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THEORY OF AFRO-CARIBBEAN DIFFERENCE IN 'ANOTHER WAY'**

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THE POLITICS OF AFRO-CARIBBEAN FORM: TOWARDS A THEORY OF
AFRO-CARIBBEAN DIFFERENCE IN 'ANOTHER WAY'

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ABSTRACT

THE POLITICS OF AFRO-CARIBBEAN FORM: TOWARDS A THEORY OF AFRO-CARIBBEAN DIFFERENCE IN 'ANOTHER WAY'

Vickie Annette Eunice Masséus

This interdisciplinary dissertation explores postcolonial Afro-Caribbean literature's formal engagement with the histories, narratives, forms, and knowledge claims of colonialism and its legacies. It weaves together Black studies, modernism, Afro-Caribbean literature and culture, and postcolonial theory through close readings of three canonical and marginalized texts by women writers from different literary, intellectual, cultural, theoretical, and critical traditions: Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway*, Jean Rhys's *Voyage in the Dark*, and Jamaica Kincaid's *Lucy*. It argues that a Black diasporic reading position, in being oriented toward what cannot or refuses to be known, renders visible that which is and remains unaccounted for in social political, and ideological practices of and quarrels with subjectivity and difference. It analyzes "scenes of difference" in the literary texts to trace and demonstrate how Black diasporic literary forms uniquely engage with forms of difference. The study develops and posits Afro-Caribbeanness as a reading methodology that, in being oriented towards *the space between*, disrupts scenes, forms, and acts of difference which continue the legacies of colonialism through concealment and obscurity.

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Finally, I dedicate my research to my grandmother: Cléona. I carry you with me always.

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INTRODUCTION

This dissertation is foremost a mediation on blackness illuminated through the modeling of acts of reading as exemplified in Afro-diasporic texts. The project accounts for Afro-diasporic writing's uniqueness through its interrogations of what Dionne Brand calls the "narratives of non/being in the diaspora" vis a vis the development of an Afro-diasporic reading practice in her essay, "An Ars Poetica from the Blue Clerk" (59). It posits that the Black diaspora, which always necessitates again and again an engagement with the intersection of art and the politics of subject formation, is particularly useful for our contemporary preoccupation with difference and representation. It argues for Black diasporic subjectivity as a critical reading methodology that, through what I call the black diasporic orientation toward the space between, reframes difference as a relation to instead of a relationship with. It examines novelistic conventions for characterization, specifically novelistic representations of marginalized subjectivities, to trace how an Afro-diasporic reading practices models productive ways for probing our contemporary quarrels with difference, as well as the consequent representations of self that claim to defy or identify such limits, by accounting for what must be hidden or made invisible in both their successes and/or failures. While this dissertation explores how difference animates articulations of selfhood or subjectivity in fiction, it is more interested in modeling how an Afro-Diasporic reading position uniquely probes who gets to lay claim to difference as a regenerative or radical in those texts; in other words, it asks how is difference remobilized into uniqueness and what are the implications of that mobilization? This question frames the project's foundational investment in exploring a postcolonial Afro-Caribbean or Black diasporic subjectivity that, in being oriented away

from difference to the space between, reveals what is hidden or mystified in articulations of marginality.

The Caribbean region is often *characterized* as without origin, incapable of self-governance, and impermanent. Early forms of this representation, which emerged from Europe's relationship to its colonies, eventually transformed into discursive practices for characterizing the Caribbean as disparate, assorted, and mixed. Victorian society—particularly the Victorian middle-class which included explorers, historians, and religious leaders—had a singular appetite for “adventure” texts consisting of observances, studies, and impressions of British, French, and Spanish colonies. A similar penchant is observable in the literature of late 19th and early 20th century time which was overdetermined trope of travels to the tropics and the African continent. Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*, Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*, Jules Verne's *The Journey Around the World in 80 days*, Charles Darwin's account of his journey on the H.M.S. Beagle, Charles Dickens' *American Notes for General Circulation* and Mark Twain's *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* are a few notable examples of appetites for travel stories, or the travel form, during the height of colonial expansion and domination.

In “Yeats and Decolonization” from *Nationalism, Colonialism, and Literature*, Edward Said, the postcolonial scholar and critic, linked the desire for travel stories in Victorian society to the forces of Eurocentrism. As the “heart of European culture” during modern European imperialism, Eurocentrism made possible a “radically different type of overseas domination from earlier forms,” writes Said (71). The significance of this new form, Said maintains, “was convincing the European and subordinating the non-

European to the 'idea of white Christian Europe'" by relentlessly "codify[ing] and observ[ing] everything about the non-European or presumably peripheral world, in so thorough and detailed a manner as to leave no item untouched, no culture unstudied, no people and land unclaimed" (72). The insatiable demand for and practice of observing, studying, and captivating Europe's "others" helped to establish the conceptualization of modern European as the civilizing, superior power in the form of Eurocentrism, the cultural force that helped to transform the power and scope of the British empire through a desire to know the other as different from, essentially inferior to, the European. The expressive or creative dimension of Eurocentrism—in the form of individual textual accounts, instructions for future travelers, reports on scientific discoveries, diaries of imperial administrators, "imaginary" travel stories, etc.—played a central and active role in representing, or giving *character* to, the myth of Europe as "superior, advanced, developed and morally mature" in that it proliferated and cemented problematic representations of Europe's colonized territories and peoples" (Said 71).

In her short, but influential book on the conventions of modern fiction, twenty-three years after the death of Queen Victoria in 1901 and ten years after the outbreak of the Great War in 1914, Virginia Woolf declares in *Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Brown*, "...on or about December, 1910, human character changed" (4). Woolf emphasizes a change in character in her defense of modern fiction against the charge that the novelists of the late 19th and early 20th centuries were "unable to create characters that are real, true and convincing" from Arnold Bennett—a well-known British novelist and critic whose own fiction and essays sustained a close relationship to European realism with their detailed observational-descriptions of people, scenes, and events (4). Character, as it turns out,

materializes as the impetus for fiction for several modernist writers, particularly, the “high” modernists. Hugh Kenner, the literary scholar and critic who published several highly influential texts on literary modernism and the “high modernists,” wrote of the style of T.S. Eliot’s poetry in *The Invisible Poet: T.S. Eliot*: “the word, in Eliot’s imagination, relates itself most immediately not to any object which it names, not to the dictionary, or to a system of discourse, but to the Voice” (199). The “voice,” the “invisible,” the “overwhelming impression,” “presence” “stream of consciousness” and “personality” are a few of the ways that modernist writers have emphasized the significance of character, or “character-making,” to the modern fiction. Woolf’s conclusions that the texture of character as that which imposes itself upon the novelist, another person, or an observer, thereby “making someone begin almost automatically to write a novel about” him or her because the impression is too overwhelming to ignore is not, I argue, unlike the earlier Victorian sentiments of imagining, observing, codifying the colonized other (2). It suggests, I propose, a new formation, or reformation, that is also a transformation of something that is not being named in the language Woolf uses to describe the significance of character to modern fiction writers.

In *Modernism and Empire*, the editors, Edward Booth and Nigel Rigby, observed that “the set of themes and issues for debate that cluster under the heading ‘modernism’, and that began to form after 1945, excluded empire” despite the fact that “the discourses that supported colonialism” reached “their most extensive” dissemination in both colonized and colonizing populations during the early years of the modern movement (3). It was at the peak of empire’s territorial reach, during the interwar years of 1918-1939, that various anti-colonial movements both within and outside of the metropole challenged

the ideologies of colonialism. It was also “amidst this fracturing of ideological and historical cement,” writes Laura Winkiel in “Modernism and Empire”, that “literary writers produced what has been canonized as the ‘great’ works of experimental modernism: T.S. Eliot’s *The Waste Land*, James Joyce’s *Ulysses*, Virginia Woolf’s novels, among others” (146). Recognizing the historical link between the end of what the British Historian E. J. Hobsbawm termed as the “age of empire” in 1914 and the inauguration and “rise of modernist experimentation” in the early years of the modern movement, Winkiel quipped, “it’s worth remarking that modernism, with its ambiguous language, experimental form, and inward turn, has proved notoriously hard to pin down in terms of a critique of empire” (146). The argument in these claims suggest, I argue, that the residues of Eurocentrism’s fascination with foreignness for its characterization and representation of itself as civilized and superior are preserved in modernism in the barely visible but yet still discernable in modernist fiction’s emphasis on character as the voice or impression which frames modernist form’s ability to, as Hugh Kenner underscores in *A Homemade World: The American Modernist Writers*, “lift the saying out of the zone of things said” (60). J.M. Coetzee identifies modernism’s Eurocentrism as the exercise of “trying to redefine the world around [yourself]—America, Europe—rather than confronting the reality” in *Strange Shores: Essays* (8). Coetzee’s claim touches on what Hugh Kenner explained, in his favorable analysis of the uniqueness of Anglo-modernist fiction and poetry, as the representation of a “voice with no ascertainable past and no particularized present,” and “as pseudopersons” that are simply just “congeries of effects” (*A Homemade World* 41). I posit that it is not a coincidence that modernism’s deliberate (rather than conditional) interest in personality or character, as fragmentary,

that exceeds detectable and localized meaning is happening while the reality of the world changes in ways that destabilize and contextualize European's imaginings of itself. In other words, I am emphasizing that one of the very factors singled out by colonial discourse as a marker of the inferiority of the formerly colonized Caribbean—its *chequered* history or condition of impermanence—is now refigured as a deliberate trope for capturing or representing the uniqueness of being Anglo as the British empire begins to wane. Refiguration is made possible through language in the ways that it can, to repeat Kenner, lift the thing out of the zone of things said. Here, in the context of the European, Anglo-, British self, we see the interplay between art and subject-formation to renew the past in ways that conceal a connection between past and present.

As a response to the deafening claims in postcolonial studies that modernism does not acknowledge its relation with empire, modernist studies underwent a global turn that has since lost its initial momentum. In her call to formulate a “planetary epistemology” of modernist studies, that is an understanding of modernism as transnational, Susan Friedman suggests rethinking the periodization of modernism by abandoning “the nominal modes of definition” for “relational ones” (426). The former, Friedman argues, “is a noun-based designation that names modernity as a specific moment in history with a particular societal configuration that just happens to be the conditions that *characterize* Europe from about 1500 to the early twentieth century” (426). The latter, she suggests, “regards modernity as a major rupture from what came before” and “opens up the possibility of polycentric modernities and modernisms at different points of time and in different locations” (426). Literary critics, cultural theorists, and historians—beginning with Fredric Jameson’s highly contested essay, “Modernism and Imperialism” and

Edward Said's groundbreaking *Culture and Imperialism*—have explored the relation of modernist literary practices and the experience of empire both formally and thematically. Some modernist scholars have re-read selected Anglo-modernist works and authors for their implicit and explicit engagements with the project of empire, while others have analyzed global anglophone and postcolonial texts for themes and forms that address life in the British metropole. Others still have investigated how the experience of empire influenced modernist experimentations and how modernist style influenced postcolonial forms. Many of these inquiries are occupied with producing new accounts in par with maintaining modernism's conventional and historical conceptualization of itself but, through an articulation of modernism anew: transnational and global proving this critical shift to be not unlike the problems they are examining.

Despite the recent global turn in modernist studies, residues of its Eurocentric past remain a part of its present global consciousness in ways that are not accounted for. These residues are visible, for example, in Caribbean literature's overwhelming absence from the field and the vital role that Caribbean theory plays in how modernism defines its global consciousness. I point this out not to advocate for more inclusions of the Caribbean in global modernist studies or to discourage comparative studies of Caribbean and modernist literature. My work is neither interested in restoring Caribbean literature as modernist, nor in severing it from the modernist studies community. Caribbeanness does not, and cannot, only be imagined, traced, or sustained by that force. Rather, I am interested in the genealogies of concepts such as empathy, community or alienation, how they transmit from one period to another, in order to track how the legacies of empire shape how we know ourselves and are known to each other. If modernity, *as* Michael

Levenson points out in *Modernism*, was “haunted by both a search for novelty and by the recollection of precursors,” I propose that modernist fiction’s rupture from the old expressive and creative was in actually a crisis of Eurocentrism (2).

A few postcolonial and Caribbean modernist scholars have accounted for Caribbean literature’s relationship with modernism and modernist form. In *Writing in Limbo: Modernism in Caribbean Literature*, a foundational text on Caribbean modernism, Simon Gikandi argues, “Caribbean writers cannot adopt the history and culture of European modernism, especially as defined by the colonizing structures, but neither can they escape from it because it has overdetermined Caribbean cultures in many ways” (3). In other words, although the history and culture of European modernism has “overdetermined” Caribbean cultures, they share with European modernism a desire to critique modernity, specifically the ways that the past still informs and haunts the present *formally*. While the Jamaican novelist and critic, Michael Thelwell, condemns modernist form and warns against “the excuse and justification for a general retreat from [a] wide-ranging engagement with social and moral questions” in Anglo-modernist literature (221), Gikandi emphasizes that for him, “Caribbean writing is not so much motivated by the desire to recover an “original” model —the unhistoried African body that predates slavery and colonialism — as by the need to inscribe Caribbean selves and voices within an economy of representation whose institutional and symbolic structures have been established since the “discovery” (26). Therefore, I argue that rhetorical strategies (innovations) must be investigated and unpacked for the ways in which they depend, engage, or help to give character to new forms.

In the infamous 1888 study of the Caribbean titled, *The English in the West Indies: Or the Bow of Ulysses*, James Anthony Froude, a British historian, travel explorer, and writer who brazenly celebrated British imperialism during the Victorian era, argued that the Caribbean islands were naturally likely to fall into a state of impropriety, impermanence, and barbarism if allowed to rule themselves because of the region's "chequered" history made up of a people not "in the true sense of the word" (305). In his long descriptions of the islands' beauty contrasted with barbaric representations of Caribbean people that serve to both cement his position and that of the British empire as superior, Froude does not, *cannot*, acknowledge the British empire's complicity. His characterization of the Caribbean, a representation of its essence/identity as lacking in character/presence, garnered many public rebuttals from several Caribbean theorists and intellectuals, most famously a brilliant response aptly titled, *Froudacity: West Indian Fables*, by the Trinidadian scholar, John Jacob Thomas. The rejection of Froude's thesis by Caribbean thinkers then touches on an enduring aspect of the region that persists in Caribbean thought now, and by extension the black diasporic thought now: the region is highly critical of how it is represented/characterized historically and also deeply invested in uniquely and radically representing itself and its people beyond that historical condition. Caribbean writers and theorists, such as Aimé Césaire, Leopold Senghor, Maryse Condé, Edouard Glissant, Frantz Fanon, Kamau Brathwaite, Patrick Chamoiseau, Raphaël Confiant, Antonio Benitez-Rojo, Sylvia Wynter, Wilson Harris, George Lamming and others, have theorized a Caribbeanness grounded in the region's complex identities which are typically read by Europe as a marker of the island's "historylessness". Although they differ in their approach and moves, Caribbean critics

and scholars articulated an aesthetic obscurity—that is, a vagueness that exceeds personality and moves into a kind of existence that is representative without being reductive—as a defining feature of Caribbean difference and traced that uniqueness in various Caribbean aesthetic forms. Their formulations are not unlike the modernists who see language’s creative dimension as a site for articulating the self-*anew*. Modernity, Michael Levenson suggests, was “haunted by both a search for novelty and by the recollection of precursors” (2). In a similar fashion, Césaire argues in *Discourse on Colonialism* that “the problem” with articulating and capturing a postcolonial Caribbean vision “is to not make a utopian and sterile attempt to repeat the past, but to go beyond” (52). If, as the Caribbean literary critic Michael Dash posits in “In Search of the Lost Body Redefining the Subject in Caribbean Literature”, “the apotheosis of the subject and the decentred subject, the poetics of rupture and ‘relation’ are the determining factors in a Caribbean literary tradition,” (19), the crisis in Caribbean texts, in having to imagine a Caribbeanness that maintains a certainty of presence, must also unequivocally have a bearing on narrative characterization.

While there are different approaches to formulating and theorizing a Caribbean difference from scholars and critics alike, it is interesting that the characteristic mode of the major theorists for engaging representations of Caribbean history as “an absent presence,” whether deliberate and unintentional, is figurative or symbolic (Brand, *The Autobiography* 23). Therefore, this study will explore this metaphorical model and Caribbean criticism’s affinity to “re-readings” in “a certain kind of way” to stage a critical possibility and practice for representations of the Caribbean and Caribbean subjectivity (Benitez-Rojo 196). As a whole, this dissertation will develop postcolonial Afro-

Caribbean (black) female subjectivity as a reading position or a kind of reading methodology to demonstrate what it means to attest to Caribbeanness in this particular way. More specifically, this study argues that a postcolonial Afro-Caribbean reading methodology allows for intimations or linkages between things/ideas/concepts/categories that are not obviously linked together through what I call the *space between*, rather than difference. In other words, through a unique orientation toward the *space between*, this reading methodology intimates or creates linkages between things that have no apparent connections to move beyond the traps of postcolonial hybridity or repetition with a difference. In so doing, postcolonial Afro-Caribbeanness offers both critical and symbolic possibilities for thinking about the pitfalls of difference, particularly as they pertain to assertions of identity in our present contemporary focus on diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Contemporary Black diasporic scholars and writers are still exploring those themes in their works, particularly the black diasporic self as absent present, the making of Black presence as incoherent (Brand), the literal and figurative denial of black freedom, among many others. We see those themes in “Venus in Two Acts,” Saidiya Hartman’s examination of the ubiquitous presence of a black girl in the archives of the transatlantic slavery which asks, “how does one recuperate lives entangled with and impossible to differentiate from the terrible utterances that condemned them to death, the account books that identified them as units of value, the invoices that claimed them as property, and the banal chronicles that stripped them of human features?”(3). It is present in Hazel Carby’s claims in *Reconstructing Womanhood: The Emergence of the Afro-American Woman Novelist* that “black women had to confront the dominant domestic

ideologies and literary conventions of womanhood which excluded them from the definition ‘woman’” (6). It is in Christina Sharpe’s examination of the post-slavery subject in *Monstrous Intimacies: Making Post-Slavery Subjects* “who is said to have survived or be surviving the past of slavery, that is not yet past, bearing something like freedom” (26). And it is in Dionne Brand’s claim in *The Autobiography of the Autobiography of Reading* that “while class and gender (the making of white class, white gender) may have been the obvious subjects of the narrative, race and colony as bedrocks of power are startlingly unremarked; in fact, normalized, stipulated, matter-of-fact. The constant reinforcement of the unseen, unread, the hardening of narrative position, is the pedagogy of colony” (19-20). We see in those brief and not at all exhaustive list from current Black diasporic thinking which attempts at coming to know black life or black livingness that there emerges a struggling with narrative, aesthetics, and language. It is the constant realization that “the stories that exist are not about them, but rather about the violence, excess, mendacity, and reason that seized hold of their lives” (Hartman, “Venus in Two Acts” 2).

I argue that because of this unique relation to narratives, Black diasporic writing offers compelling ways of reading that are useful for how we examine difference via the margins. Always concerned with the “narratives of non/being in the diaspora”, a black diasporic position is one that embodies *reading as a practice* which is aware of both the possibilities of the margins as well as its limits. It maintains that awareness, I suggest, through a probing via surprise that re-imagines, defamiliarizes, revisits precisely because of its cultural and historical specificity. Intentionally and not, the texts often comment on themselves and the failure and/or success of their reading practices in ways that seize on

unexpected links, or buried intimacies, in the archives, stories, metaphors, etc. By bringing together various sources, texts, and narratives that seem unrelated to one another, as McKittrick demonstrates in *Dear Science and Other Stories*, they attempt “not to capture something or someone, but to question the analytical work of capturing, and the desire to capture, something or someone” (4). Saidiya Hartman puts it this way in “Venus and the Act”,

By playing with and rearranging the basic elements of the story, by re-presenting the sequence of events in divergent stories and from contested points of view, I have attempted to jeopardize the status of the event, to displace the received or authorized account, and to imagine what might have happened or might have been said or might have been done.” ... “The intent of this practice is not to *give voice* to the slave, but rather to imagine what cannot be verified, a realm of experience which is situated between two zones of death—social and corporeal death—and to reckon with the precarious lives which are visible only in the moment of their disappearance.” ... “It is an impossible writing which attempts to say that which resists being said (since dead girls are unable to speak). It is a history of an unrecoverable past; it is a narrative of what might have been or could have been; it is a history written with and against the archive. (11)

This project is grounded in the reading strategies that emerge in the specificity of black diasporic texts and is routed through readings of those reading practices. Although this study is interested in modernism and empire (or modernism as a global phenomenon), it is less invested in analyzing modernist texts for complicity in or rejection of empire. Neither is it interested in arguing for the inclusion of Caribbean in the modernist canon. Instead, it aims to investigate how difference is animated in texts which seek to articulate traditionally marginalized subjectivities through innovative formal strategies; It will demonstrate how a Black diasporic reading position, necessarily oriented toward the space between because of the ways that the splitting of the archive or narrative authority

obscures and fragments black life, makes visible the legacy of imperialism in social, political and ideologies and practices of subjectivity.

The dissertation focuses on three works of fiction by women—Virginia Woolf’s *Mrs. Dalloway*, Jean Rhys’ *Voyage in the Dark*, and Jamaica Kincaid’s *Lucy*. All three novels, in their own ways, interrogate the power relations that continue to animate and structure our contemporary debates about articulating the self, forming alliances, and building community across differences. The project first seeks to trace how the desire to represent each particular female subjectivity in each of these texts emerges as a concern with capturing interiority/consciousness in new ways and tracks the extent to which a close analysis of that relationship/behavior in these novels can explain or challenge our views on difference/otherness. On the one hand, the novels’ shared preoccupation with female subjectivity emerging as a formal concern reveals an unacknowledged intimacy between them and underscores both the limits of thinking with and about their difference. On the other hand, their unique formal approaches to the shared problem of representing the complexities of women’s issues implies a distance between them and underscores the necessity of thinking with and about that difference. In exploring these two problems as intimately linked, I read these texts alongside one another to model a probing, rather than a questioning, of the space, rather than the difference, between them. I develop this reading practice as a methodology which emerges out of Black Diasporic Writing which, I argue, models a particularly reading methodology, that profoundly recontextualizes the question of alterity to one of proximity in the way that it theorizes difference as “and also”. Through this reading practice, I engage in an exploration of what I call *the space in between* to trace what their forms reveal about the politics of knowledge and to

underscore what connections are yielded between things that seem to not be linked together when one reads from Black diasporic subject position. In other words, this reading practice settles on what others avoid—that which is absent, marginal, or present in the way that it is obscured—by exploring *the space in between* and in so doing, insists on systems of knowledge, reading practices, bodies of work, or perspectives that are thought of as other in the ways that exhibit an “and also”. Making these systems of knowledge central, foundational, and important, this framework offers a powerful way of thinking about otherness outside of othering and outside of repetition with a difference, or postcolonialism’s hybridity. I argue that Black diasporic literature, in always theorizing the limits and possibilities of what its own form can and cannot produce from the margins, which not only distinctly reveals something unique about itself, it also produces a method of reading that is profoundly and uniquely useful for uncovering what the particular uses of other forms cannot reveal.

Chapter 1 sketches an account of how difference materializes in Woolf’s *Mrs. Dalloway* to join together Clarissa and her maidservant Lucy and preserves the continuity of colonial ideas about Englishness. I develop this argument through a Black diasporic reading methodology, which in being oriented to the space between the novel’s context (or construction) of a class difference *and* what happens to servants in that context brings attention to the few scenes in which marginalized characters are afforded imaginative moments. I remark that unlike Lucy, the Indian female characters and other servants who are obscured and marginalized do not have imaginative moments in *Mrs. Dalloway* even though they too participate in capturing a kind of collective consciousness that is dependent on “identifications with the ideals Englishness” (Emery, *Modernism, The*

Visual, and Caribbean Literature 43). I propose that an Afro-Caribbean methodology allows readers to see the unacknowledged connections/intimacies between Lucy and Clarissa through the space between Lucy and the “coolies” (Woolf, *Mrs. Dalloway* 48) in the narrative (this can also be extended to the space between Lucy and the other servants, and the space between the other servants and the Indian female characters in the narrative). I insist that class difference materializes in *Mrs. Dalloway*’s not only to represent Clarissa through an obscuring of “the other women”, but also to make invisible how the novel’s construction of gender and class serve to preserve particular colonial ideas about Englishness that are rooted in colonial ideologies of racial difference. I conclude that while *Mrs. Dalloway*’s modernist representation of Clarissa depends on problematic representations of its servant class, it structures a critique of its own representations of the servant class (or that dependence) to make invisible the shared intimacies between its construction of gender and class that preserve colonial ideas about Englishness.

Chapter 2 explores a similar theme in Jean Rhys’s *Voyage in the Dark* which I argue obscures connections, correlations, and intimacies thereby preserving colonial ideologies of race and difference through a sort of subjective alliance. I argue that the novel’s unique marginalization of black Caribbean subjects through Anna’s repeatedly marginalized subjective voice makes it exceptionally good at preserving colonial ideologies of racial difference by transforming them into a subjective allegiance, or a “subjective point of view” among white and black creoles (Murdoch 156). I demonstrate how in joining the experiences of colonial Black subject together with Anna’s feelings about her own displacement in London, the novel transforms colonial ideologies of racial

difference into a kind of allegiance between them. The effects of this structural operation are apparent in the language and tone of Anna's subjective voice which underscore a longing for an idealized Caribbean that essentializes Caribbeanness, appropriates it, and decouples the marginalization of Black Caribbean subjects from the structural harms of the colonial Caribbean world.

Chapter 3 examines Jamaica Kincaid's *Lucy* and argues that unlike Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway* and Jean Rhys's *Voyage in the Dark*, Kincaid's formal strategies for featuring the perspective of a postcolonial subject position highlight, rather than conceal, the legacy of colonialism while also demonstrating how the radical possibilities that do emerge from marginalized positions can reinscribe the center-margin binary in new ways. The chapter argues that a reading of the novel's unique representation of Lucy's isolation and loneliness not only makes visible how the legacy of colonialism is experienced by post-independent Caribbean and contemporary metropolitan societies but also goes a step beyond both Virginia Woolf and Jean Rhys in another way. Reading Kincaid's novel with an orientation toward the space between, this chapter demonstrates how Kincaid's novel articulates a postcolonial Afro-Caribbeanness that is rooted in the reading practices of its protagonist's voice.

CHAPTER ONE: Reading for Lucy in Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway*

“In retracing some of the steps of a journey, I am not making the same journey.”

—*Living a Feminist Life*, Sara Ahmed

“Where is the other woman in *Mrs. Dalloway*—not just any other woman, but the non-Western woman, the nonwhite woman, the colonized woman, and, most specifically, the Indian woman?” asks Valerie Hickman in “Clarissa and the Coolies' Wives: *Mrs. Dalloway* Figuring Transnational Feminism” (53) and what of the servants whom Mary Wilson suggests are “not fully realized characters on their own” in Woolf’s modernist domestic spaces *Mrs. Dalloway* (Ch. 1)? While I am not interested in a project of recovering the voices of marginalized characters in *Mrs. Dalloway*, I share these questions to point to how explorations of marginalized subjectivity invoke difference in ways that oftentimes decouple race and gender. This chapter argues that class difference in Virginia Woolf’s *Mrs. Dalloway* not only allows for the novel’s modernist articulation of its protagonist, but also conceals an intimacy between its aristocratic protagonist and her maidservant that criticism of the novel’s class politics do not, cannot, acknowledge. It develops this argument through a Black diasporic reading of *Mrs. Dalloway* which, in being attuned to the space between representations of the novel’s characters, makes visible linkages that are otherwise concealed by *Mrs. Dalloway*’s modernist engagements with difference.

Mrs. Dalloway, published in 1925, depicts a single day in June in the life of its middle-aged English aristocratic protagonist, Clarissa Dalloway, as she plans and prepares for a party she will host in her home. The novel is set in 1923, not long after the Great War which still looms in the background of English life and society. The novel

opens with Clarissa buying flowers and from there we meet several other characters, most notably Septimus Smith, a shell-shocked Great War veteran whose suicide becomes the topic of conversation at Clarissa's party. The culminating event in the novel is the party which does not occur until the end of the novel. The most striking feature of Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway* is its signature style, free indirect discourse, which weaves in and out of character's minds to produce revelations about the world of the novel and its characters. While the novel's stream of consciousness narration functions as a sort of window into the communal psychology of its characters, we do not have access to all its characters' thoughts, most notably the domestic servants who are preparing for Clarissa's party and are highly visible in the text and "the coolie woman" which frames Clarissa's reflections on her past and present relationship with Peter Walsh, the man she almost married.

Though Lucy, Clarissa's maidservant, is mostly obscured and practically absent in *Mrs. Dalloway*, her labor is not entirely invisible. The invisible presence of servants in the novel, especially Lucy's obscurity as an individual, is overwhelming in ways that assume meaning for Clarissa's own subjectivity. As Alison Light writes in *Mrs. Woolf and the Servants: An Intimate History of Domestic Life in Bloomsbury*, servants in mid-to late-nineteenth century Britain are "a visible sign of their employers status...evidence of their aspirations to gentility" (1); their position "in the background puts the master in the center of the frame" (1). Lucy, the individual, remains in the background of *Mrs. Dalloway*, yet her unobtrusive servitude plots many crucial scenes in the novel and at times, even ushers the action in the story forward. Despite the useful centrality of the servants to the novel's articulation of Clarissa Dalloway, they are absent from what J.

Hillis Miller described as the “general consciousness” of *Mrs. Dalloway* which narrates a kind of collective experience by linking and moving through the minds of different characters (180). What the novel achieves as it glides and slips into each character’s consciousness is a shared connection between the characters to bring about a kind of continuity beyond the fears and anxieties that threaten to change the reality of the aristocracy in post-First World War London. As characters are introduced and the narrative consciousness shifts, the novel reveals more about its protagonist, Clarissa, and simultaneously enacts a collective experience that also produces revelations about the world of the novel through themes such as isolation, disillusionment with the British empire, death, the threat of radical social changes on the psyche and perceptions of self, the politics and aftereffects of war, and more.

Mrs. Dalloway’s methods for conveying interiority, or the inner thoughts and feelings of its characters, allow for an understanding of Clarissa through how she sees herself and how she is seen by others. At times, the revelations about Clarissa are built on the difference or similarities between her own self-perception and how she is perceived by others. The shifting narrative consciousness in *Mrs. Dalloway* helps to capture relations in the novel, or a shared consciousness, through how people are joined together and separated from one another under the threat of war and death, a waning British Empire and its institutions, and the looming social and political forces that threaten to change their metropolitan realities. While the novel’s structural moves give us access to the character’s individual and shared feelings about the world they inhabit in the novel, I argue that it serves as a useful device for transforming those fears and anxieties into a kind of continuity of the past where colonial ideas about Englishness are preserved even

as social relations in the world of the novel are being transformed. In other words, even as the narrative's unconventional form sets up the perspective of its major characters for critique—whether it be the obscurity of the servants' subjecthood, the racist remarks Clarissa makes about Indian women, the death of Septimus, the conversations that get around the British Empire's crimes—the structure of *Mrs. Dalloway* makes the novel especially adept at hiding how that very critique is transformed into a kind of continuity of those very sentiments, sensibilities, and ideologies. The novel uniquely renders access to Clarissa not only through her thoughts and feelings only, but also through a shared intimacy with individual characters whose own thoughts and feelings add new layers of meaning and resonance to the novel's presentation of Clarissa: her values, fears, prejudices, conflicts and most of all, her position as a member of the English aristocracy. I stake the claim in this chapter that the novel's unique form reflects an unwillingness in the narrative of the modernist white female subjectivity to articulate its own resistance to change in precise, or visible, terms. While Woolf does not develop Lucy's character in *Mrs. Dalloway*, a novel that is remarkable for its unconventional methods for conveying interiority or the inner life of characters, she does allow her a few imaginative moments. Why does the novel make that choice?

In this chapter, I argue that difference materializes in Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway* to join together Clarissa and her maidservant Lucy to maintain the continuity of colonial ideas about Englishness while hiding that intimacy through the narrative's class politics. I developed this argument through a black diasporic reading methodology, which in being oriented to the space between the novel's context (or construction) of difference *and* what happens to characters in as a result of that context brings attention to the few scenes in

which marginalized characters are afforded imaginative moments. I remarked that unlike Lucy, India and Indian characters and other English servants who are obscured and marginalized do not have imaginative moments in *Mrs. Dalloway* even though they too participate in capturing a kind of collective consciousness that showcase the novel's dependence upon ideals of Englishness (Emery, *Modernism, the Visual, and Caribbean Literature* 43). I proposed that a Black diasporic reading methodology allows readers to see the unacknowledged connections/intimacies between Lucy and Clarissa through the space between Lucy and the "coolies" (*Mrs. Dalloway* 48) in the narrative, as well as the space between Lucy and Clarissa. I insist that class difference materializes in *Mrs. Dalloway* not only to represent Clarissa in way that obscures "the other women", but also to make invisible how the novel's construction of gender and class serve to preserve particular ideas about Englishness that are rooted in colonial ideologies of difference. Therefore, I concluded that while *Mrs. Dalloway's* modernist representation of Clarissa depends on problematic representations of its servant class, it also structures a critique of its own representations of the servant class (or that dependence) to make invisible the shared intimacies between Lucy and Clarissa that preserve colonial ideas about Englishness.

In *A Room of One's Own*, considered one of the earliest works of feminist literary criticism, Virginia Woolf notes that questions around women and fiction will remain "unsolved problems" (4). While examining the historical, social, political, and economic challenges women writers face in the essay, she traces how she arrives at her now-famous argument that "a woman must have money and a room of her own if she is to write fiction" instead of "coming to a critical conclusion" about women and fiction (4).

Woolf's critical reluctance to settle on a "pure nugget of truth" (4) anticipates the inquiries that have and continue to characterize feminist criticism: disagreements about what feminism is and whom feminism speaks for, and anxieties over what feminist thinking/criticism does. In her essay, "On Being in Time with Feminism," Robyn Wiegman ponders women's studies' repeated attempt and failure to know or give knowing language to the transformation that being in time with feminism entails: a "being outside" what we learn or know (176). Wiegman maintains that "feminism's historical, theoretical, political, and epistemological dimensions do not operate in the same sphere of articulation" and therefore, attempts to intimate women's issues to the politics of feminism *in* the pedagogical language of women's studies are difficult, frustrating, and alienating. She traces this difficulty as a problem of desire rather than one of politics or history and proposes a "shift in our attention away from the satisfactions of anticipated resolution" to "what is deferred or unfulfilled, to the elusiveness of our subjects, to representational failures, to what the political conscious cannot, consciously speaking, fully know" (Wiegman 170).

The desire Wiegman highlights as a central dilemma and challenge of "being in time with feminism" frames many critical feminist approaches to women's fiction, not least Virginia Woolf's fiction. Although Woolf is the only woman of the high modernists, she is widely lauded as a feminist, literary and LGBTQ+ icon beyond academia. Her novels are, both within and outside of academic feminism, an emblem of women's fiction and feminist writing for their engrossing portraits of women, arresting observations of domesticity, and unconventional narrative style. Her novels, which explore ideas of gender, sexuality, class, and female subjectivity through female protagonists who

struggle to imagine, define, and understand themselves in the worlds they inhabit, are widely appreciated for how they capture and legitimize women's everyday, ordinary experiences as central to the novel and western systems of study. To this day, her novels continue to influence contemporary debates about gender, sexuality, women's issues, women's fiction, and more specifically in academic circles, the enduring problem of women and fiction. While Woolf scholars have explored the categories of gender, race, sexuality, and class in her novels to theorize interlocking systems of oppression and structures of marginalization that define women's experiences and lives, some critics have underscored gaps in such scholarship. In recent years, new questions about Woolf, her novels, and the women in them have emerged through modernist and feminist studies' critical encounters with postcolonial theory, queer studies, Black studies, ethnic studies, and Black feminist theory. Some of those questions include: What are the implications of Woolf's novels and characters in under-studied cultural, social, and transnational contexts? What are Woolf's investments in working-class women and women of color? How do her novels' portrayal of the relations between different women hold in our contemporary context? How does *Mrs. Dalloway's* explorations of gender in the context of class politics speak to us differently?

In response to these new questions, several scholars have quarreled with Woolf's figure as an established icon committed to the dismantling of social, economic, and political discriminations around gender identity and sexual orientation by tracing how her narrative style depends on some of the very structures that produce the discriminations she vehemently rejects in her work (Cliff). Urmila Seshagiri, Jane Marcus, Mark Wollaeger, Michelle Cliff, Kime Bonnie Scott, Laura Doyle, Mary Wilson, Sonita

Sarker, and others have analyzed how Woolf's modernist narrative structure of fragmentation and contamination not only challenge the assumptions/ideologies upon which empire, subjectivity, gender, sexuality, and even fiction are predicated, but her style simultaneously constructs new perspectives, definitions and possibilities for regenerating and rehabilitating the very same ideologies by marginalizing some disempowered characters. Though they do not deny Woolf's figure as a radical and necessary novelist, essayist, and feminist for deconstructing certain assumptions about gender, sexuality, and literature, they nevertheless encourage more interdisciplinary analyses of Woolf's oeuvre.

For example, *Mrs. Dalloway* opens by introducing its protagonist, Clarissa Dalloway, through the novel's unusual style of free indirect discourse, a convention which enables the text to move between third person outside point of view and first-person interior perspective without disavowing the distance between them: "Mrs. Dalloway said she would buy the flowers herself. For Lucy had her work cut out for her" (*Mrs. Dalloway* 3). Most approaches to free indirect discourse focus on how the convention allows for a more subjective take on events in novels, but this chapter will instead explore the *space between* that this convention depends on for its success: the void which forces readers to negotiate a successful reading of the text because the narrative jumps from one mind/consciousness to another without the comforts of a narrative voice of authority, and the assumptions implicit of that success. If we return to the famous opening words of *Mrs. Dalloway* again and attempt to analyze it for how the narrative explores the issues of subjectivity, the novel seems to suggest that a successful, knowable, and convincing reading for such inquiries in *Mrs. Dalloway* is most possible

through its title character, Clarissa. Upon a first reading of this scene, readers feel they must center the novel's representation of Clarissa, whether bad or good, because of free indirect discourse which forces them to quickly settle on whose thoughts they are reading: Clarissa's or her maidservant's thoughts? By opening the novel with this style, the pressure is on to figure out what one is reading and the easiest, most useful conclusion for understanding who this novel is about is Clarissa.

Another careful look at this passage that pays attention to the space between the distinctions that the device raises leads to the question: Whose perspective do we pin down? If we conclude that they are Clarissa's thoughts, what conclusions *can* we draw about her character? And if we doubt the thoughts as hers, what conclusions can we *not* draw about her? While previous feminist and/or modernist readings of this scene conclude the opening lines as the thoughts of Clarissa, more recent critical readings have wondered if they could be the thoughts of her Lucy. Regardless, the differing approaches tend to be about making a successful or convincing case for the passage's ambiguity to support readings of Clarissa as good, bad, privileged, or complicated in contrast to Lucy. This chapter builds on those same questions and inquiries but reorients them in another way: how does difference materialize in articulations of marginalized subjectivity at the intersections of race, gender, and class?

I argue that scholars can take a different approach to this novel by heeding Wiegman's call to develop and value "what [we] do not or cannot know as well as, perhaps better than, what [we] do know" (170). The failures in *Mrs. Dalloway*, meaning the failure of reading for Lucy, offer us new ways of apprehending, or thinking, the relationship between narrative and the self. I propose this study as an example of a

method that develops a failure, or difficulty, into a practice of critical value for how we can think about, or understand, different forms of articulations that quarrel with categories of race, gender, class, or sexuality. I ask what methods are available for such endeavors in literary studies? Although we know Clarissa better than we know Lucy, or rather, since we *can* know Clarissa better than we *do* know Lucy, this chapter asks what does an approach to Lucy that does not seek to recover Lucy's voice, but to question the analytical or critical work of capturing her voice yield?

While this chapter builds on prior scholarship that engages *Mrs. Dalloway's* narrative structure for how it mobilizes the discourse of otherness to do the work of feminism while simultaneously rehabilitating problematic class and racial distinctions, it is less about making arguments for "good" or "bad" Woolf, Clarissa, or Lucy. Instead, this chapter sets the stage for this project's interrogation of the unacknowledged legacy of empire that undergirds contemporary analytical deployments of difference in ways unaccounted for. It builds on previous analyses of class, race, and empire in modernist women's fiction in another way to analyze one scene in *Mrs. Dalloway* involving Lucy, the novel's principal servant, does not subscribe to standard methods or analyses of class politics in *Mrs. Dalloway* in the way that it fails or is difficult. Then, close reads the failure of that scene through Kincaid's *space in between*, or a Black and Caribbean postcolonial methodology, to argue that close reading of that scene exposes assumptions that both Clarissa and Lucy share but the novel does not acknowledge. It argues that those assumptions impinge on the novel's particular loyalty to colonial ideologies of Englishness which reveal its political investments in difference. It proposes that *Mrs. Dalloway's free indirect style* sustains an intimacy or link between Clarissa and Lucy

through an articulation Englishness that frames and joins together Lucy's and Clarissa's subjectivities despite the class differences between them.

The implications of that link are not only overlooked in scholarship on the novel's expressions of class and gender, but they are also understudied in feminist readings of those characters. As Sonita Sarker reminds us in "Locating a native Englishness in Virginia Woolf's *The London Scene*," "the rhetoric of racial identity as that pertained to Englishness was caught in the uneasy triangle of empire, nationhood, and democracy, and was particularly strong in the years when Woolf was in the process of writing the six essays collectively called *The London Scene*, yet curiously absent in her work" (3). Similarly, in "Orienting Virginia Woolf: Race, Aesthetics, and Politics in *To the Lighthouse*," Urmila Seshagiri emphasizes that though "Woolf's interests in racial identity are nowhere near as explicitly or well-developed as her interests in the politics of gender, war, class, or education," her "ideas about race shape [her] writing across many genres: her letters, essays, and novels allude frequently to racial difference, flirt with cultural crossovers, and draw on images of the racially marked exotic or primitive" (59). Therefore, I read *Mrs. Dalloway* from a Black diasporic perspective to trace the links between things that seem to not be linked to interrogate difference as an analytical mode of tracing subjectivity.

At its simplest iteration, *Mrs. Dalloway* is about a white, middle-aged English society woman throwing a party. While the tensions in the novel depend on multiple vantage points that cut across social barriers such as class and gender (Clarissa's party guest list includes the Prime Minister), they serve to provide further insights into Clarissa's life and her past. The novel is about a day in Clarissa's life and is also about the

rapid changes in post-First World War Britain. Woolf dates one such change, the change in human character, “in or about December 1910” to frame a defense of literary modernism against the charge by novelist Arnold Bennett that modern fiction fails to create convincing characters (*Mr. Bennet and Mrs. Brown* 4). Woolf argues that modern’s fiction new form and conventions more accurately reflect modern existence than the conventions used by the previous generation of novelists.

To represent the modern subject—who is surprising, impressionable and lives a fragmentary life—modern fiction wastes no time capturing the world outside to ground the reality of its characters; instead, Woolf claims, it bends and estranges the novel from its roots by investing in “character in itself” to capture modern existence and the rapidly changing world modern characters inhabit. If “all human relations have shifted—those between masters and servants, husbands and wives, parents and children,” Woolf observes, then “religion, conduct, politics and literature” must also change (*Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Brown* 5). While Woolf’s fiction is as formally experimental as her male contemporaries’ novels, her modernism, by contrast, is simultaneously about how she takes up women’s lives—that is, the quotidian, particular, and ordinary experiences of women’s lives—as central to what the modern novel is built to do. The world she creates in *Mrs. Dalloway* lasts only one ordinary day in Clarissa’s life, culminates to one ordinary event in Clarissa’s life (her party), and centers principally on the ordinary thoughts of Clarissa and other characters. On the other hand, Lucy, Clarissa’s principal servant, appears only eight times in the novel. What one gleans about the world which Clarissa and Lucy inhabit—post-World War I London, upper-class English society, a crumbling British empire—is inextricable from the ordinary freedom that Clarissa has to

make simple choices. What one gleans about the world which Lucy inhabits—post-World War I London, upper-class English society, a crumbling British empire, Clarissa’s home—is inextricable from the ordinary freedom that Lucy has to make narrow choices. Even though Lucy only makes appears in the novel eight times, the labor her character and other servant characters they endure is everywhere in Mrs. Dalloway. In fact, the entire novel is about the preparations leading to the party which closes the novel.

In the Labors of Modernism: Domesticity, Servants, and Authorship in Modernist Fiction, Mary Wilson traces how modernist women writers interrogate the Victorian ideologies of domesticity in the changed landscape of modernity to make claims for authorship as household authority. Her book examines how literary representations of modernist domesticity in modernist women’s fiction not only expose the limitations of the Victorian ideologies of domesticity, but that they also “renegotiate domesticity” to reimagine and redefine new domestic arrangements that leverage the power relations inherent in the discourse of domesticity. She argues that modernist women writers such as Woolf “turn to a servant to illustrate claims and stories about modernity and modernism” and to negotiate “with those servants’ still-necessary presences in the house of fiction, and in the houses of female protagonists and of the women writers who create them” (Ch. 1). She observes that despite the changing domestic contexts of modern life in modernist women’s fiction, with many working-class people now no longer resigned to servitude as the only form of employment, modernist women writers still turned to the discourse of domesticity, that is the “shaping force” of domesticity’s master/servant relationship, to “substitute” or articulate “authorship for household authority” (Ch. 1). While I agree with Wilson’s careful and powerful analysis, I want to take a different

approach. Wilson grounds her focus on servants in modernist fiction by asserting that “recent critics have carefully studied the gender, racial, ethnic, and imperial coordinates of modernism” but “fewer have discussed class, and almost none has considered the close link between narrative structure and servants in modernist fiction” (Introduction). Like Wilson, I want to examine the novel’s representation of marginalized characters, but unlike Wilson, I want to explore the space between them: whether that be representations of Clarissa, the working-class women in her novels, the unnamed Indian characters, etc. I am not interested as much in exploring how Woolf leverages the characters for her own expression of authorship, nor am I interested in making a case for or against Clarissa through that lens. Rather, this chapter seeks to uncover how the novel imagines the characters in the context of both gender and class relations to peel back the assumptions that regenerate anew in articulations that seeks to move beyond the limits of marginality.

Alex Zwerdling observes in “*Mrs. Dalloway* and the Social System” that the novel reveals “the form of power without its substance” as its governing class is unable to respond, catch up, or react “appropriately to critical events of their time or their own lives” (71). Building on this claim, I add that the novel, in taking *this* approach as the most legible and foundational way to think about a fragment subjectivity, reveals not only an investment in rethinking the English subject in post-First World War society, but in maintaining a continuity between the past and present. While empire can no longer allow for claims to some natural superiority in the same ways, Englishness is reconfigured in new ways that conceal any acknowledgement of itself as still dependent on colonial logics of difference. While this chapter is interested in the novel’s deployment of free indirect style, that is the ability of the sentence to switch between third person outside

view and first-person interior, it is more curious about how *the space between* third person outside and first-person interior provokes/engenders successful, or failed, readings of Lucy in *Mrs. Dalloway*. It demonstrates how the narrative, through free indirect discourse, depends on a link, not difference, between the voices in the novel for its success: namely, Clarissa and Lucy's voice. That link is sustained based on Lucy's and Clarissa's shared assumptions about racial difference. In other words, this chapter posits that the both the success and failure of free indirect discourse in *Mrs. Dalloway* to represent a female authoritative voice across class differences depends on an unacknowledged link or intimacy between Clarissa and Lucy that the novel does not acknowledge even while the narrative leverages the class difference between them.

In reading *Mrs. Dalloway* this way, this chapter asks "what the return yields from the vantage point of" a postcolonial Afro-Caribbeanness, or black feminist reading methodology, and models how a Black diasporic inquiry into feminist investments in difference for articulations of uniqueness does the work of empowering in other ways (Wiegman 86). It proposes Kincaid's *space between* as a method for improving the quality of attention one can give to Lucy that pivots away from an interrogation of the novel's deployment of class differences toward an examination of its investment in colonial ideas of Englishness for tracing Lucy's voice, or consciousness in the novel. It offers a reading of the novel's disparate, disconnected elements—its formal interest in certain assumptions about distance in the novel form through free indirect style—to demonstrate a link between Lucy's and Clarissa that the novel does not, or cannot, acknowledge to successfully ensure readings of its investment. How the novel understands itself—how it captures Clarissa, Lucy, and their difference—as well as the

conclusions it makes possible for how we can understand the novel's interrogations of gender, subjectivity, etc., impinges on colonial ideologies of Englishness that while they no longer hold the same value of meaning for the world of the novel, are sustained in the novel because both Lucy and Clarissa are joined together beyond their class differences through a shared investment in them. While they are of different classes, are disempowered in diverse ways, and inhabit a world where assumptions about gender, class and race no longer hold, they both hold on to Englishness as a difference that not only affords them identity but is natural or self-evident. The novel rests and depends on that unacknowledged link to successfully leverage the class difference between Lucy and Clarissa for its exploration of gender issues, subjectivity, and disillusionment with empire without divesting from the privileges afforded by the project of empire: two female characters who live in a different world, hold on to similar assumptions and values that are being threatened by the shifts in human relations.

In instances where we focus on Clarissa, the title character, as the central character, narrative perspective is still difficult to pin down. Whatever insights we gain about Clarissa Dalloway, for example, is made possible in the narrative through maintaining the authoritative voice that also makes space for a more subjective take on events; the novel stages a defamiliarization of the relation between character and narrator, through free indirect discourse, precisely because of its interest in female characters, a move that signifies Virginia Woolf's intervention in modernism and challenges assumptions about what novels about women's lives can achieve. The literary critic Annalee Edmonson underscores this intermingling process as "deliberately reworking narrative restrictions, deliberately re-forming the way a self can be told through the use of

a free indirect discourse operating largely apart from recognizable authorial sanctions of what a character is actually thinking or feeling” (29). This is the context for Valerie Hickman’s questions about the other women and Mary Wilson’s argument about servants in *Mrs. Dalloway*. Though their questions rightly suggest that other women or servants are not in *Mrs. Dalloway*, what their questioning reveals, and what is continuing point of contention for this project, is that the way to engage the difference between “other” women’s and Clarissa’s *presence* in the novel is to fall back on an investment in power relations.

Free indirect discourse, *Mrs. Dalloway*’s primary style for forming the selves in the novel, provides an intimacy with characters’ thoughts, feelings, and judgments about the world and their experiences outside of the judgement or perspective of a narrator’s authority, while also maintaining an awareness of the narrator’s intimacy with the character. It is important to underline that free indirect style does not relinquish the narrator’s authority; instead, it registers and affirms the distinctive voice, or consciousness, of the character rather than reify the authority of the narrator. If free-indirect style presents a third-person narrator that is in fact modified, or driven, by the mind, perception and linguistic register of a particular character, the process of that device makes clear that the successful staging of an intimacy between character-narrator rests on an implied (not necessarily actual) distance between character’s point of view and narrative voice. In other words, the device, in the moment that it blurs the line between character’s point of view and narrative perspective simultaneously hides the intimacy between them.

In *Mrs. Dalloway*, Clarissa's intimacy with the authority of the narrative voice is obvious: although we can argue that she is disempowered because of her gender, she is empowered in some ways by her class and marital status: she is an upper-class English society woman whose husband is a member of Parliament in the conservative government. The self she forms, or imagines, in the novel is possible both through the particularity of her own subjectivity and through an intimacy with the narrator's authority that does not need to be spelled out. The narrator appears to adopt or adjust to the register of Clarissa's own voice, or consciousness, rather than describing Clarissa externally. Therefore, while free indirect discourse foregrounds the authority of Clarissa's consciousness, her female voice, in *Mrs. Dalloway*, the novel also suggests that it does need to present Clarissa from outside of herself through a declarative narrator; the transfer of his authority is without difficulty for representing Clarissa. Secondly, though the world Clarissa inhabits constantly interposes itself on her life, we glean the interconnectedness of her experiences and the world she inhabits through her personal, intimate, ordinary experiences. We can, without the narrator's perspective, understand how *she* experiences the intimate and the domestic, the ordinary details of her life, at the same time as being part of the constructs or realities that limit her choices outside of that domestic space: her class, her past, her gender, where and how she is empowered or disempowered are there, but not primarily or even necessary for understanding who Clarissa is fully. Lucy's consciousness, on the other hand—her ordinary experiences, her every day, subjectivity, the intimate details of her life—is not leveraged in the same way. While the narrative voice can adopt or inhabit Clarissa's consciousness, it does not seem able or interested in registering Lucy's voice through free indirect discourse in the same

way. For example, the novel does not give readers direct access to Lucy's thoughts as it does Clarissa's consciousness. We get access to Lucy through Clarissa's or Peter Walsh's thoughts. Despite this difference, there is a tension in the narrative, most exemplified through one scene where Lucy is given access to the narrator's authoritative voice, a moment that also marks the space between her and "the coolie woman" in the novel (Hickman 53). In the larger context of the novel's interrogations of women's voices as central to what the novel is built to do, it is easy to skim over that scene as natural or self-evident, especially in the context of the other six scenes where Lucy appears. Yet even so, there is something unsettling about it which, I argue, emerges from a Black diasporic reading methodology.

In *Mrs. Dalloway*, Lucy's *presence* is mostly conveyed through the impressions, or thoughts, of Clarissa and other characters, but there are two scenes in the novel where readers have direct access to Lucy's thoughts. One is the scene briefly explored early in the chapter where the narrative's use of free indirect discourse does not support any reading that confirms if the opening lines—"Mrs. Dalloway said she would get the flowers herself. For Lucy had her work cut out for her" (*Mrs. Dalloway* 3)—are the thoughts and perspective of Lucy or Clarissa. The second is a brief imaginative moment which the narrative allows Lucy; It stages Lucy's subjective take on the party itself, the event she and other servants have been hard at work preparing for over the course of Clarissa's personal ramblings and encounters with other characters:

Strange, [Clarissa] thought, pausing on the landing, and assembling that diamond shape, that single person, strange how a mistress knows the very moment, the very temper of her house! Faint sounds rose in spirals up the well of the stairs; the swish of a mop; tapping; knocking; a loudness when the front door opened; a voice repeating a message in the basement; the chink of silver on a tray; clean

silver for the party. All was for the party. (And Lucy, coming into the drawing-room with her tray held out, put the giant candlesticks on the mantelpiece, the silver casket in the middle, turned the crystal dolphin towards the clock. They would come; they would stand; they would talk in the mincing tones which she could imitate, ladies and gentlemen. Of all, her mistress was loveliest--mistress of silver, of linen, of china, for the sun, the silver, doors off their hinges, Rumpelmayer's men, gave her a sense, as she laid the paper-knife on the inlaid table, of something achieved. Behold! Behold! she said, speaking to her old friends in the baker's shop, where she had first seen service at Caterham, prying into the glass. She was Lady Angela, attending Princess Mary, when in came Mrs. Dalloway.) "Oh Lucy," she said, "the silver does look nice!". (*Mrs. Dalloway* 37)

Unlike the usual approaches to the representation of Lucy in *Mrs. Dalloway*, always in service of critical analyses of Clarissa, I want to analyze this scene by thinking with Jane Gallop's *Reading Lacan* which offers an example of reading otherwise in order to explore how this passage deploys free indirect discourse to "deliberately [re-form] the way a self can be told" for a character such as Lucy (Edmonson 20). In other words, rather than lamenting that Lucy has no voice because her appearance in the novel differs from those of Clarissa and other prominent characters both in terms of frequency and style, and rather than analyzing this scene as an indication of Lucy's absence in the text because of the way it does not give Lucy presence outside of her class identity, I want to read backwards from those reading positionalities or methods.

The first peculiarity in the scene are the parentheses. Readers of the novel know from experience with Clarissa's thoughts that while passages that employ free indirect course in *Mrs. Dalloway* sometimes include thoughts as parentheticals, they serve, as Mary Wilson explains, to place a character's memory in history, "[they] also [indicate] a particular kind of authorial present that will carry the novel, even as focalization shifts from character to character (47). Furthermore, those passages comment "on the action

and on the character without clearly demonstrating who is commenting” thereby making the technique even more successful (47). At times when that is not the main purpose, they *indicate* the passage of time. The narrative will at times include “(…)” to bypass the fragmentation and irrelevancy of a character's thought ramblings or sometimes include parenthetical free indirect discourse asides to mark when the world and a character's worldview are at odds with one another.

The scene in question is not a memory, but a brief—the only—imaginative moment that Lucy is having; therefore, the ambiguity around who is commenting on Lucy's actions or character takes a different approach from the novel's method of placing memories in history and thoughts in their contexts. How are we to understand Lucy's consciousness in this parenthetical? We can ascertain that Lucy herself *and* the narrative voice are both commenting on Lucy's actions and her character. First, the fact that the entire scene is a parenthetical aside, a deliberate move by the narrative voice, and that Lucy is ironically thinking about herself as a guest at the party make obvious the distance between her consciousness and the authorial voice. Yet, unlike Clarissa's parenthetical scenes, the novel is not claiming Lucy's thoughts as a real memory through this parenthetical because only a few lines in the parentheses are using free indirect discourse. While the parenthetical scene is presented differently for Lucy as opposed to more principal characters like Clarissa, it is still a narrated monologue (free indirect discourse). The novel is still staging these thoughts as Lucy's through free indirect discourse even when it estranges free indirect discourse from its roots or its own standards.

The second peculiar aspect of this scene is what Lucy actually imagines and thinks. Servitude is replaced, or at least put aside, while Lucy imagines herself as

“someone who might imitate those guests later” (Wilson, *The Labors of Modernism* 41):

“...while speaking to her old friends in the baker’s shop... She was Lady Angela, attending Princess Mary” (*Mrs. Dalloway* 37). She is in the party, not in the servant’s quarters rushing and working, as a guest. Lucy suspends a full transference from servant to guest through the word “imitate” a moment which points to the novel’s class politics, but nevertheless, in her imaginative moment she is in the dinner party scene with the aristocratic class (*Mrs. Dalloway* 37). Furthermore, what she is remembering is not a real memory—the party has not actually happened, and Lucy is not really “Lady Angela;” yet she is still imagining a self. We can assume that she has done this before and that there have been other parties with similar guests in attendance. In any effect, while the self she reimagines is not the self that the novel has represented so far, Clarissa’s maidservant, what she imagines is also not entirely so dissimilar to the Lucy that the novel represents. The class politics remain, even as she shifts from the servant’s quarters to a guest at the party. While she imagines herself as “Lady Angela,” the hierarchy between herself and Clarissa is maintained. In other words, the class difference/politics of the novel is maintained: “she was Lady Angela, attending Princess Mary” but Lucy’s own subjectivity, as servant, shifts from servant to guest (*Mrs. Dalloway* 37). Though she is lady in waiting to the Princess; she is a lady at the party. A couple of things are happening here. First, the novel’s class politics are maintained in that the hierarchy between Lucy and Clarissa is sustained in what she imagines: She, lady Angela and Clarissa, the Princess. But the novel’s staging of Lucy having an imaginative moment draws attention to the space between her and other characters. Why is that Lucy is able to have this moment without shifting or undoing the novel’s class politics?

In *The Annotated Mrs. Dalloway*, Merve Emre writes,

There is no historical figure by the name of Lady Angela who served as a courtier to Princess Mary. Like the first interaction between Lucy and Clarissa on p. 50, the mock epic quality of the parenthetical extends Woolf's parody of the worshipful servitude demanded by, and bestowed upon, the upper classes. Seen from Lucy's point of view, Clarissa is not only the loveliest mistress but "mistress of silver, of linen, of china," commander of all the pristine inanimate objects that throng her and, ... all the hyper-animated people rushing around to please her? (61)

Building on this observation, I ask again: why would the novel stage Lucy's thoughts though, unlike the subjecthood of the "Indian women—the silly, pretty, flimsy nincompoops" (*Mrs. Dalloway* 35) whom Peter Walsh cares for? And, why in this elaborate "mock epic quality" (Emre 61)? What does novel accomplish through this parenthetical? We know from Sonita Sarker's work that the "act of reclamation" in Woolf's writing, "is based simultaneously in an implicit racialization of the English self that was prevalent in [Woolf's] time" and her "gender and class politics is contingent upon her understanding of race that, in turn, is tied to English culture and nationhood" (1). "In her entire oeuvre," writes Sarker, Woolf's position illustrates not just where and in what Englishness lies, but how Englishness is inscribed" (18). While the novel stages class politics through Lucy's representation, I argue that it also joins Lucy and Clarissa together as both attendees of the party. It is that Lucy can imagine herself in the party as a guest even within the limits of servitude that is significant in this passage. Clarissa, a member of the English aristocracy who is anxious about her place and the perception of her in the aristocracy, is reaffirmed—meaning her own positionality as aristocracy—in the way that Lucy transforms from servant to courtier. Again, what makes possible this transference? And why does it not contradict the novel's class politics?

I argue that the answer lies in the space between Lucy and the “Indian Women” whom Clarissa chides as “the silly, pretty, flimsy nincompoops” (*Mrs. Dalloway* 35). It is significant that a novel which is unique for crafting a kind of communal psychology or shared consciousness around the character of Clarissa, an English aristocratic middle-aged woman, does or cannot include the selfhood or imaginings of all the characters. That some characters either do not or cannot participate in the collective consciousness that the novel stages suggests that Lucy’s imaginative moment, though brief and strange, is part of that communal psychology. Her access to it is not through class, but through an invocation of empire for a colonial ideology of Englishness; one in which Lucy is a participant: she the English courtier, Clarissa the English Princess.

In this chapter, I demonstrated how though there are real experiences that Clarissa and Lucy do not share because of class, or the space between them, the novel’s deployment of difference for its articulation of Clarissa depends on a shared, unacknowledged proximity between two characters: namely, that both Lucy and Clarissa are similarly invested in colonial ideologies. I demonstrate this argument by analyzing Lucy’s strange absence as central to the narrative’s exploration of a collective consciousness. By reading from a Black diasporic perspective, a position that is unsettling because it defamiliarizes difference through an orientation toward the space in between, I am able to narrow in on one scene where the novel includes Lucy as part of the collective consciousness in a strange way. In every other scene where Lucy appears, what we learn about Lucy or how we come to know her is relayed through other characters’ thoughts or the narrator’s authoritative voice. Yet, in this one scene, Lucy is allowed a brief imaginative moment where she herself is thinking through free indirect

discourse. I analyzed the scene by beginning not from the authoritative or seemingly natural position of Lucy's difference from Clarissa but instead through an approach that Lucy is knowable too. Lucy imagines herself in the party through an imitation of one of the guests: a courtier who attends to an imaginary princess showcasing her own participation in the collective consciousness through colonial ideas of Englishness. The chapter does not intend to suggest that Lucy and Clarissa are positioned in empire in the same way or even that the novel is making the argument that Lucy is not subservient to Clarissa by the limitations of social class. Rather, that though Lucy imitates another guest to place herself at the party as a guest rather than a servant, and though she still occupies a position of servitude, she still successfully imagines herself at the party without the novel's divestment in class politics. The novel can successfully allow Lucy a brief imaginative moment through imitation even while it fails to represent Lucy outside of the servant identity in ways that it does not for non-English characters who are outside of the collective consciousness in the novel. It is not that Lucy is excluded in the novel, but that she is one of them *too* in ways that the novel does not acknowledge.

CHAPTER TWO: Reading for Francine in Jean Rhys's *Voyage in the Dark*

In the previous chapter, I sketched an account of how difference materializes in Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway* to join together Clarissa and her maidservant Lucy to maintain the continuity of colonial ideas about Englishness while obscuring that intimacy through the narrative's use of class. I developed this argument through a postcolonial Afro-Caribbean reading methodology, which in being oriented to the space between the novel's context (or construction) of a class difference *and* what happens to servants in that context brings attention to the few scenes in which marginalized characters are afforded imaginative moments. I remarked that unlike Lucy, the Indian female characters and other servants who are obscured and marginalized do not have imaginative moments in *Mrs. Dalloway* even though they too participate in capturing a kind of collective consciousness that is dependent upon "the ideals of Englishness" (Emery, *Modernism, the Visual, and Caribbean Literature* 43). I proposed that an Afro-Caribbean methodology allows readers to see the unacknowledged connections/intimacies between Lucy and Clarissa through the space between Lucy and the "coolies" (*Mrs. Dalloway* 48) in the narrative (this can also be extended to the space between Lucy and the other servants, and the space between the other servants and the Indian female characters in the narrative). I insisted that class difference materializes in *Mrs. Dalloway*'s not only to represent Clarissa through an obscuring of "the other women", but also to make invisible how the novel's construction of gender and class serve to preserve particular colonial ideas about Englishness that are rooted in colonial ideologies of racial difference. Therefore, I concluded that while *Mrs. Dalloway*'s modernist representation of Clarissa depends on problematic representations of its servant class, it structures a critique of its

own representations of the servant class (or that dependence) to make invisible the shared intimacies between its construction of gender and class that preserve colonial ideas about Englishness. In this chapter, I explore a similar theme in Jean Rhys's *Voyage in the Dark* which I argue obscures connections, correlations, and intimacies thereby preserving colonial ideologies of race and difference by transforming them into a kind of subjective allegiance, or a "subjective point of view" among white and black creoles (Murdoch 156).

When we meet *Voyage in the Dark's* Anna Morgan, she is 18 years old and struggling to support herself financially as a chorus girl. Having recently migrated to England from an island in the West Indies where she spent her formative years on her family's plantation, Anna has difficulty adjusting to her new life and connecting with the people she encounters in England. She is, Hawthorne reminds us, 'an insecure, vulnerable Caribbean immigrant who feels herself a victim of the British gender and class system, as well as its racial biases: she lacks financial means and social standing, is hardly a "real" Englishwoman, and as a colonial Creole is racially suspect as having mixed blood' (93). Her marginalized subjectivity is reflected in the fragmented structure of the novel which consists of ellipses, stream-of-consciousness, and internal monologues that are marginal to the narrative present and is imparted in her unique language which stages her difficulty with articulating her White creole, female subjectivity in metropolitan England. While struggling to adjust to life in London, she meets and gets involved with Walter Jeffries who provides her with money but soon abandons her. Anna eventually undergoes an abortion and the novel ends with Anna hallucinating and hemorrhaging during the procedure. Although, unlike *Mrs. Dalloway's* Lucy, Anna Morgan is the protagonist in

the novel, her subjectivity is fragmented, structurally/formally relegated to the margins of the text and features her as an outsider in her own story.

Anna Morgan is central to the novel—she recounts the story herself—yet, her voice is marginalized in the narrative. We glean her displacement through the internal monologues, stream-of-consciousness, and inner-inner thoughts which are contained within fragments that are separated from the narrative present. The language of those passages ranges from reflective and informational to derisive and contemptuous, at times confusing the reader in their ambiguity. On the one hand, the ruptures and fragments provide access to Anna's thoughts and feelings which expose the hypocrisies of the white metropolitan world that condition her marginalized experience as a White Creole—that is, they reveal how “the shifting and structurally unstable inscription of the creole figure echoes” the “critical ambiguities of political structure and social position that shaped the colonial encounter in the region in a number of ways” (Murdoch 146). On the other hand, the fragments are a kind of structural metaphor for the relation of metropole to colony. The intimacies between metropole and colony must remain invisible to maintain control and dominance. The Caribbean that is obscured in the narrative is relocated to Anna's subjective voice—in the individuated language of Anna—thereby relegating the treatment of black Caribbean subjects in the novel to the intimate position of Anna's feelings. I argue that the novel's unique marginalization of black Caribbean subjects through Anna's repeatedly marginalized subjective voice makes it exceptionally good at preserving colonial ideologies of racial difference by transforming them into a kind of subjective allegiance among white and black creoles. A critique of the limitations that Anna experiences in the two white worlds—metropolitan and Creole—is evident in the

structural marginalization of Anna's voice; that is, her fragmented subjectivity. Yet, as I will demonstrate, in joining the experiences of colonial Black subjects together with Anna's feelings about her own displacement in London, the novel transforms colonial ideologies of racial difference into a kind of allegiance between them. The effects of this structural operation are apparent in the language and tone of Anna's subjective voice which underscore a longing for an idealized Caribbean that essentializes Caribbeanness, appropriates it, and decouples the marginalization of Black Caribbean subjects from the structural harms of the colonial Caribbean world. This is not to say that the experiences of Anna as well as those of the Black subjects in the novel are not both be conditioned and framed by colonial ideologies of racial difference or that Anna does not suffer and that there are no opportunities for cross-racial alliance around common issues. Rather, I want to emphasize how the novel's unique interrogations of principles and practices of colonialism through the language of subjectivity consequently preserve those very principles.

Most widely known for 1966 novel *Wide Sargasso Sea*, a prequel to Charlotte Bronte's *Jane Eyre*, Rhys was born on the island of Dominica and left for England at the age of 16 in 1907. She would return to the West Indian Island of her birth only once in 1936 at the age of 46. Her identity as a White Creole, Caribbean, and British is often read alongside her unique narrative style and protagonists, commonly known in Rhys studies as the Rhys woman. The Rhys woman is often marginalized due to "multiple axes of exclusion": usually "poor, badly educated, female, and often colonial subjects exiled to the metropolis" (Linett 437). Culturally displaced and marginalized heroines are common in all of Jean Rhys's novels, from *Voyage in the Dark* and *Quartet* to *After Leaving Mr.*

Mackenzie, Good Morning Midnight and *Wide Sargasso Sea*. The “Rhys women”, not unlike the author herself, “are at the heart of the texts they inhabit and marginal in the societies through which they wander” (Linett 437).

Claimed by many disciplines—modernist, Caribbean postcolonial, feminist, etc.— and canonized in multiple literary traditions whose own relationships with one another are fraught, Rhys and her fiction are often displaced to the margins of many of those disciplines. Analyses of Rhys’s heroines are often overdetermined by the biographical facts and rumors of her own life. In *Jean Rhys*, Elaine Savory argues for the centrality and specificity of Rhys’s Caribbean context, particularly the formative years of her life, as “the doorway” for analyzing Rhys’s experimental texts and heir unconventional protagonists (2). She goes on to explain her work’s focus on Rhys’s life and biography as a method for emphasizing how “Rhys’s Caribbean childhood and her views on race, class, and nationality...explains the complex cultural identity which so informs her textuality, not just in theme but in the multi-voiced narrative she gradually developed in her long fiction” (Savory 2-3). Similarly, in “The Poetics of Labor in Jean Rhys’s Caribbean Modernism,” Mary Lou Emery emphasizes the distinct Caribbean context of Rhys’s modernist style in which “subjectivities of working women engage the twinned dynamics of freedom and dispossession” and have their beginnings “in the plantation system” (422). Rhys’s novels, she argues, “depict the legacies of the plantation” and link Europe, England, and the U.S. with the labor taking place in plantation systems in the West Indies (421). While Savory emphasizes the Caribbean and slave planter contexts of Jean Rhys’s life for analyses of female subjectivity in Rhys’s fiction, Emery proposes instead turning the critical lens to Rhys’s poetics of labor for

uncovering how the unique representation of the subjectivities of working women in Rhys's fiction depend on the legacies of the plantation system through disguise and denial. Depictions of the "indolence and laziness" of Rhys's protagonists, Emery writes, "disguise the scenes of labor" that appear everywhere in Rhys's writing and "[tap] into the contradictions in the history of Caribbean labor politics" (422). In other words, Rhys's unique innovative fictional forms produces representations of aimless, indolent, lazy white Creole female characters that simultaneously disguise and hide scenes of coercive and exploitative labor as well as their worldwide context in plain sight in Rhys's novels.

Despite the seeming inscrutability of the categories through which Rhys's works and identity are framed, a number of scholars have attempted to engage the multivalence of Rhys's fiction. For example, Mary Lou Emery's *Jean Rhys at 'World's End': Novels of Colonial and Sexual Exile*, published in 1990 and reprinted in 2010 because of its enduring resonance to Rhys scholarship, explored "the tensions between the two spaces or contexts of Rhys's writing—the West Indian colonial context and the modernist European" by reorienting the critical attention to Rhys's work "away from the mainly European aesthetic, moral, and psychological standards" toward "Caribbean cultural values" which "[complicate] perspectives on Rhys that view her works in terms of sexual difference only" (xi). Twenty years later, the contributors to *Rhys Matters: New Critical Perspectives*, the essay collection edited by x and x, aimed to "both look broadly and across Rhys's literary output—from the multiple perspectives that an essay collection can offer—and to offer an understanding of the many larger contexts within which Rhys's multifarious work was produced and is received" (Johnson 5). And again in 2015, the

editors of *Jean Rhys: New Critical Approaches*, “hoping to set the course for Rhys studies in the 20th century,” brought together “emerging theoretical work” on the “strangeness” of Rhys’s fiction which has always challenged the “critical discourse” of her work (Johnson and Moran 2-8). These old and new debates lay the groundwork for this chapter’s significant intervention in Rhys scholarship and returns to Mary Lou Emery’s remarks that “perhaps the best way to understand the powerful yet disconcerting effects of reading Rhys’s fiction is to understand more fully the nature of the in-between spaces it explores” (*Jean Rhys At “World’s End”* xi). Attuned to the modernist, Caribbean, and postcolonial “crosscurrents” in *Voyage in the Dark*, it asks what happens if we read the strangeness and obscurities in Rhys’s fiction from a postcolonial Afro-Caribbean reading methodology which is necessarily oriented towards the *space between*?

Since its publication in 1934, critical scholarship on *Voyage in the Dark* has always focused on the novel’s form and its Caribbean themes. Regardless of the divergences in the scholarship, the tensions between Anna Morgan’s past and present and her positionality between them remain a thorough line in analyses of Anna’s White, creole subjectivity and the novel’s own interrogations of colonial ideology and practices of difference through fragmented subjectivity. Scholars have read Anna Morgan’s oscillation in and out of the various identity categories as the novel’s interrogations of the distinctions on which such categories exist. The following are a few documented examples of the breadth of that common line: Anna’s “shifting, interstitial cultural difference engenders a desire for integration and authenticity [...] becomes the ongoing marker of her inability to cope with her sense of alienation and exclusion” (Murdoch,

“Rhys’s Pieces” 259) Anna is “no more at peace with herself and with her environment Caribbean island than she is in London” (Martin); The multiple registers of Anna’s voice “further divide Anna’s already-fissured perspective, repeatedly calling attention to her status as a permanent outsider who claims neither a native community in Dominica nor an adopted home in England” (Seshagiri, “Modernist Ashes” 489); The novel’s “differential discourse” highlight “[Anna’s] fragmented positionality” and the “moments when [she] expresses the cultural displacement, alienation and lack of belonging that increasingly characterize her British sojourn” (*Jean Rhys: Twenty-First Century Approaches* 149); Rhys’s “techniques of narrative intersubjectivity [...] decenter the traditional ‘character’ as a unified self” and allow Anna to “create and re-create” her “displaced” self thereby “defiantly refusing a one-dimensional reduction of identity” (Emery, “The Politics of Form” 419); Rhys’s deployment of “the Carib as a metaphor of [Anna’s] alienation [...] is a symbol of loss, defeat, and passivity; like her, a victim of European domination” (Hawthorne 93); the novel’s use of parataxis is a method for positioning Anna’s marginalization across race, class, and culture to suggest “diverse meaningful confrontations with imperial logic” and enact “shared interests in collection action against an imperialist nationalism” (Suh 97); and, “Anna’s exile and lives as it were in two places and two time frames, ... maintains a rhizomatic relationship with the Caribbean, her identity extended through the relationship to her family and servants” in the novel (Spyra 82). Those few examples make clear how difference animates the novel’s presentation of its White, creole subjectivity and Anna’s own attempts at re-imagining her displacement and marginalization.

As a “silenced ‘foreign’ and female voice” in her own narrative, it is not unusual that Anna remains central in analyses of *Voyage the Dark*, with Francine, Anna’s black Creole servant, making appearances in readings of the novel to draw out the implications of Anna’s fragmented subjectivity, emphasize the uniqueness of Rhys’s modernist reinvention, or explore the novel’s representation the creole figure for its postcolonial implications (Emery, “The Politics of Form” xi). While Francine’s invisible but overdetermined presence in Jean Rhys’ *Voyage in the Dark* is difficult to ignore, Lucy Wilson, in “‘Women Must Have Spunk’: Jean Rhys’s West Indian Outcasts,” rightly observes that “despite considerable critical attention to Jean Rhys’s West Indian themes and characters, there have been relatively little focus on the black characters themselves” (439). Excepting Caribbean and postcolonial studies, much of the criticism of Rhys’s West Indian themes still center her white creole characters. Take for example the figure of the “Rhys woman,” the shorthand that has come to overwhelmingly define the characteristic of Rhys’s heroines as lazy, indolent, directionless, and aimless across Rhys scholarship. It is most often reflective of the white creole characters in her novels because the (black) “Rhys woman,” who is oftentimes as central to the narratives as the white Creole protagonist, take on different characteristics: they “thrive on adversity” and “draw strengths” from their marginalization and alienation, as Lucy Wilson argues (440). There are a few instances where criticism has focused on Rhys’s black Caribbean characters, yet in most of those instances, the purpose has been to get a better understanding of the in-betweenness of fragmented subjectivity of the (white) “Rhys woman” or to account for Rhys’s subversive politics (anti-colonial, anti-racist, feminist, etc.). Such is the case for Ambreen Hai, for example, who proposes that the voices of black character in Rhys’s

Wide Sargasso Sea sketches a social formation “defined by a unique proximity or intimacy between individuals of very difference class (and often race, gender, and national) affiliations” in her essay, “‘There is always the other side, always’: Black Servants’ Laughter, Knowledge, and Power in Jean Rhys’s *Wide Sargasso Sea*” (494-495).

Though generally outsiders in the narratives, Rhys’s black Caribbean subjects, are central to the development of the Rhys’s displaced, white Creole outcasts. In *Voyage in the Dark*, Francine, Anna’s childhood companion and black servant, emerges in her memory shifts to the Caribbean which disrupt the linearity of the narrative. In her flashbacks, “the warmth and vibrant energy of the West Indies is epitomized in the lives of the black inhabitants of the island,” often staging Anna and Francine’s relationship as an intimate one (Wilson, “Women Must Have Spunks” 440). Whereas Woolf’s foray into the inner thoughts of Lucy in *Mrs. Dalloway*’s functions to maintain a continuity between past and present through a shared consciousness against the uncomfortable truth of what a waning British empire could mean for Englishness and the English aristocratic class, in Rhys’s *Voyage in the Dark*, the sudden shifts into the memories and feelings of Anna Morgan sketch incongruities between her past and present, cementing an identification with the colonial Caribbean and seemingly breaks any allegiance to the white metropolitan world. In one fragmented passage, we see the reach of the novel’s structure in staging allegiance between White and Black creoles as a matter of Anna’s subjective experience of England:

I wanted to be black. I always wanted to be black. I was happy because Francine was there, and I watched her hand waving the fan backwards and forwards and the beads of sweat that rolled from underneath her handkerchief. Being black is warm and gay, being white is cold and sad. (Rhys 31)

Anna's wish to be black, accessed through Anna's inner thoughts, comes right after her landlady abruptly informs her that her room will no longer be available in a couple of days' time. We know that Anna had only recently secured some money from her suitor Walter Jeffries with which she purchased silk stockings, among other things. From the discomfort of being called a "tart" by the landlady and the precarity of her living situation, Anna's memories return to the Caribbean, to Francine in particular. It is the first time we are introduced to Francine and through the desire for blackness we glean Anna's desire for stability and financial independence. It is a strange association if only for the fact that Francine's labor and servitude is what Anna links to being "warm and gay" (Rhys 27)—an irony Anna and the text do not acknowledge. What intimates Francine to Anna in this scene is not their shared dispossession, but Anna's feelings about the landlady's judgment of her sexual promiscuity, and by extension feelings about her exclusion in the white and male metropolitan world. Here we have an example of how difference animates both Anna's language and the structure of the narrative: there is a space between what Anna feels and what is actually articulated in the language of those feelings. In one sense, the narrative, as exemplified in this scene for example, provides us with Anna's thoughts about the people she encounters and the limitations of her White creole subjectivity in London to expose the hypocrisy and entanglements of colonialism's categories of difference; but in another sense, and this is particularly significant, we also get Anna's feelings, what she really thinks, through the fragments. Through examining reflections about her thoughts, it becomes clear that her way of looking at and thinking about both London and the Caribbean joins Anna and the very people she critiques together in ways that are not acknowledged in the novel. This desire for blackness, which

we will return to later in the chapter, is one such example that is repeated throughout the novel though not always in those exact words.

Before uncovering the implications of the structure by which the novel stages the formation of possible alliances, I want to turn to the opening scene of the novel. Chapter 1 of *Voyage in the Dark* begins with a set of differences which Anna provides about England and the West Indian island of her formative years upon her arrival to England. In the first few sentences, she tells us that “colors,” “sounds,” and “smells” were so different that “it was like almost being born again,” and “as if the curtain had fallen, hiding everything [she] had ever known” (Rhys 7). It is not insignificant that the novel opens with difference as its first introduction to Anna in metropolitan London. As Murdoch reminds us, the Creole “in contemporary discourses” is “marked and overdetermined as different” and in its early beginnings:

Embod[ied] colonialism’s repulsion for the fearfully unnameable and unplaceable hybrid monstrosity, ... ultimately overdetermine[ing] the social separation and ethnocultural difference inflected by perceptions of race. [...] It is this conundrum of ‘racial’ variation and admixture within a larger Caribbean framework of supposedly rigid, racialised social hierarchies, then, that gave rise to interlocking ideologies of race and sexuality, empire and colony, gender and class, and that ultimately separated even creole whites from their metropolitan colonial counterparts. (*Creole Identity* 146-148)

It is therefore not random that in our first encounter with our heroine in the novel’s opening scene, Anna uses the word different or difference six times to articulate her disapproval of metropolitan England and her longing for the Caribbean. Through her general sense of displeasure at having to leave the Caribbean, we can see the parallel between this passage and the earlier one in which she condenses the Caribbean to the comfort of its “sun-heat” (Rhys 7) in contrast to England’s insufferable “cold” (Rhys 7). Later in the novel, we see how heat, beyond a geographical implication of the Caribbean

has consequences for Anna. We learn that the other showgirls call Anna, “who’s always cold” (Rhys 13), “the Hottentot” from Maudie: “She can’t help it. She was born in a hot place. She was born in the West Indies or somewhere...The girls call her the Hottentot. Isn’t it a shame?” (Rhys 13). Anna’s exclusion in the white metropolitan world is explained through “heat-as-difference” culminating into the derogatory term “Hottentot” which articulates Anna’s creoleness as otherness through implications of the Caribbean itself as a site of racial and cultural difference as well as sexual promiscuity (Murdoch, “The Discourses of Jean Rhys” 151). It is an example of how, Murdoch adds, “an inscription in and subjection to tropes and stereotypes of difference progressively becomes the bane of Anna’s existence in the heart of the metropole” (“Rhys’s Pieces” 260).

Difference is how Anna seems to process England and the Caribbean and difference is also how also how the novel frames her subjectivity. And yet again, as the scene opening develops, there emerges a space between what Anna voices and her language. Although readers do not discount the weather differences between the two regions, it soon becomes clear that this list is less about actual differences between the Caribbean and England, and more about Anna’s own feelings. A couple of lines later she adds, it was “not just a difference between heat, cold; light, dark; purple, grey. But a difference in the way I was frightened and the way I was happy” (Rhys 7). This time, the colors—“light, dark” and “purple, grey”—are placed side by side. Anna, we learn, experiences happiness and fear in both England and the Caribbean and that it is her experiences of both emotions that feel different. What does it mean that Anna’s happiness on the island felt different from her happiness in London? The difference which

overdetermines Anna's language and expression as well as the novel's own presentation of Anna's in-betweenness seems to suggest something not yet revealed or hidden. I want to explore not *what* is different or similar about Anna's experiences but more so *why* Anna's similar/comparative experiences in both places render different feelings and emotions in her? Thus, I propose that rather than reading the juxtapositions or differences that Anna continues to offer as evidence for her status as either an outsider in England or the Caribbean or as in-between the two, a more productive approach would be to explore the space between them. Though we cannot yet deduce what truly motivates the set of differences from this passage, we do know what she thinks about her place in London and in the Caribbean: same but different. It is this tension and the friction between Anna's story and the structural language of her fragmented voice that I intend to explore in selected examples of the novel in order to showcase how Anna's complex positionality as a displaced white female creole subject and the novel's own uses of that complexity transform and preserve colonial ideologies of racial difference into subjective alliance.

A feature of Rhys' fiction, Simpson puts it in *Territories of the Psyche The Fiction of Jean Rhys*, "are heroines whose "fraught conditions of psychic experience" and "dense layers of feelings" are "expressed in both the word [Rhys] chooses ... and the silences that resonate so fully in" her narratives (Simpson 20). The formal structure of *Voyage in the Dark* engenders Anna's "self-division" which Rhys places, along a number of other "of related techniques at the service of the narrative re-presentation of Anna's colonially-derived split subjectivity" (Murdoch, "The Discourses of Jean Rhys" 149). Through these flashbacks, Anna juxtaposes her metropolitan present to her colonial past and oftentimes, through recollections or memories of her life in the West Indies with

Francine, her black servant, appropriates or identifies with a black female identity. Emery, for example, pinpoints Anna's "disordered minds" or "derangements of identity" as the narrative "seeking alternative points of connection among the cast-offs of modernity and its systems of labor, including in its purview Europe and its colonies" ("The Politics of Form" 170). How does an analysis of the novel's innovative style for capturing Anna Morgan and the context of its West Indian themes when read from a perspective that does not easily rely on difference complicate our understanding of its interrogations?

In "Who is Christophine? The Good Black Servant and the Contradictions of (Racial) Liberalism," Shakti Jaising provides an answer to this question. Her analysis of Rhys's *Wide Sargasso Sea*, a novel characterized as Rhys's postcolonial and feminist response to Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*, finds that while the novel "is a critique of imperialism," it "nevertheless relies on the racialized typologies of liberal colonialist discourse" (815). Jaising cautions against scholarship that "highlight [Christophine's] unique abilities while leaving unquestioned what function her exceptionality might perform within Rhys's text" (823). In the case of several Rhys novels, readings of her black female characters have been to define Rhys's cross-class and cross-racial politics of intimacy and proximity. In some instances, her black female characters have enabled readings of the (white) Rhys woman beyond the conventional critical typology of laziness, emotionless, aimless, and self-hating subjectivity. At other times, they are called upon to legitimize the white Creole character's claim to the West Indies.

Returning to the scene where we are first introduced to Francine, we saw how Anna's memories of Francine and the Caribbean "as warm and gay" follows a troubling,

painful, and explosive experience with her landlady who gives Anna a notice of eviction unexpectedly after claiming she saw Anna crawl up the stairs “at three o’clock in the morning” and “dressed up to the nines today” (Rhys 30). What do we make of the structure of the scene itself? In the linear narrative, we are given this exchange as a dialogue. The landlady suggests that Anna is a prostitute with indirect language. Anna pushes back with ““It wasn’t three o’clock, I said. That was a lie!” (Rhys 30). Anna’s challenge to the landlady’s charge of sexually deviant behavior rises to a peculiar accusation: “You and your drawly voice...I don’t want no tarts in my house, so now you know” (Rhys 30). The dialogue ends and Anna tells us, the reader, “I didn’t answer. My heart was beating like hell” (*Voyage in the Dark* 30). The landlady who describes her voice as drawly links the uniqueness of her voice to sexual deviance. Anna, who pushed back the first she was accused, though indirectly, of prostitution does not reply this time when the link is made between her voice and her sexuality. Voice-as-difference demonstrates the variations by which Anna is excluded further underscoring the inferiority of her whiteness in the context of its creoleness. This is yet another example of how Anna is made to feel foreign as this time her otherness is, as Czarnecki argues, “not because of her physical features but because of her voice” (17).

While we have the context and backstory to know of Anna’s situation with Walter Jeffries, her precarity and sadness in England, and her longing for the Caribbean, Anna does not articulate with clarity how she feels about being called a tart in the narrative present. What she does tell us is that she went to bed and “started thinking about the time I was ill in Newcastle, and the room I had there and that story about the walls of a room

getting smaller and smaller until they crush you to death” before concluding, “I believe this damned room’s getting smaller and smaller, I thought” (*Voyage in the Dark* 30).

We are still in the narrative present with Anna and her thoughts. She is articulating her displacement and precarity by linking the feeling of her heartbeat—“my heart was beating faster”—to death, her experience of reading the Gothic short story “the Iron Shroud” while ill in Newcastle. Although at first it appears that Anna is making a comparison between the two rooms—I “started thinking about the time I was ill in Newcastle, and the room I had there”—the memory she shares with us is less about the rooms and more about a feeling. The Gothic story’s imagery of “the walls getting smaller and smaller” frightened her then as she feels frightened now (Rhys 30). There is the similarity of the walls in the story and the walls of her room getting smaller and smaller, but outside of that, the rooms themselves share no actual similarities. What draws the rooms together is Anna’s own subjective experience: being frightened by a short story she read while ill in Newcastle and being frightened by her looming eviction and financial precarity in London.

Following this reflection and still in the narrative present, Anna tells us she penned a response to a letter from Walter Jeffries telling him she is unwell and asking him to visit her; she then leaves to post the letter and returns to bed around 3 o’clock in the afternoon. It is at this point that we experience a rupture in the narrative where the novel’s narrative voice takes over Anna’s own narration to give us direct access to Anna’s inner thoughts: “*This is England, and I’m in a nice, clean English room with all the dirt swept under the rug*” (Rhys 31). We are now directly in Anna’s thoughts which we can infer from the passage’s italicization and the absence of punctuation and style

marks that would typify Anna as the narrator. She is ruminating about England and the hypocrisy of the place, its two-facedness so to speak yet not willingly sharing those thoughts with us. In so doing, the novel takes control to demonstrate what Anna really feels about her confrontation with the landlady, even if only briefly. Her “‘choked up rage’ manifest[ing] itself” in her “melancholia...silences” made visible in her stream-of-consciousness (Czarnecki 15). The clarity here is much more obvious than what she herself shared with us earlier through the Gothic short story and Newcastle. What we see here is not fright per say, but resentment, disdain, and criticism. She is in England and what appears to be a nice and clean English room; yet the room only appears to be clean because all the dirt is swept under rug. She recognizes the hypocrisy of England’s presentation of itself and calls it out, “the damned room” from earlier pronouncement taking on new meaning.

Immediately following this moment of clarity, we experience another brief confusion. Anna regains control of the narrative voice in the narrative present and tells us it is now dark. She feels “as if there were weights on my legs” and the narrative fragments to a memory of her bedroom in the Caribbean where she is also in bed unable to move and staring at a cockroach resting on a knot of one of the wooden planks (*Voyage in the Dark* 31). As she wonders if the cockroach will fly, Francine walks in:

Francine came in and she saw it and got a shoe and killed it. She changed the bandage around my head and it was ice cold and she started fanning me with a palm-leaf fan. And then night outside and the voices of the people passing in the street—the forlorn sad voices, thin and sad. And the heat pressing down on you as if it were something alive. I wanted to be black. I always wanted to be black. I was happy because Francine was there, and I watched her hand waving the fan backwards and forwards and the beads of sweat that rolled from underneath her handkerchief. Being black is warm and gay, being white is cold and sad. (Rhys 31)

These types of passages in *Voyage in the Dark*, H. Adlai Murdoch tells us, mark “a deliberate discursive strategy meant to define Anna’s cultural duality and lack of grounding in the metropole” in that the plurality of their formally inscription “[express] her discomfiture and sense of exclusion to an unmade and unlocalizable interlocutor (“The Discourses of Jean Rhys” 152). Andrea Lewis adds that Anna’s disjointed voice in the narrative quarrels with how “Englishness extends beyond the purged, ethnocentric boundaries set up by the class-and-race-specific center of the British empire” and that the “Englishness that is not one,” which Anna’s creole subjectivity denotes, is a “colonial history that Anna cannot shake off and that she carries with her from the West Indies to England” (90). I agree with Murdoch and Lewis but add that the language of the passage also reveals the limitations of the novel’s interrogations of Anna’s exclusion. A closer look at the space between Anna’s marginalization and Francine’s marginalization reveals those limitations.

A few of the themes discussed earlier culminate in the quoted passage above: heat, cold, voice, white, and black. At the center of them is Francine, though Francine’s own voice is not present. The passage is imbued with both Anna’s memories of the past and the events in the narrative present, but it is Francine’s labor which helps us navigate the disjointed nature of Anna’s language. The heat, violent and aggressive—“pressing down on you as if it were something alive”—with Francine switching a warm bandage to “an ice cold” one on Anna’s head (Rhys 31). We can conclude from the forceful unpleasantness of the heat and the cold bandage on her head that Anna was likely suffering from a fever. While thinking back to Francine caring for her, “the voices of the people passing in the street” outside, in the narrative present, attempt to pull her back;

We know they're in the narrative present because she describes them as "thin and sad," echoing the theme of England as sad and contrasting the thinness of the voices to the drawl of her own voice. She resists and the voices remain in the background of her dreamlike state: "forlorn sad voices" (Rhys 31). Finally, the yearning for blackness followed by "I was happy because Francine was there" as Anna watches Francine's "hand waving the fan backwards and forwards and the beads of sweat that rolled from underneath her handkerchief" (Rhys 31). Anna is made to feel happy by Francine's presence, her labor and care. That her language does not make clear whether she was happy again in the narrative present after the verbal abuse from the landlady because Francine was in her memory or happy in the Caribbean past because Francine was there to take care of her does not matter; we know that Francine being there made her happy.

The passage exemplifies not only Anna's marginalization from England, but it also demonstrates how Francine is only visible through how Anna inhabits and experiences the Caribbean; her own individual position as a White Creole. Anna's return to the Caribbean is a turn toward Francine, an intimacy that reflects the separation between her and the landlady, that lives in Anna's subjective experience. It cannot comment on the shared history that conditions Anna's verbal altercation with her landlady and subsequent othering, her happiness from Francine's presence, and Francine's labor. Instead, through the structure of difference, Francine and Anna are intimated through the distancing of Anna from the English landlady, thereby making invisible the colonial history that binds them while obscuring Francine's Black Creole subjectivity.

The presentation of Anna's fragmented subjectivity through the passage as well as her claim to or desire for blackness both obscure black Creole subjectivity and make possible an intimacy between Francine and Anna as an alternative to Anna's marginalization in metropolitan England. As Seshagiri reminds us, "Anna's declaration, "I wanted to be black, I always wanted to be black. . . . Being black is warm and gay, being white is cold and sad", reveals a dangerous desire to *be* the Empire's other, to locate subjectivity in what imperial discourse has relegated to object-status ("Modernist Ashes" 494). While the text's criticism of the slipperiness of colonial ideology of cultural and racial difference, through the structural presentation of Anna's fragmented Creole subjectivity, offers an alternative through the formation of a cross-racial alliance, in locating that alliance as Anna's own individual superiority or success, it maintains the social system that made the separations in both the metropole and the colony possible in the first place. The violence of the colonial system is not an expression of individual failure, just as alternatives to that violence is not an expression of individual success. We see the untenability and limitations of that approach in another memory in which the "racial and psychological border between them appears in stark relief" (Czarnecki 20). Anna is watching Francine "washing up" in the estate's "horrible" kitchen with "no chimney" and "always full of charcoal" (Rhys 72). She tells us,

Her eyes were red with the smoke and watering. Her face was quite wet. She wiped her eyes with the back of her hand and looked sideways at me. Then she said something in patois and went on washing. But I knew that of course she disliked me too because I was white; and that I would never be able to explain to her that I hated being white; and that I would never be able to explain to her that I hated being white. Being white and getting like Hester, and all the things you get—old and sad and everything. I kept thinking, "No. . . . No. . . ." And I knew that day that I'd started to grow old and nothing could stop it. (Rhys 72)

Prior to this scene, Anna had met with Hester, her detached English stepmother who could never assimilate to life on the island and never hid her prejudice or racism against white and black creoles. Anna would be cut off financially for Hester could no longer support her with what little money her father had left behind. She had warned Anna about the risk of being tainted by her proximity to Francine and had failed to impart on Anna the subtle differences between the two white worlds such as speech patterns, mannerisms, etc. While Anna's conclusions in the passage that Francine hated her for being white does more than indicate "a separation between Anna and the colonized women of the Antilles" (Lewis 91), I argue that it showcases the limitations of interrogation of or challenges to systems of domination or disempowerment that rests on the expression of individual freedom or failure. Though had previously stated her allegiance to Francine, she reads Francine's own dissatisfactions with her present reality through her own subjective precarity. She cannot access Francine's patois, nor does she acknowledge the structure that conditions Francine's experience. Instead, she interprets words as a hatred of her because of her whiteness. Hence, her desire for a blackness that does nothing explicitly about the structure of domination that is apparent in the scene. While literally watching Anna in a room full of charcoal on behalf of the Morgans, Anna's conclusion is being white is "sad" (Rhys 72). How do we walk the tightrope that is keeping an awareness of our individual privileges in systems of domination without being limited by the difficulty of separating individual prejudices from the institutions and structures that make them possible in the first place? That's the question Francine's character, even in its absent presence, brings to this novel's own interrogations of the practices and principles of colonialism (Murdoch).

Jean Rhys' *Voyage in the Dark* shares a marginal position in both the literary modernist canon and the broader postcolonial literary canon. How do Rhys's characters break out of the prescribed narrative patterns? What are their efforts and failures linked back to? The traditional figure of "the modernist exile" in high and late modernist texts is reconfigured and troped in this text as a paralyzed traveler figure. The final scene of the novel further details the inarticulations of Anna's paradoxical positioning both in England and in the West Indies. Following Anna's breakup with Walter, and her subsequent issues with finding permanent lodging, she becomes pregnant and enlists the help of Walter, who by now has virtually abandoned her in England. She enlists his help based on his promise that he would always be available to her if she ever needed his help. He agrees to pay for an abortion, and she undergoes the procedure. After the abortion, Anna thinks to herself:

"I lay and watched it and thought about starting all over again. And about being new and fresh. And about mornings, and misty days, when anything might happen. And about starting all over again all over again..." (Rhys 30)

Anna teases out and laments her estrangement in England and her language reflects the literal paralysis of her state, her immobility due to the trauma of her abortion, abandonment by Walter, and her alienation in England. Home, through the novel's treatment, is paradoxically a "place and a desire" which "constitute[s] a recurring motif of modernity" (Mufti and Shohat 2). For Anna, both spaces England and the West Indies are categorized as "unhomely" and "homely" based on the feelings of strangeness and the paralysis that ensues from her experiences as she moves between the West Indies and England. The novel stages that strangeness as bounded within Anna in the way she experiences difference through the reconfiguration of the unfamiliar as familiar within

the comfort of her lack of otherness in the West Indies, as well as in England's reconfiguration of familiar as unfamiliarly.

Yet, though Anna imagines and dreams about the Caribbean as a means of telling a different story about herself, the story fails precisely because it preserves the colonial narrative of the Caribbean in other ways. To understand Rhys' turn toward a transnational subjectivity, this chapter argues that one should explore not only the novel's White Creole heroine, Anna Morgan, but also Francine, the black Caribbean servant whom Anna returns to several times in *Voyage in the Dark*. Relatedly, to understand how Rhys breaks from prescribed narrative patterns in forming a transnational subjectivity, the implications of that rupture for what it means not only for Anna, but for Francine who is central to Anna's retelling, must also be explored.

CHAPTER THREE: Reading for Lucy in Jamaica Kincaid's *Lucy*

Jamaica Kincaid's *Lucy* follows the eponymous Lucy, the 19-year-old West Indian protagonist, Lucy who leaves her home in the West Indies to work as an au pair in the United States for a wealthy, white couple in North America named Mariah and Lewis. The author of many novels, short fiction, and essays, Jamaica Kincaid was born in St. John's Antigua and emigrated to the United States at the age of 17 to work as an au pair for a white North American family. Kincaid's fiction generally explores the perpetuation of colonialism and empire within metropolitan centers and late capitalist society, and covers a wide range of themes including assimilation, women's relationships, love, sexuality, forced displacements, and loneliness. *Lucy*, published in 1990, stages a complex treatment of difference and marginalization as they typically emerge in novels of development through stories of postcolonial people, particularly around the social and political implications of selfhood, self-expression, representation, origin, and history. In *Lucy*, for example, the protagonist insists on her perspective through reflections about the challenges she encounters in the United States that excavate the broader political contexts that connect those metropolitan challenges to the colonial/post-colonial past she leaves behind. I argue that the novel's complex treatment of difference refuses the re-inscription of marginality through its unique exploration of Lucy's postcolonial subject position and models a black diasporic reading practice that offers possibilities for reading fragmented/marginalized identities and inter-feminine relations.

While the novel very much embodies the trope of the strange, sad young woman coming of age in a new environment, Lucy is sharp, honest, playful and determinedly difficult. Her struggles to assimilate and form relationships hinge on a refusal to ignore or

conceal how individual life, ordinary feelings, and everyday experiences in North America are linked to life on the island and her childhood. While this description suggests similarities between Jamaica Kincaid's and Jean Rhys's novels, I suggest that Lucy's formal strategies moves in another way: first, to point to how the perspective of a postcolonial subject position highlights, rather than conceals, the legacy of colonialism, and second, to underscore how the radical possibilities that do emerge from marginalized positions can reinscribe the center-margin binary in new ways. In other words, I argue that a reading of the novel's unique representation of Lucy's isolation and loneliness not only makes visible how the legacy of colonialism is experienced by post-independent Caribbean and contemporary metropolitan societies but also goes a step beyond both Virginia Woolf and Jean Rhys to preserve what Barbara Christian describes as a "variety, multiplicity, or eroticism" in black (feminist) theory and black literature that is "difficult to control" in her essay, "The Race for Theory" (Christian 75). Hence, if Lucy's marginal position in Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway* both underpins the reformulation of a female subjectivity and re-inscribes colonial ideologies of imperial Englishness, and if Francine's marginal position in Jean Rhys's *Voyage in the Dark* both underpins the articulation of a fragmented subjectivity and reproduces colonial ideologies of racial difference, I propose that Jamaica Kincaid's *Lucy* deliberately points to the limits of the margin as difference in disrupting renegotiations of center-periphery power relations.

Difference in Virginia Woolf's novel allows for radical re-readings of the novel's dependence on class for its representation of female subjectivity; difference in Jean Rhys's novels allows for the radical imagining and representation of the female and fragmented subjectivity that re-reads the metropolitan center. In *Demonic Grounds*:

Black Women and the Cartography of Struggle, Katherine McKittrick traces “margins” in critical feminist works to stake its limits:

...one additional reason the margin is so consistently cast as metaphor is precisely because it is actually inhabited by subaltern communities—and within feminism, black and other nonwhite women’s bodies occupy this space. The margin is therefore not a legitimate area of deep social or geographic inquiry—it is a site of dispossession, it is an ungeographic space, it is all too often a fleeting academic utterance and therefore easy to empty out, ignore, and add on in times of multicultural crises. (McKittrick 58)

Echoing Barbara Christian’s pleas in “The Race for Theory,” Katherine McKittrick warns about “articulating ‘difference’ without also understanding the ways in which particular geographic and historical contexts underwrite intellectual and imaginary politics” of the “periphery” (*Demonic Grounds* 59). McKittrick posits by way of Barbara Christian that we should be open to other possibilities that “bring together poetics and politics—feeling and knowing the large sensual world” (*Demonic Grounds* 59). Christian describes it as “a way of knowing that I am not hallucinating, that whatever I feel/know *is*” (78-9). Feeling and knowledge are here bound together to sustain the variety or multiplicity that Christian advocates for against margin as only radical and productive through difference. I argue that feeling and knowing show up in interesting ways in Kincaid’s *Lucy* through complex treatment of difference that both makes clear how the margin can and is still “indicative of and produced in relation to” the center and writes Lucy as becoming (McKittrick, *Demonic Grounds* 55).

In this chapter, I read the novel’s representation of a black immigrant subject and its articulation of a postcolonial subjectivity through the black diasporic reading practices *of the space between*. Hoping to understand the novel’s thematic interrogations of marginality as/and difference, I focus on scenes of confusion or misunderstanding and

how they inform themes of isolation and loneliness. I return to a question Lucy ponders in the novel—"how does a person get to be that way?"—which suggests a continuous probing of what is concealed or hidden (Kincaid, *Lucy* 17). I argue the novel's representation of Lucy are foremost through this kind of probing which outlines Lucy's expression as a kind of unapologetic probing and opening towards surprise as a method or process of re-readings that explore what lies hidden or underneath misunderstandings or miscommunications. Made possible by the strategies which feature Lucy's postcolonial voice, the novel procures a type of consciousness that is less about rendering consciousness per se, and more about a setting up a kind of reading practice that values both knowing and feeling—Lucy constituted by both the voice of the youthful, unapologetic, and confident younger self and the voice of the retrospective, prescient, and mature voice of an older Lucy—The mature Lucy hangs back, only fragmenting the narrative or offering elucidations at particular moments in the text. The surprise that emerges from observing, hearing, recognizing the ease with which characters and situations Lucy encounters without immediate explanations or clarifications are sustained in the narrative and leads to a curiosity or wonderment that redirects attention to the space between Lucy and Mariah and Lewis, Peggy, Paul, Dinah, etc. The novel cleverly and astutely articulates Lucy as an individual *and* also leverages the element of surprise through the doubling of the voice of the younger Lucy and the voice of the mature Lucy to make visible how the legacy of imperialism not only manifests in everyday, ordinary experiences, but how, for a postcolonial subject, such practices "mystify and distract" what has always been present (Smith 818).

In her essay, “On Seeing England for the First Time,” Kincaid’s formulates the gap between idea and reality in her discussion of European exploration and colonization of the Americas. She writes,

“The space between the idea of something and its reality is always wide and deep and dark. The longer they are kept apart—idea of thing, reality of thing—the wider the width, the deeper the depth, the thicker and darker the darkness. This space starts out empty, there is nothing in it, but it rapidly becomes filled up with obsession or desire or hatred or love—sometimes these things, sometimes some of these things, sometimes only one of these things. The existence of the world as I came to know it was a result of this: the idea of thing over here, reality of thing way, way over there” (Kincaid, “On Seeing England” 37)

The absence of a coordinating conjunction demonstrates how the gap not only enables empire to preserve its dominance over territories beyond Europe through language and representation, but that the link between the realities in colonial territories and the colonizer’s imagination of itself is made invisible also through that language and imagination. Kincaid’s observation, which hinge on “idea of thing over here, reality of thing way, way over there,” points to the social, economic, historical and political implications of Europe’s imagination and colonial language which, Ian Smith argues, are made possible by “the splitting of the sign and the referent, the separation of the aesthetic from the cultural” and allows for the “seamless union” of reality of thing and idea of thing for the colonizer as well as the “disjunction between art and experience” for the colonized (809). This creative dimension is picked up by Kincaid in another essay, “In History,” as the gap where someone else’s ordinary dreariness is another person’s epiphany (620-26).

Several Caribbean scholars and thinkers have identified the implications of colonialism’s signifying practices for the Caribbean region. In the discipline of Caribbean literature and cultural studies, critics argue that the effects of the relationship between

colonization and language emerges in Caribbean writing as “a Caribbean condition” that calls for a continuous re-imagining of “Caribbean history against [a] charge of historylessness,” often referred to as a “metaphor of quarrel” (Baugh 64). In Caribbean literature specifically, it is characterized as the overdetermined thematic concern of “revisiting, correcting, and resisting versions of history derived from archives with colonial roots” (Lambert 55-56). In the case of Caribbean women’s writings, scholars have traced how “strategies of self-representation already in place” in those texts profoundly inform questions of identity around issues of class, race, and gender “for what they reveal about the fluidity and reciprocity of narrative identity” (Paquet 8). “The post-colonial,” Hellen Tiff reminds us, “is especially and pressingly concerned with the power that resides in discourse and textuality; its resistance, then, quite appropriately takes place in-and from-the domain of textuality, in (among other things) motivated acts of reading. The contestation of post-colonialism is a contest of representation” (Tiffin 910). If postcolonial Caribbean literature grapples with representation vis a vis a non-European, formerly colonized, racialized and traditionally marginalized subject, I argue that a closer look at Caribbean literature’s improvisation “in a certain kind of way” is particularly important and significant in and of itself, and also for how it interrogates established textual strategies for representation, such as the modernist strategies we saw rendering consciousness in Virginia Woolf’s *Mrs. Dalloway* and Jean Rhys’s *Voyage in the Dark* (Benítez-Rojo 196).

Early criticism on Jamaica Kincaid’s *Lucy* have categorized the novel as a bildungsroman, a genre form that explores the psychological, emotional and moral growth of a protagonist—typically white, male and upper middle class—as he comes of

age and finds his proper place in society. Unlike the conventional bildungsroman, *Lucy* has been read as the coming of age of a black Caribbean immigrant girl who seeks out new ways of defining because the price she must pay to belong in a hostile society is obscurity and self-destruction. It is a redeployment of the bildungsroman but in a narrative that explores a black Caribbean female development and that concerns a postcolonial rather than a metropolitan subject. Though varied in their approach, analyses of the protagonist all agree that Lucy seeks out new ways of situating herself rather than fitting in or accepting a kind of absent place in her new environment. Generally, scholarship on *Lucy* range from feminist and psychoanalytical readings that explore the postcolonial implications of its mother-daughter themes and socio-cultural readings that situate the novel's postcolonial strategies of resistance to aesthetic analyses of *Lucy* as an artist figure and textual analyses of the novel's autobiographical form. For example, Moira Ferguson's postcolonial reading of *Lucy* in "Lucy and the Mark of the Colonizer" argues that *Lucy* tells her own story and doubles as a representative of black Antiguans. The effect of that strategy, she writes, is a "cultural reversal" that reveals "how the political legacies of residual colonial culture live their lives and think about their cultural positionality" (Ferguson 239). On the other hand, Kristen Mahlis's "Gender and Exile: Jamaica Kincaid's *Lucy*" argues that Kincaid creates dimensions of female exile where *Lucy* "pursues a path of self-definition that is contestatory and oppositional by critiquing the narratives of self-definition surrounding her to find a provisional space for her particular subjectivity and assertions of gender and sexuality" (Mahlis 175). Mahlis adds, "rather than presenting *Lucy* as trapped in the disjunction between the stories that have shaped her *self* as colonial subject and the particulars of her existence, Kincaid imagines

an alternative space for Lucy, the space of the female exile” outside of the normative masculinist narratives of exile (179-180). While this chapter builds on the work of these scholars, it will explore how the question of difference materializes in the novel’s representations of marginalization, obscurity, and absence.

If Lucy’s representational marginal position in Virginia Woolf’s *Mrs. Dalloway* via colonial ideologies of class difference both underpins Woolf’s radical renegotiation of modernist subjectivity and reinscribes colonial ideologies of Englishness, and if Francine’s representational marginal position in Jean Rhys’s *Voyage in the Dark* via the colonial logic of racial difference both underpins Rhys’s articulation of a fragmented White-creole subjectivity and reproduces colonial ideologies of racial difference, then what of Jamaica Kincaid’s representation of Lucy, a postcolonial Caribbean subject? To lay the groundwork for how this chapter answers this question, I want to return to McKittrick’s warning about “the margins” through a brief discussion of feminist theory’s general call to theorize from the margins, or as Jane Gallop explains in *Reading Lacan* to “write in a different relation to the material, from a more unsettling confrontation” that “relinquishes the usual position of command, and thus writes from a more subjective vulnerable position” (Gallop 19). I proceed with the caution uncovered from closely reading the reading practices that inform black diasporic scholarship in my own analysis of Jamaica Kincaid’s *Lucy* through an approach to the text that is, as Barbara Christian implores in “The Race for Theory,” “based on ... the surprise that comes from reading something that compels you to read differently” (78). I argue that like Jean Rhys’s *Voyage in the Dark*, Jamaica Kincaid’s *Lucy* interrogates the absence presences of postcolonial Caribbean subjects—their historical representation vis a vis a non-European,

formerly colonized, racialized and traditionally marginalized identity. Yet unlike both Jean Rhys and Virginia Woolf, Kincaid's *Lucy* resists the impulse to conceal, distract, or mystify. In *Demonic Grounds: Black Women and the Cartography of Struggle*, Katherine McKittrick explores how the drawing together of the disciplines of blackness and human geography to trace Black Canadian geographies, that is Black subjects/existence/events/places/etc., brings about an element of surprise *and* wonderment that disrupts (rather than reinscribe) the white, colonial geographic contexts of Canada in interesting ways:

Within the context of Canadian historical geographies... Marie-Joseph Angélique is a surprise. By *surprise* I mean the outcome of wonder: ... Marie-Joseph Angélique invokes a number of surprises that are astonishing simply because they take place in Canada, a nation that has and is still defining its history as Euro-white, or nonblack. ... These people, place, events, and activities are not "Canada," are not supposed to be Canada, and contradict Canada; they are surprises, unexpected and concealed. ... the element of surprise permits an exploration of wonder. ... The surprise of blackness does not stand alone within the confines of Canada; the surprise does not end after it has been encountered. Rather, it is followed by an experiential curiosity, wonder, which is inevitably attached to new sensations, new ideas, that were previously unavailable. ... The wonder implicit in black geographies thus refuses erasure by critically invoking the recognition that Canada is, in fact, racially produced—sometimes on different terms than expected. (92-95)

The path from surprise and wonder to revelation and exposure is through emotions and feelings that bring about "new sensations, new ideas, that were previously unavailable" in surprising ways (*Demonic Grounds* 93). The surprise is not simply in uncovering blackness that was deemed there and not there or absent and present. The surprise, she explains, emerges from the "impatient, comfortable, knowing denial" of "historical black existences" that showcase how "projects of black 'recovery' are not simply hindered by the denial of archivists, but actually structured by what might be called new histories or genealogies" (*Demonic Grounds* 94). McKittrick adds that because of her own surprise at

an archivists' comfortable and knowing denial of Black existence even though the archive, as well McKittrick's own knowledge itself, proved that to be false, she "began to wonder not about how black subjects are unavailable—in need of discovery—but rather how the idea of their previous lives shapes their absence and their presence. . . . how 'conceptual otherness' is not simply missing or misread, but rather underwritten by new forms of knowledge that make Canada/York/Toronto what it is" (*Demonic Grounds* 94). We see, for example, how the novel's formal strategies of surprise expose Mariah and Lewis's attempts to deride or condescend Lucy's knowledge as the ways by which not only the neocolonial power of late capitalism continues colonialism's practices of mystification and distraction, but the ways in which Mariah and Lewis's own knowledge is underwritten by such mystification. It is the space between Lucy and Mariah, engendered by the element of surprise in the text by way of Lucy's commanding voice, that reveals how the formation of Lucy as a colonized subject is linked to the formation of Lucy as "poor visitor" by Mariah and Lewis (Kincaid Ch. 1). Drawing from McKittrick's concepts of surprise and wonderment, which echo Barbara Christian's call for a black diasporic theoretical tradition that is "based on...the surprise that comes from reading something that compels you to read differently", this chapter's approach to marginalization, absence, presence, difference in Jamaica Kincaid's *Lucy* continues the project's investment in black diasporic reading practices that, at its core, is an orientation toward difference from the standpoint of a relation to, as opposed to a relationship with (*Demonic Grounds* 94).

While Lucy, the black Caribbean immigrant protagonist of Jamaica Kincaid's *Lucy* ponders, "How does a person get that to be that way?" over and over again, she

cleverly registers the vantage point of Lucy less concerned with categories of identity, and more concerned with the structures of inequality that make them possible (Kincaid 17). The novel shares the preoccupation with rendering consciousness, or inner selves, with Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway* and Rhys's *Voyage in the Dark*, but makes use of the rhetorical implications of that concern in another way. Organized into five sections—"Poor Visitor", "Mariah", "The Tongue", "Cold Heart", and "Lucy"—the novel reflects Kincaid's signature and effortless ability to link the particular to the general by weaving together, for example, the impression Lucy has of the weather to reflections on colonialism or capitalism. The revelations in the novel come about not through its plot but through a constant and continuous motion from the particular to the general.

Lucy's first-person narration articulates a difference but does so in way that disidentifies with Mariah (and other characters) without asserting Lucy's

blackness/Caribbeanness/womanness as subject-other to Mariah (and other characters). In

Transparent Minds: Narrative Modes for Presenting Consciousness, one of the

foundational texts on formal conventions for rendering consciousness in fiction, Dorrit

Cohn explains the "obvious and crucial differences" between third- and first-person

narration:

Even when a narrator becomes a "different person" from the self he describes in his story, his two selves still remain yoked by the first-person pronoun. Their relationship imitates the temporal continuity of real beings, an existential relationship that differs substantially from the purely functional relationship that binds a narrator to his protagonist in third-person fiction. Contrary to what one might have expected, therefore, the first-person narrator has less free access to his own past psyche than the omniscient narrator of third-person fiction has to the psyches of his characters. His retrospection depends on a fundamentally different optics: there is no magic mirror corresponding to the magic lens, only the "telescope leveled at time" of which Proust speaks, and by which he means a "real" psychological vision conditioned by memory." (Cohn 144)

The novel handles the representational and subjective impasse outlined by Cohn as follows: 1) Lucy's voice is doubled in that she both experiences the events in the novel and comments on them retrospectively; 2) Lucy's representation emerges not from either the younger Lucy who experiences challenges or the mature Lucy who reflects on them, but from a strategic interplay between them. The novel procures a type of consciousness that is less about rendering consciousness per se, and more about guiding one to re-readings from a particular subjective position that necessarily brings about surprise and wonderment precisely because of its particular relation to colonialism's signifying practices; that is, Lucy's subject position is necessarily attuned to the disjuncture between experience and representation in a way that sustains surprise in the narrative in unique ways. In intersecting the personal, mundane, intimate with the general and grandly historical through first-person narrative strategies that evoke surprise, the novel reframes Lucy's own subject position beyond just an occupation with affirming an "essence" and towards a creative practice or activity of unsettling or defamiliarizing.

Let us briefly examine one scene where the novel interrogates margin as difference to reveal the unacknowledged intimacies between Lucy's metropolitan present and her post/colonial past. In the first section, titled "Poor Visitor," Mariah and Lucy construct an identity for Lucy that is completely separate from the actual Lucy under the guise of welcoming her and making her feel at home with them. During dinner, we learn that Mariah, her husband Lewis, and their three children call Lucy "Poor, poor Visitor. ... Dr. Freud for Visitor" after Lucy refuses to laugh at a joke Lewis made which implied that Lucy was not civilized or knowledgeable about table manners (Kincaid 14). In response to Lucy's rejection of the joke, and in turn Lucy's rejection of their class

position, Lewis shares a surprisingly tone-deaf story about his uncle who, having spent years of his life raising and caring for monkeys in Canada, had grown fond of them and had "found actual humans hard to take" in an attempt to make Lucy feel at home with them (Kincaid 14); As Lizabeth Paravisini-Gebert points out, "oblivious to the racist undertone of any reference to monkeys to people of African descent accustomed to such racist comparisons, aggravated here by the reference to monkeys not being human beings, Lewis is shown as embodying a number of latent notions of racial, cultural, and class superiority" (122). I want to briefly pause on how this revelation comes about in the novel to demonstrate the novel's unique interrogations of margin as difference and its representation of Lucy as a postcolonial Afro-Caribbean subject.

The narrative does not recount Lewis's story verbatim but does stage Lucy's perspective as the story is being told: "he had told me this story about his uncle before, and while he was telling it I was remembering a dream that I had had about them. Lewis chasing me around the house" (Kincaid 14). Younger, unapologetic Lucy shares the dream: she was naked, the ground was yellow, and Mariah, watching the chase from an open window, was yelling "catch her, Lewis" (Kincaid 14). The digression to Lucy's dream, which breaks away from Lewis telling his monkey story, is surprising and displaces Lewis and Mariah as focal to the story. Furthermore, the dream is surprising in that it is unusual and conventionally shocking. Yet, unlike Lewis's strange and surprising monkey story, we learn the significance of that scene through the interplay between voice of the young, unapologetic Lucy and mature, unapologetic Lucy. At the end of the strange exchange between them—Lewis's tasteless joke, Lucy's refusal to laugh at the joke, Lewis' monkey story, Lucy's digression to her naked dream, Lewis and Mariah

calling Lucy “poor, poor visitor...Dr. Freud for visitor”—we acknowledge the strangeness of Lucy’s dream and of Lewis’s joke and story; yet we are more critical of Mariah and Lewis. Mature, unapologetic Lucy tells us the meaning of the dream from the mature Lucy: “I meant to tell them I only dream about people who are important to me” (Kincaid 14)—and we know younger Lucy did not share the meaning with Lewis and Mariah. The novel makes clear through this interplay Lucy’s “genuine desire to know them as people” and reveals how Mariah and Lewis “only pay lip service to making her part of the family” (Nichols 193). The representation of Lucy through the interplay between Lucy, who reflects, and Lucy, who experiences redirects attention to the assumption that frames Lewis’s view of Lucy and forces it to the surface of the narrative. It does so by making obvious Lewis and Mariah’s class privilege, but also by making apparent that Lucy is knows that Mariah and Lewis are not and do not have to be aware of their own class privilege.

We can examine the claims outlined above in more detail in the opening scene of section two, titled “Mariah”. The section opens with Mariah posing a question to Lucy and answering it herself:

You’ve never seen spring, Have you? ... Have you ever seen daffodils pushing their way up out of the ground? And when they’re in bloom and all massed together, a breeze comes along and makes them do a curtsy to the lawn stretching out in front of them. Have you ever seen that? When I see that, I feel so glad to be alive. (Kincaid 17)

We learn from Lucy’s mature and retrospective voice that younger Lucy, who is experiencing this moment with Mariah, thinks to herself, “so Mariah is made to feel alive by some flowers bending in the breeze. How does a person get to be that way?” (Kincaid 17) but does not ask this question of Mariah. Instead, as she ponders how Mariah gets to

be that way, she remembers something “she had forgotten” until “Mariah mentioned daffodils” (Kincaid 18). First, Mariah tells Lucy she has never seen spring and therefore does not know about daffodils. Mature, retrospective Lucy interrupts the narrative to inform readers that Mariah’s question brought Lucy to a memory about daffodils which she had repressed and forgotten. Mariah’s assertion conflicts with what we come to learn about Lucy through the dream—she does know about daffodils as she has had to memorize “an old poem” about them as “a pupil at Queen Victoria Girl’s School” on the island and “had recited the whole poem to an auditorium full of parents, teachers, and my fellow pupil. ... I had forgotten all of this until Mariah mentioned daffodils, and now I told it to her with such an amount of anger I surprised us both” (Kincaid 19). Lucy does not seem surprised by Mariah’s remark that she has not seen daffodils but by Mariah’s assured, confident and comfortable expression of daffodils as something that only renders happiness or aliveness, highlighting a contradiction between their familiarity with daffodils in a way that surprised Lucy in the text. In other words, Lucy is surprised that the knowledge of daffodils as symbolic beauty and the experience of them as such could be joined together. Lucy has not seen daffodils, but she knows daffodils having had to learn and recite William Wordsworth’s “I wandered Lonely as a Cloud”.

The memory is poignant for in how it intimates colonial education to colonial violence: she had dreamt the night before she was to recite the poem that she was being chased down by bunches and bunches of daffodils. Similar to the dream of being chased by Lewis while Mariah in section one, Braziel notes that, “Lucy's daffodil dream emphasizes the violence of colonial imposition through language, literature, even flowers” (123). The novel emphasizes this association through the mature Lucy’s

reflection that she was “then the height of my two-facedness: that is, outside I seemed one way, inside I was another; outside false; inside true” (Kincaid 18). Lucy’s consciousness, innermost, is staged as an interplay between the Lucy remembering the dream from being surprised by Mariah’s happiness at seeing Daffodils and the mature Lucy reflecting on the significance of the dream and her own surprise. In so doing, the text frames Lucy’s voice as a method of re-reading that emerges from a feeling of anger which surprised her. On one hand, her question, which does not immediately deny Mariah’s assumption, points to her surprise at Mariah’s individual peculiarity; but on the other hand, her narrative voice provides a critical distance that offers a re-reading of her thoughts through a memory that locates Lucy’s experiences, both past and present, within the larger historical framework of colonialism. In other words, both Mariah and Lucy know about daffodils, yet their experience of it is different; It is not that Lucy doesn’t know daffodils and is therefore other to Mariah, but it is that Mariah’s experience of daffodils corresponds to the knowledge of daffodils as beautiful in a way that Lucy’s knowledge of daffodils does correspond to her experience of them as such because of her colonial education.

In intersecting the personal details of a flower with the historical context of colonialism through a fusion of Lucy’s doubling voice that simultaneously maintains a critical distance, the novel unsettles the easy conflation of Lucy as subject-other into a more sustained, exploratory tension of Lucy in relation to Mariah. Kristen Mahlis tells us in “Gender and Exile,” that,

In her act of repeating the words of the English poet laureate, William Wordsworth, Lucy exhibits the false consciousness that is the hallmark of the colonized. What might otherwise seem a minor event comes to emblemize Lucy’s fundamental cultural dislocation, a dislocation of which her new exile

reminds her. At the time she recited the poem, Lucy didn't see herself as two-faced, but she reacted with an immediate, instinctual urge "to erase from my mind, line by line, every word of that poem". (18)

The novel's use of surprise and wonder in this scene—specifically, Lucy's own surprise of her actions while looking back at them—highlights Lucy's postcolonial Afro-Caribbean immigrant subject position and offers a rereading of her thoughts and her memory without pathologizing or essentializing Lucy's marginalized identity. This re-reading, which places the original question in a larger historical context, asks the same question in another way: How does Mariah, someone who *also knows* about daffodils, get to be Mariah, someone who is made to feel happy from seeing daffodils? It illuminates both the historical conditions that inform Lucy's immigrant experience and colonial education, while also establishing a critical mode of questioning in Lucy's voice that makes obvious that Lucy is aware of Mariah's positioning in a way that Mariah cannot be aware. In essence, Mariah does not have to be aware. Mariah's response to Lucy's experience, "oh what a history you have", makes clear the space between them by once again underscoring that Lucy is aware of that which structures her experience of daffodils and its connection to Mariah's own experience of daffodils.

This asking again through asking in another way is a preoccupation of black diasporic reading practices that runs through Caribbean literature's own attempts to "explain what seem[s] impossible to explain" because of its seeming paradoxical distance from and proximity to a larger historical context (source/citation). In "'Whatcha Gonna Do?': Revisiting 'Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe: An American Grammar Book': A Conversation with Hortense Spillers, Saidiya Hartman, Farah Jasmine Griffin, Shelly Eversley, & Jennifer L. Morgan," Spillers captures the power in this paradox--that is,

occupying a space already outside of position of command—to transform language in ways that rethink the issues of race, gender, and sexuality as well as their intersections.

She explores the paradox through the creative act of writing:

I wrote it with a sense of urgency, with a need to tell something that had been told over and over again? I knew that none of it was new. But what was new was that I was trying to bring the language ... And so I was trying to ask the question again, ask it anew, as if it had not been asked before, because the language of the historian was not telling me what I needed to know. Which is, what is it like in the interstitial spaces where you fall between everyone who has a name, a category, a sponsor, an agenda, spokespersons, people looking out for them?—but you don't have anybody. That's your situation. ... Though you can't talk about the era of sound in the U.S. ... the eras of slavery in the Americas without talking about black women, or black men without black women and how that changes the community—there is no subject that you can speak about in the modern world where you will not have to talk about African women and new world African women. But no one wants to address them. (Spillers 308)

Spiller's claims correspond with Maria Helena Lima's observations that "Kincaid makes clear the confusing doubleness of the colonized self who oscillates between what she sees and the images she has been fed" in her essay, "Imaginary Homelands in Jamaica Kincaid's Narratives of

Development" (Lima 862). Lima continues, "Lucy finds herself in an "expanding world" (that seems to require representation" and "for Kincaid's narrative the post-colonial protagonist is trapped within a futile but continuous process of gesturing towards the "source" of identity, towards the grounds of cultural origins, towards conflicting images of home" exposing the "impossibility of such fictional harmony" (860). I find Lima's claims that Lucy is thrust into an environment that requires representation particularly generative for thinking about Mariah's construction of Lucy's identity and Lucy's uncharacteristic, outright rejection of it. Yet, I would add that rather than simply exposing

the impossibility of harmonizing art and reality through representation, Lucy's challenges showcases what is made hidden again, or obscured, in instances of fictional harmony. Again, it is not that Lucy does not know about daffodils, but rather that Lucy knows about daffodils in way that Mariah does not have to know, thereby retaining both Lucy and Mariah as knowers whose knowledge produce different experiences. In other words, Lucy's knowing of the daffodils is a knowing *too*, not a failure at the only correct sort of knowing of daffodils. A postcolonial Afro-Caribbean feminist perspective re-reads the difference between leads to surprises—Mariah knows and Lucy knows too—that emphasizes Lucy's uniqueness in the way that it unsettles, or makes difficult, that which is made commonplace or normative through racial, gendered, sexual, economic structures of inequality. Lucy, like Mariah, knows daffodils, but the revelation of negative and painful experience of daffodils retains the awareness that what she knows of daffodils is no difference what Mariah knows, and that Lucy is aware of this gap whereas Mariah is not.

Some scholars have read this first daffodils scene between Lucy and Mariah as both the intersection of aesthetics and politics and the separation of aesthetics from politics. The focus of such readings is Lucy's anger while telling Mariah about her experience with daffodils through her colonial education—"...I told it her with such an amount of anger I surprised both of us" (Kincaid 18-19)—and Mariah's difficulty in understanding Lucy's anger as a sustained agitation—"Mariah reached out to me and, rubbing her hand against my cheek, said, 'What a history you have'" (19). In "The Daffodil Gap: Jamaica Kincaid's *Lucy*," for example, Irlin François writes that "Mariah's class background and position make her assume that aesthetics and politics are

separated” and “in the end, she is incapable of grasping the complicated dynamics of a stultifying colonial education which as forced a young girl to hold in awe a bunch of insignificant simple flowers” (Francois 89). Mariah’s inability to understand Lucy as a result of her class background, François contends, explains why Mariah plans an elaborate trip for Lucy to see daffodils later in the novel, hoping to offer her an experience of the flowers even after Lucy shares her anger at daffodils with Mariah in that first scene. Moira Ferguson, in “Jamaica Kincaid: Where the Land Meets the Body,” explains how, “Mariah cannot comprehend that Lucy’s experience of the world induces an oppositional understanding and sites her in a different place” (115). Mariah’s inability to imagine a perspective that is not hers—white, metropolitan, wealthy—leads to her brushing aside Lucy’s anger by manufacturing a second appearance of the daffodils thereby attempt to once again center herself in Lucy’s story an imposing her own narrative on Lucy.

In the first daffodils scene, we know Lucy’s hatred of the flower comes from the Wordsworth poem she was “forced to memorize at school and whose beauty she was told to assimilate without ever seeing the flowers themselves” (Oczkowicz 146). In the second daffodils scene, anger surfaces again and Mariah’s misunderstanding of Lucy’s anger, once again, demonstrates how she does not have to be aware of the space between herself and Lucy. By the second daffodils scene, it is spring and Mariah decides to surprise Lucy with the daffodils in the garden: “she removed the handkerchief and said, ‘Now look at this.’ I looked. . . . underneath the trees were many, many yellow flowers the size and shape of play teacups, or fairy skirts” (29). Jana Braziel notes in her analysis of daffodils in Caribbean women’s writing, that Mariah blindfolding Lucy mimics a kind of

colonial domination in that Mariah “has absolute control; she manipulates the events that transpire’ ... she directs her position, her vision, her knowledge. ... Mariah frames the landscape, ordering it according to her vision and her worldview” (116). Lucy’s commanding voice interrupts and brings into the forefront not necessarily her subjugation to Mariah, but the intimacy between her colonial education and Mariah’s own attempts to educate Lucy about daffodils. Mariah has not yet told Lucy that the flowers are daffodils in the story before Lucy tells the reader that she wanted to kill them in the narrative.

While looking at the daffodils, we know younger Lucy thinks, “they looked beautiful, they looked simple, as if made to erase a complicated and unnecessary idea” and learn from mature Lucy: “I did not know what these flowers were, and so it was a mystery to me why I wanted to kill them. Just like that. I wanted to kill them” (Kincaid 29). Her response is surprising in the way the novel reveals once again Lucy’s anger. Lucy does not recognize the flowers as daffodils per se, but we know that at the time, she felt the anger reminding us of Barbara Christian’s feeling as knowing which we noted earlier in “The Race for Theory”. Mature Lucy does not offer an immediate explanation but only tells us that she knew she wanted to kill them. By this point, we already know about the pain that daffodils bring up for Lucy because of the first scene, but we are surprised that she feels anger at seeing the flowers even though she does not know that they are daffodils. The anger that Lucy feels upon seeing the flowers and upon remarking on their beauty, though she has not made the connection yet, demonstrates the violence of her colonial education: daffodils as a symbol of beauty which she is well versed in having had to demonstrate her sophistication of the English language through the recitation of a poem about flowers; yet her link to the flowers, her knowledge of them, simultaneously

obscures or separates her from that tradition. The novel makes clear how the process by which Lucy first encounters daffodils *as they are* is an attempt to stabilize not only Mariah's point-of-view, but to also repeat the violent domination inherent in Lucy's colonial education by severing that link in another way. Lucy recognizes this and is aware of it, but the narrative does not immediately close up that tension through reflections and digressions.

Here she is standing in front of daffodils, not knowing that they are daffodils but feeling that she wants to kill them—a surprising moment that helps readers to link back to Lucy's earlier anger at having remembered the poem that she buried long, long ago because of Mariah's excitement at daffodils. The anger that she feels insists that she knows something too and frames Mariah's next step for what it is: an attempt to rewrite Lucy's experience from Mariah's own point of view—"Mariah said, 'These are daffodils. I'm sorry about the poem, but I'm hoping you'll find them lovely all the same'" (Kincaid 29). Immediately following Mariah's words, the mature Lucy voice interrupts and gives us access to the younger Lucy's thoughts, leading to some interesting questions:

There was such joy in her voice as she said this, such a music, how could I explain to her the feeling I had about daffodils—that it wasn't exactly daffodils, but that they would do as well as anything else? Where should I start? Over here or over there? Anywhere would be good enough, but my heart and my thoughts were racing so that every time I tried to talk I stammered and by accident bit my own tongue. (Kincaid 29)

We see how Lucy resists Mariah's approach to forming a bond between them that maintains Mariah's own form of knowledge as central and instead insists on the space between them. It is not about the daffodils, she says; it could be anything else. That awareness, from her unique subject position allows Lucy to link her experience with

Mariah to the many past historical events where the margins serve as inspiration for imagining the center-periphery binary and gets written out through colonial language. Ian Smith rightly stresses that Wordsworth and daffodils are “the repositories of a set of harsh cultural memories” that “point to a larger pattern of social and historical relations that is suggestively caught in Lucy’s question: ‘where should I start? Over here or over there?’” (814). He adds, “should she unpack the histories of European exploration and colonization, or the Atlantic slave trade, or plantation labor and society, or British rule in the West Indies and its effects, or political mimicry and chicanery in postcolonial Antigua, or the economic dependencies of newly independent nations on global financial networks, or neo-colonial realignments in the contemporary period which implicate the United States?” (Smith 814).

Instead, she accidentally bites her tongue because she recognizes that “Mariah does not and cannot share her perspective, because she is inscribed by the dominant colonizer's world” and that this moment with Mariah is simply another iteration over here or over there (Mahlis 147). We are offered this insight through a re-reading by the mature Lucy who reveals this information through questions posed by the younger Lucy in her thoughts thereby articulating Lucy’s voice vis-à-vis her dis-identification with Mariah. Younger Lucy, standing in front of the daffodils and feeling the anger, bites her tongue when she tries to talk to Mariah; yet in the narrative, we know that she recognizes the particular challenge facing her as she thinks through a series of questions that reveal not a difference between her and Mariah, but the space between them: that Lucy is aware and Mariah does not have to be aware is how the novel links Lucy’s post/colonial past to her postcolonial present and what also points to a continuation of colonial practices of

domination in new ways. That Lucy is aware that Mariah does not have to be aware of the space between them is evident when Lucy tells us, “Mariah, mistaking what was happening for joy at seeing daffodils for the first time, reached out to hug me” (Kincaid 30). Refusing to assimilate into what Mariah wants, or “Mariah’s attempts to veil the power dynamics of class and race stratification,” Lucy tells us she “moved away” and asked Mariah, “do you realize that at the age of ten years of age I had to learn by heart a long poem about some flowers I would not see in real life until I was nineteen?” (Kincaid 30) once again surprising readers to produce “a return yet again to the story of enforced learning and rote memorization of Wordsworth's poem, a story whose apparent innocuousness conceals a deep psychic wound” which reveals how art or representation, through the violence of colonial education, negatively impacts the reality of the colonized subject’s own experience (Smith 814).

What does it mean that Lucy’s knowing of daffodils brings up surprising feelings in her? Mariah’s insistence on her experience of daffodils as the only claim to knowing the flowers not only demonstrates the assumptions carried within Mariah’s perceptions of Lucy, but also underscores how Mariah’s perceptive is formalized in the way that is expected to pass without comment; Lucy’s surprise, I argue, is grounded in her own perspective but settles on the space between the idea of daffodils and the reality of them. It asks: Who which gets to lay claim to knowing daffodils and how is it deployed into this specific kind of sensibility that is granted legitimacy? And, who gets to grant that legitimacy? It seems strange to have a conversation about the political positioning of daffodils, especially when Mariah presents her connection to daffodils as her way of connecting with Lucy. And yet, Lucy holds on to the question: What does it mean to be

reminded of Spring upon seeing daffodils? What does it mean to connect Spring to daffodils? What does it mean to feel happy upon seeing daffodils? And more importantly, what is concealed or made invisible in that language of daffodils? While Lucy's insistence on what she experiences and feels is a turn inward, it is also an invitation to Mariah: "I said, 'All along I have been wondering how you got to be the way you are. Just how it was that you got to be the way you are'" (Kincaid 41). In her surprise and her refusal to let that moment past without comment, daffodils are being reoriented not to engender an intimacy that enables Mariah to identify with Lucy, but to particularize Mariah's own experience and bring attention to the space between Lucy and Mariah. It is a question that leads to strange feelings in that it reorients or defamiliarizes daffodils from the position they occupy in Mariah's life and invites her to wonder about what structures how she joins the "the idea" of daffodils to the "reality" of them in the way that she does.

By the end of the novel, in the final section titled "Lucy", the protagonist has left Mariah's house and employment. She is living with a roommate, Peggy whom she finds out is having an affair with her boyfriend, Paul. The novel offers clear indications that Lucy is, though still insisting on her isolation, attempting to affirm her space in this new world. We know that Lewis and Mariah are separated and that Lucy's move is due to Mariah "once again telling me about everybody when I told her something about myself" (Kincaid 139). We also learn that Mariah, after Lewis' departure, "spoke to me harshly all the time now, and she began to make up rules which she insisted that I follow ... for after all, what else could she do? It was a last resort for her—insisting that I be the servant and she

the master” (Kincaid 143). In this final chapter, the novel moves away from Lucy’s relationships with Mariah, her mother, Peggy, Paul, and others towards Lucy herself, her innermost or consciousness: “I am making a new beginning again,” she says (Kincaid 133). We also get a sense of how the narrative progression through the various iterations of Lucy starting from “Poor Visitor” (13), “Lucifer” (152), “Lucy Josephine Potter” (149), and ending with “one great big blur” (164)—each constituting Lucy in a particular subject position spanning from the postcolonial diasporic subject, the fallen Biblical figure, her mother’s daughter, herself, and ending with a great big blur. Since we know that “naming is a central feminist concern” (Gallop 14), it is no surprise that this chapter and its final scene have garnered close attention from scholars. *Lucy/Lucy’s* final scene is as follows:

At the top of the page I wrote my full name: Lucy Josephine Potter. At the sight of it, many thoughts rushed through me, but I could write down only this: ‘I wish I could love someone so much that I would die from it.’ And then as I looked at this sentence a great wave of shame came over me and I wept and wept so much that the tears fell on the page and caused all the words to become one great big blur. (Kincaid 164)

Close analyses of this final scene often fall back on Kincaid’s interviews and background to argue for Kincaid’s investment in crafting Lucy as an artist figure or on the feminist and postcolonial concerns with naming as an act of writing back or reclaiming. Marie Helena Lima for example points out that “when seen together” Kincaid’s characters “constitute a single bildung—that of the writer” and notes that the novel suggests that when Lucy “invents herself as an artist, her art becomes her homeland” (863). Katherine Suggs concurs that Lucy “has chosen a particular identity for herself: that of an artist living in the metropole of New York City and that of a person who cannot go “back home” (156). On the other hand, Moira Ferguson’s reads this scene as a moment where

Lucy attempts to name by adopting “Lucy, Lucifer, Josephine Potter—names associated with plantocratic lineage, slave traders, (the English Potter family), and a Western symbol of evil” (“Lucy and the Mark of the Colonizer” 253). Ferguson settles on Lucifer as a paradoxical figure through which Lucy finds her “postcolonial identity” as the “perfect Western Villain” (“Lucy and the Mark of the Colonizer” 253). As the villainous Lucifer, she is forcibly rerouted back to her other names and must abandon “her dependency on others, her compliances, her catering to them, and even her continuing resistance to old emotional ties” (Ferguson qt. Belenky et al. 83-86). This journey, Ferguson argues, explains why her name turns into a great big blur in a notebook which represents “signs of patriotism in its red, white, and blue composition,” Mariah’s last attempt to assimilate Lucy (“Lucy and the Mark of the Colonizer” 254). For Kristen Mahlis, the final scene of Lucy’s tears speaks to the feminist problem of naming or finding space in masculinist narratives of exile and diaspora. The image of the final scene, according to her, represents Lucy’s cultural dislocation and absorption of the colonizer’s cultural narratives as an effect of having been named by her mother, a woman also subjected to colonial “material scriptures of motherhood and the narrative of servitude” (183). She adds, the blurring of her name because of her tears “temporally marks both the end of the narrated story and the beginning of Lucy’s attempts to write the self” (Mahlis 183). By ending the novel in a way that underscores its conclusion as “narrative origin”, Mahlis claims that readers are finally presented with Lucy’s own struggles to narrate and must confront “the paradoxical space of female exile” in masculinists narratives.

While I find the problem of naming in this scene generative for thinking about Lucy's tensions in the West Indies and her metropolitan present, I want to close read this scene in another way. The problem with *Lucy/Lucy*, both the title of the novel and the name of the protagonist, may be that they are a figurative construction on both counts, as opposed to a difference between the two Lucys. I mean to say that the difference, beyond the obvious ambiguity of title vs. character name, may be that they are both already inscribed within the bounds of representation and therefore already have a history. *Lucy/Lucy* employed figuratively means the representation of any person whosoever as long as that representation convinces us that that person is indeed Lucy. In their literal meanings, *Lucy/Lucy* is the character's name, or the book's title. If I pursue the problem of naming not as one between the two Lucys but as the space between them, how does that change my approach to *Lucy* and Lucy? I propose that the answer points to the problem of representation itself but through a concern with the postcolonial subject.

In "Lucifer: A Fantastic Figure," Judith Lee identifies Kincaid's Lucifer as a "paradox—a light-bearer who casts intriguing shadows, a figure both fascinating and disturbing" whose "primary significance is that she calls attention to the mysterious uncertainty of our relationships, as she embraces the liminal position from which male figures of Lucifer seek release" (218). Lee's conceptualization of Lucifer, as a figure, is not unlike what the novel achieves with a fusion of narrative voice and character point of view that retains a critical distance even in its ambiguity. In the way that they disidentify from one another, the way that they deliberate do not hide the illusion of characterization/representation, the novel makes visible connections, contexts, and

histories that are otherwise unacknowledged at the level of history. The narrator-I-Lucy herself tells us:

History is full of great events; when the great events are said and done, there will always be someone, a little person, unhappy, dissatisfied, discontented, not at home in her own skin, ready to stir up a whole new set of great events again. I was not such a person, able to put in motion a set of great events, but I understood the phenomenon all the same. (Kincaid 147)

She links those who are able to “put in motion a set of great events” with those who understand the phenomenon of such an endeavor, once again drawing a difference that does not *other* but defamiliarizes, makes strange that which seems familiar. The capacity of both to unsettle and disturb is evident in both, but where one can stir up a whole new set of great events from the quiet dissatisfactions, the other cannot. The novel attempts to reframe or recontextualize that ability to understand, not as a failure to stir up whole new set of great events again, but as a capability for contextualizing the link or connection that is otherwise invisible in the leap from “a little person, unhappy, dissatisfied, discontented” to that person stirring “a whole new set of great events again” (Kincaid 174).

Though most scholars begin with a focus on the “great big blur” in that scene, I want stress the surprise of her tears and want to begin with a reading of the interplay between younger Lucy and mature Lucy in the scene. Younger Lucy tells us, “I wish I could love someone so much that I would die from it” (Kincaid 163), and from mature Lucy we learn that she wept and wept having felt shame while looking at the sentence. Her words attribute her shame to a desire to love not to be loved, something that our close readings have proven in the way that she consistently maintains her position as subject through the space between rather than otherness. In *An Aesthetic Education in the Era of*

Globalization, Spivak writes, “One can then be the subject of loving rather than, at best an object of benevolence. Lucy’s longing points to what may be an impossible book, but also may not. Perhaps. The difference between blank—an absence—and a blur—something to remake” (Spivak 369). Lucy hints at the significance of blur as something to remake, a process that defamiliarizes through re-reading and re-imagining, earlier in the text when she talks about the photography class she is enrolled in after she quits her employment with Mariah and Lewis. She says, “I would try to make a print that made more beautiful the thing I had seen, that would reveal to me some of the things I had not seen” (Kincaid 160). Beauty, here, is yoked and linked to what is concealed and hidden; what cannot be seen upon a first, second, or even third look; what can be revealed from making something anew, from being surprised by it. Just as we cannot be sure that the words which become “one great big blur” are her name which she wrote at the top of the page: Lucy Josephine Potter” (Kincaid 163), we cannot know if the story ends here. She feels and her feeling is a knowing.

CONCLUSION: Reading for Lucy, Again.

This project focused on three works of fiction by women—Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway*, Jean Rhys' *Voyage in the Dark*, and Jamaica Kincaid's *Lucy*—to build on global modernist and postcolonial understandings of *otherness/difference*. Both fields, in their own ways, offer ideas for how the politics of language and the legacy of empire animate and structure contemporary approaches to forming alliances and building community across differences. Empathy, intimacy, alienation, and exile are some of the concepts and terms that continue to dominate our contemporary climate. They are not only frames through which we apprehend how we experience the world and each other, but they condition how we form community, how we define ourselves and each other. They permeate legal, social, political, and ideological discourses and responses to the ills of our global society. Whether positively or negatively, we eagerly or reluctantly use them to articulate the difficult and illuminating role they play in how we form community. Those same words have long animated modernist and postcolonial scholarship. Beyond their thematic valence in modernist studies, they characterize modernist form as uniquely experimental and avant-garde. They help to construct or organize the artistic formal experiments of modernism under a single category: radical and therefore distinctively European. For Postcolonial literature, these terms often mark a thematic obsession, and sometimes a formal preoccupation, that is most powerfully analyzed as a distinctive feature of Caribbean literature. Yet, as terms and phrases that modernist, Caribbean, and postcolonial studies gather around respectively, there are obvious distinctions in how they are used as well as what they represent in those literary traditions. The most obvious is found in Caribbean or postcolonial formation where the

knowing, or imagining, of the postcolonial subject lies within the confines of resistance or agency.

Through the study of the literary texts, this project is a meditation on blackness which makes an argument for Afro-Caribbeanness as an orientation in and toward contemplation, study, or close examination. It does not provide fixed or universal conclusions about black people or black life. Instead, it maps a way of thinking about how blackness is invoked in traditions of criticism and expression through the idea of reading. A Black diasporic reading practice, in this project, features not only as a way of mapping meaning-making, but also a means of making meaning and of becoming. In making an argument for Afro-Caribbeanness—black diaspora—through literary texts, this study underscores its approach to Afro-Caribbeanness as an orientation toward reading, or language, that lead to re-turns to blackness. The project developed a Black diasporic reading methodology, or what I identify as the *space between*, to explore how Black diasporic literature and criticism formally engage with the problem of difference. It illustrated how such a reading methodology is uniquely concerned with and critically oriented toward reading for what is hidden or obscured in new and experimental engagements with difference and marginality. Because of the gaps produced by the experience of empire and its implications for how the Caribbean region comes to know itself and how the islands make themselves known to each other and to others, Caribbean narratives are part of a broader range of creative meaning-making forms that are unique in that they mystify, intensify, and deny any attempt at what I call *storifying* the uniqueness or difference of the Caribbean. It demonstrated how a Black diasporic reading practice, or orientation toward the space between, uncovers how contemporary critical

debates in the discourse of *difference* sustain structures of inequality even in explicit and contested confrontations with and responses to divisions across gender, culture, class, and race sowed by colonialism.

Making note of the preoccupation with what is sometimes called conventional *women's* activities in women's fictions, this project traced how the desire to represent female subjectivity in these particular texts emerged as a concern with capturing interiority/consciousness in new ways while tracking the extent to which a close analysis of that relationship/behavior in these novels can explain or challenge our views on difference/otherness. On the one hand, I demonstrated how the novels' shared preoccupation with female subjectivity emerging as a formal concern reveals an unacknowledged intimacy between them and underscores both the limits of thinking with and about their difference. On the other hand, I underscored how their unique formal approaches to the shared problem of representing the complexities of women's issues implied a distance between them that necessitated a thinking with and about that difference. In exploring these two problems as intimately linked, I read these texts alongside one another to model a probing, rather than a questioning, of the space, rather than the difference, between them. I develop this reading practice as a methodology which emerges out of closely reading Black diasporic reading practices which, I argued, modeled a particularly Black diasporic reading framework, that profoundly recontextualizes the question of alterity to one of proximity in the way that it theorizes difference as "and also". Through this reading practice, I did not map the difference between the texts; instead, I engage in an exploration of what I call *the space in between* them to trace what their forms reveal about the politics of knowledge and to underscore

what connections are yielded between things that seem to not be linked together when one reads from Black diasporic subject position. I argued that postcolonial Caribbean literature, in always theorizing the limits and possibilities of what its own form can and cannot produce, not only distinctly reveals something unique about itself, but it also produces a method of reading that is profoundly and uniquely useful for uncovering what the particular uses of other forms cannot reveal. In other words, I argued that this reading practice settles on what others avoid by exploring *the space in between* and in so doing, insists on systems of knowledge, reading practices, bodies of work, or perspectives that are thought of as other in the ways that they leave space for something to have been there *also*. In making these systems of knowledge central, foundational, and important, this framework offered a powerful way of thinking about difference outside of otherness or othering and outside of hybridity.

The novels by Virginia Woolf, Jean Rhys, and Jamaica Kincaid display an enduring modernist postcolonial, and Caribbean preoccupation: the challenge or impossibility of understanding others compounded by the problem of finding an authentic language. From loose connections to miscommunications, their novels are haunted by gatherings of characters who lack the language to communicate in ways that foster real understanding between them and are therefore alienated and isolated from one another. Woolf's heroines search for ways to foster a community of individuals with a shared language and her characters constantly struggle to express themselves to each other in meaningful ways. As Rhys's and Kincaid's heroines constantly struggle to get their stories across or interpreted accurately, they continuously suffer the trauma of being misinterpreted. Despite this shared preoccupation, representations of marginalized or

alienated women in both traditions have managed to characterize each one differently. In the modernist tradition, it is a structural/textual mode which allows for dramatizations of the language problem that in turn mark Anglo-modernism as uniquely positioned for representing character's inner lives. Alienation, in the high-modernist Anglo tradition, is invoked as a figurative resource through which the problem of language in terms of its capacity to convey reality is articulated. By contrast, alienation takes a literal sense in the postcolonial Caribbean tradition and in its dramatization, the problem of language arises and is articulated. Yet, in keeping with the Anglo-modernist tradition as the standard bearer for exploring the problem of language, alienation is analyzed as a common pathology that yokes postcolonial Caribbean fiction to the project of empire and marks its difference. The textual/structural mode of postcolonial Caribbean fiction is therefore analyzed in terms of its appropriation or adoption of modernist experimentations that are exclusively determined as Anglo-modernist

I turned to this difference in the dissertation not to draw out either positives or negatives but to think about it through thinking with a black diasporic reading practice. Beginning from the position of their proximity is to be oriented toward the discomfort, whether anticipated or unexpected, that emerges from that relation. The dissertation asked: What tools arise for imagining otherwise, for reinvention, and for doing the work of sustaining community formation beyond the current practices of intimacy and difference? How do modernist and postcolonial Caribbean texts irritate one another when we think of them in terms of proximity? Where do they rub together? In what ways do they cooperate and where do they dissociate? What lingers? If we begin and stay with the

discomfort that emerges from proximity, which lies somewhere between distance and intimacy, what do we observe?

What did we observe? For Woolf, difference is that which invokes experimentation or brings character itself to life; For Jean Rhys, it is that which isolates or alienates the protagonist; But for Kincaid, I argue, it is *that which is*. While difference animates all three texts, they do not all materialize in the same way. Kincaid's *that which is* sits uncomfortably in the movement (or oscillates) from form to content, pausing in the space between them. In *Mrs. Dalloway*, we see that while the novel's representation of Clarissa is about a particular woman in a particular class, it is also about form and its ability to forge a relationship between particular Englishwomen of different classes in new ways. In the same way, *Voyage in the Dark* is about the politics of class, it is also about a particular woman of a particular background: White *and* Creole. To the extent that difference is a thing in Kincaid's *Lucy*, it is only part of the context within which her black protagonist lives. What does it mean, Kincaid's *that which is*, to not be primarily interested in race, gender, or their *isms*, but instead with blackness/Caribbeanness, womanness, etc.? I argue that it is from the space between those ideations—race and blackness, gender and womanness—that the limits of words, communication, expression, or the self emerge in Kincaid's novel, not from the categorization of difference itself as a means of knowing. Difference is not the organizing principle of the novel, whether formally or thematically.

To expound on these thoughts, I need to return to Jamaica Kincaid's *Lucy*, Lucy, the eponymous character, chooses how we read her interactions with Mariah by reading them herself in a unique way. The novel opens with Lucy as the "Poor Visitor", a

statement made by Mariah and Lewis which inscribes Lucy in the way that they see the world. Yet, the story progresses to re-introduce Lucy to us and ends with her re-introducing Lucy to herself. “These are daffodils,” says Mariah after blindfolding Lucy and walking her to her a garden to surprise her with the flowers. Mariah’s statement is a declaration that both un-names Lucy as a knower and hides the practices of colonialism that make possible Mariah’s statement. These are daffodils removes daffodils from Lucy’s history and fixes them in the present: these *are* daffodils. Therefore, as the present tense suggests, Lucy must resign herself to whatever daffodils mean to Mariah as the only thing they can mean then and now. Surprisingly, Lucy finds a question that allows for an expression of both what Lucy inherits from her colonial past and the Lucy that could have been outside of this colonial context--“how does a person get to be that way?”. But more importantly, the question, in the narrative, functions as a device which does not agree, concede, accept, or believe Mariah’s assessment of Lucy. Lucy, like Mariah, knows daffodils too and in making explicit that “and also”, the novel imagines a different world for Lucy that is rooted an expression of her reading practices.

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