lawrence
 Aelred's Sin, 158–77; and coming
 out narrative, 166; diaspora
 in, 170–7; homosexual
 identification in, 159–60;
 Middle Passage in, 173–4;
 mirroring as homosexual
 recognition in, 165–9; on
 queer studies and diaspora
 studies, 166–7
- Selvon, Samuel
 The Lonely Londoners, 1–3
- Soja, Edward W.
 Firstspace, 19
 Secondspace, 19
 Thirdspace, 19
- Stonewall Riots, 12
- sugar
 image of, 126–8
- syncretism, 26–7, 41–6, 135
- Thomas, H. Nigel
 Spirits in the Dark, 134–57; as
 Caribbean *Bildungsroman*,
 136–9, 142–5; and coming out
 narrative, 143–4; sexuality in,
 140–2; Thirdspace in, 138–42
- Toronto, 109–11, 115, 117–18, 121,
 124–35
- Trinidad and Tobago
 cocoa production in, *see* chocolate
 female sexuality in, 44–6
 Indian indentureship in, 38–9
 nationalism and sexuality in, 41–4
- Walcott, Rinaldo
 on Black Canadian writing, 119
 on Caribana, 125
- Woolf, Virginia, 155