

CONSUMING IDENTITIES: CROSSCURRENTS OF TOURISM, DIASPORA, AND  
MOBILITY IN CARIBBEAN LITERATURE AND CULTURE

By

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For the struggle, to be human, Black woman, and free...

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>page</u>
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS .....	4
ABSTRACT.....	7
CHAPTER	
1 INTRODUCTION .....	9
2 RESISTING PARADISE: BAHAMIAN LITERATURE AND THE CULTURE OF A TOURIST ECONOMY .....	43
Reflections on Culture and Tourism.....	48
Junkanoo Festivals and the Production of Culture in the Bahamas.....	59
Arlene Nash-Ferguson’s Educulture and the Junkanoo Experience.....	68
Reimaginings in/of “Paradise” – (Re)writing History, Identity, and Sexuality .....	73
3 “WE HAVE SOMETHING TO TEACH THE WORLD”: ERNA BRODBER’S BLACKSPACE, BUILDING COMMUNITY AND EDUCO-TOURISM .....	103
Resisting (Neo)Colonial Discourse and Spirit Thievery in <i>Myal</i> .....	106
An Ethical and Sustainable Vision of Tourism: Blackspace and Educo-Tourism .....	123
4 THE POLITICS OF RETURN: WRITING AGAINST EXPLOITATIVE CONSUMPTION AND TOURISM.....	136
Caribbean Writers, Return, and Mobility .....	139
Resisting the Travel Guide .....	145
“The Event of Tourism” – Returning to <i>A Small Place</i> .....	151
‘So we do not forget’: Carnival, Resistance, and Return in <i>After the Dance</i> .....	163
5 AFRICAN DIASPORA TRAVEL AND IDENTITY.....	178
African Diasporic Connections: Paule Marshall, The Big Drum, and Heritage Tourism....	182
African Diasporic Politics: Audre Lorde, Black Liberation, and Revolutionary Tourism...193	
6 CONCLUSION.....	210
WORKS CITED .....	226
BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH .....	234

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In the Caribbean, tourism is the dominant industry and primary site of neocolonialism, and therefore it shapes economic realities along with national culture and identity. Caribbean writers and artists contend with the region's overdependence on the tourist industry and address the many ways that tourism continues the legacy of colonialism. Thus, the influence of tourism over national arts and culture evokes strong reactions from artists and writers. They assert a spectrum of positions: while some artists work within the tourist economy to develop alternative models of tourism consistent with their conceptions of national identity and culture, others condemn the exploitative nature of tourism by exposing the strong continuities between the racial, sexual, and gender politics of slavery and colonialism and those of contemporary tourism. Their critiques of tourism as a form of neocolonialism are in accord with the dominant view of Caribbean scholars, such as Franz Fanon, Clive Thomas, Polly Pattullo, Mimi Sheller, Cynthia Enloe, and Ian Strachan.

In order to reveal the importance of both tourism and diaspora in shaping Caribbean culture and identity, this project examines literature and activism by several Caribbean writers inside and outside the region. I interrogate contemporary Caribbean discourse, with a focus on resistance to neocolonialism found in Caribbean writers and intellectuals' direct engagement

with tourism. While the location and mobility of Caribbean writers may inform their engagement, these writers, in similar ways, resist the dominant narratives of Caribbean tourism and create alternative narratives written from the perspective of the colonized, gendered, sexualized, and racialized subject. These writers are located in the region, such as Marion Bethel, Erna Brodber, and Oonya Kempadoo; they also live abroad, like Christian Campbell, Edwidge Danticat, and Jamaica Kincaid, and include second-generation Caribbean American writers, such as Audre Lorde and Paule Marshall. Critical perspectives and new models constitute effective forms of resistance by influencing the vision and practice of Caribbean tourism. Overall, Caribbean writers illustrate what Caribbean scholars have also argued—that the histories of slavery and colonialism are intimately bound to economics, movement, and representation in the neocolonial present.

## CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

In the post-independence period, the Caribbean remains deeply affected, materially and culturally, by colonial exploitation, which manifests itself in many forms—foreign investment, globalization, transnational corporations, tourism, and cultural production, among others. As the most dominant industry in the region, tourism is one of the largest sites of neocolonialism, shaping economic realities and national culture.<sup>1</sup> Hence, there exists a strong discord between the tourist industry and national governments who invest in tourism and Caribbean producers of culture—writers and artists—who must negotiate with the region’s overdependence on tourism. Due to the extraordinary power of tourism, a large number and broad spectrum of contemporary Caribbean writers have addressed Caribbean tourism in their work, at times making it a central theme. These writers contend with the fact that tourism’s position as the leading industry across the region is unlikely to change, and they grapple with the continued legacy of colonialism found in the tourist industry. Their writing on travel and tourism in the Caribbean constitutes a critical contestation of neocolonialism, paralleling in scope and significance the foundational work of Franz Fanon’s *Wretched of the Earth* and George Lamming’s *Pleasures of Exile*. As their counterparts in the 1950s, this new generation of intellectuals is international, includes Afro-

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<sup>1</sup> Many scholars have argued that the Caribbean is still suffering from the long-lasting effects of colonialism, thereby troubling the “post” in postcolonial, and the term neocolonialism is used regularly to describe the current social/economic/political moment. A number of studies from the 1980s and 1990s demonstrate this: namely, Clive Thomas’ *The Power and Powerless: Economic Policy and Change in the Caribbean* (1988), *The Other Side of Paradise: Foreign Control in the Caribbean* by Tom Barry, Beth Wood, and Deb Preusch (1984), and Polly Patullo’s *Last Resorts: The Cost of Tourism in the Caribbean* (1996) all demonstrate the extent to which Caribbean is controlled through transnational corporations, foreign investment, and tourism. Also, see the following collections for post-independence reflections on social, political, and economic issues across the region: *The Newer Caribbean: Decolonization, Democracy, and Development* (1983) edited by Paget Henry and Carl Stone and *New Caribbean Thought: A Reader* (2001) edited by Brian Meeks and Floke Lindahl.

Caribbean Americans, and sees its literature as part of a material and political struggle for change.

These diverse writers offer a challenge to the exploitative and neocolonial dynamics of tourism in the Caribbean by exposing the strong continuities between the racial, sexual, and gender politics of slavery and colonialism and those of contemporary Caribbean tourism. I present three categories of writers and cultural activists who exemplify these concerns in their work and activism—Caribbeans located in the region, Caribbeans abroad who reside in North America, and Afro-Caribbean Americans (who identify as both Afro-Caribbean and African American). In their literary and political writing as well as in alternative tourist projects, writers in each of these positions offer new possibilities for sustainable and ethical tourism. These visions of tourism and the ways sought to resist exploitation are affected by the writers' positions—in terms of identity, location, and mobility. Caribbean writers at home operate in local markets within the socio-economic and political workings of tourist economies, while Caribbean diasporic writers abroad have access to large readerships and an international market and Afro-Caribbean American writers, with similar access, highlight shared diasporic culture. In spite of these differences, they all engage in resistance to the neocolonial relations of tourism.

While the location and mobility of Caribbean writers may inform and shape their engagement with tourism, these writers launch similar criticisms of tourism by (re)writing and resisting the typical travel narrative and creating alternative narratives written from the perspective of the colonized, gendered, sexualized, and racialized subject. Travel writing has been dominated by white men and has historically contributed to the construction of “the other”

(as primitive, native, and so on) in direct opposition to the white European colonizer.<sup>2</sup> These ideas are sustained and embedded in contemporary tourism discourses; and therefore, (re)writing the travel narrative is an important move in resisting the racialized and sexualized representations of the Caribbean and its people. Consequently, I consider writers who are directly engaged in contemporary and multifaceted critiques of tourism that are resistant to exploitative consumption. Many of these writers are women of color who challenge dominant constructions and representations by (re)working this genre and placing themselves and their characters into a white, male-dominated space. They do this by writing from the racialized and sexualized other's perspective and interrogating the neocolonial facets of tourism. These interrogations are a necessary part of resistance to exploitative consumption; hence, these writers produce postcolonial and feminist critiques of tourism as they (re)write the dominant narratives of the region's history. Furthermore, they complicate these issues by representing migratory flows, transnational movements, and consumption by different kinds of tourists (meaning, Caribbean emigrants, Caribbeans born abroad, African Americans, and fellow Caribbeans). These complicated movements, exchanges, and diasporic subjects provide necessary challenges to the dominant discourses of tourism, which are firmly rooted in the history of slavery and colonialism.

The emerging study of the relationship between tourism and diaspora studies has most recently explored in the collection *Tourism, Diasporas and Space* edited by Tim Coles and

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<sup>2</sup> Travel narratives from the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries were not only an arm of empire and the colonizing project, but they were also political and served as historical documents. Travel narratives written by Bryan Edwards, Edward Long, James Anthony Froude, William Seabrook, J.B. Moreton, Daniel McKinnen, Anthony Trollope, and Charles Kingsley, among others, were considered history books as well as books that informed the mother colony of its colonies, the colonials, planters, and enslaved people who resided there, along with the social and political landscape.

Dallen J. Timothy. Coles and Timothy assert that tourism studies have not (until recently) effectively taken into consideration diaspora communities, while diaspora studies have not fully dealt with the implications of tourism for diaspora (xi-xii). Thus, their book aims to focus on “diaspora tourism, or tourism primarily produced, consumed and experienced by diasporic communities” (1). They explain that the intention is “to concentrate on the relationship between the diasporic condition and the production and consumption of tourism for diasporas themselves rather than diasporas as exotic Others to be gazed upon” (this implies a departure from John Urry’s important work *The Tourist Gaze*) (Coles & Timothy 1). This is an insightful move for tourism studies—understanding the complexities of diaspora communities and those who have mobility and travel and/or “return” home. My contribution expands these conversations by focusing on the Caribbean as a space for African Diaspora tourism; furthermore, I am interested in “reversing” the gaze to consider how Caribbean people across the region negotiate the production and consumption of tourism.

The Caribbean is an important location for the study of the relations between tourism and diaspora because both tourism and diaspora have literally shaped the region. However, this region has diaspora communities that are sometimes as large or nearly as large as the home country, with communities in the United States, Canada, England, and Central and South America, often called the Caribbean diaspora.<sup>3</sup> These Caribbean communities outside the region

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<sup>3</sup> I use the term “diaspora” in the Caribbean context to describe the large numbers of Caribbean people and people of Caribbean parentage who reside outside the region. Using “diaspora” in this way can be seen as problematic inasmuch that diaspora generally refers to forced removal and large dispersals of people from one place to another. The Caribbean and its people are certainly part of the African Diaspora, which encompass the descendents of African peoples who were enslaved and brought to the Americas during the Trans-Atlantic slave trade, specifically what is now the United States, the Caribbean, and Central and South America. However, it is important to note that some diasporic communities may have more than one diaspora – for example, Haitian refugees and their children in The Bahamas and the United

have been vital part of Caribbean social and intellectual histories, identity formation, politics, and economics. Moreover, when Caribbeans abroad and their children travel back home for visits, these returning subjects constitute an important part of the tourist market—they are participating in tourism as ‘different’ kinds of tourists. But what does it mean to be a tourist and contribute to tourism in the Caribbean? Can someone travel to the Caribbean and not participate in the business of tourism? The tourist industry and tourist have a different significance in the Caribbean than they do in North American and European contexts because of the region’s dependence on tourism. According to the *Oxford English Dictionary* the definition of “tourist” is someone who “travels for pleasure or culture” and “one who makes a tour or tours” (OED “tourist”). Implicit in this definition is the possession of the money necessary to travel and to travel for the purpose of leisure; hence, tourists can be defined as having mobility and privilege. But what about people who travel for business purposes, to study, or return home to visit family and friends (to name only a few other forms of travel)? Similar to those who travel for pleasure, business and student travelers, along with returning subjects, have mobility and privilege (relatively speaking). Furthermore, in one way or another, they all participate in the industry that facilitates tourism, especially within Caribbean economies that are overly dependent upon tourism. The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines tourism as “the theory and practice of touring,” “traveling for pleasure,” “the business of attracting tourists,” and “providing for their accommodation and entertainment” (OED “tourism”). Many countries in the region are dominated by tourism, which consequently structures much of the national economy and infrastructure. As a result, tourism directly facilitates movement in and out of places of interest

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States or Afro-Cubans and Afro-Dominicans living in the United States. In other words, we can discuss a Caribbean diaspora while at the same time understanding it also as part of the African Diaspora.

as well as accommodations and transport in these places. This means that the business of tourism includes the operation of airlines, airports, hotels, tour companies, taxis, attractions, restaurants, marketplaces, and much more. Therefore, when traveling to places that are popular tourist destinations, whether one visits for pleasure, culture, learning, business, or visiting family, all participate in the tourist industry as “tourists” in one way or another. The label of “tourist” certainly has its share of negative connotations, and those who return home or travel for business or education may reject this designation. Nevertheless, if one travels, one is implicated in the forces of the tourist industry, particularly in the Caribbean.

My work on tourism is in conversation with two important works that specifically engage with consumption and tourism in the Caribbean context: Mimi Sheller’s *Consuming the Caribbean* and Ian Strachan’s *Paradise and Plantation*. Sheller traces the continuities of five hundred years of consumption that have sustained inequalities in the Caribbean. She argues that the region has significantly contributed to the construction of Western modernity and thereby counters the dominant contemporary and historical view that the Caribbean has been peripheral to modernity and to the “West.” Thus, Sheller “aims to demonstrate how contemporary consumer cultures are directly connected not only to the wealth generated by slavery, but also to the contemporary inequalities between the ‘underdeveloped’ Caribbean and the ‘modern West’” (3). She is therefore in support of economic and symbolic reparations as a means of redressing the vicious cycle through which the historical exploitation of the region produced the wealth that has allowed the continued unequal distribution of wealth and power in the Atlantic world (4). Thus, she considers the economic and symbolic consumption of the Caribbean by Europe and North America. These forms of exploitative consumption have depended since Columbus on an unequal access to mobility. The accumulation of wealth and power by the ‘West’, the

development of world systems of trade, production, and consumption have been predicated on this unequal access to mobility (4-5). Sheller's study makes visible the linkages between what is by definition exploitative forms consumption and mobility (through conceptions of travel—including migration, tourism, colonization, forced movement, commodity trade, and representation) by tracing movements of objects and people in and out of the region; she does this to explore the different ways 'the Caribbean' has been produced as a single place.

While Sheller's object is to analyze the "invention" of the "idea of the Caribbean" in Euro-American culture, my goal is to investigate what this "invention" of the Caribbean has meant for the production of Caribbean culture. Although Sheller acknowledges the powerful flows of popular culture, migrants, tourists, and trans-nationals that affect representations and perceptions of the Caribbean, her focus is explicitly on North American and European consuming publics. She writes to an audience that is middle to upper class European/American because she believes that these readers should know that they are implicated in and benefit from unethical consumption of the Caribbean. I complicate Sheller's work by interrogating the work of Caribbean writers and artists who explicitly engage with the contemporary politics of consumption by addressing the region's premier industry, tourism, and the effect of tourism on Caribbean culture. Because its diaspora is large and central to Caribbean identity and culture, I address Caribbeans living in the Caribbean, as well as diasporic Caribbeans who reside in North America and who have returned to the region, and second-generation Caribbean Americans.

Strachan focuses more specifically on tourism as a form of colonial legacy, and similar to Sheller, traces it back to Europe's conquest of the Caribbean. However, in contrast to Sheller who addresses a wide spectrum of forms of consuming the Caribbean, Strachan focuses exclusively on tourism. He explores the effects of tourism on Caribbean culture and identity, by

examining the links between the myth of Caribbean paradise, colonial ideologies, and economics through an analysis of literature, tourist brochures, postcards, advertisements, and historical documents. He asserts that there exists an inextricable relationship between paradise and plantation because the economic and political dependency and exploitation established during slavery and colonialism has been reproduced (and in fact continued) in the tourist industry, which depends heavily (much as the plantation economy did) on foreign investments, foreign ownership, governmental policy, monoculture economy, and imported commodities (8-9). Strachan examines the continuity in the discursive construction of the Caribbean as paradise from the time of conquest through plantation slavery to the postcolonial tourist economy (4). Strachan reveals the myriad ways writings about the Caribbean—from historiography, travel literature, and brochures to plays, poetry, and fiction—have been and continue to be entrenched in the connected material exploitation of colonialism and paradise discourse.

Strachan and other scholars such as Polly Pattullo make clear that the Caribbean has so thoroughly infiltrated the social, political, and economic landscape of the region that it is difficult to work outside or beyond its scope. This dominance and penetration of tourism is one of the main reasons why tourism is a form of neocolonialism, why its exploitations must be seen in their historical context, as the legacy of exploitation during slavery and colonialism. Sheller exposes these relations through “linking together the practices of seventeenth-century exploration, eighteenth-century scientific collection, nineteenth-century travel writing, and twentieth-century cultural representation and area studies” (7-8). Strachan identifies these relations by connecting the ways that tourism exploits and feeds on the myth of paradise which are inextricably linked to the economics and ideology of imperialism; thus, he argues, tourism

has been “shaped by the controlling metaphors ‘paradise’ and ‘plantation’, and the ideologies that have deployed these metaphors for the past five hundred years” (3-4).

Both Sheller and Strachan establish that the material elements of tourism are directly descended from the plantation and slavery, but so is the literature of tourism. Strachan in particular makes clear that the tourist brochures, postcards, posters, and other forms of literature form an integral part of paradise discourse, which share a fundamental vision of the Caribbean as a place of natural abundance, a primitive yet ‘New World Eden’ (paradise) open to Europe and North America for exploitation and profit. Sheller makes a similar argument pointing to the fundamental continuity between the visual and literary representation of the Caribbean during the rise and height of plantation slavery in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the aftermath of slavery in the late nineteenth century, and the rise of the United States as a new imperial power and tourism in the twentieth century. The details of the image and of its political significance change as the political and economic eras shift, but the fundamental idea of the Caribbean as paradise and primitive place, available for exploitation, remains constant. In other words, there is a continuum (of course marked by important distinctions) between the travel literature of the colonial eras, prior to the development of tourism in the twentieth century, and the literature developed for the tourist industry.

Whereas Strachan’s focus is on the history of these metaphors and how they operate in tourism, I focus on the post-independence Caribbean and analyzing how Caribbean people contend with and resist what he calls the “myth-reality” that tourism produces through its selling of Caribbean paradise. I interrogate contemporary Caribbean discourse, with a focus on resistance to neocolonialism found in Caribbean writers and intellectuals direct engagement with tourism. In particular, I am interested in how Caribbean writers consciously participate in travel

writing using different approaches and genres through fiction, poetry, non-fiction, and memoir. This is an important intervention because travel narratives participate in paradise discourse, which historically operated, especially during the nineteenth century, as critical documents of imperialism, economics, colonial rule, and justifications for slavery. It is no coincidence then that a number of Caribbean writers who see tourism as a form of neocolonialism would manipulate travel writing for their critiques. Moreover, these Caribbean writers illustrate what Caribbean scholars have also argued—that the histories of slavery and colonialism are intimately bound to economics, movement, and representation in the neocolonial present. As a result, the theoretical concepts employed in my project include studies of neocolonialism, postcoloniality, migration, gender, and race to work through the crosscurrents among tourism, diaspora, and mobility and their complexities manifest in Caribbean literature and culture. Furthermore, my work is firmly grounded in the established view within colonial and postcolonial criticism since Fanon’s *Wretched of the Earth* that tourism is a form of neocolonialism that embodies the stagnation of decolonization and the external dependency of postcolonial societies. In the Caribbean, it reproduces the power relations of the slave plantation; as Frank Fonda Taylor puts it, tourism is “intrinsically a neoplantation enterprise” (qtd. in Strachan 9).<sup>4</sup>

### **Tourism as a Neocolonial Enterprise**

This European opulence is literally scandalous, for it has been founded on slavery, it has been nourished with the blood of slaves and it comes directly from the soil and from the subsoil of that underdeveloped world. The well-being and the progress of Europe have

been built up with the sweat and dead bodies of Negroes, Arabs, Indians, and the yellow races. We have decided not to overlook this any longer.

– Franz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*

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<sup>4</sup> See Frank Fonda Taylor’s book *To Hell with Paradise* (1993), a history of tourism in Jamaica.

In 1960, Franz Fanon explained why resistance to colonialism was evident, but he also warned that the exploitative relations of colonialism would be reproduced after the fight for independence. This “curse of independence” would leave newly independent countries economically dependent upon Europe through capital (acquired from the colonies and built on the labor of its people) and “immense resources of coercion” (Fanon 97). As Fanon predicted, the ruling middle class or national bourgeoisie would maintain the colonial structures that served them during colonial rule. Through the process of nationalization, the middle class operates as intermediary between their governments and foreign companies (often from former colonies): “seen through its [intermediary] eyes, its mission has nothing to do with transforming the nation; it consists, prosaically, of being the transmission line between nation and a capitalism, rampant though camouflaged, which today puts on the mask of neo-colonialism” (152). If we reflect on the hardships of postcolonial countries, the many countries that remain colonized, new forms of empire, and controls through global capitalism, Fanon’s theories clearly resonate and continue to provide a framework for understanding how neocolonialism works. Insightfully, Fanon further predicts that the national bourgeoisies being swayed by the desire for indulgence experienced in the West would create “centers of rest and relaxation and pleasure resorts to meet the wishes of the Western bourgeoisies. Such activity is given the name tourism, and for the occasion will be built up as a nation industry” (153). While Fanon’s focus was on the continent of Africa, this “activity” is also evident and in full operation in the Caribbean region. As a global industry, tourism is the major national industry in the Caribbean, even in countries that promote other industries, as well as in countries that remain colonized. Fanon views tourism as an extension of colonial rule and a reflection of a national consciousness that fails to achieve true liberation or complete decolonization. Hence, this is why I describe tourism a neocolonial enterprise.

In *The Poor and the Powerless*, Clive Thomas studies economic policy and change in the Caribbean from colonial rule to the mid 1980s, and he also makes the connection between tourism and neocolonialism. He explains that the service sector, including tourism and offshore banking, was promoted by many islands in the region (after World War II) as a way to help local economies with employment and foreign exchange (144). But as Thomas asserts, the tourist industry also facilitates an outflow or leakage of foreign exchange and the adoption of “foreign-oriented policies” by Caribbean governments (pre- and post-independence), who support investment from major transnational corporations (TNCs) for infrastructural developments, hotels, tour companies, and airlines (160). Thomas traces the development of tourism in the region from 1970 to the mid-1980s, and he criticizes the economic inefficiency of the tourist industry and negative socio-political factors, such as dependence on colonial relationships, concentration on the U.S. market which has led to the region being vulnerable to U.S. foreign policies, environmental dangers, negative racial stereotypes (of tourists and locals), sex tourism, and promotion of local culture for tourism (what Thomas calls Caribbean exotica) (164-6). Economic and socio-political concerns about the tourist industry in the Caribbean fuel Thomas’ final critique of tourism and the divide it promotes between the local and the tourist:

Plush tourist facilities coexist with depressed rural areas, unemployment, poverty and urban slums. The contrast is a reminder that enclave tourism is mutually negative – negative in terms of its local impact and negative for tourists themselves. The result is that the development of the industry, at huge financial and social cost, has in the long run contributed little towards the permanent eradication of the widespread poverty and powerlessness of the West Indian people. (167)

Facilities for tourism are often in enclaves, gated off and separated from local communities (particularly on coastlines across the region), and this has increased from the mid-1980s to now with more and more hotel resorts where tourists rarely (if ever) have to leave the property. As Thomas asserts in a mid-1980s moment, the tourist industry has not helped to build long-term,

sustainable development in the region, but rather as other critics of tourism argue, its costs outweigh its benefits. Furthermore, Thomas identifies foreign ownership and control of resources, particularly evident in the tourist industry across the region as having negatively affected long-term economic growth. Tom Barry, Beth Wood, and Deb Preusch, in *The Other Side of Paradise* (1984), also examine the profound impact that foreign investment in the Caribbean has had on the politics and economies in the region. They provide an extensive overview of the international corporate investment during the 1970s and 1980s by showing how transnational corporations (TNCs) have infiltrated almost every sector of the Caribbean economy, particularly tourism.<sup>5</sup>

While some of these issues have changed and positive and more sustainable growth has occurred in different sectors since the 1980s, much of these concerns are still current today. Regional organizations such as CARICOM (Caribbean Community) and the Association of Caribbean States (ACS) strive for regional integration, and even as they explore different sectors for economic growth, tourism continues to be the primary focus for economic growth. Hence, what economists call dependency capitalism thrives in the region, and the tourist industry supports this model. Polly Pattullo's tourism study *Last Resorts* interrogates and criticizes the mid-1990s focus on tourism as the most important and only means of economic survival for the Caribbean region by its governments and leaders. Overall, she examines the effects of tourism on Caribbean culture, environment, and social relations. Her analysis of the foreign-owned, multinational hotels, and their relationships to the airline industry and tour companies

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<sup>5</sup> Barry, Wood, and Preusch also demonstrate the extent to which Caribbean people have little to no control over their own resources and economies, and it illustrates the dependency capitalism that Caribbean governments support. They also discuss the extent to which many Caribbean islands were suffering from unemployment, scarcity of food and basic necessities, and environmental/ecological problems during the 1970s and 1980s in spite of the so-called development of the region.

demonstrate the complexity involved in this pattern of external dependency (25). She argues that linkages among Caribbean countries must be forged in order to prevent leakages, which occurs when money brought in through tourism is spent on importing goods/services for the tourist industry, with an average of every 70 cents to the dollar being spent outside the region (38). Barry, Wood, and Preusch's discussion of tourism reads like a prequel to Pattullo's *Last Resorts*, in which they show that transnational corporations and foreign investors control and reap most of the profits from the tourist industry. Both of these studies assert that tour operators make profits through vacation packages, which include hotel, airfare, car rental, meals, and entertainment that are paid by tourists before they even land in the region. Studies from the 1980s and 1990s reveal the extent to which the costs of tourism ultimately outweigh the benefits, and this has continued. However, the tourist industry maintains incredible power throughout the region, with state-sanctioned ministries/boards of tourism, and regional organizations that uphold tourism as savior and ideal. Certainly, in the past ten to fifteen years, some countries in the region have done better than others; however, over-dependence on tourism remains a major problem in the region and reflects the extent to which decolonization in both economic and cultural terms has not been fully realized in the Caribbean.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> I engage in the question of decolonization with full awareness that several countries in the Caribbean remain colonized (i.e. overseas colonial territories of Britain, territories of the United States, overseas departments of France, and the Netherlands Antilles). Moreover, I discuss this issue knowing the complexities of the Spanish-speaking Caribbean and the wars over island-territories, particularly from the late 1600s to the 1800s, among European colonial powers and the United States as a neocolonial power; Spain lost several of its territories to Britain and France, and then to the United States during the Spanish-American war (Cuba and Puerto Rico). Finally, it is important to remember that Haiti fought and won its independence from France in 1804 and the Dominican Republic gained its independence from Spain in 1844, yet both of these countries experience neocolonialism in similar ways to its colonized and independent neighbors. However, most of my dissertation deals directly with the Anglophone Caribbean (with some discussion of Haiti), and as a result the independence and post-independence periods I discuss

A number of post-independence studies have emphasized that the Caribbean continues to be effectively colonized through neocolonial economic relations, but they also explain these neocolonial relations are reinforced through cultural colonization. Paget Henry and Carl Stone's edited collection *The New Caribbean* includes several essays that posit the process of decolonization not leading to more economic, political, or cultural control.<sup>7</sup> More specifically, Trevor Farrell argues in his essay "Decolonization in the English-Speaking Caribbean: Myth or Reality?" that the English-speaking Caribbean "remains essentially colonized" and what has changed is the form, mechanisms, and agents of colonization (5). He asserts that dynamic changes are and will continue occurring in the region, but decolonization remains a myth that is bound up in international relations—American global power, capitalisms, and political and economic developments. By measuring contemporary Caribbean reality with that of the colonial condition, Farrell explains that the Caribbean has little control over its own resources, movement, and development (6-7).<sup>8</sup> He asserts that the economy of the Caribbean is deeply and

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refer to the 1950s to the present. Nevertheless, the major concerns of this project (tourism, neocolonialism, diaspora, and mobility) are regional concerns.

<sup>7</sup> Some theorists may argue that global capitalism and new forms of colonialism and imperialism are more far reaching than the postcolonial and colonial world. Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri theorize about the new global form of sovereignty they call Empire. They argue that this new Empire and its processes of globalization are distinct from imperialism because it has no fixed boundaries or territorial center of power (xii). This has everything to do with the workings of the global economy and capitalism: "today nearly all of humanity is to some degree absorbed within or subordinated to the networks of capitalist exploitation" (43). But they do acknowledge certain colonial and imperial structures still in place within Empire: "the geographical and racial lines of oppression and exploitation that were established during the era of colonialism and imperialism have in many respects not declined but instead increased exponentially" (43).

<sup>8</sup> For true decolonization to occur, Farrell posits that (1) a country must have real control over its own resources and dynamics and (2) "it should mean the restructuring of social relationships, the abrogation of the grosser forms of class differentiation, and the opening up of the economic and political system to genuine popular participation and shared control by all the people" (6). He adds to this that decolonization cannot mean "the exchange of white overseers for black

extensively controlled by transnational corporations even though it appears as if localization has occurred (examples include Jamaica's bauxite industry, Trinidad & Tobago's oil industry, and the entire region's agricultural sector). This clearly resonates with the studies done in *The Other Side of Paradise*, *The Poor and the Powerless*, and *Last Resorts* (among others). Farrell is also concerned with the extensive cultural and psychological colonization that he argues still marks the post-independence Caribbean (11). Similarly, Paget Henry argues in his essay "Decolonization and Cultural Underdevelopment in the Commonwealth Caribbean" that we must consider the distorted consciousness of colonized people and places because just as colonization uproots economic and political institutions, it also disrupts cultural institutions. Utilizing Fanon's theories of colonization, Henry explains that the colonizer's social definition of the colonized distorts the colonized consciousness. Therefore, in order for any real or comprehensive decolonization to take place, Henry posits that cultural institutions must also be decolonized. While focusing on the cultural institutions of the Anglophone Caribbean, he argues against the divide between cultural and structural explanations of "underdevelopment" because culture and societal structures (political and economic) are inextricably connected and therefore affected by colonialism in what he calls the neocolonial period. Thus, he sees no real decolonization occurring in the region because of the disruption of decolonization and the onset of neocolonialism through structural imbalances, foreign control, and cultural dependency. Although Henry does not reference tourism as a part of neocolonialism, all of the structures implicated are directly fueled by the tourist industry.

Tourism is one of the most powerful conduits of neocolonial exploitation because the tourist industry not only thrives on foreign investment, thereby affecting economic and political

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ones" or "white brutality, repression, insensitivity and arrogance for black brutality, repression, insensitivity, and arrogance" (6).

structures, but it also drastically shapes the socio-cultural landscape of the region because of continued cultural colonization and the effects of slavery and colonialism on Caribbean identity. More specifically, tourism reproduces the destructive psychology and race (and gender) dynamics of slavery and colonialism. Pattullo locates this reproduction especially in tourism awareness and training programs that promote service attitudes such as “smile, please” and “be nice to tourists” because of concerns over “indifferent service” by workers to visitors/tourists (61-72). This “indifferent service” is approached in varying ways by the tourist industry; on the one hand, service is described in brochures as “laid back” and a “slow pace of life” that tourists should enjoy, but on the other hand, it is a problem that Caribbean locals must fix to ensure tourism growth and return visitors (62). Considering the majority of workers are Black and a large number of tourists are white (although tourists are increasingly heterogeneous, which I discuss later), Pattullo argues:

at a more profound level, this issue is not just about different approaches to service, but also about the unequal and racist historical relationship between blacks and whites. The parameters of this issue have to some extent been ignored by tourist administrators. Instead, the problem of the encounter has been approached pragmatically, as an education exercise in which the burden and learning process have been placed on the Caribbean national rather than on the tourist. (62)

In other words, interactions between tourists and locals are complicated because of the long history of slavery and colonialism in the region. But the tourist industry and state-sanctioned support of tourism focus the blame and burden of attitude change on the local worker. This reinforces unequal relations of power between tourist and local, particularly when tourists are white and local workers are Black. Hence, Pattullo’s explicit connection between tourism and the legacy of slavery: “Many of the ‘problems’ associated with the tourist industry stem from slavery and colonialism, this folk memory lingering in the shadow of every encounter: that black people have served white people for hundreds of years, and that before they did it for a wage,

they did it under servitude” (63). Certainly, as Pattullo references, others have made a similar claim about the connection between slavery and tourism, such as Frantz Fanon, V.S. Naipaul, and Jamaica Kincaid, among other writers and intellectuals including artists, historians, scholars, and economists. Strachan and Sheller, among other critics of tourism, also discuss the legacy of slavery and colonialism found in the tourist industry.

This legacy runs through tourism in economic, socio-political, and cultural terms; therefore, it manifests itself from the larger economic and political systems into the everyday. Strachan argues tourism is an offshoot of the plantation system because “the plantation laid the economic, political, cultural, and social groundwork that has enabled tourism to function so effectively in the Caribbean. As an institution of colonization, the plantation established a political and economic dependency on the metropolitan centers that tourism merely extends” (9). The tourist industry reproduces this dependence because there are no alternative political or economic structures to create the tourist product of “paradise” being consumed by (mostly), as Sheller puts it, North American and European consuming publics. In similar ways Pattullo and Strachan highlight the notions of racial superiority of whites and class divisions from slavery that are sustained through tourism as tourists consume a “paradise” and lifestyle that the majority of Caribbean locals do not have. However, all tourists are not all white—visitors to the Caribbean are increasingly heterogeneous with large numbers of African American tourists (and other African Diaspora tourists), who may have different images of the Caribbean, but they have “paradise” fantasies and expectations like their white counterparts (Strachan 11). The different images are grounded in historical and cross-cultural connections between Afro-Caribbeans and African Americans and the region as a model of Black liberation and resistance. Nevertheless, Strachan suggests that many African American tourists (much in the same way as white tourists)

are able to exploit and consume the Caribbean through not only their American privilege and dollars, but also stereotypical constructions and sexualized fantasies of Caribbean Black people that began during slavery (13). Therefore, we must begin to interrogate how the construction of “paradise” is so powerful a fantasy (and tourist product) that ‘different’ kinds of tourists (including African Diaspora tourists and fellow Caribbeans) regardless of race, gender, or nationality can (but certainly not always) participate in exploitative consumption of the Caribbean.

### **Tourism, Mobility, and Consuming Culture**

Even if the people of the Caribbean are being held in place and relegated to the immobile labour pool of ‘the South’, Caribbean people, culture, and ideas continue to leach across the border and cannot be kept out. ... The movements of goods and ideas are tightly connected with the movements of people and their attachments. Decisions made about economies of production, consumption, and trade have deep implications for economies of culture, emotion, and identity.

- Mimi Sheller, *Consuming the Caribbean*

As Sheller asserts, the Caribbean has been consistently consumed by Western European and North American publics for the past five hundred years, including “the natural environment, commodities, human bodies, and cultures” (3). This historical consumption of the Caribbean has contributed to various movements and mobilities of people and objects through the colonial and postcolonial period in the Caribbean. However, Sheller posits that “with the mobility of some, comes the production of the immobility of others” (30). This is most evident in the tourist industry, with the mobile tourist and the (mostly) immobile local worker; but as Sheller indicates, these mobilities and immobilities are complicated given the long history of migration of Caribbean people, ideas, and culture across the region and outside the region. As a result, the Caribbean has long been transnational and global, and as Michel Rolph-Trouillot suggests in *Global Transformations*, tourism and travel was a “globalizing” force long before the term

“globalization” came into being because of the Transatlantic Slave Trade with its “massive flow of goods, peoples, information, and capital across huge areas of the earth’s surface in ways that make the parts dependent on the whole” (47). By understanding these earlier global flows and “the silencing of the past on a world scale,” Trouillot argues that we are in a better position to see the present and silences that continue, and “we may realize that some of these silences are deliberately and cynically produced” (47-8). In other words, the silences about the global nature of slavery and colonialism help sustain what Trouillot calls “globalitarism,” “a dominant ideology of our times that aims to produce the teleology of the market as the new master narrative of Western modernity” (48). If we accept the argument that globalization has definitive beginnings during the early colonial period, then we must consider what these global flows have meant in the construction of our present; and as Trouillot argues, we must uncover the silences of the past in order to understand our present. This is what I see a number of Caribbean writers and scholars doing in their critiques of tourism and resistance to neocolonialism—they are (re)writing the past and dismantling the production of silences. They do this by engaging in and representing movement, migration, and mobility/immobility in the face of tourism and neocolonialism. As Sheller argues, these global flows and “apparent freedom of travel” are created through boundaries and asymmetric mobility, “binding people, places, and meanings in place” (30). Tourists can only experience and consume the constructed fantasy of Caribbean paradise if it is fixed in place, for instance through the hotel and its service staff, who may be in close proximity to tourists but always at a distance in “their place” of servicing tourists needs/desires. Moreover, workers in the tourist industry cannot leave the region as easily as tourists can. Therefore, boundaries or the “binding mobilities of consumption” facilitate tourism, which results in not only the consumption of service and products, but also people (Sheller 30-1).

Tourism constitutes a notion of “eating the other,” what bell hooks describes as the commodification and consumption of “the other” in a contemporary moment in which she fears that “cultural, ethnic, and racial difference will be continually commodified and offered up as new dishes to enhance the white palate—that the Other will be eaten, consumed, and forgotten” (39). Sheller uses this notion in order to describe what she sees as the “eating of others,” defined as “the body to body relations of ‘pleasurable’ consumption which lead to the actual bleeding, illness, dismemberment, or death of particular, embodied, others” (Sheller 145). In poignant examples of the consumption of bodies from slaves to service workers and sex workers in tourism (also in medical research and experiments particularly in Haiti), Sheller analyzes this “eating of others” in terms of commodity consumption and “the actual material relations through which bodies in one place unethically touch bodies in another place” (148). The tourist industry is a major site of contact for unethical consumption supported through both global flows and binding mobilities. Hence, there are “a number of ways in which the violences of the master-slave relation and the eroticised politics of colonial domination continue to inform contemporary practices of tourism, immigration, and relations between nations” (173). Sheller asserts the concept of ‘eating others’ in the proximity between bodies and nations, where “the Northern consumer’s desire to get close to exotic others in the Caribbean, and to seek out pleasures of excess consumption, operates to reconstitute boundaries of difference between dominant and subordinate positions” (173). In other words, the legacy of slavery and colonialism are reenacted through the “boundaries of difference” that tourism helps to produce and sustain. Therefore, the Caribbean space continues to be used, abused, and devoured as a major resource and conduit in the production of knowledge, power, and capital for the West (Sheller 202). Sheller’s tracing of this clear history of unethical consumption and the embodied relations that exist between the

Caribbean and North America/Europe—from slavery to service, working bodies in tourism, objectified as edible commodities and sexual objects (and on the flip side as dangerous bodies and disease vectors)—assists in the unsilencing of the past, as Trouillot asserts, we need in order to understand the complexities of the present. More specifically, as we uncover these disturbing and exploitative forms of consumption in tourism, we can then understand and analyze how they deeply influence identity and culture across the Caribbean.

Caribbean scholars, such as Kamala Kempadoo, Denise Brennan, and Julia O’Connell Davidson, among others, working on sex tourism are also doing the work of uncovering one of the most exploitative forms of consumption, which remains for the most part silenced in much of public discourse inside and outside the region. Similar to Sheller, Jacqueline Sanchez Taylor in “Tourism and ‘embodied’ commodities: Sex Tourism in the Caribbean” argues that it is through the construction of difference, the objectification of sexualized and racialized others, and playing out of racist and gendered colonial fantasies that tourists can participate so easily in the consumption and sexual exploitation of Caribbean people (41-2). Furthermore, she asserts that both male and female sex tourists (in spite of race, gender, age, socio-economic status, or nationality) “derive power from a framework of real racialized and gendered inequalities which are written on the body” (50). This power is connected to the mobility of tourists as well as the stereotypical notions of difference that are bound to the racial, sexual, and gender politics of slavery and colonialism. Sanchez Taylor posits that “the commodification of ‘difference’ makes it possible for sex tourists to construct and consume ‘Others/Otherness’, while the commodification of Blackness encourages locals to sell tourists different forms of ‘embodied racisms’” (51). Moreover, even if tourists are not seeking sex, these constructions and selling of difference are still tied to the tourist industry and the embodied and asymmetric relations of

tourism. As Sanchez Taylor suggests, these issues are even more disconcerting once we consider the ways in which Caribbean countries are pressured by global markets and world financial institutions to use tourism for economic development, particularly when the tourist industry has been built upon and relies on racialized, sexualized, and gendered images (51). As long as the selling of difference continues, it will be very difficult to create new frameworks or alternative models of tourism that are not entrenched in racism, sexism, and embodied consumption.

Across the region, Caribbean scholars and professionals have developed and continue to research alternative models of tourism; however, many of these are focused on economic sustainability, and at times cultural and environment preservations but not ethical relations. (Sex tourism is often left out of these developments, but it is always implicit in advertisements, brochures, and other promotional materials for Caribbean tourism).<sup>9</sup> Heritage and cultural tourism is by far the most popular, with some countries in region delving in this model from the 1970s; while other forms of community-based tourism, such as eco-tourism, have garnered more attention as consumers demand a different tourist product and Caribbean nations seek economic sustainability. Some of these models have been developed as an alternative to mass-market tourism focusing on an integrated market and community benefits. Pattullo discusses the alternative models developed in the 1970s: Michael Manley was arguable the first to develop such a model of “new tourism” in Jamaica that attempted to change the exploitation in the industry by challenging top-down management and the racial dynamics in tourism in 1972; and in 1979, Maurice Bishop during the Grenadian revolution posited regional linkages and a “new tourism” that would benefit local communities directly (Pattullo 204). These models were

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<sup>9</sup> While I may not discuss sex tourism in each chapter of this study, it is important to note that all of my analyses of tourism implicitly deal with sex because it is ever-present in travel and tourism discourses, as it was historically in the discourses of slavery and colonialism.

ultimately destroyed because they attempted to operate outside of the global market, which sustains dependency capitalism and neocolonial structures across the region. It seems that the “success” of alternative models of tourism depends upon a balancing act by countries who must negotiate the needs of tourists, foreign investors, tour operators, policy makers, communities, and governments across the region (Jayawardena xiv). The recent collection edited by Chandana Jayawardena titled *Caribbean Tourism* (the final of a triad series) highlights this issue, while it calls for tourism that is “more than sun, sand, and sea.” This collection focuses on special interest tourism in four categories: community and ecotourism, agro-tourism, heritage and cultural tourism, and events and sports tourism. While most of the essays are in full support of tourism, they also advocate for more efficient and sustainable tourism that will benefit Caribbean communities in economic terms, with a few essays being critical of exploitative consumption. While the collection takes into account earlier critiques of mass tourism, the major concerns are economic and political and very rarely engage with the social and cultural landscape of the Caribbean and how exploitation affects Caribbean identity.

While I think this research bodes well for creating more economically sustainable forms of tourism, I am concerned about the ways in which these special interest tourist products can also be exploited and that national culture can be shaped to please tourists, while sex tourism is often ignored. Therefore, even as I explore heritage and community-based tourism along with other alternative forms of tourism, my study remains critical of heritage and cultural tourism and concerned about sex tourism specifically because, culture, bodies, service, and products can so easily be consumed and exploited together. The Caribbean space becomes a consumer commodity as the islands, cultures, products, and services in “paradise” are packaged and sold to the extent that Caribbean residents have less and less access to the resources that are readily

available for the tourist industry. Furthermore, with the growing popularity of heritage and cultural tourism, the industry facilitates the funding of celebrations, festivals, and other cultural activities, which in turn dramatically affects and shapes cultural production. Many festivals and celebrations, such as Trinidad and Tobago's Carnival, The Bahamas' Junkanoo Parade, Jamaica's Sunsplash and Sumfest, and Carriacou's Big Drum, among others, are performances that honor the African roots in Caribbean cultures, but they are also being (re)produced for the consumption of tourists. Other festivals and cultural activities are fabricated and produced directly for the tourist industry; for example, Barbados' Crop Over Festival, the Bahamas' Junkanoo Summer Festival, among others, that use elements of traditional celebrations and shape it into a tourist product. Also, Caribbean people and bodies are being commodified in the production of cultural performances and local/tourist interactions, where the racialized and sexualized other is desired for both culture and sex. These relationships and exchanges become even more complex given the production and performance of Caribbean (often read as Black) culture for tourism where such representations may be taken as "authentic" or "real" Caribbean (Black) experience. At the same time, these representations and cultural productions directly contribute to and shape contemporary Caribbean identities.

In her discussion of heritage and culture in tourism, Pattullo describes Jubilation, a cultural show at Crystal Palace in the Bahamas (from the mid 1980s to the early 1990s), and she argues that it reveals two polarities of cultural expression: one formal, foreign-driven for tourists, and the other second informal display of local creativity. She concludes that "in many instances, tourism has bred cultural decline despite the efforts of those who are attempting to reclaim control" (179). She explores how different countries are reclaiming culture and identity not only for local communities but also to expand tourism: "The most recent struggle for the Caribbean

has been both to nurture its indigenous art forms, to create and perform for its own peoples, amid the demands of tourism, while at the same time finding imaginative ways of ‘using’ tourists as patrons rather than being used by them” (179). She analyzes what she calls a new dynamic at the points where tourism and Caribbean culture are interacting. It is through these interactions that I place the complex (re)production and at times fabrication of Caribbean cultural production, which has become an important part of the Caribbean tourist product more so today than it was during the 1990s. Pattullo highlights concerns over “authenticity” and how it plagues “tourists shows” all over the world, but then she goes on to reveal how different Caribbean nations are reclaiming their own identity, heritage, and culture in this process. But I am suspicious of the process and what kinds of identities, heritages, and cultures are retained, promoted, and fabricated for tourism, which is then also consumed by Caribbean people. Nevertheless, I agree with Pattullo’s assertion that certain festivals and productions can retain and celebrate cultural identity while also attracting tourist dollars, such as Junkanoo, Sunsplash, and Carnival.

The performance of Caribbean festivals for the tourist market has great significance because such cultural performances are part of the process of forging national identity, but we must question this process because tourism affects culture and identity. Stuart Hall posits that identity is a “‘production’ which is never complete, always in process, and always constituted within, not outside, representation” (392). Therefore, the term “cultural identity” itself (and by extension national identity) is troubled in terms of “authenticity” or authority. Hence, he argues that cultural identity is a matter of being and becoming seen in two different ways—the first as one shared culture reflecting common historical and cultural experiences which must be rediscovered, reproduced, and uncovered, and the second as recognizing similarities along with deep and significant points of difference: “We cannot speak for very long, with any exactness,

about ‘one experience, one identity’ without acknowledging its other side – the ruptures and is continuities which constitute, precisely, the Caribbean’s ‘uniqueness’” (394). While he finds the first way (shared culture) crucial, he positions the second way of defining cultural identity (ruptures and differences) as being the only way “we can properly understand the traumatic character of the colonial experience” (394). In other words, cultural identity for African Diasporic subjects in the Caribbean must deal with both continuities and differences for understanding the past in the present. Hall argues that this process is imperative because Caribbean people have been made to see and experience themselves as ‘Other’ through the dominant regimes of representation, which has the power to make people subjects. Perhaps this is why Hall sees identity as produced within representation, and furthermore why cultural identity is both being and becoming. To put it another way, Caribbean cultural production (read as Black) in terms of representation has the power to produce subjectivities. Consequently, while we can conceptualize identities as fluid and in motion, we must also be critical of how culture is being produced for the tourist industry because these representations and (re)productions are linked to cultural identities across the Caribbean and in Caribbean migrant communities abroad.

In order to create truly sustainable and ethical relations in the tourist industry, we must continue to trouble and vex the “silences of the past” and do the work of dismantling interlocking systems of oppression in terms of race, gender, class, and sexuality within and outside the region. Meanwhile, as Pattullo and other tourism scholars and critics argue, the Caribbean needs sustainable development of tourism that moves away from the mass tourism model and external dependency and searches for regional solutions and linkages (206). Community-based forms of tourism, which can include eco-tourism and heritage tourism, are considered the closest model in

theory and practice to sustainable and integrated forms of tourism. Caribbean tourism is certainly in need of change, especially if it continues to be upheld as the only path to economic growth and benefits neocolonial interests over the majority of local people, changes must continue. Moreover, serious transformation of tourism on a social and cultural level would require responsible and ethical models that are locally-led, which at the same time, do not exploit Caribbean cultures or people. But how can this happen given that tourism is structured through neocolonialism and global capitalism and thus feeds on interlocking systems of oppression like racism, sexism, homophobia, classism, and xenophobia?

### **Gendering Tourism and its Criticisms**

In *Bananas, Beaches, and Bases*, Cynthia Enloe posits a radical analysis of international politics, including tourism, which reveals how much this landscape is affected by the politics of race and gender. She argues that “from its beginnings, tourism has been a powerful motor for global integration. Even more than other forms of investment, it has symbolized a country’s entrance into the world community” (31). This has been particularly true for poor countries in the “Third World” with tourism being the main formula for “development” and “progress.” Similar to other critics of tourism, Enloe highlights the way tourism replaced the “one-commodity dependency” of the plantation economy across the Caribbean with “a new kind of dependency” that many poor nations hope will get them out of debt (32). But Enloe exposes how the tourist industry depends on constructions and representations of the Caribbean in gendered terms:

this belief in the logic of fueling development and economic growth with tourism underlies the full-page color advertisements in the Sunday supplements. Many of those ads luring travelers to sunny beaches and romantic ruins are designed and paid for by government tourist offices. Most of the bureaucratic agencies depend on femininity, masculinity, and heterosexuality to make their appeals and achieve their goals. Local men in police or military uniforms and local women in colorful peasant dresses – or in very little dress at all

– are the preferred images. The local men are militarized in their manliness; the local women are welcoming and available in their femininity. (32)

Promoting and selling the tourist product, then, relies on Caribbean “paradise” not only being both fantasy and real, it also relies upon normative notions of gender and heterosexuality to fuel the tourist economy. Therefore, in formulating critiques of tourism, these articulations of gender and sexuality must also be taken into account from the advertisements and commercials promoting tourism to the cultural productions showcased and reproduced for tourists. The institutions of slavery and colonialism shaped and depended upon constructions of gender and race to sustain inequity and domination; similarly, tourism and neocolonialism rely upon these notions of gender, race, and sexuality. In fact, Enloe argues that tourism as we know it would not survive without sexism and patriarchy:

Without ideas about masculinity and femininity – and the enforcement of both – in the societies of departure and the societies of destination, it would be impossible to sustain the tourism industry and its political agenda in its current form. It is not simply that ideas about pleasure, travel, escape, bed-making and sexuality have affected women in rich and poor countries. The very structure of international tourism needs patriarchy to survive. (41)

Patriarchy, notions of maleness and femaleness, along with the policing of gender in heteronormative ways sustain global inequalities and oppressions. The global tourist industry in its present state relies upon these systems because it is part of the global capitalist market. Nevertheless, as Enloe insists, the world has been made, hence it can be unmade, changed, and transformed. My aim in this project is to study the ways in which Caribbean writers and artists are changing and transforming the way we think of tourism and neocolonialism in the Caribbean by exposing the continuities between the racial, sexual, and gender politics of slavery, colonialism, and tourism. Their critiques of tourism and (re)writing of history (or in the words of Trouillot, unsilencing the past) constitute fundamentally important contributions to the Afro-Caribbean tradition of resistance.

This work should be understood as vital resistance to the ways in which Caribbean people and identities are influenced by tourism, most often through state-sanctioned ministries of tourism who (along with foreign companies) produce certain stereotypical, racialized, sexualized, and heteronormative images of the Caribbean for the tourist product. These images found in tourism discourses are rooted in the history of slavery and colonialism. Therefore, resistance must necessarily be engaged with the (re)writing of the dominant narratives of history because these are central to understanding the present and envisioning a better future. In *Culture and Imperialism*, Edward Said argues that “post-imperial writers of the Third World” must “bear their past with them” because revisions of the past work towards a “post-colonial future” (212). As Said suggests, this is more than reinterpretation:

In a totally new way in Western culture, the interventions of non-European artists and scholars cannot be dismissed or silenced, and these interventions are not only an integral part of a political movement, but in many ways the movement’s *successfully* guiding imagination, intellectual and figurative energy reseeing and rethinking the terrain common to whites and non-whites. For natives to want to lay claim to that terrain is, for many Westerners, an intolerable effrontery, for them actually to repossess it unthinkable. (212)

Said describes these interventions as resistance and a major theme of “resistance culture” in the “Third World” is the “cultural effort to claim a restored and invigorated authority over a region” (212). Caribbean writers and scholars have since the independence periods participated in “resistance culture” and laid claim to territory and guided the imagination and the “intellectual and figurative energy” of the movement. Moreover, contemporary Caribbean writers, scholars, and artists who critique tourism have continued this tradition of resistance by (re)writing the past for the present and uncovering the relations between the racial, sexual, and gender dynamics of colonialism (and slavery) and neocolonialism (and tourism).

Caribbean writers and cultural workers located in the region must contend directly with state-sanctioned ministries of tourism, and hence, they develop ingenious ways of negotiating a

neocolonial terrain. On the other hand, diasporic Caribbean writers located outside the region do not have to contend with the same challenges in terms of their literary production but are equally as critical. In chapter one, “Resisting Paradise: Bahamian Literature and the Culture of a Tourist Economy,” I study the literary and cultural production of the Bahamas because it is one of the most tourism-dependent countries in the region and one of the first countries to develop a tourist industry. This chapter combines an analysis of interviews with workers in the tourist and culture industries, the national festival Junkanoo, and selected literary works by Bahamian local writer Marion Bethel and Bahamian diasporic writer Christian Campbell in order to explore the profound affects tourism has for contemporary writers and artists. Some cultural workers and artists work inside or with the tourist industry to produce viable national culture and alternative tourism models, specifically the educator and cultural activist Arlene Nash-Ferguson; while others particularly writers, who do not directly depend on tourism, criticize the industry more directly. I include both a local writer and a diasporic writer in this discussion of the local Bahamian space because they both are critical of Bahamian tourism and deal explicitly with the racial, gender, and sexual politics of travel and tourism. Moreover, I found it thematically and strategically important to keep these two Bahamian writers together because they both resist paradise discourse, which is deeply entrenched in the Bahamian tourist economy and cultural production, and colonial and neocolonial exploitation. Chapter two, titled “‘We Have Something to Teach the World’: Erna Brodber’s Blackspace, Building Community and Educo-Tourism,” follows the first chapter’s analysis of local Caribbean spaces. By considering the multifaceted approach to challenging neocolonialism through writing and activism, this chapter explores the local Jamaican writer, activist, and scholar Erna Brodber, whose work combines the critique of tourism as a form of colonial oppression (similar to Bethel and Campbell) and the production of

an alternative tourist product (comparable to Nash-Ferguson). I bring together her critique of travel and U.S. imperialism in the novel *Myal* along with her activism in creating an ethical and sustainable tourism venue called Blackspace, located in Brodber's home village of Woodside in rural Jamaica. Blackspace is an "educational-tourism" site that focuses on the effects of slavery on people of African descent through several events before and on Jamaica's Emancipation Day. Brodber maintains critical views of tourism even as she works within the tourist industry and encourages ethical exchanges between locals and tourists.

In order to further explore the similarities of tourism critiques among writers inside and outside the region, the last two chapters focus on Caribbean writers in the United States and Afro-Caribbean American writers who directly engage with travel and tourism in the Caribbean. In chapter three, "The Politics of Return: Writing against Exploitative Tourist Consumption," I analyze Afro-Caribbean women writers who reside in the United States and make a significant contribution in challenging exploitative consumption in their literary works through narratives of return. They do this by using their mobility and prominence in North American literary markets to inform potential tourists and fellow Caribbeans abroad of the injustices of the tourist industry. Jamaica Kincaid directly confronts and criticizes the tourist industry in her satirical essay/memoir *A Small Place*; while Edwidge Danticat participates in and critiques the tourist industry with her travel guide/memoir *After the Dance*. Kincaid and Danticat both offer postcolonial critiques of tourism that resist the history of colonial control and exploitation that manifests itself in the Caribbean tourist industry. In chapter four, "African Diaspora Travel and Identity," I compare Afro-Caribbean American writers, with comparable status to Caribbean diasporic writers in terms of location and mobility, who pose similar challenges to neocolonial discourse and the tourist industry by also creating alternative travel narratives. Paule Marshall

and Audre Lorde both seek a spiritual home in the Caribbean through Grenada and Carriacou, thereby positing a sustainable model of African Diaspora travel and heritage tourism. I analyze Marshall's fictional work and representation of African American Diaspora tourism, while I trace Lorde's literal return as a revolutionary tourist to the Caribbean through her literary and political writings. Marshall and Lorde's criticisms and alternative narratives work on an African diasporic level of building solidarity and movement cross-nationally and culturally.

In the concluding chapter, I complicate this African diasporic travel position by discussing the (sexual) consumption of Blackness within intra-Caribbean travel. In the novel *Tide Running*, Indo-Caribbean British writer Oonya Kempadoo represents intra-Caribbean travel and sex tourism through the story of a Trinidadian woman who mimics North American and European touristic exploitation of the Caribbean in Tobago. Kempadoo's novel offers a challenge to neocolonialism through her representation of the sexual politics of tourism and the adverse effects of globalization on the island of Tobago. While this novel does not posit an alternative model or ethical vision of tourism, it does contribute to "resistance culture" by creating awareness of the vexed relations and continuities between slavery and colonialism and tourism. Moreover, this novel highlights the ways in which "Blackness" continues to be commodified in the Caribbean tourist industry, specifically in terms of how Caribbean people have ingested the myth-reality of paradise discourse and can therefore participate in exploitative consumption. As Caribbean scholars and professionals work to develop new models of tourism that are non-exploitative, careful attention must be paid to the racial, sexual, and gendered dynamics of the tourist industry. Caribbean writers, artists, and cultural workers have paved the way for this work by exposing the colonial and neocolonial exploitation found in the contemporary Caribbean tourist industry. They have insisted that slavery is relevant in

understanding the present and moving towards the future. They have shown alternative models of tourism must do more than be economically sustainable in order to really change the exploitative consumption of the Caribbean and complete the process of cultural decolonization.

CHAPTER 2  
RESISTING PARADISE: BAHAMIAN LITERATURE AND THE CULTURE OF A  
TOURIST ECONOMY

But in our tourist brochures the Caribbean is a blue pool into which the republic dangles the extended foot of Florida as inflated rubber islands bob and drinks with umbrellas float towards her on a raft. This is how the islands from the shame of necessity sell themselves; this is the seasonal erosion of their identity, that high-pitched repetition of the same images of service that cannot distinguish one island from the other, with a future of polluted marinas, land deals negotiated by ministers, and all of this conducted to the music of Happy Hour and the rictus of a smile. What is the earthly paradise for our visitors? Two weeks without rain and a mahogany tan, and, at sunset, local troubadours in straw hats and floral shirts beating "Yellow Bird" and "Banana Boat Song" to death. There is a territory wider than this - wider than the limits made by the map of an island - which is the illimitable sea and what it remembers.

- Derek Walcott, *"The Antilles: Fragments of Epic Memory"* (1992)

In his 1992 Nobel Prize acceptance speech, Derek Walcott expresses deep concern over the effects of tourism on Caribbean identity and culture. His choice to include tourism in his Nobel Prize speech indicates the importance he places on the subject. As Walcott suggests in the epigraph above, tourism advertisements represent the Caribbean as an "earthly paradise," and the region is rendered available and ready to serve North America's (and Europe's) traveling (consuming) public(s). Hence, different Caribbean islands must sell themselves and their tourist product through "the shame of necessity." In order to attract much needed visitors to "island paradise," the region has to reproduce dominant colonial and neocolonial images of the Caribbean. Walcott recognizes that the region has very few choices due to the far-reaching effects of neocolonialism of the United States, the "republic," which "dangles" its foot into the Caribbean Sea, and Caribbean postcolonial governments who are complicit in the exploitation of their countries. Walcott's image of various Caribbean countries as "inflated rubber islands," along with the iconic tourist scene of drinks and umbrellas, highlights his fear that there is a "seasonal erosion of their identity." In other words, Walcott understands the extent to which tourism and neocolonialism shape Caribbean culture and identity. Walcott's concerns resonated

deeply in 1992 and remain a serious concern today for the island nations of the Caribbean, particularly with the far-reaching effects of globalization. But as Walcott asserts, there is so much more to these islands than tourist advertisements could ever show—its seas and histories are boundless. Caribbean artists and intellectuals such as Walcott and other early Caribbean writers continue to resist and write against the dominant colonial and neocolonial representations of paradise by unveiling the “illimitable sea and what it remembers” and by challenging the ways in which tourism affects identity.

In this chapter, I study the literary and cultural production of a tourist economy in order to demonstrate the extent to which tourism affects identity. My focus is on the Bahamas because the country has been devoted to tourism since the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, and its economy is overly dependent on tourism, with over 5 million visitors annually and the industry accounting for 63% of jobs in the country (Bahamas Ministry of Tourism). By far the number one industry, tourism is the most important economic activity in the Bahamas. Tourism shapes Bahamian identity and national culture in a fundamental way because it is so important to the national economy; as a result, tourism is integrated into the school system and drastically influences how culture is produced. Bahamian people, including workers in the tourist and culture industries and artists, acknowledge the powerful role of tourism in shaping their identity and national culture, but they have different strategies of negotiating tourism depending on their relationship to the tourist industry. Artists who are not dependent on tourism for their livelihood express the strongest criticism. In contrast, artists who produce for the tourist industry directly and even for local consumption within the Bahamas tend to be more accepting of tourism; while workers in the industry who are not engaged with cultural production are inclined to be the most accepting. Many workers and artists directly involved in the industry express desire for tourism

improvement, and they believe that increasing the amount and quality of culture in the tourist industry will bring more profits to the Bahamas. As the major national festival of the Bahamas, Junkanoo is the central avenue through which cultural workers and educators attempt to work within the tourist-dominated economy to produce a national culture of which they can be proud.

I begin with an analysis of the interviews that I conducted with Bahamian people who work directly and indirectly in tourism and related industries because these situate the need for critical analyses of tourism; also, these interviews reveal how local people engage with the daily realities of tourism and what Bahamian scholar and writer Ian Strachan calls the myth-reality of “paradise.” Bahamians are both critical and accepting of tourism, and they have had to find ingenious ways of negotiating this neocolonial terrain. This is most evident from the interviews and the ways in which culture is produced for tourism, mostly through Junkanoo. Cultural workers, specifically Arlene Nash-Ferguson and her concept Educulture, attempt to work within the system of tourism in order to create sustainable tourism models and resist exploitative tourist consumption. Bahamian writers, who are financially independent from the tourist industry yet deeply concerned about tourism, directly challenge tourism’s influence on Bahamian culture and identity by exposing tourism’s power in the country and the region. I offer an extensive analysis of two Bahamian poets, Marion Bethel and Christian Campbell, and their criticisms of tourism and neocolonialism. Bethel and Campbell represent in different ways the racial, sexual, and gender politics of travel and tourism, rooted in the history of slavery and colonialism. They both deconstruct dominant colonial and gendered structures through a (re)writing of history, while at the same time, reimagining and resisting paradise discourse.

As scholars of tourism have shown, the Bahamas is one of the most “successful” tourism destinations in the Caribbean region. As Strachan posits in his book *Paradise and Plantation*,

the Bahamas tourist industry works so well because of its deep investment in the image of paradise. The myth of paradise has a long and extensive history grounded in colonial rule, slavery, and travel narratives, and as Strachan argues Caribbean tourism is a direct offshoot of the plantation system. Ironically, as Strachan explains, “the plantation economy never flourished in the Bahamas until tourism” (94). Where the Bahamas failed as a “viable” British colony in terms of the plantation system and the sugar industry (due to the poor soil and limestone rock across the island chain), it has benefited from the “unproductive” landscape and the perceived “perfect” picture of paradise – white sand, untouched beaches, clear ocean-blue seas, hundreds of islands in the sun. These images are continuously sold and packaged vis-à-vis the global tourist industry:

No longer is the imagined Caribbean paradise a site where wealth can be attained in the money form (gold) or acquired via the export of commodities (sugar, tobacco, and cotton). The site is now a sight. Now the Caribbean paradise is wealth; it is the commodity for sale; and it is profit. The paradise is now both myth and material good. Like the plantation that gave birth to it, Caribbean tourism is rooted in export, the export of paradise to North American and Europe. (112)

The product being exported is most often controlled by foreign companies and multinational corporations; therefore, what defines paradise and gets exported is determined for the most part outside the region (Strachan 112-113). While it is clear that the tourist-consumer then purchases this construction or myth and travels with the expectation of consuming paradise as a product, Strachan wonders how the propaganda and myth-making of paradise over the centuries, especially in the last 50 years, have affected people who live in these spaces.

In thinking about this question, I extend it to consider how this imagined paradise has become “real” with its ability to wield profit and to have a direct material influence on those who participate and facilitate its consumption—perhaps a “needed” paradise:

But can tourism shape self-perception of Bahamians through its presence? So pervasive and overpowering an industry must—through its physical presence, its economic presence,

its social presence, and its media presence—impose itself on the imaginations of Bahamians, impose itself in such a way that it begins to affect how Bahamians imagine themselves as social beings, how Bahamians imagine the landscape of their community, country, and world. (114)

Strachan makes an irrefutable case for the prominence of tourism and the myth of paradise in the Caribbean, and he establishes the overwhelming presence of tourism and its influence on Bahamian people and culture.<sup>1</sup> However, he does not fully explain the agency of Bahamian people in dealing with the impositions of tourism, the way it shapes self-perception. While Strachan argues that Bahamians “must contend with a state-sanctioned and financed, industrially packaged brochure myth-reality” (125), what he leaves out of this discussion is *how* they contend with this myth-reality and respond to the ways it affects identity. I take a more specific look at the work of Bahamian writers and cultural workers in order to conceptualize *how* tourism affects culture and identity in a tourist-dependent economy. Strachan reflects upon the work of Bahamian intellectuals, writers, artists, and other cultural workers to explain that Bahamians are thinking more critically about tourism and its effects (143). But he does not offer a detailed analysis of these works; this is because his project is engaged with a historical analysis of the myth of paradise and how this is fundamental to tourism. My project is concerned with how Caribbean writers and intellectuals resist this myth, and more specifically in this chapter, *how* tourism affects identity within an over-dependent tourist economy; or to put it another way, what it is like to live in the culture of a tourist economy.

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<sup>1</sup> While the culture and people of the Bahamas have been significantly affected by tourism since the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century, it is particularly during the post-independence era and the proliferation of tourist propaganda in brochures, slogans, and posters that Bahamians begin to believe in the myth of paradise (Strachan 132-5). This also fuels the desire for certain kinds of lifestyles or “playin tourist” because as Strachan suggests “some Bahamians try to live vicariously through the tourist experience” and work to perform “paradise” (135).

Tourism quite literally is the majority of Bahamian people's bread and butter, whether or not they work directly in the tourist industry. The successful growth and monopoly of Atlantis Resorts on Paradise Island, the largest resort in the Bahamas, has escalated this dependence, being second only to the Bahamas government in job creation. Tourism education has long been an intricate part of the education system, and this continues to grow with a number of tourism training programs in high schools and training colleges, at the College of the Bahamas (with Bachelor Degree programs in Tourism and Hospitality Management developed before most other degrees), state-sponsored programs for tourist workers (usually offered for free), and Atlantis with its own management training program called "Atlantis University."<sup>2</sup> These connections between education and tourism, understanding a tourist economy, and the influence of tourism on Bahamian culture and identity are best illustrated through my interviews with a cross-section of tourist and cultural workers.

### **Reflections on Culture and Tourism**

Interviews with workers in the tourist and culture industries set the tone for my study because they reveal how local people adjust, change, and sometimes resist the looming presence of tourism. They also provide an important context for my analysis of cultural and literary productions in the Bahamas' tourist economy. The main question for my field work was: how

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<sup>2</sup> The extensive connection between education and tourism in the Bahamas was most recently affirmed with the president of the College of the Bahamas giving the keynote address, titled "My Bahamian Marketplace: Fueled by Education, Propelled by Collaboration," at the 2007 National Tourism Conference. President Janyne M. Hodder argued for the support of the College of the Bahamas (soon to be University of the Bahamas) through the ways in which the College "can and should contribute to this key sector (tourism) of our economy" (36). She also asserted: "it is clear that tourism makes a huge difference to our collective wealth and well-being. When tourism does well, the country does well and its citizens prosper. Should tourism falter, the nation would stumble" (36). Her talk continued with calls for sustainability, creativity, and innovation in the tourist industry through collaboration with the soon to be University of the Bahamas: "consider how the College/University of the Bahamas can be a partner in the sustainable development of this most crucial sector of our economy" (37).

does the culture of a tourist economy affect people who are involved (both directly and indirectly) and work daily in the tourist industry and the production of culture? Before discussing the interviews, I should explain how I conducted my research and the interview process.<sup>3</sup> Out of the main question came three major concerns: tourism training, the relationship between tourism and culture, and general thoughts about the tourist industry. My rationale here was to ask specific questions in these areas to acquire a general sense of what Bahamian people think about tourism and how it influences identity; and I wanted perspectives from both tourist and cultural workers. For the purposes of my study, tourist workers are defined as people who work directly in the service sector and with tourists (i.e. hotel workers, straw market vendors, taxi drivers, and retail store workers), and cultural workers are defined as people who work directly or indirectly in the tourist industry in the area of cultural production (i.e. dancers, entertainers, Junkanoo workers, souvenir designers, and writers, among other artists).

Since I am from Nassau, Bahamas and worked in the tourist industry for a number of years, I already had contacts with people in this industry and in the culture industry. Therefore, I was able to set up interviews through personal contacts, and I also made new contacts as I spent time in “tourist areas” downtown Nassau on Bay Street.<sup>4</sup> I designed nine interview questions based on my project’s concerns with how tourism affects culture and identity. These questions focused on tourism training, identity, culture, tourist industry politics, and gender.<sup>5</sup> Over the

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<sup>3</sup> I acquired Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval through the University of Florida to conduct my interviews.

<sup>4</sup> Before setting up an interview, I told each person about my project and explained that I would be recording the interviews and using them in my final product. The interviews generally lasted 25 to 45 minutes at a location most convenient for the interviewee, and before the interview began, each participant reviewed and signed the IRB approval letter.

<sup>5</sup> I asked questions about gender because I was very interested in how men and women who work in the tourist industry perceive the affects of tourism on women compared to men,

course of several weeks, I conducted 19 interviews: nine people were directly in the service sector of the tourist industry—four female straw market vendors, one male taxi driver, and four female hotel workers, with two hotel workers also participating in the culture industry, one entertainer/dancer/souvenir designer and one product designer. Eight of the interviewees were in the culture industry—one female jewelry designer, one female Junkanoo worker/educator, one male musician/artist, and five writers, one male and four females (four out of the five writers had a main profession—a lawyer, an engineer, a scholar/academic, and a “civil servant” or appointed government worker); while two people did not fit into either “category” of tourist or culture industry but in professions affected by tourism—one male officer in the Bahamas Government Department of Fisheries and one male Agricultural consultant/specialist and former government worker. The majority of interviewees identified as Black Bahamians, with a few identifying as mixed-race; a cross-section of people from different socio-economic backgrounds (from working class to upper class), my interviewees work in a range of jobs from lower-paying jobs to higher-paying jobs, from self-employed to government jobs. This study is not meant to be an expose of “inside the Bahamian tourist industry,” but rather to offer a number of local perspectives, alongside cultural and literary analyses, about tourism and culture in the Bahamas. What follows is an overview and synthesis of the interviews with highlights and direct quotes from selected interviews. Names have been changed; however, basic information is kept to place the interviewer in context.

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particularly because women comprise the majority of low-paying jobs in the industry. These questions led to two important realities of the tourist industry in the Bahamas: 1) jobs are still very gendered—meaning that women comprise most of the housekeeping jobs, low-end restaurant servers, hostess jobs, and straw vendor work, while men comprise most of the landscaping/physical plant jobs, wood carving vendor, taxi drivers, and high-end restaurant servers; 2) a glass ceiling exists for managerial jobs and higher-paying jobs in the hotels.

The most significant insight that I acquired through these interviews is that people working directly in the tourist industry, especially in the service sector, were less critical of tourism overall and its effects on culture and identity than people working in the culture industry and other industries; I also found that writers and artists, especially those whose work is not marketed extensively to tourists, were highly critical of tourism and most open to discussing its influence on Bahamian culture and identity as both a serious social, political, and economic problem and a form of neocolonialism. I see this spectrum and variation in responses to tourism as a reflection of proximity to the daily realities of tourism service, how much tourism training one has received, and how much one's individual and family income is directly dependent upon tourism. These interviews revealed a series of notions and beliefs that demonstrate how much tourism shapes identity in the Bahamas, specifically through government-sponsored tourism training programs and the (colonial) educational system: 1) tourism is the only viable industry in the Bahamian economy; 2) tourists (called visitors by most people in the service sector) must be treated properly so they spend money and want to return; 3) it is the responsibility and duty of all Bahamians to support tourism no matter what, and if tourism fails, it is the fault of Bahamians; 4) foreign investment is a good thing because it supplies jobs and helps the economy; 5) Bahamian culture should be made more assessable to tourists or "visitors" because they like it and this will help tourism.

Most of the interviewees expressed being encouraged (and even pressured) to work in the tourism industry in elementary and high schools regardless of whether they had received official training in school or elsewhere. While those critical of tourism had a major problem with the fact that many high schools, especially public schools, promoted tourism above everything else, a number of people in the service sector thought that tourism training should be improved and

described it as important and necessary. The majority of the service sector workers I interviewed participated in Bahamahost, which is a training program sponsored by the Ministry of Tourism established in 1978, that focuses on customer service in the industry. Bahamahost is described as a program that “promotes professionalism, pride, and education in hospitality fields to ensure a proper welcome to visitors” (Bahamas Ministry of Tourism). It is generally offered free of charge to those in the service sector. All of the straw market workers I interviewed was trained by Bahamahost and they all use its language to talk about tourism. Susan has worked in the Nassau Straw Market on Bay Street for two years (before that she worked in retail on Bay Street for eight years). She described her experiences in the Bahamahost program and on-the-job retail training for the tourist industry through the language of customer service. She explained that tourists are customers and must be treated well: “we are the hosts and the visitors expect to be treated a certain way and we have to have a good attitude no matter what” (personal interview). Laura, who has worked in the Nassau Straw Market for over 15 years, expressed positive experiences with tourism training in Bahamahost; she said that it helped her to deal with tourists better because “even when they are wrong, they are right” (personal interview). With over 30 years of experience in the tourist industry, Latoya has participated in four Bahamahost programs and has been working in the Nassau Straw Market on and off since she was a young child. Interestingly, she used to work for the Ministry of Tourism and did Straw Market work part-time, but she left the ministry to work in the market full time because she says she makes more money that way. Latoya believes that tourism training should be mandatory for every Bahamian because “we need to treat tourists better so that they return and enjoy themselves” (personal interview). These three straw market vendors represent how much tourism education can affect perspectives and attitudes about tourism, and more specifically, they reflect an embrace of

tourism and tourism training. Bahamahost has certainly influenced their attitudes towards tourists; this is clear through the customer service rhetoric they all used and how they each insisted that Bahamahost helped them to deal with tourists better.

Like straw market vendors, hotel workers receive tourism training, but it seems that their training is specific to the hotel and to their position. A hotel worker for over 29 years, Eva works in housekeeping or “space cleaning” on Paradise Island in the back offices of what is now Atlantis Resorts. She has seen all the ownership changes and renovations to Paradise Island’s major resort from the 1980s to its current status as Atlantis, the top resort in the country.<sup>6</sup> After describing her work as “the dirty stuff” and saying that she enjoys when people are happy with her work, Eva explained that since Atlantis took over the hotel, she receives regular training sessions every year called “re-orientations” that are focused on maintaining a high standard for all the cleaning staff. She also said “every morning, we have role call and the managers give us updates, tell us what to do, and remind us that we have to be nice to the guests” (personal interview). Eva has only received tourism training through Atlantis; however, the rhetoric she

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<sup>6</sup> Paradise Island was called Hog Island until 1962 when American millionaire Huntington Hartford purchased large sections of the island and initiated legislation to change the island’s name, and this started the transformation of Paradise Island into its present status as a world-famous tourism and leisure destination (Strachan 133). Atlantis is owned by white South African millionaire Sol Kerzner and operated by his company Kerzner International Resorts. Since re-building and renovations began in 1996 and its opening in 1999, Atlantis has bought a number of the hotels, businesses, and land on Paradise Island and has built two new enormous towers in addition to the two towers previously there. They have also built a second new bridge from Nassau to Paradise Island and world-class marina. Kerzner International is said to have leased the land from the Bahamas government for 99 years, but the company has also bought outright various sections of the island. They have restricted most of the public beach access, which in turn prevents many Bahamians from using the beaches, and the hotels and hotel resources are generally restricted to visitors and hotel guests. Beaches are supposed to be public domain according to Bahamian law, but access to the beach can be limited based on who owns the land leading to the high tide water line. Currently, Paradise Island is quite literally dominated by Atlantis Resorts, its Marina Village, its time shares, and privately-owned condominium and gated communities.

uses is similar to the Bahamahost program in terms of the “proper” treatment of guests/visitors and the need to keep tourists “happy” so they want to return to the Bahamas. This rhetoric is taught through official tourism training by the government and hotels; it represents the extent to which the Bahamian government and hotels (operated/owned by multinational corporations) have similar visions of tourism. This language is also filtered to the general public and is characteristic of people who work directly and indirectly in the tourist industry, whether or not they receive official training.

Active in both the service and culture industries, Marlene operates her own stall at Marina Village in Atlantis, and she has been working as an entertainer, dancer, and massage therapist in the tourist industry for over 30 years. She recently decided to create her own line of Bahamian souvenirs because she wanted to have her own business and sell Bahamian products in the tourist industry. Although Marlene said she had received no official tourism training, she supported training in schools and insisted that it needed to be improved because “we need to learn to be courteous to each other, and treat each other with respect, not just to the tourists” (personal interview). It is striking that she uses industry rhetoric to envision better relations among Bahamians because this further illustrates that tourism indeed shapes Bahamians’ conceptions of self. Also, Marlene said that “we have to get back to the old days with more respect for each other, we need to have pride in ourselves, and then we would be even nicer to the tourists” (personal interview). In response to my questions about tourism and culture, Marlene asserted that she does think tourism has an affect on culture mainly because certain aspects of Bahamian culture are only supported once people realize that money could be made from it in the industry. She explains, “when I was growing up not that many people were into Bahamian dance as culture until the tourist industry started to promote it, so it seems like tourists

have to appreciate it first before we're interested in it and want to do it" (personal interview). Marlene responds to my questions from both a service worker and cultural worker standpoint, yet she seems most invested in being a cultural worker. Moreover, her standpoint is one of an entrepreneur (in service and culture) and upper-middle class Bahamian woman who is in a very different work position from someone like Eva, who is working class in lower-paying job strictly in service. Marlene is a prime example of how Bahamians exert agency in relation to and negotiating with tourism. Her attitude reflects the idea that tourism is necessary for the economy and it can be used to enhance Bahamian culture and promote it to Bahamians. While she uses tourism training language, she has her own agenda with that language and with the tourist industry; therefore, she reveals why it is not enough to say that the tourist industry shapes Bahamian culture and identity.

This illustrates a subtle yet important difference between service sector workers and cultural workers (including those cultural workers who are also in the service sector like Marlene). When asked questions in the area of tourism and culture, a number of service sector workers discussed Bahamian culture through a tourist industry perspective, generally saying that visitors need to experience more of what the Bahamas has to offer in terms of culture so that they would want to return. While many cultural workers concurred with this view, they also asserted that it was really important for there to be more pride in Bahamian culture and identity. A number of cultural workers, especially the writers, were not only very critical of tourism training, but were also critical of the influence of tourism on Bahamian culture and identity. Nevertheless I think critiques like these are easier to make the farther removed one is from direct, daily dependence on the service sector of the industry. In other words, distance from the tourist

industry appears to allow for a more critical perspective, as does being involved with cultural production and/or being in a more independent position within the industry.

Tourist workers directly in the service sector have a complex relationship to tourism, particularly ones who are more independent than hotel workers. They can be equally critical of tourism, but they suggest changes for the industry rather than outright rejection. Dennis has been a taxi driver for over a year and before that he worked at the Adastral Gardens and Zoo as an animal conservationist for eight years. He explained that being a taxi driver is a means to an end (it provides him with the money and time to finish his degree in Agriculture at the College of the Bahamas), but he does think it is an important job because taxi drivers are the first people tourists meet. While he supports tourism training in general and found the Bahamahost program helpful for learning to deal with tourists, he said that the entire education system trains Bahamian children to be in the service sector of the industry, specifically pushing them into lower paying jobs. He is critical of the curriculum and explained that “schools don’t encourage students to produce or create any of our own products” (personal interview). He believes that the Bahamas should be able to grow enough food to feed the country and that agriculture should be promoted in schools. Moreover, he thinks that tourism does affect Bahamian culture and identity on many different levels: “we want the lifestyle and money that tourists have because people who work in the industry see that everyday. The tourist industry on the whole doesn’t benefit us and so this needs to change” (personal interview). While Dennis may be critical of tourism, he also remains practical and thinks about ways of negotiating the positive and negative aspects of tourism. When asked what he would change about the industry, he said that the Bahamas needs to develop eco-tourism and the government should lease/rent rather than sell Bahamian land/islands to foreign developers; and finally, he asserted that “the most important change needs to be in the

education system, teach our culture and history, encourage our children not to see themselves as someone's maid or butler, but to feel empowered and that they can be more than service" (personal interview). Marlene and Dennis represent major insights that I gained through the process of talking to so many different people in and around the tourist and culture industries. Bahamian identity is shaped to a large degree through tourism, and we can see this clearly in the education system and the production of culture for the tourist industry. However, Bahamian people have agency and ideas about how to change tourism so that it benefits Bahamians.

Furthermore, those who are critical of the influence of tourism on Bahamian culture and identity recognize that tourism must be negotiated with in order to create any kind of change and that this change must begin with education, culture, and history. Case in point, hotel worker and Bahamian product designer Joy works at Atlantis inside the comedy club as an assistant manager, which includes the duties of host, cashier, and supervision of four wait staff. She thinks that tourism has a major affect on Bahamian culture and identity because "we water everything down for tourists" (personal interview). She sees the Junkanoo performances at Marina Village on Friday nights and at private parties as watered down for the tourists because it seems that "they don't want anything else" (personal interview). Joy complained about Atlantis not promoting or showcasing Bahamian culture. She offered Atlantis' huge budget for their annual 4<sup>th</sup> of July U.S. Independence celebration as a prime evidence that they barely do anything for the Bahamian independence day which is the 10<sup>th</sup> of July. She also complained about there being no Bahamian restaurants in Atlantis: "this shows they have no respect for us, and so this contributes to us having no pride in ourselves. And we change ourselves for tourism" (personal interview). Joy sees Atlantis' lack of engagement with Bahamian culture as being a problem for Bahamian identity. This reflects the degree to which the hotel and the tourist

industry are so central to Bahamian daily realities. In response to my question about what she liked and disliked about the tourist industry, she said she liked the money and “we do have a nice destination to come to, and it does bring in a lot of money, and I think it can even bring in more money if we did it properly” (personal interview). I asked her how, and she said, “if we stopped catering so much to tourists and did it for ourselves, educating ourselves, getting better streets for ourselves, and then it would flow, tourists would like to come here more, it would be a nice place to come to because people would be more educated, streets would be cleaner, and there would be more pride in ourselves” (personal interview). Joy doesn’t like that Bahamas only promotes and pushes tourism as the only thing to do, and she hates the fact that children are not encouraged to do other things like the arts and music outside of Junkanoo.

The interviews with Joy, Marlene, and Dennis all reflect the constant negotiation one has to make with the tourist industry living in the Bahamas, particularly if one is working directly in both service and culture. This constant negotiation includes the reality of the country’s overdependence on tourism, reflected in an education system that promotes tourism, and the state-sanctioned support for cultural productions sold in the tourist industry. Many of the people I interviewed saw culture as a way to create a better tourism product whether or not they believed that tourism affected Bahamian culture and identity. This reflects a certain trend in the global tourism industry and, more specifically, regional moves in the Caribbean to do more than just sun, sand, and sea. Hence, the relationship between tourism and culture is complicated and vexed because on the global tourism stage “culture is in” and tourists are understood as wanting more from the places they visit. Debates about the need for ethical and sustainable visions of tourism such as eco-tourism, heritage tourism, and responsible tourism have circulated through the World Tourism Organization and the United Nations since the 1990s. While the region

moves towards more cultural and heritage tourism models, the question becomes what does this demand for “culture” do in places where cultural decolonization has not been fully realized. These countries endured colonization for centuries with histories of cultural, political, and social control being maintained through racial and class hierarchies established through slavery and European beliefs in white superiority—this legacy remains. Is there a way to maintain one’s cultural integrity, teach one’s histories, and at the same time, have a successful tourism product that is disconnected from colonial ideologies? In the Bahamas, Mrs. Arlene Nash Ferguson has attempted to do this very thing. She has been working for the past seven years in what she calls “Educulture,” and in a personal interview, she described her work in culture and education. Through her programs that are designed for both Bahamians and tourists, Mrs. Nash Ferguson has created a model for sustainable heritage tourism in the Bahamas through Junkanoo. Junkanoo is both an example of the extent to which tourism has shaped Bahamian national culture and an illustration of the ways Bahamians have successfully negotiated within the tourist economy to reclaim or at least reshape their national culture.

### **Junkanoo Festivals and the Production of Culture in the Bahamas**

Junkanoo is a cultural expression in the Bahamas that comprises music, dance, and crepe-papered costumes made from cardboard in a street parade traditionally held every year on the day after Christmas (Boxing Day) and on New Year’s Day. Its origins continue to be debated but it undoubtedly reflects the African roots of the Bahamas. It has become a major component of the tourist package in the Bahamas. Thus, although it remains the major festival and celebrated component of national culture, Junkanoo is heavily marketed as the “be all, end all of” Bahamian culture, with weekly hotel Junkanoo shows at hotels, which tourists can participate in, and images of Junkanoo sold and reproduced for the tourist industry. Tourism has directly contributed to the growth of Junkanoo; hence its government support has increased. In

fact, Junkanoo is not only celebrated during the traditional parade days of Boxing and New Year's Days, but it is also prominently featured during the summer as the Junkanoo Summer Festival, operated by the Ministry of Tourism. The question becomes then how did the traditional form of Junkanoo, once understood as a form of resistance to slavery, become a tourist product and the premier national culture of the Bahamas.

The dominant origin story of the Junkanoo festival is that it most resembles the West African "John Canoe" festival across the Caribbean by enslaved Africans, often referred to as "the oldest West Indian festival" believed to be a "quaint survival of an old African slave custom" (Bahamas National Archives). It is said to be a celebration of John Conny who was a famous African trader prince around the year 1720 from Axim on the Gold Coast (present-day Ghana); this festival occurred around Christmas because it was the only time of year that slaves were given time off by plantation owners (Bahamas National Archives). There are a number of histories about the festival's origin that reveal its West African roots through deities, dances, and plantation figures.<sup>7</sup> These legends and stories passed down through oral history and collected in the Junkanoo Archives found in the Bahamas National Archives provide enough evidence for us

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<sup>7</sup> Other prominent theories of the festival's West African origins include the following: The West African name "Jananin Canno" was derived from a combination of the supreme being (Canno) and the defenders (Jananin) of the Quoja tribe; a West African first fruit ceremony and traditional dance called "Kanoo" was performed by the Bam-bari tribe; and an Ashanti dance figure was known as "Jankomo" (Bahamas National Archives). A number of plantation legends reveal various spellings and myths including a plantation owner in North Carolina, known as John Canoe, who allowed slaves to celebrate Christmas and New Year's Day and for his kindness the slaves named their celebration in his honor; and the plantation figure "John Kooner" or Kuner who dressed up in fantastic garb and wore a large mask at Christmas time in North Carolina and was accompanied by a procession of fellow slaves making music and noise in celebration of the masked John Kooner (Bahamas National Archives). Other myths and legends include the word "Junk Eneu" or "junk enough" used in Trinidad to describe pre-Lenten revelers who took to the streets dressed in everything and anything, and the traditional masks worn by paraders in the French West Indies were called "l'inconnu" or "the unknown" (Bahamas National Archives).

to say that Junkanoo is certainly an African Diasporic cultural celebration.<sup>8</sup> Moreover, two legends that cite North Carolina plantations as possible origins for the festival correspond with the history of the Bahamas and the migration of British Loyalists from the American South who brought their slaves into the Bahamas in the 1780s. Furthermore, these stories also reveal that the John Canoe festival was celebrated on several Caribbean islands albeit in variations, but the commonalities reveal African Diasporic connections. However, it seems as if the festival survived only in the Bahamas, Jamaica, Bermuda, and Belize post-emancipation (with its counterpart being Carnival, a pre-Lenten festival celebrated in much of the Caribbean). Its survival and growth in the Bahamas appears to be very specific to the Bahamas and the island of New Providence during the post-emancipation period.

Historically, the festival was celebrated on Christmas night into the day after, known as Boxing Day.<sup>9</sup> In 1830, a law was passed in the Bahamas that allowed all slaves to have Christmas Day and the two days following as holidays (Bahamas National Archives 6). After emancipation, the newly freed Africans continued their festival during Christmas and it became a way for Black Bahamians to travel through the segregated island of New Providence by leaving the Black towns and areas called “over the hill” and marching through Downtown Bay Street—an act of resistance to the white oligarchy that controlled both the business sector and the government well into the 1950s (Strachan 129). The Junkanoo Archives collection in Nassau

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<sup>8</sup> For more historical information about Junkanoo, see the collection *Junkanoo: Festival of the Bahamas* edited by Nicolette Bethel and the essay “1979 Jonkonnu and Related Caribbean Festivals” by Judith Bettelheim.

<sup>9</sup> Boxing Day (December 26<sup>th</sup>) is a holiday in the United Kingdom and most of the former British colonies. Its origins are believed to be European, specifically British, and it was called “Boxing Day” because traditionally this was the day when the upper and merchant classes and churches would give a box of food and other items to the poor on the day after Christmas. This tradition may have continued through slavery and into the “new world” with plantation owners and colonists giving days off during Christmas time to their slaves.

has documents proving that “John Canoe” was celebrated on Christmas night every year from the early 1800s, and the collection traces the changes that took place in the festival from the individual masked costumes and characters to the materials used for the costumes, from scrape newspaper to sponges and cloth (in the 1930s) to the contemporary crepe-paper designs, large costume pieces, and organized parades from the 1950s (Bahamas National Archive 11-35).<sup>10</sup> The music in Junkanoo has kept most of the traditional instruments being goatskin drums, cowbells, whistles, and conch shell horns, but in the contemporary period other musical instruments have been added and replaced the conch shell—the tuba, trumpet, saxophone, and trombone (Wisdom 26). The music, costumes, and march (called rushin’) that comprise Junkanoo are all rooted in resistance. So how did this festival of resistance become a tourist attraction?

The commercialization of Junkanoo between the 1920s and 1950s was a key element in its transformation for use in the tourist industry. The festival’s traditional march was transformed into an “organized” parade with a competition for large cash prizes in 1920 under direction of the colonial government to promote it as a tourist attraction. It was described as “the main winter tourist attraction” in the 1920s and contributed to the industry boom (Bahamas National Archives). By the 1950s, people developed groups (often by district or neighborhood) themes in order to compete, and by the 1970s, Junkanoo groups were being sponsored by local businesses. Junkanoo groups create new costumes every year that are organized around a particular theme, which is kept secret until the day of the parade—each parade for Boxing Day

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<sup>10</sup> The spelling “Junkanoo” has been used in the Bahamas since around the 1950s, with the printed “John Canoe” in newspapers being changed to “Junkanoo” in the early 1950s. It is unclear what the motivation for this change was, but perhaps we can see through the legends and stories that “Junkanoo” looks the most like a phonetic spelling of how people may have been saying it for hundreds of years.

and New Year's Day has different themes and costumes.<sup>11</sup> The groups are judged in various competitive categories—best music, best costume, and best group overall, among others. It is important to note that this history of Junkanoo in the Bahamas has been traced primarily on the island of New Providence because the majority of the population lives there, and it is the city and tourist center of the Bahamas.<sup>12</sup> Also, it reveals the extent to which Junkanoo's "organization" and commercialization have been motivated by the potential of its cultural capital in the tourist industry.

Today Junkanoo is a serious cultural and commercial enterprise in Nassau with over 20 Junkanoo groups and hundreds of performers in each group, who work year-round to prepare for the Boxing Day and New Year's Day parades. Despite efforts by the Bahamian government (pre- and post-independence) to control the Junkanoo parades and appropriate it for tourism, many Junkanoo performers and spectators continue to resist such takeovers (Strachan 129). However, these groups are sponsored by local businesses from major banking institutions to gas stations to hotels, and the cash prizes are substantial with major government support. Additionally, Junkanoo parades are coordinated through the Ministry of Tourism (not through the Department of Culture as one may assume considering it is a cultural festival), and while the Boxing Day and New Year's Day parades remain locally focused, Junkanoo is packaged and sold through the tourist industry in a number of other ways: through hotel performances, parades held during the summer and on other special occasions, and Junkanoo music and costumes in

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<sup>11</sup> Although Junkanoo groups comprise the majority of the Junkanoo parades, there are scrap groups and individuals who are not competing but in it for the art and enjoyment (Wisdom 24). Moreover, in recent years, there have been a few scrap groups who have mocked the commercialization of Junkanoo with one scrap group a couple years ago whose theme was "The Death of Junkanoo" and they had a coffin as a part of their costume pieces.

<sup>12</sup> While Nassau's Junkanoo parades are the major ones in the Bahamas, smaller versions of the festival are practiced on other islands in the Bahamas, including Grand Bahama, Eleuthera, Bimini, Exuma, and Abaco—some developed specifically for the tourist industry.

tourism advertisements, brochures, and promotional campaigns. Although the traditional parades still have relatively few tourists in attendance (although in the past few years, these numbers have increased), small versions of Junkanoo are being performed at hotels so that tourists can “sample local culture in its stereotyped form” without leaving the hotel (Strachan 129). Most recently at the Atlantis Marina Village, which is a “native-style” village replica with buildings modeled after old Nassau houses (the only place where one can find any Bahamian culture being promoted at Atlantis Resorts), a weekly Friday-night Junkanoo rush-out has been created specifically for Atlantis from the “best of the best” in Junkanoo—with performers from each of the major groups collaborating for this paid weekly performance. While one can certainly critique this “watered-down” version of Junkanoo that is performed for tourists at the hotel, it is important to think about how the performers are benefiting from these year-round Junkanoo events, financially and artistically, in being able to create this cultural art form throughout the year. Before this regular tourism support, Junkanoo performers and artists rarely (if ever) received payment during Junkanoo season; thus, tourism has provided important financial support to the Junkanoo community. My intent here is not to criticize the performers themselves for this tourist-motivated version of Junkanoo, but rather to understand the effects of culture being produced for tourism. My interviews suggest that while some Bahamian people are critical of “watered-down” versions of culture that are produced for tourism, others want better productions that are closer to “the real thing.” This mixed response reflects the reality that tourism has been destructive to traditional Junkanoo and, at the same time, beneficial in limited but important ways to both the performers and the prominence of the festival.

Hence the festival’s growth through tourism has resulted in collaborations between the Ministry of Tourism and Junkanoo workers to produce an event for tourists and Bahamians. In

addition to Junkanoo performances at hotels, another regular Junkanoo event that the Ministry of Tourism has funded is Junkanoo during the summer. This event started in Nassau as “Junkanoo in June” several years ago with four to five weeks of Junkanoo on Saturdays at Arawak Cay, which is an area just beyond downtown that sells local Bahamian food and drinks. Over the years, Arawak Cay and its vendors have built up a consistent customer-base of both locals and tourists, and so it is certainly an ideal location for Junkanoo during the summer because this event was envisioned as being for both residents and visitors. Interestingly, Arawak Cay was developed during the early 1990s specifically for tourist consumption; before that it was mostly a local hangout and it still remains a local spot even though it is visited by tourists. “Junkanoo in June” was originally a collaborative effort between the Ministry of Tourism and Junkanoo performers, but with its growing success, the Ministry has taken more and more control of the event. In 2006, the Ministry of Tourism launched “Junkanoo Summer Festival” from June to July with a number of additions and expansions to the original “Junkanoo in June,” which included a Junkanoo show (often called a rush-out; also, rushin’ is the word used to describe the act of participating in Junkanoo) and the Junkanoo museum display operated by Educulture called the “Heritage Museum on Arawak Cay.”

“Junkanoo Summer Festival” is now a full-blown cultural extravaganza promoted heavily through the tourist industry and different events being held all over the island, along with a more extensive celebration on Arawak Cay that includes: food vendors to represent each major island in the Bahamas, a kid’s corner, vendors selling art, jewelry, souvenirs, clothes, and other items, and staged performances/activities before and after the Junkanoo rush-out. In 2007, the Junkanoo Summer Festival schedule of events included the following: “A Walk Through History,” held on Tuesdays through Fridays Downtown, with people dressed as different

historical figures such as famous pirates, Lucayan Indians, Queen Victoria, and Christopher Columbus; the “Festive Arts Tour” and “Native Market” Downtown on Saturdays; the “Music and Heritage Celebration” at Arawak Cay on Saturdays (with two Junkanoo rush-outs and the Heritage Museum exhibit); and on Sundays, the “Royal Poinciana Tea Party” at the National Art Gallery and “Summertime Jazz” at the British Colonial Hotel, among other events (Bahamas Ministry of Tourism). While these events are using the heritage tourism model which can be a more sustainable model of tourism, they still reflect the colonial dominant narrative of history and reinforce images of “the native” and other racialized and gendered stereotypes promoted through the global tourist industry.

The “Walk through History” continues to perpetuate and celebrate the Columbus landfall, the story of Lucayan welcome, and pirate adventures, which all serve to uphold the colonial (white) British legacy of Bahamian history and paradise discourse. With very little historical or social context, the tours, the tea party, and the jazz events are another part the fabrication of culture for the tourist industry, yet these events are open to both residents and tourists and both attend. The performances on Arawak Cay are produced for the tourist industry but are successfully marketed to both tourists and Bahamians. The museum exhibit on Arawak Cay designed and operated through Arlene Nash-Ferguson’s Educulture does provide social and historical context for Junkanoo; therefore, it takes into account seriously both audiences—Bahamians and tourists—and offers the perspective of locals and local histories. I attended several of these events while in Nassau during Summer 2007, and it was clear that most of these events are produced for tourists first and foremost, with Bahamian in attendance adding to the “authenticity” of the festival. According to Janet Johnson, director of Events Strategy and Special Projects in the Ministry of Tourism, Junkanoo Summer Festival is “all about giving our

residents and visitors more options. We want to provide another Bahamian activity for them to delve into. At Arawak Cay and downtown Nassau, they will be able to enjoy an array of distinctly Bahamian items in a safe atmosphere” (Bahamas Ministry of Tourism). The Ministry is consciously envisioning these events as being for “residents and visitors,” but the events themselves are most certainly designed for tourists.

This is what I find to be the most fascinating aspect of the Junkanoo Summer Festival, even though it is being promoted and marketed primarily as a tourist attraction, many of its patrons are locals, who claim it as their festival. It is a contradiction on many levels because locals tend to outnumber the tourists at a number of these events, particularly those at Arawak Cay. Hence, the Junkanoo Summer Festival has become a family outing for many Bahamian families who frequent the festival during Saturdays in June and July—participating in events and activities that are a (re)production of Bahamian culture designed for tourists. Bahamian people are able to enjoy and participate in certain cultural activities through tourism in a space promoted as a “safe atmosphere.” This implies that other places on the island where culture is being produced may not be so safe—implicitly referring to the high crime rate in New Providence and areas of the island considered “dangerous.” But this “safe” is really for tourists—safe in the sense that this production is really for them. Nevertheless, the Junkanoo Summer Festival provides a regular summer event, where young Bahamians can learn about their culture, music, history, and art through the tourist industry. They would get very little of this knowledge in primary or secondary schools. Hence, the work of Arlene Nash-Ferguson and her vision to transform the cultural production of Junkanoo into one structured and formulated by Bahamians while also being used in the education system.

### **Arlene Nash-Ferguson's Educulture and the Junkanoo Experience**

Nash-Ferguson's concept of Educulture and use of Junkanoo can be seen as doing a kind of a rebuilding and needed change to tourism in the Bahamas. With experience in both education and Junkanoo, Nash-Ferguson has combined these to create Educulture, which is a cultural and educational consultancies company offering "true-true Bahamian experiences for both visitors and Bahamians" (personal interview). Their programs include 'ride & learn' tours for primary and high schools, Junkanoo workshops, and Junkanoo presentations. These programs are designed to teach the history and roots of Junkanoo to both Bahamians and tourists. The Junkanoo museum also sets up a display museum for the Junkanoo Summer festival every year. Nash-Ferguson explains that it is important and necessary to have the history and culture of the Bahamas at the festival (personal interview). The museum display is one of the only features of the festival that highlights the historical, social, and political context of Junkanoo. Educulture and the museum demonstrate a primary example of how Bahamians contend with a state-sanctioned Ministry of Tourism and find resistant strategies for negotiating tourism and its influence on Bahamian culture. Nash-Ferguson has created a sustainable model of heritage tourism through Educulture and Junkanoo.

Nash-Ferguson developed "Educulture" because she wanted to initiate change in how Bahamian children were educated and, at the same time, she wanted to preserve the history and roots of Bahamian culture through Junkanoo. Junkanoo sustains many elements of Bahamian history—music, rake n' scrape, resistance to slavery, folktales, stories, and art, among others. She wanted to preserve these historical and cultural specificities through teaching, collecting Junkanoo pieces, hosting Junkanoo presentations, maintaining the Junkanoo Museum, and organizing Junkanoo performances for tourists. I asked her what she thought about the hotel Junkanoo shows that have become so popular, specifically the one at Atlantis' Marina Village.

She explained that she hasn't seen it yet, but she knows that these Junkanoo shows have become very popular and a lot of "Junkanoos" want to get in on a show: "Junkanoo is for sale for tourists. But what we do for the tourists is very different from what we do for ourselves" (personal interview). She describes these shows as performances for tourists, and so they are different and have different energy from the Junkanoo parades, "the parades are for us" (personal interview). It seems that she accepts these Junkanoo "tourist performances" or weekly shows by defining them as separate genre from "real" Junkanoo.

Educulture began with a Junkanoo summer camp in 2000 at Nash-Ferguson's home, and then expanded when she was invited by fellow Junkanoo workers to put together a Junkanoo museum exhibit at what was then called "Junkanoo in June." During that time, she also led a 150 Junkanoo piece group to the World Games in 2000. She realized during this process that no one was fully documenting contemporary Junkanoo, so she found a niche, started collecting pieces, and building the museum and Educulture business on West Street, near downtown Nassau. This was the beginning of the museum and Educulture programs, which has been going strong for the past seven years (personal interview). She explains that she didn't start out thinking about the tourist industry or wanting to work with the ministry. It happened because she was invited to organize the exhibits and displays of Junkanoo by different organizers and for the Ministry of Tourism. Since then, she has taught for the Bahamahost program and organized the "Junkanoo Museum & Shack" for the last seven years at the Junkanoo Summer Festival. As we can see from the history of Educulture, even though Nash Ferguson didn't intend to work with the tourist industry, it has proven to be instrumental in the success and growth Educulture. Yet the primary mission of Educulture programs is geared towards educating Bahamian children about their history and culture.

Nash-Ferguson says that her focus was “getting to the children of the Bahamas to show them our history, show them our culture, and show them how our government works. It would complement and supplement what the teachers are doing in the classroom. This was my passion. Tourism and everything followed” (personal interview). She has been involved with Junkanoo since she was a child, and so she thinks that it is extremely important for Bahamian children to learn about the history of Junkanoo and understand the significance of it for Bahamian culture; she believes that “will help us to understand who we are” (personal interview). When she learned that Junkanoo started as a form of passive resistance to slavery, it was transformative for her and she was upset that she did not know this when she was young. As a result, she decided that children need to learn about this history, how it started, and how it connects the Bahamas with the rest of the Caribbean (personal interview). Consequently, in addition to the Educulture programs, Nash-Ferguson developed a curriculum for primary and high schools using Junkanoo as the organizing principle. Her methodology breaks down the creative process of Junkanoo, from making the costumes and practicing to rushin in the parade on Bay Street, into stages and incorporates those stages into a related subject area. Her concept called “The Junkanoo Experience” uses the logic that Bahamian children are invested in Junkanoo, so using Junkanoo terminology and examples to teach concepts in school will help Bahamian children to be more interested in their schooling. Additionally, she believes that since many children come into primary school with Bahamian English, not Standard English as their first language, Standard English needs to be approached from a base of Bahamian English. Unfortunately, her ideas about education and changing the curriculum to incorporate Bahamian culture and language have not been embraced by many in the field of education. I would argue this is because of the entrenched British colonial model of education in many primary and high schools, with some

schools incorporating North American models as well. The Ministry of Education has reviewed Nash Ferguson's "Junkanoo Experience" curriculum but have not expressed any interest in discussing it further. This certainly reflects a reluctance to teach outside the colonial model and neocolonial models of education, which promotes service industry jobs as the only viable opportunities, especially for poor and working-class Bahamians in public schools.

Concerned about the education system of the Bahamas and what they teach the youth of the Bahamas, Nash-Ferguson said she thinks that tourism training only focuses on tourists, which is a problem because "we treat each other terribly" (personal interview). She believes we need to get back to "the Bahamian way" with manners being taught in homes and reinforced in schools. While she explains this as a matter of needing "to know ourselves," this idea appears very colonial in its structure and conservative in its approach, referencing some "authentic" Bahamian way, which is certainly problematic. Nevertheless, Nash-Ferguson's concerns about the public school system indicate that she is acutely aware of colonizing systems. She posits that that these schools train Bahamian children to be in the service industry—she calls students graduating from public schools "the uniform crew," from high school uniforms to maid and bartender uniforms (personal interview). Furthermore, she is critical of the reliance on tourism as the only option for economic survival and sees this as having a negative affect on Bahamians. I asked her if she thought tourism affects Bahamian identity and culture. She responded by saying, "Oh yes definitely because we have so many visitors, over 5 million a year and there are only 300,000 of us, there is bound to be an impact and superimpose that on our lack of knowledge about who we are, it waters down our ability to withstand the onslaught of foreign cultures that we face directly" (personal interview). Like other cultural workers interviewed, Nash-Ferguson believes that educating Bahamians about history and culture for Bahamians first will have a positive

affect on the tourist industry because “we need to know who we are first” (personal interview). Nash-Ferguson is also concerned that huge development anchor projects will affect “the family island way of life,” and she thinks there needs to be better planning and some community building: “It all comes back to understanding ourselves and our story. Once we understand that, then we can be proud to be Bahamian. Slavery and colonialism taught us to despise everything about ourselves, and that has to change” (personal interview). Again, she sees the problem stemming from the lack in the education systems in the Bahamas which have formed through colonialism, and the history of travel and tourism and its discourses are also grounded in the history of slavery and colonization.

In closing the interview, I asked her what she would change about the tourist industry. She responded with “promote more of the culture of the Bahamas. We should be selling who we are, not what foreigners think we are” (personal interview). She thinks visitors should have a “true true Bahamian experience and get a taste of who we are” (personal interview). But as Mrs. Nash Ferguson has suggested, “who we are” must be maintained, taught, and reinforced because of the great influence of tourism on Bahamian culture and identity. It is clear that conversations about culture and education will lead to tourism because it occupies so much space in the Bahamian landscape. Hence, Educulture is a welcome model for sustainable heritage tourism in a country that is so dominated by the tourist industry, and it can be seen as an alternative vision or a call for ethical tourism because it advocates for Bahamian-centered education systems and promotion of culture for Bahamians first and then tourists. Given the complexities and double-bind of the industry, Bahamians appear to have little choice but to work within and through the system developing fascinating strategies for negotiating the neocolonial terrain of tourism. The Bahamian postcolonial government supports neocolonial tourism, and it is willing to promote

Junkanoo as national culture for tourists but fails to see that Junkanoo can be part of the education curriculum. This may affect the way Junkanoo is performed and promoted.

Therefore, Nash-Ferguson's work as both educator and cultural worker is needed more than ever as she works within the tourist industry to resist stereotypical fabrications of Bahamian culture and help develop cultural productions that more accurately represent Bahamian culture.

### **Reimaginings in/of “Paradise” – (Re)writing History, Identity, and Sexuality**

All of the Antilles, every island, is an effort of memory; every mind, every racial biography culminating in amnesia and fog. Pieces of sunlight through the fog and sudden rainbows, *arcs-en-ciel*. That is the effort, the labour of the Antillean imagination, rebuilding its gods from bamboo frames, phrase by phrase.

Decimation from the Aruac downwards is the blasted root of Antillean history, and the benign blight that is tourism can infect all of those island nations, not gradually, but with imperceptible speed, until each rock is whitened by the guano of white-winged hotels, the arc and descent of progress.

- Derek Walcott, *“The Antilles: Fragments of Epic Memory”* (1992)

Bahamian artists are generally more critical of tourism, particularly ones who are not dependent upon tourism for their livelihood. Certainly artists are cultural workers, but they are far more removed than cultural workers who produce culture directly for tourism. Nevertheless, some Bahamian writers have attempted to work through the tourist industry. For example, Patricia Glinton-Meicholas has published a few popular satirical books and Bahamian language books marketed to both tourists and Bahamians. These books are published locally through Guanima Press (which is owned by Glinton-Meicholas and her spouse). The satires, *How to be a true-true Bahamian* and *The 99cent Breakfast*, and the works on language, *Talkin' Bahamian* and *More Talkin Bahamian*, are explicitly written for multiple audiences—tourists, foreign residents, and locals—and in each of these books, she makes it clear that they are for everyone who wants to learn or be reminded how to be “real” Bahamian. Even though she markets to

tourists, Glinton-Meicholas is critical of tourism in her poetry, specifically in the poem “No Vacancy in Paradise,” which represents the extent to which paradise is created for tourists:

Forgive us, though  
If our humanity  
intrudes  
spoiling  
the fantasies  
packaged for you  
by a dream merchant  
into fournightsthreedays  
of tropical delights (49)

This poem asserts the ways in which Bahamian humanity is lost in the construction of paradise and the fantasies that accompany it, all packaged in the tourist industry. Perhaps Glinton-Meicholas attempts to offer tourists a way of “seeing” Bahamian humanity through her satirical humor. Regardless, she is less critical than writers whose do not write or market their work for the tourist industry. For the purposes of my study, I chose two Bahamian poets, financially independent from the tourist industry, whose work is critical of tourism and neocolonialism, resists paradise discourse, and challenges dominant colonial and gendered travel discourse. Marion Bethel’s poetry demonstrates the continuity of slavery and conquest in contemporary tourism, as she (re)writes Bahamian history and identity; while Christian Campbell’s poetry engages in the sexual and gendered aspects of tourist exploitation, as he (re)writes Bahamian identity and sexuality. These two Bahamian poets offer (re)imaginings in “paradise” as they (re)imagine “paradise” itself.

Marion Bethel is arguably one of the most distinguished Bahamian poets today. Although she has only one book of poetry *Guanahani, My Love* published in 1995, her work has been published widely in several Caribbean and international journals and publications, and she has recently completed a second manuscript of poetry. Bethel’s main profession is law—she is

an attorney running her own law firm in Nassau. This reflects a reality of many Bahamian writers who more often than not have a main career outside of writing. She was the 1994 recipient of the most prestigious regional literary awards—The Casa de Las Americas Award (a literary prize competition in Havana, Cuba, which publishes the winning book in Spanish and English).<sup>13</sup> Bethel critiques tourism in a number of poems, perhaps most stridently in a selection from her first book and in two pieces from her later unpublished manuscript.

Bethel offers a challenge to colonialism by addressing the period of conquest in the Bahamas, the site of the first European contact in the New World. She begins *Guanahani, My Love* with a few poems that frame the Bahamas as exploited from the very first moment of European contact through the enslavement and genocide of the indigenous people (the Tainos, known as the Lucayans and Arawaks), and the subsequent enslavement of African peoples through the Transatlantic Slave Trade. Her re-envisioning and (re)writing the dominant narratives of history and conquest continue through to her engagement with tourism and neocolonialism. In the poem “Of Pirates and Junkanoo,” Bethel uses the figure of the pirate as a way to discuss consumption and exploitation, and she juxtaposes the image of the pirate with the Junkanoo figure as a sign of resistance. Capturing an image of Caribbean paradise in the opening lines, the speaker says “I drum away a dream drunk / in pirated laughter and gold” (16). This dream represents, in the words of Ian Strachan, the myth-reality of paradise, which is grounded in conquest and the search for gold; therefore, the Junkanoo performer in this poem attempts to “drum away” or forget this myth-reality that is soaked in stolen bodies and resources.

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<sup>13</sup> Marion Bethel was awarded a major year-long fellowship at the Mary Ingraham Bunting Institute of Harvard University and Radcliffe College in 1997. Also, Bethel was special editor for an issue of *The Caribbean Writer* in 1999 on Poetry from the Bahamas. And more recently, she was invited as a guest poet at the XVI International Poetry Festival of Medellin in 2006 hosted in Columbia.

Junkanoo provides a yearly escape from a sordid history and daily realities that conflict with the myth of paradise. The speaker continues: “I blow again my shell of conch / stripped of wax / chronicler of stacks / of raw sugar, tobacco and mould” (16). The conch shell was traditionally used in Junkanoo as one of the horns that accompany the goatskin drums, cowbells, whistles, and bicycle horns. While the conch shell as a horn was used during slavery by slave masters and drivers to call in slaves to/from the fields, it was also used as a form of communication among slaves, particularly for planning rebellions and forming maroon communities.<sup>14</sup> Given the history of Junkanoo during slavery, the use of the conch shell connects the Bahamian festival even further to resistance. Thus, the conch shell can be seen as a complicated symbol of resistance because it is being used here by the Junkanoo performer “stripped” of its memory of “raw sugar, tobacco and mould,” and at the same time, the shell carries these memories as “chronicler.” Again, the Junkanoo performer is attempting to forget, but at the same time forced to remember and understand this past in the present.

Bethel interrogates the history of the Bahamas by uncovering the past (slavery and colonialism) to better understand the present (neocolonialism). The nation is trapped under the weight of this history: the theft of resources; the abuse of people through slavery; and the lies of stability under colonial rule and domination. We can again envision the speaker as a Junkanoo performer (re)telling this history:

I sing acappella a nation sunk  
trapped in a piracy mould  
swaggering about a golden trunk  
of union jacks  
Americana pax

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<sup>14</sup> In the epigraph of Michelle Cliff’s novel *Abeng*, Cliff cites the word “abeng” as an African word meaning conch shell. As it is commonly known, the conch shell was used by slave drivers to call the slaves into the fields; Cliff asserts the conch shell as having another use “it was the instrument used by the Maroon armies to pass their messages and reach one another” (Cliff).

found in a slaver's hold. (16)

The nation is trapped in the mold of constant piracy of resources and people, and the dominant narrative of colonial history does not address this. This “piracy mould” could also refer to the nation of the Bahamas as a colonial construction—a mimic and former colony of ‘motherland’ England, “swaggering” in its reproduction, and under the neocolonial rule of “Americana pax” or American pox, U.S. Imperialism. Bethel ends the poem with a swift move from past to present as the speaker changes and speaks to the Junkanoo performer specifically and to Bahamian people more broadly:

Blow that conchshell shake them bells  
in junkanoo resistance bold  
pirates sell land like tourist shells  
greased hands  
in a trance  
of lashes, myths of gold. (16)

The speaker is urging readers here to resist and use Junkanoo as it once was—as a form of cultural resistance to those in power—and to simply remember this form of “resistance bold” and speak out against the exploitation of the Bahamas. The pirates selling “land like tourist shells” represent the government and land-owning (mostly white and near white) elite of the Bahamas, who continue to perpetuate (consciously or unconsciously) a history of conquest, plantation, and myth-making of paradise. In this poem, Bethel denounces the exploitation of the Bahamas and calls for resistance in terms of (re)writing history, revitalizing Junkanoo as cultural resistance, and raising the issue of land ownership.

Land ownership and control has been a major issue not only in the Bahamas but across the region, with multinational corporations, cruise lines, and tour companies (among others such as rich celebrities) buying their own piece of “paradise” for use in the tourist industry or for private use—this is a serious problem in the Bahamas with literally hundreds of small islands

and cays for sale to the highest bidder. The Bahamas' real estate is being marketed using paradise discourse to sell the islands. According to the *International Herald Tribune*, the islands of the Bahamas are the new 'hot spot' in real estate because of its number and variety of islands, proximity to the United States, and the Bahamas' stable economy. On October 18, 2007, they ran a story titled "Tide of investment sweeps Bahamas":

From the capital city of Nassau on New Providence to less sparsely populated islands in the chain, high-end residential projects are in development with amenities that almost routinely include golf courses designed by champions, equestrian centers, full-service marinas accommodating vessels as long as 200 feet, or 60 meters, private air strips, dive shops, spas, unspoiled beaches and turquoise waters. Almost anything built in the Bahamas these days is considered upscale, with developers courting clients who have multiple homes around the globe. But the prices, linked to the American dollar, look like bargains to anyone paying in pounds or euros. (Jackson)

The upscale developments they are referring to here certainly do not include Bahamian working class or even middle class homes or businesses. Outside of the privately-owned homes, developments are owned and operated for the most part by multinational corporations. It seems that the real estate market is excited about "paradise" - all those "empty" and "deserted" islands just waiting to be "developed." The article opens with: "This archipelago where Columbus discovered the New World and Hemingway fished has long been a winter hideaway for the super-rich, the titled and the famous, protecting their privacy and often their fortunes in lush enclaves far from the cruise-ship crowd" (Jackson). While the Bahamas certainly has a cruise-ship industry, the writer is referencing a long history of privately-owned islands throughout the Bahamas that are sold by the Bahamas government. During the 1970s and 1980s, this occurred most often through private purchases and to the super-rich, but now it is increasingly, as the article suggests, through development companies that are building resorts, marinas, and/or gated communities. This is what Bethel refers to in her poem when she writes "pirates sell land like tourist shells"; unfortunately, this has only increased.

Bethel sees clearly the relationship between tourism and neocolonialism, and this is evident in her poem titled “On a Coral Cay,” where she connects the dependence on the tourist industry in the Bahamas to the “failed” industries of the past. The poem opens with the following declaration: “On a coral cay where tourism is king / divine and banking, a silver prince / where sugar never was, no hardly / where cotton never was, not much” (26). In the mid 1990s, tourism and banking reigned supreme in the Bahamas as the number one and number two industries respectively within a space where sugar and cotton plantations failed. The poem continues with references to other industries that flourished then failed in the Bahamas during the colonial period—whaling, wrecking, sponging, pirating, and rum running. The speaker then says “we do not grieve our loss / of the cassava Bahamians / to the Sargasso sea,” meaning those who died on failed plantations; “for we are the conch Bahamians / we do not pain for what / we do not know we have lost” (26). The “conch Bahamians” or contemporary Bahamians have little knowledge of the history of plantation life in the Bahamas because of the lack of history books that address this subject. Bahamian history for the most part is told through the eyes of the colonizer and Bahamian white and near-white elite (Strachan 125). Here Bethel laments the loss of this history and the ancestors whose stories go untold, while at the same time (re)writing history in subtle yet powerful ways. She connects the “conch Bahamians” and their lack of knowledge to the success of tourism and banking.

The last stanza of the poem returns to tourism with the speaker making a clear relationship between tourism and plantation slavery:

On a coral cay where we live  
on a tourist plantation, a banking  
estate where the air is conditioned  
and so are hands that do not know  
the fishing line or pineapple soil  
We produce nothing, or hardly and

we service the world, or nearly  
In our air conditioned service  
We are blessed waiters of grace divine. (26)

Bethel asserts that the Bahamas is a “tourist plantation” and “banking estate,” where Bahamian people are “conditioned” to provide service for both the tourist and banking industries. As a result, very few Bahamians participate in other industries such as fishing and agriculture, which would allow the country to explore and utilize other resources. Fishing and agriculture are continuously undervalued as tourism and banking receive most of the government’s attention and support. When Bethel writes “we produce nothing, or hardly,” she is not making a Naipaulian claim that “nothing was created in the West Indies,”<sup>15</sup> but rather she is referring to a literal production of food and products in the Bahamas. She is comparing Bahamians’ servicing of the world with the very limited supply of locally-produced food and product; thus directly linking the plantation slavery, even though it “failed” in the Bahamas, to the success of tourism and banking. Bethel offers an insightful critique of tourism that interrogates its neocolonial structure and suggests implicitly that the Bahamas invest in other industries that are more sustainable and will build self-reliance—hence, her poetry posits a postcolonial critique of tourism.

In Bethel’s more recent work, she maintains a critical eye on tourism and neocolonialism, and in so doing, (re)writes Bahamian histories and herstories. In other words, she is (re)writing “history” from the perspective of the racialized and gendered subject that includes multiple stories from both female and male vantage points. Specifically in two poems, she addresses the figure of Christopher Columbus, the problematic history surrounding the Columbus landfall on San Salvador, the historical inaccuracies of the Columbus story, and how this is used in Bahamian history from the perspective of a young Black female. Hence, Bethel (re)writes the

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<sup>15</sup> See V.S. Naipaul’s *The Middle Passage*.

Columbus colonial (racialized and gendered) travel discourse through two poems “Guh Morning, Columbus” and “Guh Night, Columbus.” These (re)writings are vital to resisting paradise discourse because the Columbus narrative is deeply entrenched in the Bahamian tourist industry and the historical inaccuracies are played out over and over again in the Bahamian education system and cultural productions. Therefore, I see Bethel’s poetry as a much needed corrective.

In the poem “Guh Mornin, Columbus,” Bethel writes in the voice of a young girl attending primary school, who talks about her lunchtime ringplay games and the freedom and release she has in the dance and movements. She then tells of a story she has written at school, which she calls “my school of 1492 on School Lane” (unpublished poem). By calling the school 1492, Bethel draws attention to the moment that marks the beginning of European conquest, genocide, and colonization in the “New World.” It also marks the beginning of the “official” history of the Bahamas—“discovered” by Columbus, inhabited by the “peaceful natives” who welcomed Columbus and “happily” assisted him in claiming these lands for Spain. The idea and image of the landfall thought to be on the island of San Salvador remains an iconic symbol for the Bahamas, particularly in terms of national identity and its position in the global tourist industry. The Bahamas’ Ministry of Tourism promotes the country as the place where “Columbus made his first landfall in the New World on the island of San Salvador” (“The Bahamas”). Although historians and geographers have debated the exact island (all located in the Bahamas) Columbus first landed on, the country remains “the first” and this “fact” is used within the dominant narrative of history, which feeds tourism discourses. As Strachan argues in his work on the Bahamas, Columbus has been deified and glorified especially in the tourist industry; “his ‘discovery’ of ‘paradise’ has become the centerpiece of the nation’s history” (126). The celebration of Columbus is sustained and celebrated through education and national

identifiers: the statue of Columbus, which stands in front of the Government House, and the October 12<sup>th</sup> national holiday (which was still celebrated as “Discovery Day” well into the 1990s, now officially called “National Heroes Day” but still colloquially called Discovery or Columbus Day).<sup>16</sup>

The Columbus story is powerful and even though people “know” about the Taino (Lucayan) genocide, Columbus is still revered and even worshipped (Strachan 126-7). As Caribbean historians and scholars have asserted, a more complete recording of this history would explain several points quite differently: the “natives” were called “Indians” by Columbus because he thought he was in the Indies, and henceforth, the indigenous people of this hemisphere have had to endure the misnomer “Indian” for over five hundred years; Columbus essentially began the practice of slavery; most of the indigenous peoples were killed post-European contact and conquest. But the dominant narrative of this history, one that proclaims “happy, peaceful natives” greeted Columbus with open arms, is taught in schools across the world; and in the Bahamas’ colonial education system, this story is taught as *the* Bahamian story, *the* Bahamian beginning. But as Strachan explains, “some local voices have challenged the privileged place Columbus is afforded in history and in the national psyche” (127); and this is exactly what Bethel does in her poems that address Columbus. She directly confronts and resists the powerful place of Columbus in Bahamian history and culture by challenging and (re)writing the Columbus story.

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<sup>16</sup> Strachan asserts the 1992 Quincentennial Anniversary of Columbus’ landfall as an example of how the Columbus moment continues to be glorified and commodified by the tourist industry and the Bahamas government (127). The celebration of this anniversary included vehicle license plates with 1492-1992, Bahamian dollar bills with an image of Columbus, a special Junkanoo parade, and a reenactment of the Columbus’ ships arrival in San Salvador with actors playing the roles of the Taino and the Spaniards (127). “The three ships of Columbus’ first voyage and the meeting of the Taino and the Spaniards on a beach at Guanahani were viewed to be sacred images, and they graced school walls across the nation” (127).

“Guh Mornin, Columbus” closes with the young speaker’s story that she wrote at her school on 1492 lane, which reveals how a young Bahamian girl understands the Columbus narrative, while also challenging it by inserting herself into this colonial and gendered narrative. Also, the speaker incorporates seemingly unrelated historical events, places, and people into her adventures, and this disrupts the dominant discourse of the colonial period:

I captained the pirate ship the Santa Maria and fought with Anne Bonney at the  
Battle of Waterloo we captured Nelson Horatio landed on Guanima wearing  
Edward VIII’s bearskin cap and traditional red coat

we traded chiclets for cassava with the Lucayan children

we buried the hatchet with Hatuey (unpublished poem)

The young Bahamian girl imagines herself as the captain of the Santa Maria, which was Columbus flagship, but she calls it a pirate ship. This displaces the normative historical rendering of Columbus as explorer or “discoverer” and places his voyage into the realm of piracy or theft and plunder. Moreover, she then evokes a battle with Anne Bonney, a female pirate in the 1700s who lived in Nassau and traveled across the Caribbean, thereby (re)writing herstory. She continues by placing herself and Anne Bonney as shipmates who capture Nelson Horatio, a British Admiral during the late 1700s who helped to fight off Napoleon from invading Great Britain. Anne Bonney and our young girl speaker land on Guanima, the Lucayan name for Cat Island, which has been one of the debated islands for the actual landfall of Columbus in 1492. By wearing Edward VIII’s bearskin hat and a traditional British army red coat, they are both pirates and British conquerors. Edward VIII was King of England in 1936 and named Duke of Windsor after voluntarily abdicating the British throne because of his relationship with divorcee Wallis Warfield; he was later assigned governorship of the Bahamas from 1940 to 1945 during

World War II.<sup>17</sup> In these seemingly unrelated moments, Bethel brings multiple European histories together to tell her story of Columbus, perhaps to show how these histories collide and illustrate colonialism at work from the very first moment of contact.

These collisions are particularly evident through the speaker's (re)telling of Columbus' landfall and the "exchange" that the dominant narrative of history says happened between the Europeans and the Amerindians. Bethel revises this narrative through her young speaker who explains "we traded chicklets for cassava with the Lucayan children," which subtly critiques the "trade" by showing its inequity—the gum represents what the Europeans brought, items that were unnecessary and offered no real sustenance; while the Lucayans shared food and knowledge of the land—these represent nourishment and long-lasting necessary sources of sustenance. The final line of the poem resonates with a subtle (re)writing of history of the untold story of Taino (and by extension Lucayan) resistance. The legend of Hatuey describes him as a famous Taino Cacique (chief) who fled from Spanish rule in Hispaniola to Cuba with a group of his tribe to warn their island neighbors of the European invasion. He did this after seeing what Columbus and his fellow colonists had in store for the indigenous peoples of the Caribbean. Celebrated as the first Cuban martyr in the struggle for independence, Hatuey was captured and killed in 1512 by Spanish conqueror Diego Velázquez de Cuéllar (Rouse 156). The closing line of Bethel's "Guh Mornin, Columbus" leaves us with this image of burying "the hatchet with Hatuey," thereby inserting the resistance of Tainos into the Columbus story, yet acknowledging

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<sup>17</sup> British Prime Minister Winston Churchill is said to have dispatched the Duke to this post as governor because he wanted to get him out of Europe because of the Duke and Dutchess support of Nazi Germany and Hitler. The Duke of Windsor is the only British monarch to ever hold a civilian political post, and he expressed dislike for the position and called the Bahamas a third-class colony.

the genocide and enslavement of indigenous peoples across the Caribbean as an important and necessary part of Columbus' legacy that must be incorporated into the dominant narrative.

In "Guh Night, Columbus," Bethel writes again from the perspective of a young Bahamian child, who remembers Sunday drives with her family across the small island of New Providence. This poem works to not only (re)write colonial and gendered travel discourse, but it also (re)claims space and place at the time of Bahamian independence. The speaker (re)imagines these Sunday trips as adventures and places them within the context of literature she more than likely read in British colonial schools: "I had a place on top of the hill where the world began to be there forever was / my hope like rich mineral deposit set deep in quarry stone / I also longed to travel the Silk Road to the court of Kubla Khan" (unpublished poem). Bethel asserts, through her speaker, a Black female child's desire to travel, explore, and see the world. The poem also illustrates her understanding of independence: "what I learned as a child before the split the separation from rock at ten was / this: coloured colonial christian charitable in prayer I was no interloper on this land / my father drove us on Sundays in every direction" (unpublished poem). Before independence from Britain (July 11, 1973), the speaker explains what she has learned about colonial Bahamas and its people, being a Black person, a colonized subject, and a good praying Christian, ideas reinforced through the British colonial education system. But once "the split" or independence occurs, she knows that she is "no interloper"—she belongs to this land, on which her ancestors were enslaved. (While technically speaking all non-indigenous peoples in the Western Hemisphere are "interlopers," the speaker suggests here a claim to this land through the complicated history of being both colonized and descended from Africans enslaved in the New World.) This issue of belonging and not belonging is directly connected to not only the

period of independence, establishing who “belongs” to the nation, but it is also a reflection of the colonial mechanisms of control through slavery and the post-emancipation era.

The Sunday drives “in every direction” can be seen as a (re)claiming of land and space, and as the poem continues, the speaker describes different places throughout the island. As they drive down various streets, the speaker remarks upon landmarks, upper-class neighborhoods, and areas of the island where rich (mostly white) Bahamians and foreigners reside—Lyford Cay and Eastern Road. The speaker asserts herself as belonging to the island, “I was no trespasser no intruder in this land,” as she moves through these areas that are reminders of the class divisions and socio-economic privilege of those living behind “the great wall of Lyford Cay... with castles and moats and towers” and on “the eastern road of more themostest citadels and strongholds” (unpublished poem). Bethel is offering a locally-specific critique of space and land at the moment of independence in the Bahamas, with references to different areas and neighborhoods. A private, gated, and exclusive community on the western tip of New Providence, Lyford Cay remains to this day predominantly rich, white, and foreign, with a few exceptions in recent years of rich Black Bahamians residing there. Similarly, the area known as Eastern Road (not a gated community, but rather a stretch of land on the eastern coast of New Providence) is filled with mansions and high end residencies, and the people who reside there are often called the “Eastern Road White Knights.” However, a number of well-off, middle to upper class Black Bahamians reside on and near Eastern Road; regardless, these neocolonial spaces in the Bahamas continue to represent the have’s and the have not’s, class status, and socio-economic privilege. Bethel’s poem focuses on the independence moment, yet issues of land ownership and class divisions remain a concern of many Bahamians; this poem calls attention to the different spaces that exist on the island.

Therefore, this journey must also take them to the tourist spaces on the island as the family arrives in downtown Nassau where the cruise ships dock: “in the north we promenaded with our father along Prince George Dock in / Sundayschool clothes acted our part in american showtime a scramble for pennies / the bronze head of George Washington flung by jeweled hands from a cruise ship” (unpublished poem). Bethel invokes a story (based on history) at the cruise ship dock, in which young Bahamian boys used to dive for pennies “entertaining” tourists to get money.<sup>18</sup> As the family watch, they too become apart of this “american showtime” from the perspective or gaze of tourists, the “jeweled hands” on the cruise ship. “American showtime” makes reference to the Bahamas’ participation in the tourist industry—being accommodating to the United States, making deals with cruise ship companies, and producing culture for tourism. The speaker continues with the scene: “we sang to the tourists under our breath with the barefoot boys who sang loud for / their supper we stretched our eyes wide held out breath for the diving boys / diamond-studded with sea water indigo-blue barracudas a flash-in-the pan of sky” (unpublished poem). The family can’t help but join in on the singing, softly perhaps in shame, as they listen to the boys sing, dive, and perform for a few dollars thrown from cruise ship passengers. The family holds their breaths with the diving boys as they enter the ocean; this holding of breaths represent the fear and possibility of the boys drowning. The harbor is quite deep near the cruise ships (dredged to accommodate the massive ships), and so

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<sup>18</sup> A number of travel books and brochures about the Bahamas written from the late 1800s to the early 1900s include a similar scene in which Bahamian black boys are diving for coins thrown by tourists into the ocean. See William Drysdale’s *In Sunny Lands* published in 1885. These kinds of scenes were described more often than not in order to show the “docile” nature of the Black Bahamians and how they never fought and were friendly. Strachan writes extensively about the birth of travel brochure discourse from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and how it continues to affect Bahamian tourism today. He argues that the travel writing during the late 19<sup>th</sup> century deliberately focused on how “docile” and “civil” the “natives” were in these places, so that the wealthy travelers would feel safe (Strachan 102).

this fear is both real and symbolic of the dangers of what tourism has done to the Bahamas and Bahamian people. Bethel reveals how much tourism is a part of the everyday for Bahamians—even on a Sunday drive (re)claiming land and space, there are some spaces in Nassau dominated by tourism and tourists that are arguably un-reclaimable. The family leaves Prince George Dock and heads south for home as the speaker continues to describe the streets and the movements across the island. As she begins with the image of her hope “set deep in quarry stone,” she ends with an image of her reading “still and silent and grounded as the quarry rock that / surrounded me” (unpublished poem). The quarry, with its opening and closing images, forge a connection to the land itself—limestone rock which the islands of the Bahamas are comprised—and also Black Bahamians claim to this land. Even as the family travels around the island and are reminded of so much that is not theirs, downtown tourist spaces and (white) rich neighborhoods and areas, the speaker emphasizes her claim and her family’s claim to space.

Their movements across the island enacts this claim just as Columbus and other European conquerors did during the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries—in fact, landfall for them was claim enough regardless of the people there already. Hence, the poem’s title “Guh Night, Columbus” indicates a letting go of Columbus’ hold/claim on the Bahamas and bodes him and his “legacy” farewell. She invokes in this poem a kind of travel discourse from the perspective a Black woman, thereby resisting the dominant travel narrative genre, which was so often used from the 16th century on to lay claim to the New World and prove that the “natives” needed to be colonized and Christianized. The long history of colonization and enslavement began with Columbus and the 1492 landfall, and still he and the iconic landfall image continue to be deified, celebrated, and commodified in the contemporary Caribbean tourist industry. The two poems “Guh Mornin, Columbus” and “Guh Night, Columbus” work together to account for and dispel

the powerful discourse of Columbus worship and disrupt the place of the Columbus story in Bahamian history. Through her poems, Bethel is directly engaged in a (re)writing of history that seeks to challenge neocolonial and gendered discourses of travel and tourism that are firmly entrenched in the history of slavery and colonialism.

Christian Campbell's poetry also creates this challenge but does so in different ways—through subtle metaphors that reveal the profound influence of tourism on Bahamian identity and culture through an engagement with the sexual and gendered aspects of tourist exploitation. Specifically, Campbell's poems "Groove" and "Welcome Centre" offer poignant critiques of tourism that deal with how tourism affects Bahamian culture and identity. Through poetic renderings of two sexualized and racialized figures often used and stereotyped in tourism discourse, the "rent-a-dread" or "beach boy" in "Groove" and the "straw market woman" in "Welcome Centre," Campbell (re)writes Bahamian identity and sexuality by demonstrating the extent to which tourism influences cultural production and self-perception. Moreover, he challenges tourist exploitation by confronting the asymmetric relationships that emerge in sex tourism and the ways the Black female body and sex are sold in tourism.

The poem "Groove" deals with the difficult (and often taboo) subject of romance and sex tourism with what many in the Caribbean call the "beach boy" or "rent-a-dread"—generally described as local Black men who spend time with and have sex with female tourists in exchange for money, food, lodging, and other material items (Cave Canem VII). In sex tourism studies, these "exchanges" are sometimes called "romance" tourism because of the time spent together, and it is often described as something different from prostitution.<sup>19</sup> Nevertheless, as other sex

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<sup>19</sup> See Kamala Kempadoo's collection *Sun, Sex, and Gold: Tourism and Sex Work in the Caribbean* for extensive and important essays about sex work in the region, specifically the following essays: "'Come to Jamaica and Feel All Right': Tourism and the Sex Trade" by

tourism scholars such as Kemala Kempadoo and Denise Brennan, I see romance tourism as a form of sex tourism that illustrates the unequal power dynamics and asymmetric relationship between local and tourist.<sup>20</sup> The epigraph of “Groove” reveals the speaker as “the other voice of Winston Shakespeare from *How Stella Got Her Groove Back*” (Cave Canem VII). The popular novel by Terry McMillan (then turned into a film) details the journey of a 40 year old, African American woman who travels to Jamaica on vacation and falls in love with a significantly younger Black Jamaican man. A subsequent visit to Jamaica ensues and Winston moves to the United States to be with Stella. This romance story traffics in the myth of paradise and shows how African Americans have also been fed and consume stereotypical images of the Caribbean. The novel (and film) are based on the author’s own experiences and journey to Jamaica, which brought public attention to “romance” tourism—even though these kinds of “relationships” have been ongoing across the region for many years and have been an inextricable and unspoken component of tourism. But what is different about this film and novel is that both the tourist and

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Shirley Campbell, Althea Perkins, and Patricia Mohammed, and “‘Fantasy Islands’: Explore the Demand for Sex Tourism” by Julia O’Connell Davidson and Jacqueline Sanchez Taylor.

<sup>20</sup> There are a number of scholars who do work on sex tourism and sex work consider “romance” tourism to be sex work, and sometimes prostitution, but do not make a distinction between sex and romance tourism. See Kempadoo’s “Continuities and Change: Five Centuries of Prostitution in the Caribbean,” and the Campbell, Perkins, and Mohammed study and O’Connell Davidson and Sanchez Taylor’s essay in the collection *Sun, Sex, and Gold*. Also, see Sanchez Taylor’s “Tourism and ‘embodied’ commodities: Sex Tourism in the Caribbean” who argues against the term romance tourism, and Denise Brennan’s *What’s Love Got to Do With It?: Transnational Desires and Sex Tourism in the Dominican Republic* who also uses sex tourism over romance tourism. Conversely, Deborah Pruitt and Suzanne LaFont in “Romance Tourism: Gender, Race, and Power in Jamaica” do make a distinction between sex and romance tourism because of the intimate and potential long-term relationships that can (and often do) emerge. They argue that “In a unique conjunction of need, hope, and desire, the romance relationships between tourist women and local men serve to transform traditional gender roles across cultural boundaries, creating power relations distinctive from those existing in either native society” (331). However, they do acknowledge that there still exists an asymmetric power dynamic between tourists and locals and that the economic status on the part of tourists still allow for tourist to dominate the other regardless of gender, and locals continue to be “Othered” (332-33).

the local are Black, while the perceived “usual” pairings for sex/romance tourism tend to be white tourists with Black locals.<sup>21</sup> The novel and film do not represent Winston as a “rent-a-dred” or “beach boy,” but rather as someone who Stella just happens to meet at the hotel on her vacation. Hence, the “other voice” of Winston in Campbell’s poem is referring to the other side of this story—perhaps a more realistic vision of the local who makes a living through sex tourism.

The opening lines of the poem focus on the ways in which the Black male body is fetishized and used within consumer culture generally, and more specifically, in the tourist industry: “I never born. / I walk out the water one day, / gleaming and black. / I walk out the water one day, / between Atlantis and The Shack” (lines 1-5). While this scene can be thought of as reminiscent of Aphrodite, the Greek goddess of love, beauty, and pleasure, who sprung from sea foam, it also closely invokes the image from the film in which Stella and Winston meet for the second time as he dives into the hotel pool and emerges “gleaming and black.” Although *How Stella Got Her Groove Back* is set in Jamaica, Campbell’s poem is set in the Bahamas, as the speaker makes reference to the hotel Atlantis on Paradise Island and other cultural markers, yet the speaker could be in any number of places across the Caribbean. The poem continues with the speaker explaining where he comes from, not being born, but rather created:

Me, I come from conch-songs  
and fire and under limbo bars,  
wooden monkeys in barrels  
where huge dicks spring out,  
clapboard houses, goombay,

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<sup>21</sup> However, the Stella/Winston narrative is now very prominent and reveals the extent to which African Americans do travel to the Caribbean for “romance” and sex tourism. See the website Girlfriend Tours for an idea of how established this industry is—Girlfriend Tours International is run by two older African American women who organize vacations for women in Jamaica. See <http://www.girlfriendtours.com/about.htm>.

a raggamuffin's bop, the Ministry  
of Tourism. My ting, my thing. (lines 7-12)

The speaker is a product of tourist songs and limbo and fire dances where Black men perform “native” dances in skimpy costumes that showcase not only their flexible bodies but also their “huge dicks” during shows that are mostly for tourists. He also comes from clapboard houses, made out of wood based on African designs, a vestige of slavery, and generally found “over the hill.” This area includes poor, working class neighborhoods in Nassau, and so this reference to houses subtly brings attention to the speaker’s working-class status and the class divisions that exist in the Bahamas. He also comes from Goombay, a summer festival during the 1980s created by the Ministry of Tourism specifically for the tourist industry, a raggamuffin’s walk (tough guise—rude boy), and the Ministry of Tourism. By placing these seemingly unrelated items together, Campbell shows how much tourism and the production of culture for tourism affects (as Strachan puts it) “self-perception.” This placement is significant because the speaker’s identity has been forged through tourist cultural productions and his class status, which is reinforced through the tourist industry and exploitation.

The male speaker understands his masculine identity, sexuality, and place in his country through the workings of tourism. Not only does the speaker define himself through tourism, but he also describes his body and his “ting”<sup>22</sup> or “thing” (dick) through tourist motifs and colonial structures: “I make of muscle / and rum and straw. / Tiny umbrellas and beads. / And the Bible and Shakespeare / and Africa” (lines 13-17). Rum, straw, tiny umbrellas, and beads all have significant placement in the tourist industry—from drinks and souvenirs to hair-braiding materials—that can be found in and near hotels and on hotel beaches. The speaker also defines

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<sup>22</sup> In Bahamian English, “ting” is a popular word often used as a noun to describe a person, place, thing, or idea. It is also used to refer to private parts and sexual organs.

himself through the Bible, Shakespeare, and Africa; in other words, the speaker understands himself as made not only through tourism but also through colonization and slavery. He has been forged through Christianity and a British colonial education system in which memorizing Shakespeare is almost as important as Bible class and attending church; and yet he is aware of his Blackness and that this Blackness has something to do with Africa and enslavement. By placing all these identity descriptors together, Campbell emphasizes the pervasiveness and profound impact of tourism on Bahamian culture and identity. In other words, he presents tourism as having the same profound influence on identity formation as colonialism and slavery because tourism erupted out of those institutions and travel and tourism discourses are immersed in colonial (racialized and gendered) discourses.

The speaker also understands himself and his identity through different jobs in the tourist industry, and he aligns these jobs with sex work. It is no coincidence that these are all low-paying service/entertainment jobs in the tourist industry; and while they are indeed gendered, they are for the most part jobs that poor and working class Bahamians do. He explains that he was also a number of people—a Marketwoman, a Banana man, a fire dancer, a glass-bottom boat operator, and a jet ski renter on the beach—before he became a “rent-a-dred.” The speaker compares these tourist workers and their jobs with the sex work that he is doing now—drawing a stark connection to the selling of souvenirs, food, performances, guided tours, and water rides with the selling of the body. Also, these jobs are gendered, yet he includes them together to show how sexualized both male and female bodies are in tourism; hence, his sex changes from job to job, being female most obviously as Marketwoman and perhaps as fire dancer which could be male or female. Campbell creates a compelling vision that forces readers to confront the ways in which the Bahamas is selling itself through service, culture, and sex.

The speaker's voice is juxtaposed to that of other tourist workers, thereby aligning sex work with more "acceptable" jobs in the tourist industry and comparing these more "acceptable" service jobs to his sex service. The speaker describes his work as service: "I could fuck / like a goatskin drum. ... All day long I lift plenty / legs. I prowl. I ride" (lines 26-7, 31-2). He is using his "thing" (his body, dick, gleaming and Black) to uphold his masculinity, which is strengthened and assured through fucking and lifting "plenty legs." The speaker then says "somebody pounce a white gyal, / leave her in the bush to dead. / I lift plenty legs. I prowl. I ride" (lines 33-6). He has heard about a white female tourist being raped and killed, but he cannot be too concerned as he continues his sex service, which is to "lift plenty legs" and prowl and ride. But this death is a threat to tourism and his economic future because it can damage the reputation of the Bahamas as a "safe" tourist destination. However, it is almost as if he can disconnect from the news of this rape/death because he implies that his sex acts are consensual, and he is desired by the female tourists—he is not like the "somebody" who committed this horrific act. But this disconnect is troubling and disturbing as female tourists become objects for his "prowl" and "ride"—a means to his end of asserting his manhood and sex skills, yet this is how he earns a living. Although this work as his livelihood, he derives power from being a male sex worker, perhaps because of sexism and in spite of racism, which he glorifies even as he hints at the problems in sex work. He seems able to separate himself from concerns of subjugation through his masculinity and ability to fuck well. He appears willing to play the part and be "the native" and this extends to all tourists regardless of race.

The speaker is aware of the ways in which his Blackness is made desirable through the tourist industry, and at the same time, he is also aware of how Black tourists may want to make Diasporic connections with him through his Blackness: "the black ones believe we / family, but I

don't know / them niggers from Adam" (lines 37-9). In other words, he says here that African Americans may think they are the same because they are Black, but to the speaker, they are not "family" simply because of skin color and race. His assertion ignores the shared history of enslavement and the commonalities across the African Diaspora and exposes how differences of class and nation can prevent Black Diasporic subjects from connecting—especially in the tourist industry. Moreover, Bahamians are in many ways taught to view African Americans as different even as they recognize their shared skin color. Bahamians are educated through the prism of tourism—"the tourist" is a visitor, a guest, who has money and is paying for service. As the poem closes, the speaker leaves us with images of who he is/must be for the (sex) tourist industry, for him to make money and be in the hotel space to solicit or be solicited:

You have to be barefoot.  
You have to dance.  
You have to have chest.  
When my locks start to sprout,  
I will make double.

O I have too much  
to want.

America, America. Yes, America,  
I run the islands. You come.  
Look for me.

The speaker explains the ways "the native" has to act and be within tourist spaces and the hotel: a well-shaped body, barefoot, and dancer, ready, willing, and open to act the part. All the assumptions and representations of "the native" come into play here as the speaker understands that he must perform and "be" these things in order to be pleasing to the tourist. And as the speaker explains, locks will be added bonus to his cultural and "native" capital—he "will make double" once they "sprout." Dreadlocks across the Caribbean and within promotions for tourism have come to signify the Caribbean Black man, the Rastafarian, the Beach Boy, and the Rent-a-

dred. He understands the sexual desire of tourists for Blackness, locks, and a kind of masculine “native” performance, all found in the “rent-a-dred.” Furthermore, this highlights the ways in which “the islands,” and thus Blackness and Black maleness, are homogenized in the tourist industry with dreadlocks being indigenous to Jamaica and not the Bahamas.

With the refrain, “I have too much / to want,” the speaker expresses his own desire for more, but in a very ambiguous way, perhaps a desire for material possessions and socio-economic mobility; and so he sees his performance and sexual labor as the way too get what he wants. On the other hand, he could also be saying that he has had “too much” tourist women, thereby reflecting on what it means to desire and be desired in the context of consumption and sex work. The final lines of the poem reveal the ways in which this speaker sees himself as having power and agency; this is reflected in his telling “America” that he “run the islands”—he’s in charge, he has power. His directions to American tourists (since they comprise the majority of tourists in the Bahamas) are clear—“you come” and “look for me,” or rather the image of him. He will bring fantasies to life while earning money to work towards his dreams; we are not privy to his dreams or goals because he is performing “the native” role, which is dehumanizing on the one hand and on the other it has the illusion of power. But this is all a part of the fantasy—that he has any power of consequence is wrapped up in the fantasy and myth-reality of paradise. Nevertheless, he still views tourists as a way to achieve some status and earn money. He has been created through tourism and constructions of “the native” and sexual desire for the Other, and as a result, the gaze upon his body is projected back onto “the tourist” and desire for the tourist dollar. Campbell’s poem reveals the extent to which Bahamian local identities and culture are forged through tourism and conceptualized through tourist sexual desires even as the male “rent-a-dred” derives power from this position and hence has some

albeit limited agency. This reflects the complicated negotiations that Bahamian people have to make within the culture of a tourist economy, specifically in terms of sexuality and the often unspoken and inextricable connection between tourism and sex.<sup>23</sup>

Sexual desire and sexuality are very much tied to the tourism package, not only directly through sex or romance tourism, but also through performance. In the poem “Welcome Centre,” Campbell writes about the tourist welcome center at Prince George Warf, downtown Nassau, where cruise ships dock and cruise ship passengers disembark. The Ministry of Tourism created this center specifically for tourists who arrive on cruise ships, for the purposes of greeting and giving information. Campbell’s poem titled “Welcome Centre” describes a Bahamian’s experience at the center upon seeing fellow Bahamians perform for tourists, and within this description, Campbell critiques the production (and fabrication) of Bahamian culture through tourism and for tourists. The poem opens with the speaker explaining that he ended up at the welcome center looking for a Bahamian-made straw bag for his aunt: “I went down Bay Street, downtown, / past the Queen Victoria Statue / and out near the water, to where / Bahamians don’t go” (lines 6-9). Bahamians may not “go” to the welcome center, but of course Bahamians are there working. There is an “old man in a palmtree shirt” playing the guitar and singing “Bahamas experience, you can find true romance...” (lines 10 & 14). Wearing what many call the tourist industry’s uniform, short sleeve, button down shirts with “paradise” motifs, from palm trees to flamingoes, he sings about the fantasy of “true romance” thereby confirming for tourists that they have made the right decision to visit “paradise.” The Bahamas itself is romantic, and one can also “find” romance while visiting.

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<sup>23</sup> The edited collection *Tourism and Sex: Culture, Commerce and Coercion* by Stephen Clift and Simon Carter explores this relationship in a number of essays on tourism and leisure across the world. In the introduction, Carter and Clift argue that sex and the promise of sex has always been an intricate part of tourism and travel.

Along with the guitar playing and singing, there is also a dancing “straw woman” described by the speaker as a “solid woman rigged as a straw / doll in Androsia and pigtail wig” (lines 15-6). She is dressed up in Androsia print, which is a Bahamian hand-made fabric, and a pigtail wig to make her look like a doll, probably to resemble the straw dolls sold along Bay Street and the straw market. She is “teaching tourists to dance, / greeting them with a high-pitched voice: / Welcome to the Bahamas!” (lines 17-19). As she says her greeting, the speaker notices how she “popped her eyes when she said it, shook / her huge bottom as if / its own broad life” (lines 21-24). She performs for the tourists; she is a dancing, “straw doll,” with a shaking bouncing bottom as if it has a life of its own. Her body is on display and her bottom is part of the show—her Black female sexuality being promoted as part of the tourist experience in the Bahamas. This is certainly different from the “rent-a-dred” because there is no exchange of sex in this performance but rather the promise of sex; and yet they both sell their bodies, which have become part of the tourism product. The Bahamian speaker, suspicious of her bouncing bottom, remarks, “but somehow it was too ripe / inside the pink and white skirt. / Real flesh don’t bounce like that. It was fake, an extra shelf / If I could touch it, I’d prove it” (lines 31-34). The Bahamian speaker feels discomfort not only in watching this performance, but also in wondering how far this act really goes for his fellow Bahamian woman. What does she have to do to become the straw woman everyday? Perhaps she understands all too well the tourist sexual fantasy of “the native” and the female Black “native” more specifically, with “extra” bottom being an asset for this performance, what tourists expect to see, or rather what has been promoted through the global tourist industry.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> In “Erotic Autonomy as a Politics of Decolonization: An Anatomy of Feminist and State Practice in the Bahamas Tourist Economy,” M. Jacqui Alexander suggests that black working-

Fascination and preoccupation with Black women's bodies is certainly nothing new given the history/herstory of the Hottentot Venus and how long Sarah Baartman's body parts and genitals were on museum display in Paris (from 1815 to 1974). She was the object of Europe's gaze because of what Europeans saw as her extraordinarily large buttocks and genitals. Campbell's poem illustrates the continued fascination with Black women's bodies and how this operates in the tourist industry in the realm of performance and entertainment. The "straw woman" and the speaker's eyes meet, and he thinks they are both thinking the same thing, but then he wonders if she may just assume he is a tourist: "When our eyes caught, / she knew I knew. Or did she think / I was a tourist too?" (lines 36-38). As this question lingers in the air, the speaker implies the extent to which sexual desire and sexuality are bound up in the tourist/local exchange. The tourist industry supports this and, in certain ways, facilitates these kinds of exchanges; this "straw woman" performance and the welcome center are fabricated, state-sanctioned operations, with Bahamians behind its design and construction, in spite of the fact that these images and ideas about "the native" were constructed through slavery and colonialism and perpetuated through neocolonialism. Therefore, Campbell's poem works on multiple levels of critique—primarily regarding the current manifestation of these "native" performances, while also hinting at the root of these ideas and reflecting on what they mean.

Everything that happens at the welcome center is a fabrication that is disingenuous—it is created deliberately as a part of the tourist package. The speaker explains that this center is "another refuge / for Yankees, island music / that didn't make me dance, / a lady in a culture-bustle. / Not a thing happens here" (lines 39-43). The speaker asserts that nothing happens at this place because it functions as a refuge for Americans with fabricated "culture" produced for

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class women and their bodies are used to support the tourist economy in the Bahamas and their "service" also proves their loyalty to the nation, which really means loyalty to tourism (89-100).

tourists. But something is happening—nothingness and a mimicry of the white colonial gaze on the racialized and gendered object. Bahamian culture is being produced for cruise ship tourists, and Black female (read as “native”) sexuality is on display with “a lady in a culture-bustle.” The speaker claims her bouncing bottom as “a culture-bustle” because it represents Bahamian culture, her bustle, her bottom, and her being dressed up as a “straw doll” in this performance.

What the speaker implies then is that this performance, this production, is meaningless:

What I hate bout Home  
is in that look,  
me to her, her to me,  
The poem is the glance  
right there. Or that she kept  
dancing, is that the poem?  
That I can leave, that she can't leave,  
that tourist come and go?  
The next shipload come in,  
confusion of ants,  
and I left without a dance,  
still wandering town for the gift. (lines 44-55)

The speaker explains that he hates what the glance between him and the dancing woman mean, “that look,” which is knowing something is not quite right with this picture, a kind of shame perhaps on both sides, embarrassed at what has become of their culture. But then the speaker questions even “that look,” the spark for this poem, the glance upon which the poem may be based. The poet questions his own motivation for writing as he says “the poem is the glance” but then asks, is the poem “that she kept / dancing.” He reflects upon her lack of mobility on the one hand, and his mobility on the other hand as a Bahamian not dependent upon the tourist industry: “that I can leave, that she can't leave.” She is working, while he can continue his walk downtown looking for a gift; but “leave” works on two levels here, not only leaving the center but also the ability to leave Nassau. But he also wonders if the poem is about the tourists who come and go, on and off the cruise ships—the tourist who is in transit compared to the local who

works at the center. Yet the poet appears to be in between the two, a local who has mobility and can travel. This poem represents the complexities involved in Bahamians' participation in creating the tourism product, as well as all Bahamians complacency in producing fabricated culture that is devoid of organic origins. Campbell engages in a critique of tourism and its effects on culture and identity, and (re)writes identity and sexuality as a challenge to tourism.

Bahamian poets Bethel and Campbell offer ways to reimagine "paradise" through (re)writing and interrogating identity, history, and sexuality within a space whose culture is thoroughly impacted by tourism; hence, they are participating in a necessary yet difficult resistance to paradise discourse. They represent through their poems the complexities of Bahamian identity as it is troubled and shaped through the tourist industry. Their work is also a reflection of the complicated negotiations that Bahamian people have to make within the neocolonial terrain of tourism and a tourist economy that has so much control over the production of culture. Given the enormous pressures to maintain and sustain tourism, Bahamians have not only had to endlessly perform and smile for tourism, but they have also had to develop new strategies for creating and supporting cultural productions that are funded through a state-sanctioned tourist industry. Arlene Nash-Ferguson's *Educulture* can be seen as developing a sustainable model of heritage tourism for the Bahamas, and her work is also resisting paradise discourse because she is trying to prevent what Walcott calls the "erosion of their identity" by educating Bahamian children about their culture and history. This kind of work operates within and uses the tourist industry, and it can lead to more sustainable forms of tourism that benefit Bahamian people. Bahamian writers are working on the level of memory and rebuilding through what Walcott calls "the labour of the Antillean imagination." As Walcott suggests in his Nobel Prize acceptance speech, the work of Caribbean writers is to uncover and

rebuild minds and bodies out of the “amnesia and fog,” and this lack of memory is perpetuated through the tourist industry, “the benign blight that is tourism can infect all of those island nations.” Walcott warns that tourism can all too quickly take over: “until each rock is whitened by the guano of white-winged hotels, the arc and descent of progress.” Tourism is a benign blight because it masks itself as the marker of progress with the ultimate sign being the hotel and each island being “whitened” through the hotel. But what Walcott asserts here is the flip side to the arc—the descent of progress in terms of identity and culture for countries across the Caribbean. Poets Bethel and Campbell, along with a number of other Caribbean writers and intellectuals (producers of Antillean imagination) are participating in the necessary labor of reimagining and rebuilding memory “phrase by phrase.”

CHAPTER 3  
“WE HAVE SOMETHING TO TEACH THE WORLD”: ERNA BRODBER’S BLACKSPACE,  
BUILDING COMMUNITY AND EDUCO-TOURISM

Knowledge production in literature and social-scientific disciplines is clearly an important discursive site for struggle. The practice of scholarship is also a form of rule and of resistance, and constitutes an increasingly important arena of Third World feminisms. After all the material effects of this knowledge production have ramifications for institutions (eg., laws, policies, educational systems) as well as the constitution of selves and subjectivities.

- Chandra Talpade Mohanty, *Feminism Without Borders*

Chandra Mohanty argues that knowledge production through literature and the social sciences by women in the “Third World” is an “important discursive site for struggle” because it challenges the objectification and discursive production of “Third World women” (categorized and constructed mostly through anthropology) (76). Therefore, this knowledge production or “practice of scholarship” can be seen as a form of resistance and a part of “Third World feminisms” because it has material effects on institutions and the process of self-definition, in what Mohanty describes as “the constitution of selves and subjectivities” (76). Jamaican historical sociologist, writer, activist, and scholar Erna Brodber has long contributed to knowledge production through both literature and social science. Brodber’s work illustrates Mohanty’s assertion that knowledge production across these disciplines can be an important site for struggle and resistance. Her novels have consistently engaged with the effects of colonialism and slavery on people of African descent in the Americas. She is a literary author in the vein of other writers I discuss in this project, but she is also a cultural worker connected to the tourist industry of Jamaica similar in this respect to Arlene Nash-Ferguson in the Bahamas. Building upon the previous chapter’s engagement with literary texts that challenge tourism and the cultural activism in Nash-Ferguson’s *Educulture*, a model of sustainable heritage tourism, Brodber utilizes both literature and cultural activism to resist exploitative consumption of the

Caribbean; in the novel *Myal* and research project Blackspace, Brodber proposes a kind of liberated space—a spiritual and social space outside of colonialism in her fiction and at Blackspace, her community-based, research project and Educo-tourism site in Woodside, Jamaica. Brodber identifies herself as an “intellectual worker,” and this speaks to her commitment to knowledge production and why she crosses disciplinary boundaries.<sup>1</sup>

Brodber’s knowledge production has consistently integrated social science work and literary production. She has published several sociological and historical studies, including *Abandonment of Children in Jamaica* (1974), *A Study of Yards in the City of Kingston* (1975), *Perceptions of Caribbean Women* (1982), *Standing Tall: Affirmations of the Jamaican Male* (2003), *The Continent of Black Consciousness* (2003), and *Woodside Pear Tree Grove P.O.* (2004). Also, she has published four novels, *Jane and Louisa Will Soon Come Home* (1980), *Myal* (1988), *Louisiana* (1994), and *The Rainmaker’s Mistake* (2007). Not only have her novels received critical acclaim (*Myal* winning the 1989 Commonwealth Regional Prize for Literature), but her contributions to history, the social sciences, and Caribbean and African Diaspora studies have also earned her a highly respected international reputation and a number of prestigious awards, including the Musgrave Gold Award for Literature and Orature from the government of Jamaica in 1999 and the International Prince Claus Award for Culture and Development from the Netherlands in 2006. The critical reception of Brodber’s body of work inside and outside the Caribbean reflects its influence on various institutions, educational systems. Most importantly, her work significantly contributes to the creation of “selves and subjectivities” for the

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<sup>1</sup> June E. Roberts, in her book *Reading Erna Brodber: Uniting the Black Diaspora through Folk Culture and Religion* (2004), also studies the interdisciplinary nature of Brodber’s work, but she focuses on her fiction work only. Roberts uses a contextual philosophical approach to studying Brodber’s novels and argues that she develops “a unique Caribbean aesthetic of spirit-based social theory” (ix).

descendants of Africans enslaved in the New World.<sup>2</sup> Mohanty offers a framework for understanding the breadth and acclaim of Brodber's work in this context of knowledge production and what this can do not only for intellectual work but also for community building and resistance.

Brodber's work is a "discursive site for struggle" particularly because she writes, works, and creates in interdisciplinary terms, using fiction, social science, and community building, to consistently challenge colonialism and neocolonialism. She confronts the dominant narratives of history by interrogating the past and (re)claiming histories and herstories for people of African descent through novels, sociological studies, speeches, community projects, and collecting/publishing oral narratives.<sup>3</sup> From the perspective of those enslaved and their descendants, these histories and herstories that Brodber promotes transcend and challenge both colonial and neocolonial narratives and constructions of "the Other" by creating and establishing "selves and subjectivities." This chapter considers Brodber's multifaceted approach to resistance; hence, it brings together her critique of exploitative travel and U.S. imperialism in her writing along with her activism in creating a sustainable tourism venue through Blackspace.

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<sup>2</sup> Erna Brodber uses this phrasing because she specifically describes her work and her people as the descendants of Africans enslaved in the New World. Also, she prefers the word "enslaved" over "slave" because the TransAtlantic Slave Trade was very different from slavery in other periods and other parts of the world.

<sup>3</sup> I use the term herstories throughout this chapter and dissertation to acknowledge the male-centered term "history" and "histories," thereby consciously highlighting a woman-centered term "herstory" and "herstories." I also see histories and herstories as challenging the dominant narrative of "History" because they include multiple stories that often oppose and/or uncover hidden stories while at the same time offering a corrective to the notion that there is one "true" History or that "History" is unbiased or fact. A wealth of postcolonial and feminist theorists and writers have discussed these issues concerning "History" and have challenged dominant narratives by (re)writing and theorizing about the failures of "History," including C.L.R. James, Edward Said, Sylvia Wynter, Kamau Brathwaite, Derek Walcott, Eric Williams, Paul Gilroy, Michel-Rolph Trouillot, Chandra Mohanty, and Angela Davis, among an array of others.

Located in Brodber's home village of Woodside in rural Jamaica, Blackspace is a community-based project and Educo-tourism site that focuses on the effects of slavery on people of African descent through several events preceding and on Jamaica's Emancipation Day. Educo-tourism is educational tourism, grounded in the sharing of knowledge between locals and tourists. Thus, Blackspace invites students and tourists from Jamaica and abroad to contribute their skills, expertise, and resources to contributing to the Woodside community. Even so, Brodber maintains critical views of tourism even as she works through the tourist industry and encourages ethical exchanges between locals and tourists through Blackspace and Educo-tourism. She has been critical of travel and cultural colonization in her novel *Myal*, which represents how the Caribbean can be consumed through colonial discourse and U.S. cultural production. *Myal* offers a feminist critique of travel and illustrates how Brodber's fiction works to (re)write history and challenge exploitation of the Caribbean. Brodber exposes the imperial history of tourism by tracing the continuity among imperialism, travel narratives, and the minstrel tradition of U.S. film and theater. Her novel highlights the oppressive effects of this imperialism and cultural colonization on Caribbean people and at the same time presents a model for resisting this oppression through a critical engagement with the imperial tradition and consequent transformation of the colonial education. Brodber's writing, scholarship, and activism reflect neocolonial resistance, a discursive site for struggle, and various ways to build community.

### **Resisting (Neo)Colonial Discourse and Spirit Thievery in *Myal***

In *Myal*, Brodber represents the effects of cultural cannibalism and colonial control on the minds, bodies, and spirits of African Caribbean people, through, what she calls in the novel, zombification or spirit thievery (also known as spirit possession). Spirit thievery is the control over the mind, bodies, and spirits of colonized peoples through language, education, and other colonial structures (used and reinforced by both the colonizer and colonized); it is the

consumption and control of culture or cultural cannibalism. This must be eradicated in order to have spiritual restoration of the entire community, and by extension Jamaica, the Caribbean, and colonized peoples generally. Consequently, Brodber's novel reveals how colonial discourse in books, plays, children's stories, and formal colonial education can have harmful material effects on colonized bodies and communities. Brodber illustrates the struggle through which a rural Jamaican community unites to rid itself of the material consequences of colonial discourse and to create a spiritual and social space liberated from colonialism. The young light-skinned Ella O'Grady, who is the ultimate product of colonization and cultural imperialism, becomes the site for this struggle, and the community has to use its African religious practices to heal her body, mind, and spirit. *Myal* begins with a description of the healing of Ella's sick body as a result of spirit theft, and then the narrator takes readers on the journey of learning why this happened and also what has happened to the larger community.

Brodber maps out the effects of spirit thievery through the Black female body of the protagonist Ella, who experiences multiple kinds of possession with colonial education and marriage, which occur in the Grove Town School and her travels around Jamaica and to the United States. Ella is a pale, light-skinned Black woman, from a light-skinned Black mother (Mary Riley) and Irish father (Ralston O'Grady), who Mary worked for as a housekeeper. Ella's body is a site of memory for Black women's experiences during and after slavery because she represents the long history/herstory of the control of Black women through rape and sexual abuse. Ella (and her mother) can be seen as a reflection of centuries of miscegenation and represents the privilege as well as denigration that come with racial mixing and one's proximity to whiteness. While members of Grove Town find Ella an oddity, an alabaster baby, and say such to her mother Mary when she returns from Kingston and gives birth to Ella, they also

recognize the privilege that comes with her light skin. They ask Mary to think about how hard it will be to raise this “little brown skin girl” in the bush or country (Brodber 7). But Mary pays them “no mind” and continues to raise her child with “ginger” skin and hair (Brodber 10). Ella’s childhood and schooling is described as both a form of denigration and of privilege; teachers and fellow students think her strange and resent that “the colour would carry her through,” and eventually “they stopped seeing her and she stopped seeing them” (Brodber 11). Although she is regarded as not being smart, Ella quietly retreats into the colonial books and images in her time at school, absorbing that half and acculturated into the (white) colonizer’s “truth,” “their books” as Willie calls them. This is why Ella is important in the strategy to achieve spiritual restoration—she is the product of colonization and cultural imperialism of the mind, body, and spirit.

In a circular and even cyclical fashion, the narrator moves in and out of the past in order to make sense of the present and the future. Brodber creates a novel that defies European colonial structures with a complex, non-linear narrative form that weaves the past into the present and juxtaposes exploitative colonial discourse with the reclaiming of stories and lives as an important site for resisting cultural imperialism. Brodber contrasts cultural colonization and colonial education by using story-telling and recognizing the importance of African religions and spirituality in Jamaica. This kind of movement, bringing the past into the present, is integral to deconstructing and challenging dominant colonial ideologies and history, and it also (re)constructs space outside of colonialism.<sup>4</sup> According to Catherine Nelson-McDermott, the

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<sup>4</sup> A number of critics have discussed this novel in terms of how it critiques colonialism and cultural imperialism. See the following articles: Helen Tiffin’s “Cold Hearts and (Foreign) Tongues: Recitation and the Reclamation of the Female Body in the Works of Erna Brodber and Jamaica Kincaid,” Neil Ten Kortenaar’s “Foreign Possessions: Erna Brodber’s *Myal* the medium, and Her Message,” and Shalini Puri’s “An ‘Other’ Realism: Erna Brodber’s *Myal*.”

novel deconstructs colonial structures in terms of language and education, while at the same time, beginning “to build a non-colonized and non-colonizable, social space” (54). Melvin Rahming asserts that *Myal* not only re-engineers social space, but that it is also “a re-creation of spiritual space,” which he sees as her major achievement in the novel because Brodber reveals “the process by which a spiritually besieged community can assert the power and primacy of its spirit” (7-8). Rahming sees critical limitations in only reading Brodber’s novel as de-centering colonial structures or to see it in “post-colonial terms” because in order to understand the social and spiritual space being created in *Myal*, one must have a new vocabulary (8). Positing a “critical theory of spirit,” Rahming formulates a critical paradigm that reveals how the critic needs an alternate dialectic to describe the community as “non-colonized and non-colonizable” as Nelson-McDermot does. Rahming explains that this critical vocabulary should be “capable of suggesting the nature of a communal consciousness that is freed from ontological ties to colonialism” (8). He calls for a critical investigation of the spiritual matrix in *Myal* that goes beyond the metaphor of spirit thievery/possession as cultural imperialism, but rather explains “a reality in which spirit thievery and spirit possession are accepted as not only ‘possible’ but as real” (8). The African Jamaican spiritual practices (such as Obeah and Myalism) that Brodber writes about in her novel are certainly accepted as real and reflect the process of creolization across the Caribbean as a result of slavery, which Kamau Brathwaite posits as the clash and mixing of African and European cultures, languages, religions, rituals, and peoples.

The title of the novel comes from the syncretic Jamaican religion Myalism, which is rooted in African traditions historically used as a site of resistance by enslaved Africans (Smyth 7). Moreover, spirit possession plays a critical role in Myalism, this can be a good possession, being close to God, or experiencing the Spirit; also it is a corrective to bad or evil spirit

possession often against Obeah (Chevannes 18). Obeah can be used for harmful intentions, but there are “good” and “bad” Obeah practitioners; whereas, Myal is known for healing (Chevannes 18). Myal followers incorporated elements of Christianity from the mid to late 1700s, and Myal has been seen as a vital part of Jamaican resistance and rebellion movements into the 1860s (Chevannes 18-19). The Myal religion underwent a transformation after the 1860s because Christian churches and clergy saw Myal as Satan worship, and it was integrated into the more Christian or mainstream syncretic religion of “Revival” through Zion (Chevannes 20). It is because of Myal’s long history that Barry Chevannes argues the following: “To a far greater extent than most people realize, Myal and its manifestation, Revival, have shaped the worldview of the Jamaican people, helping them to forge an identity and a culture by subversive participation in the wider polity” (21). Brodber demonstrates this and more through her novel by representing the reality of African Jamaican spirituality and spiritual practices and showing how these have been woven into Christian beliefs and denominations in Jamaica; yet at the same time, she reveals how these relationships are a necessary part of resistance to colonial structures and cultural imperialism. Therefore, as Rahming suggests, it is imperative to understand the essential spiritual restoration found in *Myal* that occurs after the deconstruction of cultural imperialism, which results in the re-building and re-creation of social and spiritual space that can be outside colonialism.

This re-creation of social and spiritual space existing outside colonial ideologies also operates as a linguistic weapon against the consumption of the Caribbean generally and African Jamaican experiences more specifically. Brodber’s novel rejects any consumption of the Caribbean that seeks to devalue and destroy history, culture, and local specificity. She does this through the representation of spirit thievery (beyond the metaphor) and the resistance to it

through Myal/Revival practices and the spirit telepathy among community members of Grove Town. The novel is set during the early 1900s (the country still under British colonial rule), but elders and leaders in the community understand and recall times long ago—six hundred, five hundred, four hundred, and two hundred years ago—comparing those times to the current moment; thereby displacing a linear notion of time and relying upon a cyclical notion of time to understand the novel. Furthermore, a number of the major characters defy time and space by communicating as ancestor spirits and/or animal archetypes, animal characters who we discover at the end of the novel to be caricatured and stereotyped in a colonial reader children’s book about Mr. Joe’s farm—a story that serves to dehumanize and keep Black colonized subjects in their place. Some of these characters are based on the *Royal Crown Reader* that circulated across the British colonial empire from the 1900s to the 1960s and also allegories of inferiority that are found in colonial education (Roberts 27-8). Brodber appropriates certain tools of the colonial project while, at the same time, creating new characters through “the spirit” and Myal to re-build and re-create social and spiritual space.

This individual spirit restoration in the novel reveals the healing powers of the elders and Myal practitioners in community and how they work together to protect and save their own. Dan, Master Willie, Percy, and Mother Hen through their spirit human channels are fighting against spirit thievery—literally and culturally. The ancestor spirits and their human channels are vital for the spiritual restoration of Grove Town, and they utilize African Jamaican religious and spiritual practices for this healing. Reverend Simpson is a Baptist parson in Grove Town, who is moved by “the spirit” and channels with other elders/leaders in the community, but he does so as Dan, the dog/mongrel, an ancestor spirit (37-8). Ole African is described as someone who “went where there was a spirit let loose needing to be cut and cleared” (34), or a Myal

practitioner, and he channels as Master Willie with Dan and others. Mass Cyrus is also a Myal practitioner who channels as Percy, the chicken. The narrator opens the novel at the height of the climax with Mass Cyrus in 1919 when Ella O'Grady is brought to him with her swollen belly (and the novel moves through time and back again and then forward to give readers a full picture), and he explains that it will take seven days to cure Ella's mind, body, and spirit (Brodber 1-3). Miss Gatha "dealt in drums and in spirits" (77), also a Myal practitioner who channels/communicates as Mother Hen. She is introduced when "the spirit led her to the Baptist manse" (70), and she transforms the church space into her tabernacle where she performs a spirit healing or corrective to save 15-year-old Anita from a spirit thief, who turns out to be Mass Levi, an elder in the community (using bad Obeah on the young girl's spirit, possessing her to attempt to restore his lost power). Miss Gatha is successful in her healing of Anita, which counters and destroys the evil use of Obeah by Mass Levi.

Ole African (Master Willie) consistently asserts the refrain "the half has never been told" throughout the novel, and this powerful statement sets the tone for how to attain spiritual restoration by telling history/herstory from the perspective of enslaved Africans and their descendents. This restoration occurs by combating spirit thievery and spirit possession through challenging history and colonial control within language and education—in other words, by telling "the half that has never been told" and finding people to do this telling. Brodber uncovers the silences about "the half" and resists the colonial half through her characters Ole African, Dan, Mother Hen, and White Hen and their collaboration to re-create social and spiritual space for the people who are descendents of Africans enslaved in the New World. In recognition of the cross-cultural relationships and complexities that comprise the Caribbean, Brodber includes another human/spirit in this struggle—the White Hen coming through Maydene Brassington,

who is the white English wife of the “near white” Jamaican Methodist Reverend William Brassington. She is brought into the human/spirit circle after Mother Hen (Miss Gatha) acknowledges her after Anita’s spirit restoration. Miss Gatha tells Maydene to spread the news that the spirit thief is gone and calls her “White Hen,” and Reverend Simpson (Dan) says “Miss Gatha has seen fit to recognize her” (Brodbber 77). He makes sense of this by realizing that “they need that power” (Maydene’s whiteness and privilege) to carry out their plan (Brodbber 78). Their plan is to tell “the half,” meaning the history/herstory of Africans enslaved in the New World and their descendents from their perspective—the people, culture, land, languages, spirits, bodies, and lives that were stolen, and being sold, enslaved, and then turned into zombies through colonialism and cultural imperialism. In trying to understand what has not been told, Dan and Willie plan a strategy to “beat back those spirit thieves and make our way home” (Brodbber 67). Willie explains that the spirit thieves not only started by taking bodies on the slave ship, but also by controlling minds through their books (Brodbber 67). He tells Dan that to make the way back home and to have *spirit restoration*, they must: “Get in their books and know their truth, then turn around ship and books into those seven miles of the Black Star line so desperately needed and take who will with you” (Brodbber 67). In other words, in order to tell “the half has never been told,” the colonial half that exists must be understood and turned inside out. Willie explains, “you learn the outer’s ways, dish it out in little bits, an antidote man, against total absorption. You can see where to put what, to change what. You change those books, you take those ships and away we go. ... Stick with the learning and build who feels they want to be built” (Brodbber 70). Reverend Simpson must learn the colonizer’s ways and pass that along to others just enough to create an antidote, in order to sustain resistance to the colonizer’s language and education—to encourage and facilitate changes and challenges. Both Anita and

Ella are a part of this plan because they will be teachers and must experience how to fight spirit theft from their guardians Amy (who is the Teacher's wife and adopts Anita) and Maydene, respectively.<sup>5</sup> They will participate in one way or another in telling "the other half" and creating change, especially Ella.

While Maydene's plan for Ella can be thought of as another form of spirit thievery because Ella experiences more cultural imperialism after living with Maydene and William, it also seems as though Ella has to embark on this journey to have spirit restoration. It is during Ella's reciting of a Kipling poem at 13 that attracts the attention of Maydene, who sees her husband William in the young girl Ella and wants her as a daughter (Brodber 19). As she explains to Amy, her contact to Ella's mother, "when I saw that child, I saw him. You don't need to tell me that that child's colour makes her uncomfortable in a district like this. That much I can see. What I am only now beginning to understand is the enormous size of pain my husband must have lived through as a child" (Brodber 23). Maydene convinces Ella's mother Mary (with help from Amy) that Ella should spend time with her and William in Morant Bay on weekends, which becomes full time (William's idea because of the fear surrounding Anita's spirit possession), and then to Port Antonio for high school. Maydene desires Ella as a daughter because she hopes that she can help her to understand or relate to her husband more, and also she has the notion that Ella will be "better off" with her and William due to her light skin color. This is a kind of spirit theft, but Maydene also becomes or rather channels the animal-spirit White Hen, who has a part to play in the strategy for spiritual restoration for the community; from this perspective, we can see

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<sup>5</sup> In her article "Body Talk: Writing and Speaking the Body in the Texts of Caribbean Women Writers," Denise deCaires Narain argues that Ella and Anita's bodies are "crucial to the construction of a healed/whole 'nation' and "Brodber is signaling clearly the complexity and centrality of sexuality in narrating the nation (268). She asserts that their "bodies become the stage upon which a collective zombification is enacted and exorcised – and in both cases it is indigenous forms of spiritual healing which provide the cure" (267).

Maydene as helping Ella to eventually find her place in the struggle. William arranges for Ella to travel and live in Baltimore, where she marries Selwyn Langley, an American player (actor) and aspiring playwright. When Selwyn meets Ella, he decides that she will be his production; the narrator explains that he occupied himself with one task, “the making of Ella O’Grady,” mostly because he is fascinated by her ability to pass as “white” in the United States even though he tells her that she is “coloured” and “mulatto” (Brodber 43). He is determined to have Ella and mold her into his world, “his whole career now depended on animating that doll” (Brodber 47). From the very beginning of their relationship, Selwyn treats Ella like a doll that can be manipulated and controlled for his desires because to him, she is the exotic Other.

Selwyn becomes even more invested in his “production” once he hears Ella’s stories of her Grove Town home. As she tells him about Ole African, he exclaims “what delightful theatre!” (Brodber 55). It seems from this moment Selwyn had plans to use Ella and her life as the inspiration for his play. He creates *Caribbean Nights and Days* during the first year of their marriage, and he is overjoyed with Ella for giving him “purest gold” that needed only refining: “He was going to put on the biggest coon show ever” (Brodber 79-80). In order to write and produce his coon show, Selwyn has to rely on Ella for the raw materials, and this process of her “giving all she had” is described as a “clean, clear passage from Ella’s head through her middle and right down to outside” and that “poisons drained out of her body” (Brodber 80). What is inside Ella, these poisons, are the effects of a colonial education that has privileged whiteness and Englishness and denigrated Blackness and distorted History written “in their books.” This draining is of great importance because Ella must rid herself of colonial ideologies and structures, which she embodies and holds in her mind. Although this draining is a kind of cleansing for Ella, Selwyn’s facilitation is exploitative because he does not ever intend to give

back to her; he only takes and unethically consumes what Ella pours out of her mind. The narrator explains how Ella's mind contains two parts—the elevated top section with (white) colonial images that separated and pushed back her Grove Town experiences to the bottom:

Her parts were at one with each other. And even her mind came into the act. It was now struggling for a balance with her body. For years there had been something like a gauze in her head where she supposed her mind to be. It stretched flat across her head, separating one section of her mind from the other – the top of the head from the bottom of the head. In there were Peter Pan and Lucy Gray and Dairy Maid and at one time Selwyn – the top section. At the bottom were Mammy Mary and them Grove Town people. She knew they were there but if she tried to touch them or to talk to them, the gauze barrier would push back her hand or her thoughts. (Brodber 80)

The gauze barrier keeps Ella's mind away from her people and supports her passing and acculturation into whiteness. The draining helps Ella to gain clarity and bring to the top of her mind her mother and other Grove Town people, but it is Selwyn who is pushing for this draining in order to use her stories for his play: "Selwyn had indeed propelled himself through the gauze partition and into Ella's carnate past" (Brodber 80). While Ella's mind and body struggled for balance, Selwyn stops asking her questions and focuses on the casting and final touches on the play. But Ella feels over-drained and expects that Selwyn will fill the empty space he helped create; she desires to produce something—a child. She doesn't know that Selwyn has no intention of having a baby with her (after all, she is a "mule" to him) and that he is using prophylactics; hence, she does not become pregnant and begins to think something is wrong with her (Brodber 82). Selwyn, preoccupied with his coon play, thinks that Ella "would be so pleased to see what had been done with all that left her body. But she wanted to make something inside, not outside of it" (Brodber 82). This is why her belly becomes over sized after watching the opening night of *Caribbean Nights and Days*. Ella stops speaking to Selwyn because she is horrified at the distortion he created of her life and home. Her belly literally carries the effects of Selwyn's distorted, racist, and caricatured colonial images in his play that he fashions from her

stories—through her mind and body. The “bad belly” is a product or offspring of her and Selwyn’s marriage and reflects the damage of his exploitation and consumption of her body and the effects of cultural cannibalism and her travel to the United States.

The coon play is reminiscent of the colonial travel narrative, which has historically used to construct the colonized, racialized, gendered, and sexualized object. The coon play like the colonial travel narrative is a tool of empire and cultural imperialism used by the United States. Therefore, it is no accident that Brodber chooses the genre of the coon play and its relationship to the travel narrative to reveal how the exotic Other can be unethically consumed and exploited. Ella experiences spirit theft and spirit possession in multiple levels, her colonized mind, body, and spirit, which culminates in the viewing of the coon play. The play has actors in blackface performing grotesque caricatures of all the Grove Town people Ella had known, and the main character, the star, is a white-skinned girl with flowing blonde hair who is supposed to be Ella. After watching the distorted depiction of her life, Ella says “It didn’t go so,” and she has “conversations between her selves” in her head; these selves represent the struggle she has in her mind between the colonial (mis)education and her Black female subjectivity. One voice said, “He took everything I had away. Made what he wanted of it and gave me back nothing”; and then the other, “It was you who let him take everything. You gave him everything”; and in defense, she said, “But I didn’t even know when I was giving it, that it was mine and my everything”; and finally the other voice explains, “How could you have know? Mule. With blinders on. You wouldn’t listen, you wouldn’t see” (Brodber 84). She begins to fight with herself, her selves, as she attempts to make sense of what happened. She realizes that she didn’t know what she was giving, that her memories of home and “them people in Grove Town” are who she is, her everything, yet the other voice in her head explains the problem as her inability to

see herself. Her mind and body are struggling with the history of colonization and slavery, being the product of racial mixing, and her identification with colonial images and ideologies that she internalizes as a result of colonial education and her migration to the United States.

When Maydene comes to take Ella back home, she says “Spirit thievery comes in so many forms” (Brodbert 83). After watching the play for herself, the White Hen calls it “coon at its best” and then speaks to Selwyn, only to discover that he intends to “immortalize it into film” (Brodbert 92). This coon play will be turned into a film, the imperial arm of U.S. cultural production. But Maydene knows they can do nothing to stop this, and her main concern is Ella’s swollen belly, which U.S. doctors could do nothing to help. White Hen contacts Willie, Dan, and Mother Hen, who bring in Percy (Mass Cyrus) to help cure Ella. Mass Cyrus explains that “curing the body is nothing. Touching the piece of those she must touch and those who must touch her is the hard part. The family will have to come too” (Brodbert 93). The novel begins with this healing and a description of the dirty ball (“bad belly”) that came out of Ella, along with her crying and bleeding under a mango tree, but readers will only learn the context and details as the novel unfolds (Brodbert 2-3). A lightening storm accompanies Ella’s recovery and when she wakes up, “she had forgotten and forgiven all” (3). Brodbert’s vivid descriptions of this spirit theft and possession and its manifestation in the body are a vital component to her call for spiritual restoration and the re-creation of social and spiritual space outside of colonialism. Ella is the embodiment of Black women’s experiences during enslavement and colonial rule, and at the same time, she is also the “favored product” of miscengenation and colonization, being a Jamaican “near white,” light-skinned Black woman, who internalizes colonial education and imperial cultural production. Mother Hen, Willie, Dan, White Hen, and Percy use their human-spirits and telepathy to help save Ella, to literally, mentally, and spiritually bring her back home.

After Ella's spiritual restoration, she becomes a teacher and works to dismantle the colonial education system, which is an integral part of the plan to tell "the half that has never been told." While working at the primary school in Grove Town, Ella has to teach the schoolchildren a storybook about Percy, Master Willie, Mr. Dan, and others on Mr. Joe's farm (Brodbert 96). It doesn't take Ella long to realize that this book is an instrument of colonial control because Percy and Master Willie are treated as "sub-normals who have no hope of growth" (Brodbert 97). She shares her concerns with Reverend Simpson (Dan) and explains that through the story "the children are invited into complicity" (Brodbert 96). Reverend Simpson (Dan) waits for her to explain why this bothers her because he wants her to come to this realization on her own, so he tells her to think about it more and come back to him. Dan spirit-calls Willie and Percy to tell them that his "antidote" is working, she is thinking (Brodbert 98). After a couple months, Dan spirit-calls again with everyone, Percy, Master Willie, Mother Hen, and White Hen, and he updates them on Ella's progress with uncovering the facets of colonial control in the story of the rebellion on Mr. Joe's farm in which the animals return happily and joyfully to the kind and loving arms of their captor Mr. Joe (Brodbert 100-1). Ella is angry as she analyzes this story, and finally at the end, she expresses her frustration and depression at how the animals forgot all about their fight for freedom. After seeing how upset she is at the teaching this story, Reverend William Brassington begins also to see that the story has a negative message, and like Ella, he does not want to teach it again (103-4). Maydene encourages him to do something about it and work together with Ella to change the system and talk about this problem. The problem is how the colonial mind-set and structures are fed into the young children through the colonial education system, which perpetrates and sustains the consumption of minds, bodies, and spirits of Jamaican people.

Through her critique of the colonial story, Ella begins to understand cultural colonization and how colonial education reinforces and perpetuates colonial control and spirit thievery. When she returns to Reverend Simpson (Dan) and explains why the story bothers her, they discuss the process of zombification and how this is represented in the characters/animals in the story: “taken their knowledge of their original and natural world away from them and left them empty shells – duppies, zombies, living dead capable only of receiving orders from someone else and carrying them out” (107). Ella does not want to teach this to the children; she asks Reverend Simpson if this is what she is supposed to do—tell the children “that the world is made up of zombies who cannot think for themselves or take care of themselves but must be taken care of by Mr. Joe and Benjie? Must my voice tell that to children who trust me?” (107). Ella no longer wants to support this kind of thinking, nor does she want to participate in this kind of education system. She admits that she was once zombified, and perhaps this is why she can recognize how the story supports colonial control. Reverend Simpson explains to Ella that the problem is that the colonial writer wrote “without awareness of certain things. But does he force you to teach without this awareness? Need your voice say what his says?” (107). At this moment, Ella understands that she can do something different with the story, use her voice and teach it in a way that counters its intended message; she can change the colonial school curriculum. Moreover, after discussing zombification with her adopted father William, they decide to have community seminars to discuss these issues of colonial control and cultural cannibalism (108). As light-skinned Black members of this community and products of the colonial education system, Ella and William are posed to create more spaces for spiritual restoration by dismantling the colonial education system and encourage thinking and autonomy.

At the end of the novel, the ancestor spirits debate what it means for the community that Ella and William are doing this work. White Hen is overly ecstatic and thinks that this will change everything and the colonizers will admit that they are spirit thieves (109). But Dan is not so convinced of that, but rather he is happy because:

Two people understand, White Hen. Two special people. New people. My people have been separated from themselves, White Hen, by several means, one of them being the printed word and the ideas it carries. Now we have two people who are about to see through that. ... People who are familiar with the print and the language of the print. Our people are now beginning to see how it and they themselves, have been used against us. Now, White Hen, now, we have people who can and are willing to correct images from the inside, destroy what should be destroyed, replace it with what should be replaced and put us back together, give us back ourselves with which to chart our course to go where we want to go. Do you see, White Hen? (110)

Dan explains the importance of people in his community and colonized peoples (descendants of enslaved Africans in the New World) to see and uncover colonial structures in terms of language, education, and knowledge. Colonial ideologies must be destroyed because they devalue the colonized cultures, languages, and peoples. Ella and William are the antidotes that Willie calls for earlier in the novel, the “antidotes” who learn just enough in order to fight against colonial education and learn the colonial books in order to tell “the half that has never been told.” They also must see how they have been complicit in the colonial system and how they have been used against the community. Dan asserts that the images must be corrected from the inside, certain things must be destroyed, others replaced, and finally re-creation of social and spiritual space, “put us back together, give us back ourselves with which to chart our course to go where we want to go” (Brodber 110). These words resonate with deep assertions for self-determination, autonomy, re-building, restoration, and re-claiming of minds, bodies, and spirits, which must begin with the (re)writing of history so that it tells “the half that has never been told.” Brodber does exactly this in this novel, while sustaining the African Jamaican spirituality so vital to the community in her re-creation of social and spiritual space. White Hen falls asleep

and seems unable to comprehend the notion of giving “us back ourselves,” which may speak to the limits of cross-cultural and cross racial organizing at a certain point. Brodber is clearly supportive of cross-cultural exchanges and reveals this in much of her work, but at some point in organizing and processing, she does assert the need for Blackspace, a space for people of African descent to do their own work. These closing moments of the novel among the spirits highlights this very need for space.

Mother Hen’s powerful and poetic words end the novel with the call for continuous struggle and acknowledging the time it will take to create the long-lasting and far-reaching changes that are needed: “Different rhymes for different times / Different styles for different climes / Someday them rogues in Whitehall / Be forced to change their tune” (Brodber 111). Mother Hen affirms Percy’s idea to “short circuit the whole of creation,” and that Ella was “gonna break it up and build it back again” (Brodber 110). In other words, fundamental breaking up and changes to the way we understand and write the world must be had in order for there to be first the dismantling of colonial ideologies (decolonization) and then the re-building and restoration of minds, bodies, spirits, and communities. Mother Hen explains that through different movements the struggle will prevail and Whitehall (representing the colonizers or the British government) will have to deal with what they have done—their spirit thievery. In this brilliantly conceived and executed novel, Brodber creates a linguistic weapon that can be used across time periods and colonized spaces, even though it is particular to Jamaica. This linguistic weapon is also a feminist critique of travel that specifically deconstructs the U.S. coon play steeped in cultural imperialism, paternalism, and patriarchy. This feminist critique also offers a vision into the future by using the past and history of colonial travel narratives to challenge the neocolonial and gendered discourses of travel and tourism. In her fiction, Brodber creates

awareness about the effects of enslavement and colonization on people of African descent, works against neocolonialism through a (re)writing of histories and herstories, and re-builds much needed social and spiritual space outside colonialism.

### **An Ethical and Sustainable Vision of Tourism: Blackspace and Educo-Tourism**

The liberating transformation that Brodber envisions can not be fully realized through the novel form; therefore, Brodber developed her community-based research project and alternative tourist venue, Blackspace, as means of realizing her vision. Ironically, Blackspace makes use of the tourist industry to facilitate the operations of Blackspace and to help produce the events that celebrate the liberating history of her Jamaican community. Educo-tourism is the term Brodber uses to describe her alternative tourist site, which assists in organizing the educational and community institutions that effectively counter asymmetric and exploitative practices of contemporary tourism and the imperial and colonial history that produced them. In a 2001 interview, Brodber explains her focus on Blackspace: “I have failed as far as the novel is concerned to write for the people I am aiming to write for. But I have come to understand that I am doing something else” (Brodber, “On Writing” 2). This something else began with her researching and recording the history of her village (first published in 1999 in a small booklet titled *The People of My Jamaican Village* and later expanded and published in *Woodside Pear Tree Grove P.O.* in 2004). Brodber also conducted local lectures (during 1996 and 1997) on the history of slavery and emancipation from the perspective of enslaved Africans in the New World, collected in her book *The Continent of Black Consciousness* (2003). In the forward, Brodber explains that her lectures were designed to fill in the information gap from Jamaica’s education system and assist in the creation of Blackspace:

This series inaugurated what I now hope will be the School for the Descendants of Africans Enslaved in the New World housed here in the small rural village of Woodside in St. Mary, Jamaica. The further hope is that there will be continued meditation on the

issues discussed at the seminars in private sessions by non-university seekers and that these informal sessions will take place in other geographic areas of Africa and the diaspora, a lack of knowledge of our historical condition being one of the commonalities we, in this area, share. (xii)

Brodber's vision for "the School for the Descendants of Africans Enslaved in the New World" includes the sharing and exchange of knowledge outside of the university with the hope of expanding these discussions into Africa and the diaspora; this vision became Blackspace.

In making her lectures public, Brodber hopes to inspire both private and group meditations and discussions about "our historical condition" across the African Diaspora (xiii). Moreover, she explains that the lectures are written from a "very personal point of view" because these issues should not be the monopoly of university courses and academia; "they are matters which affect our daily lives" and each of her lectures "tries to point us towards a path of social and psychological engineering" (xii).<sup>6</sup> The seven lectures included in *The Continent of Black Consciousness* take readers/listeners on a journey from slavery to the present from the perspective of enslaved Africans and their descendants; in other words, speaking and writing "the half that has never been told." Brodber works outside of the jargon of academia and deals with the social and psychological effects of enslavement while also creating a social and spiritual space outside (and perhaps beyond) colonialism. She creates this space through her writing, in

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<sup>6</sup> There are seven lectures/essays included in *The Continent of Black Consciousness* and includes the following: "Comparative Slavery" compares the experiences of enslaved Africans to other enslaved groups; "Liberation Thought and Action 1789-1900" describes how Black people fought against and resisted slavery; "The World the Freedman/Woman Made" looks at how Black people post-emancipation handled freedom; "Marcus Garvey and the Continent of Black Consciousness" posits a continent of Black consciousness emerging from the days of slavery and places Marcus Garvey in that context; "Afro-Caribbean Voices in the International Arena" considers three prominent male Caribbean writers, Claude McKay, George Padmore, and C.L.R. James; "From Juba's Head" explores how Afro-Caribbean women writers Merle Hodge and Paule Marshall deal with Africa and the diaspora in their fiction; "Writing Your Village History – the Case of Woodside" explains how Brodber came to write the history of her village and encourages others to do the same. Brodber's lecture series is specifically designed to promote the sharing of knowledge among people of the African Diaspora while at the same encourages Black people to learn their histories/herstories inside and outside the university setting.

her fiction, and also through the literal space of Blackspace and Educo-tourism, which revolve around the annual Emancipation events held in Woodside since 2000 (in collaboration with the Woodside Development Action Group). Since Brodber believes that her novels did not fully do the work she wanted to do, she has focused her writing energies into community-based programs, lectures, and activism in Woodside. Moreover, her publishing during this time has been concentrated in historical and sociological work, with only one novel *The Rainmaker's Mistake* in 2007 published since *Louisiana* in 1994. All of this work demonstrates Brodber's commitment to knowledge production in various disciplines as well as community activism.

Brodber's cross-disciplinary work as a historical sociologist, novelist, and activist is not only evident in her writing, but also in her research project Blackspace. This project utilizes tourism, education, oral histories/herstories, drama, workshops, music, dance, and lectures surrounding the celebration and commemoration of Emancipation Day (1<sup>st</sup> of August 1838 in the British Caribbean) in Woodside. Blackspace has become more than a research project; it is an Educo-tourism site as well as a space for people of African descent to reason about the psychological and material effects of enslavement. Brodber developed the concept of Educo-tourism through Blackspace, and it reflects the community tourism that Woodside has had for some time (university students from around the world visit and study, traditionally from the disciplines of agriculture and other hard sciences). Blackspace works through Educo-tourism by recruiting certain kinds of tourists from abroad and students from Jamaica to participate in the sharing and exchange of knowledge that contributes to the annual Emancipation events in Woodside. Blackspace and the Emancipation program include a two-week Emancipation summer school for children ages 3-15, Blackspace Reasonings (group discussions for adults and teens on the weekend before August 1), the annual honoring of the ancestors, community

workshops, and drumming circle (all on July 31), and the August 1st day of events (the worship, guest speaker, community play, and a march). Through these community-based programs and events, Brodber has quite literally created the space she posits in her fiction—a social and spiritual space, working outside colonialism. Blackspace is designed to account for the effects of enslavement and colonialism in the present, in order to assist people of African descent in moving forward by dealing with the past in order to understand the present and create a better future. Brodber utilizes tourism to do this work and create this space; hence, she simultaneously critiques colonialism (and by extension neocolonialism) and the exploitative consumption of the Caribbean while using the tourist industry to create an ethical and sustainable vision of tourism.

This resonates with the work being done in the Bahamas by Arlene Nash-Ferguson and Educulture discussed in chapter one, and further demonstrates how Caribbean people in the region find ways of contending with and resisting the current system and region's overdependence on tourism. Both Brodber and Nash-Ferguson offer alternative visions of tourism that seek sustainability and are grounded in education and the local. Whereas Nash-Ferguson's vision is focused on educating both visitors and locals about Bahamian culture, Brodber's vision is concerned more with an equitable knowledge exchange that is essentially a bi-product of the work of Blackspace Emancipation programs and events. Brodber's concept of Educo-tourism has ethical and sustainable possibilities for the tourist industry in Jamaica and across the region because it is organized around the sharing of knowledge between locals and tourists. Brodber has said that one of things that she likes about tourism is that it can facilitate exchange in ways that are beneficial to both tourist and local; she is uninterested in tourism that does not engage with history and education (personal interview). This is where Educo-tourism comes in, which is about the exchange and sharing of knowledge and skills. Brodber invites

different people from around the African Diaspora as well as Jamaica to participate and help with the events, as speakers, discussion leaders, teachers, musicians, and artists. Most of the tourists and students who travel to Woodside and participate in Blackspace are of African descent. But Brodber insists that all people are welcome to Blackspace; however, non-Black participants must be respectful of certain activities that are for Black participants only (personal interview). As she explains in her lectures and fiction, Brodber believes that Black people (including mixed-race Black people) need to have the space and time to understand and deal with the effects and legacy of enslavement and colonization, and that one of the best ways for this to happen is inside/among Black communities. Brodber has said that while the project's development through community tourism does reach out to tourists "of all types and colors," this is but one aspect of Blackspace because her focus is on people of African descent working through and understanding their identity ("Blackspace" 2). She insists that Black people must do the work of "understanding ourselves" outside of and away from others—consequently the development of Blackspace ("Blackspace" 2).

The philosophy behind Blackspace lies not only in Black people understanding themselves (creating selves and subjectivities), but also in the notion that Black people have valuable knowledge and experiences for others. Brodber believes that Black people have something to offer the world—these things are hard to describe, but she says we can understand it as "a kind of spirituality" particularly because of the experience of enslavement and the transatlantic slave trade ("Something" 2).

I believe that there is something that black people have to offer the world-something coming out of their experience. I don't believe that we were sent here in the Caribbean, that millions of us were taken from our place just for nothing; it has a reason. We have something to teach the world. Something that is our own experience, something that others don't have. For me the business is to find what that is. ("Something" 2-3)

Brodber's insistence that "we have something to teach the world" is what drives Blackspace and Educo-tourism because it is a philosophy that values exchange yet also privileges the Black experience as worthy of study and knowledge-bearing (of and in itself).<sup>7</sup> Moreover, Educo-tourism welcomes knowledge from other parts of the African Diaspora and rest of the world. This is an alternative model of tourism, far removed from the mass tourism and heritage tourism model, which are (for the most part) one-sided consumption. With the rise of heritage tourism and the increasing market demand for more responsible and sustainable tourism models, local cultures and environments have become more important. However, these models can be imperial and neocolonial because foreign perspectives tend to over-shadow local needs and desires, with "responsible" and "ethical" tourists deciding what is "best" for their "host" country.<sup>8</sup> While the possibilities of responsible tourism are hopeful, it is imperative that these models are decolonized in order to ensure that local communities have priority, autonomy and decision-making power. Educo-tourism can be considered a kind of heritage tourism, but it is different because it not one-sided, with tourists experiencing and consuming local culture, but rather, it is designed for more equitable exchanges, with tourists and locals learning from each

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<sup>7</sup> The notion of "we have something to teach the world" and the idea that there must be a reason Black people were enslaved can seem problematic insomuch that it can take one into arguments about it being destiny and does not account for history of colonialism, racism, and other systems of oppression. However, Brodber's use of this notion for the creation of Blackspace works because she also considers the institutionalization of racism, colonialism, and other forms of oppression in her work.

<sup>8</sup> A number of studies on tourism define the problems with and possibilities of responsible or ethical tourism, which include sustainable and heritage models. See Sharon Bohn Gmelch's "Why Tourism Matters" in the important reader *Tourists and Tourism* (2004) for an overview of tourism's global reach and economic, environmental, social, and cultural impact. Gmelch's describes "responsible" tourism as a new concept that supports ecotourism, alternative tourism, and sustainable tourism development" (13). Also, see Deborah McLaren's "Rethinking Tourism" also in *Tourists and Tourism* in which she advocates the need for education in responsible tourism (445).

other and contributing to the events of Blackspace. Brodber's vision of tourism directly contributes to the local community of Woodside (and to the Jamaican tourist industry more generally) with a tourist product that is locally sustainable. Furthermore, Brodber's vision of tourism is a form of ethical tourism that considers local communities, peoples, and cultures first and by so doing it is non-imperial, non-colonial, and non-exploitative. Most importantly, this alternative tourism site is based on the philosophy behind Blackspace, which privileges the knowledge and experiences of Black people and seeks to re-create a social and spiritual space outside of colonialism; in essence, a literal discursive site for struggle.

Brodber utilizes tourism in order to do this work because it is practical and even unavoidable since she does want different people from across the African Diaspora to travel to and participate in Blackspace. Furthermore, tourism has the potential of cultivating relationships between locals and tourists that are positive. While some relationships are asymmetrical and exploitative, many people in the tourist industry describe a "positive" of tourism as the fruitful and genuine friendships that can emerge and learning about people from other parts of the world.<sup>9</sup> This notion is generally discussed by advocates of tourism as a benefit, but in practice it has (for the most part) gotten buried in the profit-motivated, transnational corporate control of mass tourism. Educo-tourism can be thought of as a re-conceptualizing of tourism, or in other words, re-working tourism to fit the needs of the local community while using the tourist industry. In "Rethinking Tourism," Deborah McLaren considers the development of "alternative types of tourism," but she is concerned that tourists "will simply consume these new products,

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<sup>9</sup> See George Gmelch's *Behind the Smile: The Working Lives of Caribbean Tourism* for interviews with tourism workers that reveal these advantages of tourism: personal advancement, meeting new people from different countries, learning about different cultures, and travel opportunities that all emerge from meetings between locals and tourists. Also, during my interviews with workers in the Bahamian tourist industry, these same positive aspects of working in the tourist industry were discussed.

places, and people without recognizing the urgent need for a critical reevaluation of global tourism and their participation in it” (444). Hence, McLaren argues that any rethinking of tourism must challenge the travel industry at every level and that “the remedy is within tourism itself” because “tourism provides people-to-people contacts and an opportunity to utilize the ability to communicate with one another, to meet, and to organize” (444). This opportunity is exactly what Educo-tourism provides for the exchanges between tourists and locals in Woodside, which works on a local and global level and presents a vision of tourism that is sustainable and ethical. Hence, Educo-tourism has the potential to be a strong working model for responsible tourism. While McLaren warns against the possible commodification of alternative types of tourism, she illustrates the reality that any kind of travel makes one culpable in the global tourist industry, whether one is seeking alternative or responsible tourism or not:

You and I are tourists, even if we are traveling to learn about or change the world. Unless we are willing to stay at home, reject the transportation systems, communication lines, and technologies and the tremendous amount of resources that we consume each time we travel, we need to understand not only our participation in the promotion of the global tourism industry but also its importance and potential as a tool for change. (444)

In other words, traveling for any purpose contributes to the global tourist industry and consumption of resources; thus, if we are to engage in any kind of travel, we should be prepared to acknowledge our participation and recognize the ways that tourism itself can be used to create change. McLaren’s position about the potential of tourism is insightful, but I disagree about the danger in naming new models “alternative” or “responsible” because new models can resist commodification. Educo-tourism’s name and concept resists mass tourism models and positions the education of both locals and tourists equally in the tourist product and experience of Blackspace.

If we are to understand Educo-tourism as responsible, sustainable, and ethical, then we ought to explore how it actually works. I traveled to Woodside during the summer of 2007 (July

23<sup>rd</sup> – August 2<sup>nd</sup>) and participated in Blackspace and the Emancipation programs and events. As a Caribbean person of African descent and an educator, I am in the intended group of participants for Dr. Brodber’s Blackspace, and just one of the many students, academics, educators, writers, and scholars who have visited and participated in Blackspace over the past seven years. Dr. Brodber invited a colleague (also Afro-Caribbean and an educator) and me to attend and help her with the 2007 Emancipation program, specifically for the Emancipation summer school and the Blackspace Reasonings. We helped teach during the second (and last) week of the summer school, where the children of Woodside (and Blackspace visiting participants) learned Emancipation songs and practiced for the community play and march held on August 1st. The summer school is designed to help the students learn about the history of Woodside and their enslaved African ancestors; however, each year, the pace and tone of the school changes because there are different teachers from the community and from abroad. During my time at the summer school (with about 30 children, ages 3-15), we had a morning circle, reviewed the songs, did self-affirmation exercises, and then we divided up into smaller groups with similar ages for reading and playtime (including ringplay games). Although my colleague and I were the teachers, along with young adults and high school students from the community, I would say that we learned just as much from the children. This is certainly a part of the exchange and sharing of knowledge that Blackspace cultivates. Moreover, we stayed with a member of the Woodside community who boards tourists and other visitors in her home (for \$20-\$25 U.S. dollars a day including meals)—this was also a part of the Blackspace experience, staying there, learning and sharing with her, and living in the community.

In addition to working at the summer school, we also prepared for the Blackspace Reasonings, which are held in the evening a few days before Emancipation Day. These

Reasonings can be described as group discussions among adults and teens of African descent in the Woodside community and abroad (including three tourists of African descent, as well as Jamaicans who traveled from Kingston and other parishes to attend), and each year Dr. Brodber chooses the topics for discussion. For 2007, we had three questions for three different nights of Blackspace Reasonings that dealt with issues of the psychological effects of enslavement on Black people across the African Diaspora today, effective education for descendents of enslaved Africans in the New World, and utilizing Black archives through creative arts.<sup>10</sup> These Blackspace Reasonings foster a space for what Brodber has asserted in her knowledge production—i.e. Black people must do the work of understanding themselves—and they also contribute to creating selves and subjectivities and building community. As Brodber posits in her writing and activism, this work must begin with knowing one’s histories/herstories, teaching/writing from these perspectives, and changing the education systems (particularly colonial/imperial ones that devalue Black people and Black experiences). We discussed not only practical and immediate solutions, but also ideas for long term change and movements. Moreover, we talked about how to fight against existing structures that keep Black people enslaved mentally, socially, economically, and institutionally. Overall, Blackspace Reasonings encompass in practice what Brodber had mapped out theoretically and creatively in her historical, sociological, and fictive works, and they contribute a great deal to the entire experience of Blackspace and the Emancipation events for locals and tourists.

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<sup>10</sup> These are the questions we discussed during the reasonings: 1) Do personality types of our enslaved forefathers/mothers as discussed by sociologist Orlando Patterson have relevance today?; 2) Am I, as an education specialist, giving today’s descendants of Africans enslaved in the New World the right kind of schooling?; 3) How can I bring Black Archives to a wider group through the creative arts?

Along with the Emancipation summer school and the Blackspace Reasonings, we participated in several activities that centered around the philosophy behind Blackspace and Educo-tourism. The final two days of events on July 31<sup>st</sup> and August 1<sup>st</sup> were filled with time and space for sharing and exchanging knowledge. After the annual honoring of the ancestors on July 31<sup>st</sup>, we participated in community workshops, similar to the Blackspace Reasonings, but more general and focused on the theme of that year's Emancipation program, which was "Why we here Lord" for 2007. These workshops included many members of the Woodside community, visitors from other villages and parishes in Jamaica, and tourists from abroad. The three educators/tourists of African descent participating in Blackspace (including myself) led these workshops along with Brodber and other educators from around Jamaica. We learned from each other and shared our knowledge and expertise on various issues, while discussing community building, history/herstory, Blackspace, Emancipation, decolonization, education, and culture. This was certainly Educo-tourism at work for locals, visitors from other parts of Jamaica, and tourists of African descent. Another activity we participated in that placed emphasis on the sharing and exchange of knowledge is the community play, which is a re-enactment of the reading of the Emancipation Proclamation based on the histories/herstories and families of Woodside and the surrounding communities.

The community play describes Emancipation Day on August 1<sup>st</sup>, 1838 from the perspective of enslaved Africans in the Woodside area, who more than likely would have gathered at a central location to hear the reading of the Emancipation proclamation. Dr. Brodber is the play's author, and she adds to it each year based on any new oral stories or other relevant information she has collected. This re-telling and re-enactment of Emancipation challenges the dominant narrative of "History" by detailing a more complete picture of that time; the play deals

with many issues, including the Middle Passage, experiences of enslavement, the rape of Black women on slave ships, the brutal labor and abuse on plantations, the specific histories/herstories of families and their ancestors in that community, the period of apprenticeship, the desire for reparations and/or return, and finally concerns about what it meant to be free in 1838. Different members of the community perform in the play each year along with invited visitors; my colleague and I were assigned parts (since we participated in the summer school and arrived early enough to rehearse), which we had to memorize and practice. Dr. Brodber also invited the Jamaican Youth Theatre group and their directors from Kingston to attend the Blackspace events, participate in, and to direct the play. The play includes not only the assigned and practiced parts, but also community parts open to the audience on Emancipation Day, and the entire play relies upon audience participation. Here is another example of Educo-tourism at work within Blackspace and reveals the extent to which Brodber consciously re-works colonial structures and ideologies through challenging dominant narratives. The play works on multiple levels as a discursive site for struggle and also as knowledge production. It is community-based but, at the same time, utilizes all Blackspace visitors who want to participate, and it also works to re-build social and spiritual space by confronting Emancipation, the past, to understand the present, in order to move forward into the future. The play leads into the annual re-claiming of space around what used to be the coffee estates of Woodside on which the ancestors labored. The annual Emancipation program closes with this march and re-claiming of space—a spiritual and social act that is more than symbolic, particularly because it is about the present and future of community building.

Reflecting on her theory of community building, Brodber writes in the preface to her social and historical work *Woodside Pear Tree Grove P.O.*, “that people should not only have

knowledge of themselves but feel that others want this knowledge and should share in a two-way process with them, was part of the theory of community development ensuing out of my sojourn in my homeland” (vii). Brodber created this theory through returning to her village after studying and traveling abroad—in order to build or develop one’s community, there should be sharing and exchange of knowledge, while at the same time understanding one’s self—and she put this theory into practice through Blackspace and Educo-tourism. These are ideas and concepts that can be transported and implemented across the African Diaspora, which Brodber encourages and hopes will happen (personal interview). In studying her community activist work along with her scholarly and creative work, I see Brodber’s knowledge production as embodying a poetics of resistance interweaving the global and the local, connecting the past and the present to re-envision the future, through grassroots activism and writing.

CHAPTER 4  
THE POLITICS OF RETURN: WRITING AGAINST EXPLOITATIVE CONSUMPTION  
AND TOURISM

History is the fruit of power, but power itself is never so transparent that its analysis becomes superfluous. The ultimate mark of power may be its invisibility, the ultimate challenge, the exposition of its roots.

History does not belong only to its narrators, professional or amateur. While some of us debate what history is or was, others take it into their own hands.

- Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*

Michel-Rolph Trouillot asserts in *Silencing the Past* that it is in the production of historical narratives where power is exercised, and this allows certain narratives to be produced while others are silenced (25-6). Since power itself depends upon “its invisibility,” the difficulty lies in exposing the mechanisms of power and its relationship to the production of history. In the words of Trouillot, Caribbean writers and scholars have long taken “history” “into their own hands” by (re)writing dominant narratives and deconstructing silences, particularly written from the perspective of the colonized subject. As my project identifies, writers inside and outside the region demonstrate that the (re)writing of the history of slavery and colonialism is central to understanding the (neocolonial) present; more specifically, they expose the continuity between colonial and neocolonial exploitation of the Caribbean by critiquing travel and tourism. This chapter focuses on diasporic Afro-Caribbean women writers who reside in the United States and make a significant contribution to “resistance culture” that local writers and activists such as Bethel, Brodber, and Nash-Ferguson cannot. Through narratives of return, Kincaid and Danticat challenge exploitative consumption and tourism in their literary works by exposing and utilizing the power that lies in the production of history. They do this by using their mobility and prominence in North American literary markets to inform potential tourists and fellow Caribbeans abroad of the injustices of the tourist industry that are rooted in the history of slavery

and colonialism. Jamaica Kincaid's *A Small Place* and Edwidge Danticat's *After the Dance* are both non-fiction books that re-work the genre of the travel narrative and place their narrators into the white, male-dominated space of travel and tourism. Kincaid directly confronts and criticizes the tourist industry in her satirical essay/memoir *A Small Place*; while Danticat participates in and critiques the tourist industry with her travel guide/memoir *After the Dance*.

These two writers can be placed in the radical tradition of Caribbean writers in the 1950s; writers who also lived abroad and used their visibility and success in international circles, along with the privilege of their travel (mobility) to challenge the colonial oppression of their respective islands (and of the region more broadly) and the emerging elite. Kincaid and Danticat continue this tradition by writing against neocolonialism and the corruption of the post-independence Caribbean elite; they are also very critical of postcolonial governments. These women writers make tourism the site of anti-neocolonial struggle in the post-independence period, and they use literary techniques and the travel guide genre usually dominated by colonial and neocolonial producers. They undermine and (re)write dominant colonial and gendered narratives of history, which are the foundation of travel guides. In other words, Kincaid and Danticat both offer postcolonial critiques of tourism that resist the history of colonial control and exploitation that manifests itself in the Caribbean tourist industry. It is important to note that they deal with different countries with specific histories and differing issues, and these will be taken into account within the textual analysis.

Furthermore, Kincaid and Danticat develop their insights into the context of the postcolonial Caribbean and its neocolonial terrain while living abroad. Hence, when they "return" home for visits and then criticize the tourist industry they use to travel home, the subject position being both "native" and "tourist" complicates how each writer's critique is understood.

In “Caribbean *Tabula Rasa*: Textual Touristing as Carnival in Contemporary Caribbean Women’s Writing,” Angeletta KM Gourdine analyzes what she calls “touristing: traveler behavior and/or performance in response to the [tourist] industry” (80). In other words, “touristing” is the act and/or performance of being a tourist. Gourdine’s concept of “touristing” is helpful in thinking about the power of the tourist industry on behavior and performance; thus, we may ask how people act/perform the part of “tourist” in accordance with the expectations and demands of tourism if they are “native.” Gourdine asserts that Kincaid’s *A Small Place* is a social critique of “touristing,” while Danticat’s *After the Dance* is “native touring” because she is returning from abroad to “tour” her homeland: “For tourists like Danticat, returning from abroad to their homelands or other Caribbean spaces affords an opportunity to reconnect culturally, to confirm their identities as natives, while experiencing home as nonnatives” (83). Whereas Gourdine contrasts Kincaid and Danticat, I position them as both returning Caribbean subjects, neither tourist nor local, who offer similar critiques of tourism and neocolonialism. Nevertheless, I find Gourdine’s analysis useful inasmuch that we cannot deny Danticat’s position as visitor to her homeland and her experience of cultural reconnection through Carnival, but Danticat experiences home as both local and tourist. Furthermore, Kincaid is certainly critiquing the act of being a tourist, but her narrator utilizes both subject positions of insider and outsider to critique tourism and neocolonialism; in other words, Kincaid’s narrator is as much a tourist as Danticat’s. Certainly, as Gourdine argues, being a tourist and “touristing” operates through acting out fantasies onto the Caribbean space; these fantasies are supported though through travel narratives/books/guides, which are rooted in slavery and colonialism. Therefore, Kincaid’s parody of the travel book and Danticat’s use of the travel guide genre to counter Haiti’s neocolonial exclusion from the tourist industry work to challenge the exploitative

consumption of the Caribbean. Kincaid and Danticat are writing against the dominant narratives of travel and tourism deployed by not only the global tourist industry (and the multinational corporations that dominate this industry), but also Caribbean governments and ministries of tourism that use visions and metaphors of “Caribbean paradise” constructed through the colonial (white) gaze. They both produce alternative travel narratives that counter the travel guide or tour book genre, which historically defined “natives” as outside of history and humanity while also constructing a political analysis of Caribbean society.<sup>1</sup> While Kincaid’s book is most obviously a satire and parody of the tour book, Danticat’s text is published by the travel guide book industry yet it subtly critiques the very industry it is suppose to promote. Both Kincaid and Danticat even though they live and work in the United States illustrate an allegiance and concern about their homelands in spite of their distance.

### **Caribbean Writers, Return, and Mobility**

Many Caribbean emigrant writers and scholars have explored their own movements and migration in both fiction and non-fiction, while remaining in varying ways committed to home. Caribbean writers of the 1950s were very critical of colonialism and through their travels were able to create awareness about different issues facing the region. George Lamming, Kamau Braithwaite, and Sylvia Wynter exemplify the radical tradition of critique and resistance to colonial structures, heightened in the 1950s and 1960s, most notably in the British Caribbean. George Lamming’s seminal work *Pleasures of Exile* examines the migration of the West Indian writer in terms of colonialism. As Lamming writes of his own migration and travels, he ponders his relationship to home: “I have lost my place, or my place has deserted me” (50). He explains

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<sup>1</sup> See Bryan Edwards’ *History, Civil and Commercial, of the British Colonies in the West Indies* (1793) and *Historical Survey of the French Colony in the Island of St Domingo* (1797) and James Anthony Froude’s *English in the West Indies* (1888).

this as the dilemma for the West Indian writer abroad: “that he hungers for nourishment from a soil which he (as an ordinary citizen) could not at present endure. The pleasure and paradox of my own exile is that I belong wherever I am” (50). While Lamming explains reasons for leaving home, he also recognizes the Caribbean writer’s desire for home, or what he calls “growing echoes” from that “acre of ground in the New World” (50). This paradox and pleasure of exile then has remained bound up in the capacity to be home as a writer and the need for one’s roots. Kamau Brathwaite discusses this issue within the Caribbean in his 1963 essay “Roots,” and he traces the return of Caribbean writers at that time: “whether we think it desirable or not, the emigrant has become a significant factor on the literary scene and is, in fact, a product of our social and cultural circumstances. I want to submit that the desire (even the need) to migrate is at the heart of West Indian sensibility – whether that migration is in fact or by metaphor” (7). Brathwaite’s assertion here suggests that in studying Caribbean literature we must acknowledge the significance of both the emigrant position and the issue of migration in both metaphorical and literal terms for the Caribbean writer. It is the longing for home/exile that creates resistance to colonial structures in the work by Caribbean writers and intellectuals both home and abroad.

Furthermore, Brathwaite argues that for an artist or writer to have a meaningful work, s/he must have reference to his/her society and traditions (37). He explains this is “why, perhaps, we find the ‘rejected’ West Indian writer an eccentric at home and an exile abroad; in both cases working from an ex-centric position” (37). In essence, Brathwaite asserts that the Caribbean writer experiences feelings of isolation at home and abroad because of the writer’s commitment to home, but at the same time, needing distance from home in order to be public about critical perspectives of home. Sylvia Wynter in her 1968 essay “We Must Learn to Sit Down Together and Discuss a Little Culture” positions exile for the Caribbean writer as one of

“uprootedness” even if one returns home. She argues that the Caribbean writer when returning from exile (in the metropolitan center) is faced with another kind of exile because the Caribbean public has been conditioned by “the great corporations of production in the culture industry” (308). Hence, the Caribbean writer is irrelevant because, as Wynter posits, “West Indian books have a function in West Indian society” and its writers do not (308). She explains this process as indicative of the capitalist market system—a system in which the writer must relocate to the metropolis to work and have a purpose (309).<sup>2</sup> Wynter’s words still resonate in the contemporary moment of the global/corporate market economy with many Caribbean writers having to negotiate in a publishing world dominated by “first-world” countries. Moreover, a number of Caribbean writers continue to live and work abroad while being haunted by home, perhaps Lamming’s growing echoes calling from the land/home/space. Through Lamming, Brathwaite, and Wynter, we can trace a radical tradition of Caribbean writers maintaining a commitment for his/her home and community (and by extension the region) by questioning and challenging systems of oppression in the Caribbean.

Through an analysis of mostly Caribbean male writers, Brathwaite concludes his essay “Roots” by positing that Caribbean writers who return (literally and metaphorically) should be concerned with being “of the people” (53). He sees this “return” as a change of form that would reveal a sense of responsibility to one’s Caribbean society, which would represent or reflect the struggle within that community.<sup>3</sup> Wynter argues that we must explore our common past in order to “realise our common present,” and she explains this as a silence (312-13). She asserts this

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<sup>2</sup> Certainly, writers are not the only Caribbean migrants who must deal with this capitalist market system—migrants of different class and educational backgrounds have had to leave home for better employment opportunities.

<sup>3</sup> Brathwaite has certainly demonstrated his commitment and sense of responsibility through his poetry, essays, and (re)writing of history.

silence as avoiding the past connection between Prospero and Caliban which in turn ignores “what unites them in the present” (313). In other words, the present inequities (injustice, elitism, and division) and acceptance of them is inextricably connected to the past, in which minds have been colonized and dominated through cultural myths (Wynter 313). Therefore, she says that the Caribbean is in need of a cultural revolution where the Caribbean writer is at the center and has a function in the deconstruction of these controlling cultural myths. During the independence and nationalist movements of the 1960s and 1970s, many Caribbean writers illustrated a necessary preoccupation with home while confronting the history of colonization in order to create change in the present. These movements failed to bring Wynter’s cultural revolution despite the (re)writing and challenging of history that many Caribbean scholars and writers have done. The post-independence era continues to be plagued with cultural colonization and economic and political controls through neocolonialism.

While much has changed since the 1960s in the Caribbean, decolonization in the region has not been fully realized (or to put in another way, decolonization is a process that remains incomplete and is always in danger of being stopped or even reversed), and neocolonialism effectively exerts major economic, political, and socio-historical power over the region. Caribbean intellectuals and theorists have also consistently challenged systems of oppression by illuminating the effects of slavery and colonialism and revealing the myriad ways the region contributed to the West’s growth and wealth. Kincaid and Danticat can be seen as articulating the main arguments of seminal male Caribbean theorists, such as C.L.R. James, Eric Williams, and Franz Fanon. In the tradition of James and Williams asserting that the Caribbean was central rather than peripheral to the development of Western Modernity, these two women writers illustrate this vital concept in their works. They implicitly, and in the case of Kincaid’s *A Small*

*Place* explicitly, support Williams' argument that the extensive profits from slavery in the Caribbean fueled the development of capitalism. Moreover, they both represent Fanon's argument that colonial violence would produce postcolonial governments' violence and misuse of power—Kincaid and Danticat's clear critique of postcolonial governments resonates with Fanon and a pattern of intellectual resistance.

But how do we discuss these writers' perspectives and their politics of return? What happens when Caribbean intellectuals "return" home and inevitably or even inadvertently participate in neocolonialism, specifically the tourist economy—the very thing that they critique? Are they participating in a 'better' kind of consumption of the Caribbean—one that does *not* exploit people, economies, or culture? Can we then think of their work as offering counter-narratives to exploitative tourist consumption? These writers posit important intellectual frameworks that can help us to re-think and re-shape Caribbean communities, while providing socio-historical insights and representing perspectives of the Other (colonized, gendered, racialized, and sexualized subject). These writers are conscious about their mobility and the privilege that comes with that mobility; hence, they are critically engaged with the systems that provide said privilege.

In discussing the inequalities that exist in the Caribbean from plantation societies to service economies, Mimi Sheller argues that "with the mobility of some, comes the production of the immobility of others" (30). In other words, while some people have the money to travel as tourists and take vacations, other people, especially low-paid tourist workers in the Caribbean, have little to no mobility because of the unequal relationships supported through tourism and globalization. As discussed earlier in the introduction, Sheller argues that North American and European consuming publics are implicated in these asymmetric relationships that exist within

everyday patterns of consumption, which continue to shape the Caribbean. However, within these North American and European consuming publics there exists a strong Caribbean Diaspora, and those who live in the “first world” participate in this consumption whether they know it or not. These emigrants of Caribbean descent have access and mobility in ways that complicate these relationships of power and consumption. Sheller argues that the ingestion of embodied commodities is an unethical relation of violent domination that keeps the entire Caribbean region in a subordinate position (145-148). But this issue of mobility and consumption become very complex in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century with the “return” of Caribbean people who emigrated for educational and economic opportunities and are now in positions to “give back” so to speak, yet they are participating in the very consumption that contributes to the economic exploitation of this region. Nevertheless, this subject position of return allows for unique perspectives and can lead to a different kind of consumption.

Moreover, Caribbean writers and intellectuals who are of African descent can be understood through Paul Gilroy’s *Black Atlantic*—what he describes as a transcultural and international formation, a result of cultural mutation and historical conjunction (2-3). Gilroy situates this *Black Atlantic* culture as not only fundamental to modernity but also as continuously resistant to it. He argues that the *Black Atlantic* is a counterculture, defined as a philosophical discourse that refuses the separation of culture and politics (38-39). The producers of this *Black Atlantic* are Black intellectuals who travel across the Diaspora, and the writers in this chapter discussion can be located within the *Black Atlantic* as transnational Afro-Caribbean writers who consistently write about home from afar. Gilroy posits that what he sees as a counterculture to modernity erupts out of the cultural and artistic expressions of these Black intellectuals, artists, writers, speakers, activists, and poets (37-38). Those who produce this counterculture are

essential to the history of struggle and continued struggle for Black liberation. Gilroy positions the producers of the Black Atlantic through their exile, movements, and migrations across the African Diaspora, and it is through these experiences and their abilities to transcend national and ethnic structures that they have been able to form this kind of resistance. It is useful to consider diasporic Afro-Caribbean writers from this perspective of the Black Atlantic because it offers a transnational understanding of migration for the African diasporic writer and intellectual. It allows us to read their works as sites of resistance through their movements and focus on home even as they complicate issues of nationalism and cultural identification. In essence, these writers and intellectuals engage resistance by critiquing colonial and neocolonial structures that affect the region from inside and out while recognizing both difference and privilege.

### **Resisting the Travel Guide**

Kincaid's *A Small Place* (1988) and Danticat's *After the Dance* (2002) can be seen as narratives of return from the perspective of migrant Caribbean writers. Both works are essentially non-fiction, with Kincaid's book being a combination of memoir and essay and Danticat's book a combination of memoir and travelogue. Considering Kincaid's long career as a writer for the *New Yorker* (1976-1995), one could argue that her audience to a certain extent would be *New Yorker* readers. Interestingly, the *New Yorker* refused to publish *A Small Place* because one of the editors said it was angry, but at the same time, they were publishing Kincaid's short fiction pieces (from *At the Bottom of the River* and selections from her novels *Annie John* and *Lucy*).<sup>4</sup> It would certainly not be the last time *A Small Place* was deemed angry, and in fact, it was banned for a short time by the Antigua government. Kincaid's book has received as much

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<sup>4</sup> But what is striking here is that Kincaid's fiction is just as "angry" as *A Small Place*, but the real difference lies in her subject matter—where her fiction deals with the personal, *A Small Place* focuses on the structural; perhaps the *New Yorker* did not want to be implicated in her accusations about the impact of European colonialism and tourism.

acclaim and praise as it has criticism—both scholarly and popular. One of the acclaims by *The Philadelphia Inquirer* cited in the book’s third printing states “Wonderful reading... Tells more about the Caribbean in 80 pages than all the guidebooks.” This review indicates that readers will learn about the Caribbean in this book—that it is “better” than “all the guidebooks,” which in a way marks Kincaid’s book for a certain readership, a middle to upper-class traveling audience. Her intended readership may also be very accustomed to seeing tourism advertisements in the *New Yorker* (and other magazines, newspapers, and other media) during this time—ads that use and reinforce dominant (colonial) narratives and images of the Caribbean as paradise and untouched islands in the sun filled with pristine beaches, colonial wonders, adventures, and so on. The *New Yorker* is marketed to an upper-class audience, so it is not surprising that the ads would be geared for that same audience.<sup>5</sup> Therefore, it may be safe to say that Kincaid is writing against these narratives and images that she would have seen during her time at the *New Yorker*, and perhaps this is why she chooses to parody the travel guide genre.

Moreover, it is important to consider her position as a mainstream writer, with bestselling author status, and how this provided her with a certain freedom to write and publish this satirical

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<sup>5</sup> If one peruses various issues of the *New Yorker* during the mid to late 1980s, one will find many ads for different resorts and hotels across the Caribbean that use descriptors such as luxurious, exclusive, isolated, secluded, and elegant to attract a certain kind of tourist (wealthy). I reviewed a number of issues during this period and found that most of the ads were for resorts and hotels—more than likely resorts and hotels that were foreign owned or controlled—with names like Cotton Bay Beach and Golf Club, Colony Club Hotel, Rock Resorts (their motto was “a tradition for discriminating”), and Elegant Resorts (with a Plantation Plan). Moreover, there were a number of ads for Eastern Airlines, which was a prominent airline during the 1980s and it marketed itself as being “we’re the one to the sun” and flying to “21 Magical Caribbean Destinations.” Although I didn’t see any ads specifically for Antigua, I saw quite a number for the U.S. Virgin Islands, British Virgin Islands, Barbados, Bermuda, Jamaica, The Bahamas, St. Lucia, Turks and Caicos, and the French Antilles (Guadeloupe and Martinique). I also saw ads for Caribbean real estate companies and for Caribbean cruises.

and bitter critique of tourism.<sup>6</sup> Mainstream refers to one's success as a writer in literary (predominantly white) circles and publishing history with major publishing companies (perhaps we can attribute Kincaid's success with connections she made as a writer for the *New Yorker*). We can also think about Edwidge Danticat's emerging mainstream position and bestselling author status when considering her non-fiction book *After the Dance: a walk through carnival in Jacmel, Haiti*, a part of a travel series by Crown Journeys Publishers. The book is about her return home to Haiti in 2001 to experience Carnival in Jacmel for the first time. Before this book was published, Danticat was already an established, well-reputed writer, known for writing the stories about Haiti that are rarely told. And even though she uses the genre of the travelogue, Danticat offers a critique of tourism that can be seen as resisting the neocolonial embargo on the Haitian tourist industry. While Kincaid and Danticat both critique tourism, their approaches are different (especially in tone); regardless, they achieve a similar outcome—writing against exploitative consumption and tourism.

In discussing Caribbean tourism, it may seem strange to have Antigua and Haiti along side each other because, to put it plainly, Antigua is a flourishing tourist destination and Haiti is not. The differences between how they are seen in the global tourist industry are clear the minute one conducts a travel search on these two places. According to *Lonely Planet* (a well-reputed travel guide book and website, also known for being more “socially and culturally aware” than other companies), “Antigua's tourist office boasts that the island has 365 beaches, 'one for each day of the year'. It has great reefs and wrecks for diving and snorkeling. On neighbouring Barbuda you can track the island's fabled frigate birds and visit the Caribbean's largest rookery;” whereas “Haiti is a poverty-stricken land of urban overpopulation, denuded

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<sup>6</sup> *A Small Place* was used for the narrative structure and voice for Stephanie Black's important film, *Life and Debt*, which uncovers the neocolonial forces in post-independence Jamaica.

hillsides and a people suffering the wounds of civil strife and oppression. It is also a vibrant country of colourful art, fantastic music, cloud forests and an intensely spiritual people whose humour and passion are legendary” (Lonely Planet). What is remarkable about these different descriptions is the effort in Haiti’s description to lure visitors after they have described the poverty and strife; the writers of this blurb clearly know that Haiti is not a popular destination yet they choose to highlight the “vibrant” culture of the country, perhaps because of Lonely Planet’s commitment to culture. But Antigua’s description makes no mention of people or culture, just the natural water/landscape and birds, a very typical vision and marketing strategy for many Caribbean popular tourist destinations in which culture and people take a back seat to the much desired sun, sand, and sea. Moreover, another popular and well-reputed travel guidebook and website *Fodor’s* highlights Antigua (and its sister island Barbuda) as islands “where one can play Robinson Crusoe”; conversely, Haiti is not on their list of travel destinations in the Caribbean (Fodors). While Antigua and Barbuda’s Department of Tourism boasts “the beach is only the beginning...” and has tourist offices all over the world, Haiti’s tourism industry is practically non-existent (Antigua and Barbuda).

However, this was not always the case. Haiti was a tourist destination before the series of post-Duvalier coups and the AIDS pandemic, and during the 1970s, Haiti’s tourist industry even flourished. But during the 1980s, Haiti was often blamed for the origin of AIDS and its migrants for “bringing” AIDS into the United States (Farmer 2-4). Paul Farmer (medical anthropologist, physician, and founder of the NGO Partners in Health that began in Haiti) argues in his book *AIDS and Accusation* that HIV/AIDS was brought into Haiti through the tourist industry, particularly with sex tourism (143-4). Moreover, with Haiti’s militarization, largely built through U.S. invasion, occupation, and support of certain dictatorships that were favorable to

U.S. interests, representations of Haiti as “dangerous” and “demonish” are reinforced within a colonial history that has continuously marked Haiti as magical, threatening, and mysterious. This maintains the colonial perception of Haiti that “the natives” need to be “saved” (occupied and controlled) from itself (freedom/autonomy). The tourist industry has used the representations of a mystical and magical Haiti for advertisements, and current attempts to revitalize Haiti’s tourism continue to use these. For instance, the online travel guide *Destination 360* (which is a growing internet travel guide that covers destinations around the world using freelance writers) frames Haiti in a similar way to *Lonely Planet*, but it goes even further in trying to lure tourists:<sup>7</sup>

They would have you believe that no one wants to visit the island. The people of Haiti have a reputation, after all. A reputation for danger and instability. And while the turbulent history of Haiti doesn't lend itself well to apologists, the country itself has long been given a bad rap. While crime, environmental problems and urban decay definitely have a home here, it's neither more or less sketchy than many places in the world. And if anyone tries to talk you out of visiting Haiti, politely ignore them, as Haiti culture makes the island one of the most complex and fascinating locations in all of the Caribbean. ... Notoriety came in the form of Haiti's national religion of voodoo, but it was soon replaced by a different, more ominous marking – dictatorships, drug trafficking, widespread poverty and violence, all of which seriously wounded Haiti tourism. And despite the return of democracy to the island in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the island is still in the process of recovery. But that is neither here nor there, as the island still has enormous beauty to offer. (sic) (*Destination 360*)

This description openly engages in the “danger and instability” and “turbulent history” of Haiti by calling these a symptom of “a bad rap,” and even though there are problems (admittedly “crime, environmental problems, and urban decay”), let no one talk you out of a trip to Haiti.

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<sup>7</sup> There are many online travel guides, and I chose *Destination 360* because it is one of very few that includes Haiti among its Caribbean destinations. Furthermore, I also include the prominent travel guides *Fodor's* and *Lonely Planet* because they are very popular and well known; they are also in book form and online. These travel guides are representative of the dominant narratives of tourism and reveal how the Caribbean and these specific islands are marketed in the global tourist industry. Moreover, it is useful to show how these travel guide descriptions of different Caribbean islands are similar to the ways that Caribbean governments and ministries of tourism market themselves.

They appeal to the reader's sense of adventure, daring, and cultural desire, assuring that Haiti's tourism industry had just been "seriously wounded." After "explaining" Haiti's "notoriety" and "ominous" problems, *Destination 360* declares that "democracy" to Haiti has been "restored" and is in the "process of recovery." Aside from the glaring problems and inaccuracies with this description of Haiti, it is written from a colonial perspective and in subtle support of U.S. imperialism and political intervention in Haiti. This description wants potential tourists to see beyond the "widespread poverty and violence" and visit Haiti for its culture and beauty.

Furthermore, *Destination 360* posits Haiti as working to "restore" Haiti for tourism:

Factor in that the government and people of Haiti are trying their best to restore the island into a tourist haven, and you have all the makings for a sublime trip to an island rediscovering itself. The palm trees and gingerbread houses of Jacmel make the city one of the most beautiful locations in all of the Caribbean. The fading white of the buildings and voodoo artwork give the city an exoticism that reminds one of why this used to be one of the top tourist spots in the entire Caribbean. (sic) (*Destination 360*)

Perhaps it is *because of* its notoriety, poverty, decline of tourism, and social and political unrest that Haiti is still represented in the tourist industry through images of danger and magic. And it is through these images that Haitian culture, art, and landscape are marketed as *extraordinary*. On the other hand, *Destination 360's* description of Antigua and Barbuda says they "really supply only one thing, and they supply it well: vast, idyllic beaches" and this is what makes it such a popular vacation spot; then they basically imply that these islands have no culture, and people go there for sun, sand, and sea (*Destination 360*).

While the differences between Haiti and the rest of Caribbean are vast in terms of successful tourism, the desire for tourism remains. It should not be a surprise that the government of Haiti along with the people of Haiti (in the country and its diaspora) would want tourism revitalized because tourism remains the beacon of hope and stability. (Nor should it surprise us that the global tourist industry and the multinational corporations that run this

industry would want to bring Haiti back into the fold even as the United States maintains what is essentially an embargo on Haitian tourism.) Therefore, Haiti remains an important site for a discussion of tourism and neocolonialism, particularly because of its history and how it has been used in the discourses of colonialism and travel.<sup>8</sup> Both Kincaid and Danticat challenge these dominant discourses through their works, *A Small Place* and *After the Dance* respectively—books which can be thought of self-consciously writing against the typical and colonial travel narrative or travelogue.

### **“The Event of Tourism” – Returning to *A Small Place***

Kincaid is often criticized for being out of touch with her Caribbean homeland of Antigua, particularly because of her dismissal of creolized languages and certain negative characterizations of Caribbean people. Nevertheless, she is considered a prominent diaspora Caribbean author and Antiguan expatriate residing in the United States (since she was 17), who writes continuously about the Caribbean. In *A Small Place*, Kincaid creates a narrator who is a returning home to Antigua, and it is through this voice that we experience a sharp and at times bitter critique of empire, colonialism, and tourism. We can consider Kincaid herself “returning” home through this narrator—a metaphorical return home. While the narrator clearly reflects the perceptions of Kincaid, considering the book is non-fiction but also parody, the narrator’s voice shifts and changes from the perspective of “native” and local to “native” but outsider. The book is seemingly addressed at first to “the tourist” and from the perspective of “the native” telling “the tourist” what one sees and wouldn’t see as a tourist. Through this narrator, Kincaid exposes the complicity and responsibility of tourists who participate in the unethical consumption of the Caribbean, similar to Sheller’s assertion that North American and European consuming publics

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<sup>8</sup> To a certain degree, I think Haiti is silently used as a warning to the rest of the Caribbean—act right, be good and friendly tourist destinations, or else.

benefit from the unethical relations to the region. Kincaid's narrator makes the unethical relations explicit from the position of a Caribbean emigrant who is part of the North American consuming public. Although the narrator's position changes throughout the text, she remains in the subject position of return yet vacillates between insider and outsider, or local and non-local.

It is through and because of this changing perspective that we can read Kincaid's troubling and contradictory authorial identity and subject position. Jane King in her article "A Small Place Writes Back" harshly critiques Kincaid's *A Small Place* through personal, historical, and cultural perspectives using her other works and interviews as the framework for analysis. While questioning the author's subject position, King argues that Kincaid denigrates "our small place in a destructive and angry fashion" (12). King says that it is almost impossible for readers to assign any fixed identity to the author's postmodern identity, and that Kincaid offers little else but anger and insults to the Caribbean (17-18). While Kincaid's identity is difficult to place, she does much more than offer anger and insults to the Caribbean as she uncovers the connections between slavery and tourism for an audience of potential or regular tourists as well as Caribbeans living abroad who may visit the region, among other different kinds of tourists. Moreover, her narrator shifts positions throughout the text, and it is this non-fixity of the author's identity that we experience an important critique of tourism and see its exploitative roots. In *Paradise and Plantation*, Strachan also analyzes this book in terms of its critique of tourism and explanation of tourism's foundations in history, slavery, and colonization. Strachan argues that while Kincaid is writing against the construction of paradise and tourist brochure discourse, she still views the Caribbean as an unreal place that is beyond time and the real (238-9). Furthermore, he takes Kincaid to task for rebuking Caribbean languages and religion and characterizing Caribbean people as having no agency (243). He argues that even as she deconstructs the tourist-imperialist

nostalgia for the primitive, she also upholds perceptions of Black Caribbean people being children, innocent, and lunatics that have been used to justify slavery and neocolonial systems (244). Regardless, he still finds Kincaid's work important because it "has been very much about dismantling the discourse of imperialism and thereby combating powers that represent the Caribbean in terms that do the region little good" (260). But he says she is "guilty of some of the sins she condemns" (260). While this is certainly true, Kincaid, in spite of her contradictions, offers a significant critique of travel and tourism while re-working the travel narrative genre.

Early in the book, the narrator reverses the tourist gaze by asking the tourist (European or American) to consider a more realistic picture of Antigua, one that implicates him or her in the destructive forces of the tourist industry and then shows how these forces are directly related to slavery and colonialism. Explaining that economic history books never discuss the African slave labor involved in building the wealth of the West, the narrator uncovers the silences of the past by describing these kinds of books and their distorted history of: "how the West (meaning Europe and North America after its conquest and settlement by Europeans) got rich: the West rich not from the free (free—in this case meaning got-for-nothing) and then undervalued labour, for generations, ... but from the ingenuity of small shopkeepers in Sheffield and Yorkshire and Lancashire, or wherever" (9-10). The narrator finds this to be the ultimate shame, that Antiguan and other Caribbean people of African descent must endure the silences of the dominant narratives of history that deliberately leave out the contributions of African people:

(isn't that the last straw; for not only did we have to suffer the unspeakableness of slavery, but the satisfaction to be had from 'We made you bastards rich' is taken away too), and so you needn't let that slightly funny feeling you have from time to time about exploitation, oppression, domination develop into a full-fledged unease, discomfort; you could ruin your holiday. (10)

In providing this unconventional, ironic history lesson linking capitalism to slavery, the narrator (re)writes or rights the history not only of this place, but of this region, and she understands the

ways in which the Caribbean has been historically abused and consumed.<sup>9</sup> This is not the history an average tourist would know and this would not be included in any of the dominant travel guides. While they may mention slavery, they certainly would not discuss how slavery and colonialism made the industrial and modern progress of Europe and North American possible. The narrator's tone is meant to be biting; she wants the reader to feel the frustration and anger that she feels over the injustices and oppression Black people have experienced. She also wants the potential tourist to understand how the past is an intricate and complicated part of the present. In other words, it may be difficult to enjoy vacationing in Antigua (or any other Caribbean country) if one has to fully engage the silences in history. Kincaid delves into these historical silences even further by tracing the direct continuity between slavery and banking institutions:

The Barclay brothers, who started Barclays Bank, were slave traders. That is how they made their money. When the English outlawed the slave trade, the Barclays brothers went into banking. It made them even richer. It's possible that when they saw how rich banking made them, they gave themselves a good beating for opposing an end to slave trading (for surely they would have opposed that), but then again, they may have been visionaries and agitated for an end to slavery, for look at how rich they became with their banks borrowing from (through their savings) the descendents of the slaves and then lending back to them. (26)

Here Kincaid makes the correlation between a contemporary international bank (based in England) and their origins in the slave trade. While being sarcastic, the narrator makes the point that banking made the Barclays brothers "even richer" after the slave trade, as their banks in the Caribbean made money from money through loans to and savings from Black people. Thus, North America and Europe (the West) were quite literally built not only through centuries of free labor during slavery, but also through institutions that emerged out of slavery during the post-emancipation period. In the tradition of C.L.R. James and Eric Williams, Kincaid is ultimately claiming here that the Caribbean is central to modernity, the formation of capitalism, and the

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<sup>9</sup> See Eric Williams' important work *Capitalism and Slavery* for an extensive study of this.

West's wealth; this resonates with Paul Gilroy's argument in *The Black Atlantic*, where he positions Black intellectuals and the Black Atlantic as foundational to modernity even as the Black Atlantic challenges modernity.

Kincaid places the Caribbean into the dominant narrative of modernity through this (re)writing of history, yet she also reveals the extent to which Caribbean people are affected by the exploitation of the tourist industry, which sustains oppression and inequities. Through her discussion of "the tourist" and "the local," she illustrates what Sheller's describes as the mobility of some produced at the expense of the immobility of others. For the most part, Kincaid's use of a collective "we" refers to Caribbean "natives" or locals and the "you" refers to tourists and consumers; but Kincaid also shifts her narrator throughout the text, and "she" is placed in both positions because she is both "native" and tourist. Kincaid skillfully reveals the irony of both "the tourist" and "the native" through her representation of the "insider" and "outsider" subject positions.<sup>10</sup> The narrator explains the ugliness of "the tourist" and how much "the native" despises "the tourist," while revealing the complexity of mobility and politics of location: "That the native does not like the tourist is not hard to explain. For every native of every place is a

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<sup>10</sup> Other critics have explored these issues of subject position and narration from a variety of perspectives and theoretical frameworks. In "What If You're an 'Incredibly Unattractive, Fat, Pastrylike-Fleshed Man'? Teaching Jamaica Kincaid's *A Small Place*," Rhonda Frederick develops a strategy for teaching *A Small Place* by using the text itself and focusing on Kincaid's multiple definitions of tourist and white people and her shifting subject position (3). Frederick argues that because Kincaid uses second person singular deliberately, it is up to readers to figure out why she does this and for what purpose (4). Whereas Frederick is interested in the implications for readers, I am interested in how Kincaid implicates herself in patterns of consumption as both insider and outsider. In "A Small Place: Some Perspectives on the Ordinary," Suzanne Gauch argues that "*A Small Place* addresses otherness by rejecting it in favor of ordinariness, an ordinariness that levels many of the distinctions upon which self and other are predicated" (910). She supports her argument by analyzing Kincaid's treatment of tourists and natives while also interrogating the narrator. While Gauch positions Kincaid as neither here nor there, I argue that Kincaid positions herself as both insider and outsider, and by the end of her book places herself as outsider and consumer in the context of tourism.

potential tourist, and every tourist is a native of somewhere. Every native everywhere lives a life of overwhelming and crushing banality and boredom and separation and depression, and every deed, good and bad, is an attempt to forget this” (18). The narrator positions every “native” as a potential tourist—right along with the reality that most Caribbean locals are too poor to be tourists, and she also removes herself from this “native” position because she is both insider and outsider, native and emigrant who has achieved mobility. The narrator explains that “Every native would like to find a way out, every native would like a rest, every native would like a tour. But some natives—most natives in the world—cannot go anywhere. They are too poor. They are too poor to go anywhere” (18-19). Readers specifically those in the consuming publics discussed earlier are forced to think about who can afford travel and leisure, and they are subtly asked to think about poverty and mobility:

[Most natives] are too poor to escape the reality of their lives; and they are too poor to live properly in the place where they live, which is the very place you, the tourist, want to go—so when the natives see you, the tourist, they envy you, they envy your ability to leave your own banality and boredom, they envy your ability to turn their banality and boredom into a source of pleasure for yourself. (18-9)

The narrator explains here that locals may envy the tourist’s ability to leave home, have a vacation, and enjoy the local’s everyday reality—to enjoy their lives in a place that caters more to tourists than to “natives,” where they are too poor and cannot afford to live or leave. Many locals cannot afford to have vacations and escape from their everyday lives, and at the same time their country expends many resources to attract these tourists. Kincaid exposes the silences of the past in order to understand the contemporary tourist industry and then asks “tourists” to consider their position of privilege and their mobility in terms of travel. Published in 1988, Kincaid’s book has certainly influenced academic work on tourism and consumption; and it is through the narrator’s description of mobility that Kincaid offers a postcolonial critique of

tourism. This critique also operates through a (re)writing of the dominant narrative of history, in which Kincaid places mini history lessons from the perspective of the colonized within her text.

Kincaid's parody of the travel guide and use of irony and sarcasm create a space for readers to not only see the ways in which the Caribbean has been instrumental in the building of capitalism and modernity, but also helps to deconstruct the dominant narratives of history that many of her readers would believe to be true. She does this by consistently making the reader work through and experience different subject positions, where "people like me," "I," and "we" refer to natives, the colonized, Antiguan, Black people, and Caribbean residents and emigrants all at the same time. Meanwhile, she uses "you" to refer to tourists, the colonizers, English, white people, and Americans at different times in an effort to assert narratives of history that they probably don't know, ones that links Barclays Bank with slave traders and British colonialism with present-day corruption. The narrator asks a series of questions that continue to challenge the dominant narratives of history and the representations of the Caribbean as corrupt and dangerous even amidst the accepted and revered "Caribbean paradise":

Have you ever wondered to yourself why it is that all people like me seem to have learned from you is how to imprison and murder each other, how to govern badly, and to take the wealth of our country and place it in Swiss bank accounts? Have you ever wondered why it is that all we seem to have learned from you is how to corrupt our societies and how to be tyrants? (34)

Here Kincaid is implicitly referencing the work of Fanon, specifically his assertion in *Wretched of the Earth* that during the struggle for independence in countries colonized by Europe, the colonial regime in all its corruption and brutality would be re-instituted by the national bourgeoisie (and in the postcolonial period, this has indeed happened).<sup>11</sup> The narrator not only

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<sup>11</sup> In *Wretched of the Earth*, Fanon explains this process in the chapter titled "The Pitfalls of National Consciousness."

forces “the tourist” to think about the origin of the Caribbean’s “underdevelopment”—why Caribbean people “imprison and murder each other,” “govern badly,” and “take wealth”—but she directly places blame on the British and other European colonists (we have learned this “from you”) for the current state of affairs in this region (all we learned from you is how to keep our societies corrupt through tyrannical leadership). In other words, the Caribbean essentially continues to be controlled in spite of independence and the postcolonial period just as Fanon theorized because of the ruling classes who learned how to govern through colonial rule—colonial governments which were violent and corrupt and determined future leaders.

Thus, Kincaid is critical not only of colonialism and slavery, but also its long-lasting effects on Caribbean societies and postcolonial governments. This is why she critiques post-independence Antigua and the Antiguan government so harshly:

Is the Antigua I see before me, self-ruled, a worse place than what it was when it was dominated by the bad-minded English and all the bad-minded things they brought with them? How did Antigua get to such a state that I would ask myself this? For the answer on every Antiguan’s lips to the question “What is going on here now?” is “The government is corrupt. They are thief, they are big thief.” (41)

The narrator sees post-independence Antigua as worse off than British ruled Antigua because of the corruption and government failures to work for the majority of the people, which she traces back to the “bad-minded English” and their violent, corrupt colonial structures. As the narrator walks down Market Street, she describes the destroyed library in 1974 that was not yet re-built many years later and the “bad postcolonial education” that many Antiguan receive, which again can all be traced through the aftermath of colonialism and enslavement (42-3). She also connects these concerns of no proper library and poor education systems with the heavy investment in tourism and how the Antiguan government deals with the realm of education and culture, with the Minister of Education also being the Minister of Culture and Sports (48-9). The narrator asks

about the business of culture and asserts an ambivalence and demeaning critique concerning the preservation of culture:

In countries that have no culture or are afraid they have no culture, there is a Minister of Culture. And what is culture, anyway? In some places, it's the way they play drums; in other places, it's the way you behave out in public; and in still other places, it's the way a person cooks food. And so what is there to preserve about these things? For is it not so people make them up as they go along, make them up as they need them?" (49-50)

In a sarcastic and biting way, the narrator suggests that culture is made up as people need it, which is certainly offensive and ignores culture that simply happens daily; perhaps a reflection of Kincaid's disconnection from Antiguan culture. However, in the context of criticizing the tourist industry and postcolonial governments, we can align this assertion to the continual cultural colonization of the region and also the fact that Ministries of Culture rarely promote the daily cultural activities of people in the region. Furthermore, Kincaid critiques how the post-independence Antiguan government during the 1980s ruled Antigua. She references this business of culture, education, and sports being lumped into one because of how much it speaks to the government's lack of attention on the everyday lives and quality of lives of its own people. What is implied here is exactly what many tourism scholars and critiques explain about the cost of tourism in the Caribbean: most resources are used for the tourist industry, and the money made from this industry is for the most part not being filtered back into the country for its people, while the majority of its people service this industry yet continue to struggle.<sup>12</sup>

Furthermore, Kincaid brings attention to a number of scandals and examples of corruption throughout the post-independence government led by the same family (*The Birds*,

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<sup>12</sup> Now that "culture" has become its own commodity, we can revise what Kincaid says here as heritage tourism becomes more popular and in high demand—but this realm of culture still gets filtered through Ministries of Tourism across the Caribbean so that it is not for the people but rather for the tourists. And this is also made more complex as Caribbean emigrants return home for visits and vacations to participate in this business of culture—i.e. Carnivals all over the region – with Trinidad hosting the most popular one, Jamaica's music festivals, namely Sumfest and Sunsplash, The Bahamas' Junkanoo festivals, Barbados' Cropover Festival, and so on.

though she never says their names) for over 25 years. She provides several examples from a stamp scandal to deals made with offshore banks, hotels, and casinos, from ministers somehow getting U.S. green cards and brand new cars to contaminated food to the run-down hospital that illustrate neocolonialism at work. For instance, in her description of the stamp scandal in Antigua in the 1980s, Kincaid shows the connection between government corruption and neocolonialism. The narrator explains that stamps were issued for Redonda (an uninhabited neighboring rock/cay that is considered part of the nation of Antigua and Barbuda) and lots of money was made from this deal but no one “seems to know who got the money or where the stamps ended up” (51). The narrator rhetorically wonders whose idea it was to make these stamps since “Antigua has no stamp designer on payroll” and there is no place that “houses the dyes and the paper on which the stamps are printed” (51). Kincaid implies that the Redonda stamps were produced elsewhere and that Antigua’s government was manipulated into this deal by other forces with power and money. In driving the point home about how deep the corruption goes and how tourism feeds into it, Kincaid draws a connection between the preoccupation with slavery and emancipation with the dependence on tourism:

In Antigua, people cannot see the relationship between their obsession with slavery and emancipation and their celebration of the Hotel Training School (graduation ceremonies are broadcast on radio and television); people cannot see a relationship between their obsession with slavery and emancipation and the fact that they are governed by corrupt men, or that these corrupt men have given their country away to corrupt foreigners. (55)

As the narrator insists here that people cannot see this relationship, Kincaid implies later on that the people of Antigua know more than she thinks they do. After the narrator asks “and might not knowing why they are the way they are and why they do the things they do put in their proper place everyday and every event, so that exceptional amounts of energy aren’t expended on the trivial, while the substantial and the important are assembled (artfully) into a picture story,” she creates a local voice that reveal exactly how much Antiguan know about what is going on in

their country and the relationship between the oppression of slavery and the tourist industry. Kincaid attempts to show their side (locals) of this seeming acceptance of corruption. Hence, even as Kincaid critiques the ways in which Antigua and its people have been used from inside and outside, she complicates the position of local people in this process by acknowledging her distance from home.

Through the last half of the book, the narrator switches perspective by placing herself in an outsider but “native” position. Kincaid through her narrator removes herself from the local perspective, and thus implicates herself in the “you”—the tourist or the North American consumer. It is precisely because of Kincaid’s own troubled position of ‘native but not native’ that she is able to construct a narrator who moves between the local and tourist subject positions. Perhaps this provides a more productive way of analyzing her infamous description of Antiguanas as innocents, artists, and lunatics. In attempting to explain the everyday realities for people of Antigua, the narrator says that she is unsure whether or not the people she came from are “children, eternal innocents, or artists who have not yet found eminence in a world too stupid to understand, or lunatics who have made their own lunatic asylum, or an exquisite combination of all three” (57). It is this voice of all three that the narrator gives space to speak about government corruption and reliance on tourism, with specific examples of how the majority of Antiguanas do not benefit from the money coming in through tourism (57-68). The voice she creates is this “exquisite combination” of how she defines Antiguanas—as children or eternal innocents, artists who are beyond this world, and lunatics who must create their own world. Kincaid is seemingly unable to understand why and how Antiguanas are able to deal with their everyday lives, from the corruption and tourism to the lack of resources, and so she reverts to stereotypes and pathological characterizations of Caribbean people. But Kincaid has not lived in

postcolonial Antigua, and so she attempts to make sense of it through using a voice created from the negative descriptions of Antiguan to reveal perhaps the local perspective.

These descriptors are certainly derogatory on the one hand, but on the other, they exemplify the narrator's (and even the author's) own struggle to understand Antiguan's apparent acceptance of the corruption and exploitation. This struggle allows Kincaid to make some sense of the everyday in this 'small place' she has left. It is through this Caribbean local/resident voice that Kincaid uses her narrator to end an explosive critique by suggesting:

And it is in that strange voice, then—the voice that suggests innocence, art, lunacy—that they say these things, pausing to take breath before this monument to rottenness, that monument to rottenness, as if they were tour guides; as if, having observed the event of tourism, they have absorbed it so completely that they have made the degradation and humiliation of their daily lives into their own tourist attraction. (68-9)

By creating this disturbing and disruptive voice, Kincaid struggles with the daily realities of Caribbean people working in the tourist industry, who deal with the corruption of governments and the degrading/humiliating experience of serving tourists with awareness—locals are tour guides absorbing the event of tourism so much that their lives/bodies have become a part of the tourist attraction. Perhaps this image of absorbing the rottenness of tourism helps us to make sense of why people stay working in the tourist industry, but acceptance here is never simple because readers are led into thinking about choice, or rather the lack of choice, for workers in the tourist industry and by extension Caribbean people who live in countries over dependent on tourism. Kincaid consciously acknowledges her outsider status; she removes herself from the category of local/resident and places her own subject position into that of "native tourist" and North American consumer. Kincaid's book works to demystify the complacent acceptance of tourism, while at the same time turning the tourist gaze into a tool of ethical critique. It is through this representation of return and acknowledgement of her own mobility and status that she effectively writes against exploitative consumption and tourism; thereby creating a resistant

counter-narrative to tourism, one that incorporates the history of colonial control and exploitation while (re)writing and righting history.<sup>13</sup> This re-working of the travel guide genre exposes the power in these kinds of historical productions by writing from the perspective of the colonized and racialized subject.

**‘So we do not forget’: Carnival, Resistance, and Return in *After the Dance***

Whereas Kincaid uses the tool of satire and narrator shifts to create her critique in what is essentially a parody of the travel guide genre, Danticat uses a different strategy—writing in the travelogue genre which pulls the reader into a seemingly normative and exciting travel narrative. Danticat, who is from Haiti but resides in the United States, negotiates both insider and outsider subject positions in her book *After the Dance*. While this text is a travel guide to Jacmel Carnival in Haiti, it continuously provides a history lesson and socio-political context for readers at every possible moment. She challenges the dominant narratives of history and resists the exploitative nature of the tourist industry by re-working the travel guide genre. Through her narrative and by publishing with a travel book company, Danticat uses the tourist industry against itself as she changes and revises the racist and disturbing colonial discourse that operates to keep Haiti (like much of the Caribbean) outside of the West. She writes in a memoir style with beautiful and alluring prose indicative of her fiction, as she describes the city of Jacmel and takes the reader on a historical tour of carnival from her perspective as a returning “native” or in Haiti what they call a “*diaspora*, a Haitian living in the United States” (124). Although Danticat

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<sup>13</sup> I focus only on *A Small Place* by Kincaid because this is the book by her in which I see resistance to tourism and neocolonialism. I have read *My Brother*, which details her troubled and literal return home to Antigua when her brother was dying. Also, I am aware of her recent travel narrative *Among Flowers* about her visit to the Himalayas to collect flowers, and that people have criticized her for the way she represents the people and place. While I find these issues vexing, they are beyond the scope of this project and perhaps illustrate how even as Kincaid is conscious of her mobility that she is also invested in it and enjoys it.

spends most of her time outside of Haiti, she remains dedicated to educating people about her country, and it is through this lens that we ought to engage in this fascinating book. Danticat directly participates in a long history of travel narratives written about the Caribbean, and thereby refutes those narratives which served to construct Haiti as primitive and savage.

Therefore, even in the moments of rapture in carnival where the narrator seems to lose herself in the enjoyment, she has the perspective of return and is conscious of her mobility and privilege.

Danticat critiques the tourist industry and neocolonialism through the (re)writing of Haiti's history, her own personal history, and "a walk through Carnival." As explained earlier, Haiti is no longer a tourist destination (even though it was from the 1950s till the early 1980s), but it is one of the most exploited and neocolonized countries in the Caribbean. In many ways, Haiti is the anti-tourist destination, but it has historically functioned as the West's place for adventure, magic, and exploration of the unknown, and simultaneously being stripped of its resources. Danticat's book not only acknowledges these colonial and neocolonial histories, but it also describes carnival, a Caribbean festival that is so often shaped by tourism. However, carnival was historically a form of resistance during slavery like other sites of Afro-Caribbean folk culture such as Junkanoo and Myalism. Therefore as Danticat tells the story of carnival, "the half that has never been told" in the words of Brodber, she reveals that carnival remains a cultural site of resistance. Danticat joins Bethel and Brodber as contemporary Caribbean writers who in their literature represent Afro-Caribbean folk culture as sites of resistance. Furthermore, Jacmel's Carnival is a representation or (re)writing of history, telling "the other half," that is parallel in key ways to Brodber's *Blackspace* Emancipation Day play, Ella's reworking of the colonial curriculum in *Myal*, and Bethel's vision for Junkanoo to resist neocolonial exploitation in the poem "Of Pirates and Junkanoo." Carnival in Jacmel provides locals with the opportunity

to express themselves, their stories, and their histories/herstories. Michelet Divers, Jacmel's best-known carnival expert, describes it as such to Danticat: "it is a parade, an exposition, but it is also a way for Jacmel to tell its story. Every costume, every mask portrays a part of our story and concerns" (17). Danticat highlights the local act of resistance still occurring in Jacmel's Carnival for a larger international audience using the power of the travel book industry to do so.

The narrator operates as both native informant and visitor/tourist simultaneously or "native tourist," and it is through this double lens that we experience her journey through Jacmel Carnival. The book begins with the narrator's personal story that we can align with Danticat's life in Haiti up until she moved to the United States at 12 years old. She explains that her uncle would not allow her to attend or participate in carnival, and through his terrifying stories, she developed a real fear and phobia against carnival and crowded spaces in general. Her journey to Jacmel is about reconnecting with her homeland and one of its most famous celebrations. Danticat embarks on this journey to overcome her fears, travel around the country, and learn about carnival, but her memoir provides an extensive re-definition of Haiti, or to put it another way, a subtle reformulation of Haiti within dominant European and United States discourses. Each chapter of *After the Dance* includes not only specific descriptions of Jacmel and its carnival, filtered through Danticat's personal experiences, but also histories/herstories of Haitian people, from peasant farmers to visual artists and literary figures, all immersed in uncovering the myriad historical silences that so often accompany discussions of Haiti. Danticat seems determined not to be one who goes under the sabliye tree:

People who leave Haiti and don't call, write, or return are said to have gone under the *sabliye* tree, for the word *sabliye* with the last two syllables placed before the first is *bliye sa*, or forget it. In African lore, the *sabliye* is the "forgetting" tree, which slaves were made to walk under before they were packed on ships and brought to the so-called New World, to places like Jacmel" (19).

The narrator leads into this story after describing sabliye trees she sees in the Jacmel square, which reminds her of the Haitian saying about the children of Haiti who leave and do not return—they are said to have forgotten. It is clear that Danticat is one who does not forget, and in fact, she *rights* and (re)writes Haiti's histories/herstories so that others do not forget. The Haitian saying comes from "African lore" in which enslaved Africans were made to forget (where they came from, who they were, their families, cultures, and languages) during the traumatic and horrific experiences of capture and the Middle Passage during the Transatlantic Slave Trade. Danticat skillfully weaves multiple stories into this description of trees, as she makes the past (slavery) an integral part of the present (neocolonial Haiti) and future (do not forget), as she traces the historical connections between the sabliye trees and the African people in Jacmel for a variety of readers, from potential tourists to fellow diaspora Caribbeans.

These history/herstory lessons in the text are placed strategically and seamlessly into the story of carnival in such a way that positions socio-political and historical contexts as imperative to understanding this place being described in this travel guide. Danticat (re)writes many stories including that of Amerindians and their culture, African slaves laboring on plantations, the struggle over Hispanola between France and Spain, the development of Jacmel and Carnival, the complex history of free Blacks and mulattos, the political turmoil from independence to present, along with individual stories of people living in Jacmel (Paula, Ovid, Marlene) who she meets along her travels. Similar to Kincaid and Gilroy and in the tradition of C.L.R. James and Eric Williams, Danticat continuously places Haiti (and the Caribbean) inside of modernity as she challenges dominant colonial narratives that construct the Caribbean as outside of time and space. This narrative has dismissed the Haitian Revolution and constructed Haiti as a primitive,

savage, and uncivilized place that cannot be independent or economically viable.<sup>14</sup> Danticat's counter-narrative in *After the Dance*, much like Kincaid's in *A Small Place*, serves to disrupt the economic and power relations of tourism by inserting an alternative travel narrative that rebukes racist and colonial discourse of Haiti into the U.S. literary and travel guide book marketplace(s). Both Kincaid and Danticat, as diasporic Afro-Caribbean female writers and intellectuals, are maintaining the radical tradition of Caribbean male writers and intellectuals of criticizing colonial and post-colonial structures by specifically challenging dominant narratives of history and (re)writing that history. Similar to Kincaid and her anti-travel guide book, Danticat inserts her counter-narrative into the genre of travel guides that have been a primary imperial and controlling tool created by both colonial Europe and neocolonial United States.

The stories and (re)writing of history that Danticat engages situates Haiti into a very specific modern history. By mentioning Haiti's rise as France's richest colony in the 1700s because of the African enslaved labor on the sugar and tobacco plantations across Haiti, Danticat implicitly draws the connection between wealth generated from slavery and Haiti (41). Furthermore, she consistently refers to the Haitian Revolution along with the many attempts to stop it by France and the U.S. interventions and occupations that followed the revolution. This "unsilencing of the past" in Trouillot's words allows for a better understanding of the present neocolonial situation in Haiti and the ways in which Haiti (like the rest of the Caribbean) has been an inextricable part of the growth of the West and modernity. During her travels around Jacmel, Danticat visits an abandoned steam engine, "a symbol of nineteenth-century industrial

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<sup>14</sup> Trouillot in *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* argues that the Haitian Revolution was "unthinkable" and "a non-event" because it "entered history with the peculiar characteristic of being unthinkable even as it happened" (73). Trouillot also explains that just as the Haitian Revolution "was thought impossible by its contemporaries," it continues to be silenced by historians (96).

Jacmel,” on “a grassy plain that was once the site of a thriving sugar plantation called Habitation Price” (53). This Watt steam engine, one of the few remaining in the world and considered a valuable relic, was brought to Haiti in the early 1800s; hence marking that “the industry revolution had made its way to Jacmel” (54). But Danticat re-thinks that statement because she realizes the industrial revolution had only passed through: “Peasants were still going about their lives and working their land just as they had hundreds of years before. But then steam engines and their like were never meant to ease the working lives of peasants anyway. They were purchased and brought to places like this to increase the profits for their owners” (54). The steam engine is certainly a symbol of the industrial revolution that ushered in modernity, and even though it was never meant for the people of Haiti to better their lives, it exists as a reminder of the sweat, labor, and bodies used and abused during slavery and the building of industrialized nations across Europe and North America. In other words, Danticat’s references to slavery, plantations, and the steam engine contribute to a complex understanding of Haiti’s vexed position in the late 1990s of being represented as outside modernity since it has contributed so directly to the wealth of Europe and North America. Moreover, the negative, racialized, and colonial representations of Haiti are rooted in the dominant discourse of travel and tourism.

While righting and (re)writing stories of Haiti in her travel guidebook, Danticat refutes the existing dominant historical narratives that justify exploitative consumption and tourism and military control and occupation. In discussing Haitian poet-novelist Rene Depestre’s celebrated novel *Hadriana* set in Jacmel, Danticat describes two important carnival figures, the chaloska and the zombie, which operate to challenge military abuse and poverty in Haiti. She explains that the chaloska is “a character in military garb with a protruding mouth and clawlike teeth” based on a real military officer, Charles Oscar Etienne, who terrorized Jacmel in the early 1900s

(67). By singing this rhyme “Chaloska, I’m not afraid of you; you’re a human being” (68), the chaloska would go away. Danticat wonders if this demilitarizes and defangs the monster. The song can be seen as “defanging” the chaloska because it recognizes that this military figure is human and was once part of Haiti and a community of people. The process of militarization of certain groups of people in Haiti has been detrimental and been used to support dictatorships, which in turn embraced U.S. neocolonial forces (ex. free trade zones, transnational corporations building factories and manufacturing plants, blood and plasma banks, and so on).<sup>15</sup> The chaloska represents the extent to which Haitian people have suffered at the hands of their own military and government, but these abuses of power must be placed in the socio-historical and political contexts of colonialism and neocolonialism. Danticat subtly weaves these controversial and troubling contexts/stories/facts throughout the text; specifically, she highlights the often unspoken relationship between Haiti and the United States from the U.S. Occupation 1915-1934 to the major role the United States has played in the building of the Haitian military during the Duvalier regimes and U.S. military invasions during the early 1990s (73 & 107). Thus, the chaloska figure, as represented during Jacmel Carnival, and the song/rhyme to transform the military monster into its former human self can be seen as symbolically taking power away from the brutal history of military dictatorships and regimes that the people of Haiti have suffered under for many years. At the same time, these representations of history/herstory during Jacmel Carnival serve as resistance to neocolonialism and the history of slavery, colonialism, occupation, and military rule that comprise the complicated and tumultuous story of Haiti.

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<sup>15</sup> See Paul Farmer’s *The Uses of Haiti* for an extensive study of what has been happening in Haiti since the early 1980s with a particular focus on those living in poverty and in need of healthcare; this book explains how the United States’ foreign policy towards Haiti (from the 1804 to present) has contributed to the social, economic, and political crises in Haiti.

Furthermore, Danticat explains that representations of Haiti through ‘the zombie’ were deployed in U.S. imperialist narratives, particularly in American cinema, which served to justify in the American imaginary their relentless interference and occupation of Haiti. Colonial and neocolonial powers have used the figure of the zombie and what it symbolizes to justify their interferences and attempts to control Haiti since enslaved Africans fought and won their independence in 1804. Controlling images such as the zombie, primitive, and savage, along with the fear of “voodoo” and “blood sacrifice” are often associated with Haiti and used in mass media representations—particularly during the 1980s when Haiti was blamed for bringing HIV/AIDS into the United States, and in news stories throughout the 1980s and 1990s about the scary “disease carrying” “boat people” (Haitian immigrants seeking political asylum but rejected by U.S. racist foreign policy that calls the crises in Haiti simply economic). These representations, stigmas, and symbols have detrimental affects on the actual lives of Haitian people; therefore, it is important to consider why Danticat spends time addressing this image of the zombie and why she does not engage in the fears of “voodoo” but rather asserts the correct term “Vodou” when it is relevant to a particular story. In resisting dominant colonial and neocolonial representations, Danticat re-defines the figure of the zombie, as she does with the *chaloska* figure, by explaining the ways it is interpreted in Haitian culture. Danticat posits a different conception of zombie through its appearance in carnival, and by so doing, she indirectly writes against other controlling images. She explains that Haiti’s well-known writer Despestre creates an alternative vision of a zombie for the people of Jacmel and Haiti that counters the dominant Hollywood zombie films:

For Despestre, a zombie has never been as simple a creation as the bleary-eyed villains of 1930s Hollywood B movies. Instead zombification is a state of deterioration based on the loss of one’s *ti bonanji*, one’s good angel, which turns one into a vacuous shell of one’s

former self. A case can be made that the Jacmel I am visiting now cannot help but be a slightly zombified version of its former self, having lost so many of its own angels. (69)

In this definition, zombification becomes a metaphor for the deterioration and loss that so many cities, town, and people in Haiti have faced through colonial rule and neocolonial dictatorships. She then explains that real zombies found in Haiti were in fact political prisoners who were tortured and mentally damaged by “dictatorship-sponsored torture” (70). These “real zombies” are a product of zombification—they are included in the angels that are lost.

Danticat deconstructs the zombie legend while revealing the ways Haitian people and culture deal with the brutal history of dictatorships in Haiti, which are directly related to the history of slavery, struggle for emancipation, and the military efforts waged against an independent Haiti.<sup>16</sup> By detailing the representations of the *chaloska* and the zombie during carnival and in Haitian culture, Danticat disrupts the racist colonial and popular discourse about zombies and the stigma surrounding Haiti and “voodoo.” At the same time, she restores pride and love for her country through confronting and accepting its troubling history:

With my hand on the zombie’s back, I would lean forward and whisper, ‘Zombie, I’m not afraid of you. I know you’re a human being.’ And I would wish that some of the relatives of the zombies found in the northern hills had gone and claimed them and had invented their own rhymes, songs, stories, and salty potions to bring them back to life. (70)

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<sup>16</sup> The Haitian Revolution sparked intense fear across the Caribbean, in the United States, Latin America, and Europe (rightfully so when one considers the rebellions and revolutions that it inspired). As a result, Europe and the United States attempted in many ways to destabilize Haiti; to name just a few examples: France demanding 150 million in gold to recognize Haiti as a nation, the U.S. Occupation of Haiti from 1915-1934, Haiti being continuously not recognized as a republic, U.S. plans to send free Blacks to Haiti in the mid 1800s, the U.S. FDA’s accusation of a swine flu epidemic and subsequent slaughter of all the indigenous pigs on the island (which turned out to be unnecessary) which also led to peasant land being stolen, and the racist policies against Haitian refugees entering the United States, among others. See Joan Dayan’s “A Few Stories about Haiti, or, Stigma Revisited” for a detailed discussion about the historical residue of Haiti’s past being so stigmatized. She analyzes the ways in which the apparatus of servitude still dictates modernity and civility—using Frederick Douglass’s writings and time as minister resident and consul general to Haiti.

She uses the chaloska song/rhyme in her desire to bring these zombies back to life; she wishes for their humanity to be restored and for their relatives to help save them. The assertion of the chaloska and zombie as being human beings can be thought of as a kind of spiritual restoration for the people of Haiti. Moreover, this acknowledges the loss of so many people to the “dictatorship-sponsored torture” (supported by U.S. neocolonialism), which the people of Haiti at home and abroad have to contend. Danticat returns home to set records straight, to (re)write history, and reclaim her country as she works within the system to challenge it—a counter-narrative and postcolonial critique of tourism. Certainly by this point in the book, readers have realized they are getting much more than they bargained for in terms of challenging their own perceptions of Haiti and at the same time experiencing this storytelling and revision of history.

Danticat provides history lessons and cultural context as carnival day approaches in this “walk through Jacmel,” and she critiques the effects of slavery, colonialism, and neocolonialism by bringing the past into the present, similar to Brodber’s layering of the past and present in *Myal*. Danticat uses the present situation in Haiti of massive deforestation to discuss the importance of trees for resistance before independence (slave revolts), during the nineteen year U.S. occupation, and during the Duvalier dictatorships (which the government and certain business sectors of the United States supported even as human rights violations were reported year after year) (106-7). Danticat refuses to hide the truth of what has happened to Haiti. She speaks of life, death, torture, the once-green-now-empty mountains, and revolution with resilient tones right along side her description of cultural particulars in Jacmel and its carnival. Though her subject position of return, Danticat is able to see the mass deforestation, the empty mountains from a distance, from the perspective her own childhood in Haiti and then returning home to see the changes. It is because of her mobility and privilege that she can write with certain insights

and perspective of someone who is not only from this place but also has taken the time to learn its history/herstory and complicated struggles. Seen through the radical tradition of other Caribbean writers and intellectuals, Danticat's return to Haiti and her alternative travel narrative resist the history of colonial exploitation that sustain contemporary tourist industry.

While *After the Dance* certainly promotes the Jacmel Carnival and may encourage its travel guide readers to visit to Jacmel, Danticat takes great care to ensure that readers learn about the meaning of carnival for the people of Haiti. Moreover, she describes the myriad ways that carnival (as with other Afro-Caribbean folk culture) remains a site of local resistance. Jacmel residents express great concern about keeping their national carnival safe and enjoyable for both locals and tourists, as they pride themselves in the best hospitality (122). But at the same time, it is clear that carnival is for them and that importance is clearly expressed by Danticat. She asks Michelet Divers, the resident carnival expert, "so is Jacmel carnival a contemporary bread-and-circus prescription for keeping the masses happy" (118). He responds with a clear and resolute description of carnival being an integral part of living:

Carnival has always been a break from life. ... This is a country where people are poor in money perhaps, but rich in culture. Carnival is our chance to show our kind of wealth. If people were only concerned about bread, would you ever have any artistic expression at all? Would people paint, write, make music? It's like the proverb says, 'After the dance, the drum is heavy'. But during the dance, you're not thinking about the weight of the drum. You forget your troubles and have good time. (118)

The carnival festival is a cultural and artistic expression created for and by the people of the Jacmel community. It serves as not only community memory for the people of Jacmel, but it is also a platform for resistance and revolutionary thoughts and ideas. Carnival continues amidst economic struggles, political crises, international embargos, and social turmoil. Divers says that even in 1994 (a year marked with extensive strife) carnival was celebrated and "voices sang louder, the people danced longer, as if to rebel against the extremely difficult circumstances"

(118). This kind of resistance may be described as symbolic but it is resistance nonetheless. The people of Jacmel can use their carnival to express themselves, ideas, protests, concerns, issues, and histories/herstories that are important to them and their community.

Danticat experiences this for herself on carnival day as she describes the carnival parade and the different groups, themes, and costumes—“the Arawaks, the slaves and colonists, the zombies and *chaloskas*, the ghosts, the AIDS educators and the peasant farmers” (142). One group included “three generations of revelers dressed as peasant farmers,” who performed “call-and-response hymns” to “encourage people in the crowd to plant trees while demanding agricultural reform, turning their carnival moment into a jubilant protest” (132). Hence, Danticat unearths the revolutionary aspects of carnival and shows that locals in Jacmel are using carnival to protest and fight for change. One of the year’s prevailing themes or messages concerns the issue of HIV/AIDS. One man as a solo act represents AIDS and insists that is alive and kills; one group gives away condoms and has a banner saying “Let’s break the silence about AIDS,” while another group carry a sign that states “Carnival is pleasure for a few days—with a condom, the pleasure will last forever” (137). These groups illustrate the different ways that local people in Jacmel can participate in carnival and the survival of this festival as a form of resistance. Danticat uses her description of groups as an opportunity in her “walk through carnival” to then provide another history lesson about Haiti that challenges the dominant discourses which represent Haiti as diseased and the origin of AIDS (137). She cites Paul Farmer (who I referenced earlier) as a source for her refutation of the ridiculous belief that Haitians are “the originators of the disease” and the subsequent effects of that stigma along with political unrest that destroyed the Haitian tourist industry (138). As Danticat explains, while science has proven this belief to be false, the disease and HIV/AIDS stigma remains:

Haitians have the dual task of dealing with world-wide finger-pointing about AIDS while tracking its alarming expansion at home. And at carnival, the man in the black dress, in his grotesque personification of AIDS, is saying to everyone that yes, it does exist here; but the young people with the banners are also saying that it is not ours alone. (138)

Again, we can see Jacmel carnival as a space for resistance and discourse about problems inside and outside the country. While acknowledging the high rates of HIV/AIDS in the country, Danticat represents Haitian people as involved in that battle yet having to struggle with the accusation and blame. Throughout the book, Danticat engages in difficult subjects (written from the perspective of the colonized and racialized subject) that one would rarely if ever find in a travel guide. She completely transforms what the travel guide has historically done for Haiti. In Danticat's prose, it has become resistance by writing against the dominant narratives.

Another troubling and disturbing issue is brought to the carnival stage—in a most defiant act, the major group Max Power performs a reenactment of Haitian refugees being caught by the U.S. Coast Guard in shark-infested waters (145). Danticat uses this as another entrance to discuss a more recent history:

According to Amnesty International, in 1991, after the coup that unseated President Aristide during his first term, thirty-eight thousand Haitians took to the high seas, crossing five hundred miles of rough waters to Miami. Of those, less than 5 percent received asylum and the rest were repatriated. Between that time and now, thousands have perished at sea, their boats sinking or simply disappearing somewhere between Haiti and Miami. (145-6)

Moreover, she describes Max Power's float as "a renewed political protest but also as a cautionary tale, as well as attribute to those who have perished at sea while dreaming of a better life" (146). This is yet another example of her inserting a (re)writing or righting of history into this travel guide for potential tourists and other readers in a North American audience, so that they can experience a more accurate picture of Haiti and its people. Danticat not only challenges the genre of the travel guide through teaching prospective tourists and fellow Caribbeans emigrants Haitian history and culture, but she is also teaching ethical consumption—know this

place, know its history/herstory when you visit and consume. In her final thoughts about her first carnival day, Danticat reflects on the carnivals she had spent in the mountains or on her uncle's porch and insists that these experiences were not so different, "those were celebrations of life, community, and belonging, explosions of rapture and beauty in a country that is not supposed to have joy" (152). Here Danticat exposes yet another root of the distortions in the dominant representations of Haiti as only poverty stricken with no hope for the future, and she defies this representation by expressing a taste of the many stories, lives, joys, celebrations, protests, and struggles of the people of Haiti. She writes against the negative racialized stereotypes and representations of Haiti and Haitian people.

As diasporic Caribbean writers living abroad, both Kincaid and Danticat use their mobility and privilege in the U.S. literary marketplace to resist and re-work the travel guide genre. While Kincaid uses parody and satire, Danticat writes a seemingly normal or average travel narrative. They both "take history into their own hands" and create alternative travel narratives that defy and resist the long and powerful history of travel guides that were used by colonial powers to subjugate Black people during slavery and beyond. Furthermore, they use major publishers and have access to a wide readership including the ones they have already established by being bestselling authors. Kincaid and Danticat both challenge the existing patterns of consumption by making their readers aware of the devastating effects of colonialism and slavery that are perpetuated through tourism, the tourist industry, and other neocolonial forces. Their postcolonial critiques of tourism are grounded in their (re)writing of the dominant narratives of history from the perspective of the colonized subject. Through contributing to the necessary process of "unsilencing the past," Kincaid and Danticat create a better understanding of the present, which can help us to envision a future. They provide these intellectual critiques in

the radical tradition of other Caribbean writers who lived abroad during the 1950s and 1960s.

Finally, they produce counter-narratives of tourism that essentially posit the past, slavery and colonialism, as immediate and relevant in the contemporary travel and tourism discourses.

Kincaid and Danticat undermine the literary techniques and genres usually dominated by colonial and neocolonial producers, and in so doing, they all force their readers to confront their role in over five hundred years of 'Western' domination in the Caribbean.

## CHAPTER 5 AFRICAN DIASPORA TRAVEL AND IDENTITY

Writing home means communicating with home. But it also means finding ways to express the conflicted meaning of home in the experience of the formerly colonized. It also demands a continual rewriting of the boundaries of what constitutes home.

- Carole Boyce Davies, *Black Women, Writing and Identity*

In similar ways to Caribbean writers abroad, such as Jamaica Kincaid and Edwidge Danticat, certain Caribbean American writers directly challenge neocolonial discourse and tourism by creating alternative travel narratives. While immigrant writers represent the literal home they left for North America, the Caribbean American writers examined in this chapter, Paule Marshall and Audre Lorde, seek a spiritual home in the Caribbean, the home of their parents and ancestors. These writers establish a different relationship between tourist and local by modeling African Diaspora tourists who posit ethical tourism and consumption of the Caribbean. Their spiritual and physical travels (those of their characters and narrators) introduce new forms of tourism and possibilities for resistance to neocolonialism. Moreover, as with other writers in this study, they reveal the connections among the racial, sexual, and gender politics of slavery and colonialism to that of exploitative tourism and neocolonialism.

In her novel *Praisesong for the Widow*, Marshall engages in the now large industry, heritage tourism. Published in 1983, the year of the U.S. invasion of Grenada, the novel functions as a subtle counter-narrative to U.S. imperialism that viewed a Black and socialist revolution as an imperative to send in troops, including African Americans as Lorde notes in one of her poems. While Marshall never discusses the invasion, her novel exists in stark contrast to the U.S. media representations of the scary communist takeover that was supposedly happening at that time in Grenada. Marshall's novel paints a very different picture of Grenada and its people, thereby effectively (re)writing the island-nation in the U.S. (literary) imaginary and

countering the notion that Grenadians “needed” the United States to save them. Moreover, she explicitly connects the tourist industry to imperialism, slavery, and white supremacy with her description of the opulence of cruise ships. Considering that the U.S. invasion of Grenada brought with it the renovation of the airport and infrastructure to build their tourist industry, Marshall’s novel offers a sharp critique of tourism (and subtle counter to U.S. imperialism) even as it models an ethical form of tourism. The novel represents Grenada and Carriacou as a spiritual home for the African Diaspora, connected through its Big Drum ceremony both to Africa and to African Diaspora cultures throughout the Americas.

While Marshall highlights these historical and cultural links between Afro-Caribbeans and African Americans, Lorde focuses on contemporary politics, charging that African Caribbean Americans like herself have a responsibility to fight U.S. neocolonial interests and exploitation in the Caribbean. Lorde criticizes the U.S. invasion of Grenada in her political essay “Grenada Revisited” and poem “Equal Opportunity,” and she rescues the Grenadian Revolution from the U.S. media’s distorted representations of the island-nation. I trace Lorde’s engagement with the Caribbean, from spiritual tourism she depicts in her biomythography *Zami* (1982) to revolutionary tourism in “Grenada Revisited” (1984). Her travels and relocation to the Caribbean in late 1980s (St. Croix, U.S. Virgin Islands) greatly influences her critique of U.S. imperialism and neocolonialism. Both Marshall and Lorde posit ethical visions of tourism—through Marshall’s fictional character Avey Johnson and Lorde herself—that advocates African Diaspora tourism and tourists informing themselves about the histories/herstories and culture of Caribbean places they visit. In other words, these ethical visions of tourism can be described as consumption and participation in the tourist industry by tourists who learn and listen as they

consume. Lorde and Marshall demonstrate and imagine that people of Caribbean heritage can effectively challenge neocolonial tourism by being responsible and ethical tourists.

Marshall and Lorde construct their critiques and posit alternative tourism through their identities as African-Caribbean American with privilege and status in the U.S. literary marketplace. Yet, they both trouble the boundaries of nation and identity by embracing and writing about their (as Lorde puts it) hyphenated selves—being both African American and Afro-Caribbean, members of the African Diaspora, and as African-Caribbean Americans. However, as Carole Boyce Davies explains, accepting one’s Caribbean heritage can be a difficult and long process. Although these two writers are of the same generation, they came to embrace their Caribbean identities through different processes. Marshall writes about the Caribbean migration experience in her first novel *Brown Girl, Brownstones* (which has some autobiographical aspects) published in 1959. In contrast, Lorde does not explicitly engage in her Caribbean heritage until *Zami: A New Spelling of My Name* published in 1982, even though she had been publishing poetry since the early 1960s. But they both emerged with similar definitions of an African Diasporic female subjectivity that complicate definitions of home, while at the same time acknowledging the politics of location.<sup>1</sup> I use the term “politics of location” to discuss where writers are writing from—their location, which may or may not be their home, and their mobility. Both Marshall and Lorde are conscious of their mobility and privilege as United

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<sup>1</sup> In the article “Audre Lorde’s Life Writing: The Politics of Location,” Lori L. Walk argues that Lorde explores the issue of positionality or a politics of location in many of her works: “Lorde’s life writings, including her essays and poetry, reveal the locations or position that are perpetually inhabited by her hybrid self” (816). She posits that “Lorde’s body is the bridge to the resting place she calls ‘home’ and she answers the complex questions regarding hybridity and coalition politics by embracing all of her selves, committing to all of the struggles, listening to all the voices, and ‘translating silence into language and action’” (816). Walk also uses *Zami* to position Lorde’s identity and movements.

States citizens and status within literary circles, yet they understand the shared experiences and oppressions with being a part of the African Diaspora.

As Carole Boyce Davies asserts in *Black Women, Writing and Identity*, “migration creates the desire for home, which in turn produces the rewriting of home” (113). Writing home is complicated because of one’s relationship to home—the longing for home, the rejection of home, feelings of displacement and homelessness, reconnecting to home, and having multiple homes are just some of the ways in which home is (re)written. Boyce Davies argues that home and nationalism are radically disrupted by Afro-Caribbean women writers in the United States because of their location, heritage, and gender (113). Afro-Caribbean American women writers must deal with both cultural and sexual politics; and that often “historical links to Africa are re-examined and relocated” (115). As Boyce Davies asserts, “many of these writers are critically engaged in an anti-hegemonic discourse with the United States” (115). Lorde and Marshall are among the Afro-Caribbean women writers that Boyce Davies examines, and they further complicate issues of identity because they are born and raised in the United States. For Boyce Davies, Audre Lorde and Paule Marshall “came to awareness of their identities within the Caribbean households which their parents created, through subsequent migrations and through their own political awareness of the meaning of personal geography and the politics of location” (116). Hence, she asserts that they “challenge the very meaning of specific identity and placement” (116). This is precisely why these two writers are included in this study of African Diaspora travel and identity—they locate themselves as African Diasporic female subjects in both the Caribbean space and African American space.<sup>2</sup> More importantly, it is through their

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<sup>2</sup> Aside from Carole Boyce Davies’ work, there are few studies that bring Marshall and Lorde together in conversation in terms of how they deal both deal with their Caribbean identities and

complicated identities and nuanced understandings of migration and travel that Marshall and Lorde are able to assert resistance to the U.S. hegemonic discourse found in contemporary Caribbean tourism and new forms of colonialism.

### **African Diasporic Connections: Paule Marshall, *The Big Drum*, and Heritage Tourism**

Marshall identifies as both African American and Afro-Caribbean subject, and she has repeatedly demonstrated her commitment to an African Diasporic identity for Black people through her fiction. In her novel *Praisesong for the Widow*, Marshall makes visible the links between African American and Caribbean culture in such a way that encourages African Americans literally to step off the cruise ship and create another type of relationship between their “first-world” selves and their largely “third-world” counterparts in the Caribbean. This novel reveals a different kind of consumption that does not exploit or promote neocolonial control. Marshall critiques the tourist industry and its connection to imperialism through her depiction of the main character Avey Johnson on a cruise; she then (re)writes the Grenadian landscape and people through Avey’s journey in the country. Moreover, this novel has initiated academic research on the Big Drum Ceremony in Carriacou, which has in turn influenced the marketing and performance of this ceremony. Thus for my project, I am not only interested how this novel suggests an ethical tourism model for African Americans who visit the Caribbean, but also how it can be used to promote heritage tourism. Marshall’s subject position as Caribbean-American with Bajan parents, along with her travels to the Caribbean, provides her with perspectives of Caribbean locals and emigrants, as well as African Americans. Therefore, she has much to draw from in creating the characters for her novel.

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issues around migration, travel, and writing. Many scholars have written about both Marshall and Lorde in the context of them being Black women writers and of the African Diaspora.

Marshall's African American protagonist Avey rediscovers herself and her African Diaspora roots while in Grenada and Carriacou. The novel takes readers on a journey through Avey's life weaving in and out her present through the past to reconnect with her family's history. Marshall's work has long been recognized because of its remembering of the cultural connections among people of the African Diaspora, dealing with issues such as memory, language, oral history, gender, and migration. In his essay "The African Presence in Caribbean Literature," Kamau Brathwaite describes Marshall's work as a "literature of reconnection." Boyce Davies asserts that "the struggle to maintain a version of an African heritage in the path of encroaching Western values is pursued relentlessly in all of Marshall's works and is crystallized in *Praisesong for the Widow*" (118). Barbara Christian argues this novel "dramatizes the links between myths of both Afro-American and Afro-Caribbean culture and uses them as the basis for the widow, Avey Johnson, and her assessment of her life" (74). This novel has a clear and definite message for people of African descent to remember and retain connections to African heritage and to be wary of (white) American materialism.<sup>3</sup> Marshall spreads this message through the story of Avey Johnson, a middle-aged, middle-class African American woman who is disconnected from her African heritage and family history, and while traveling on a cruise through the Caribbean, she embarks on a journey of remembering and reclamation of her identity and history.<sup>4</sup> But Avey's journey occurs while she experiences the Caribbean through a typical

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<sup>3</sup> In "Ritualistic Process and the Structure of Paule Marshall's *Praisesong for the Widow*," Barbara Christian argues that Marshall in all of her work "focuses on the consciousness of Black people as they remember, retain, develop their sense of spiritual/sensual integrity and individual selves, against the materialism that characterizes American societies" (74).

<sup>4</sup> A number of scholars read this novel through an African Diaspora lens and as a re-claiming of history and identity through cultural memory. Abena P. A. Busia, in her important article "What is your Nation?: Reconnecting African and Her Diaspora through Paule Marshall's *Praisesong for the Widow*," argues that this work is a "diaspora novel" and that it along with other novels by Black women across the African Diaspora and throughout the continent "tackle

tourist gaze and has participated (during her annual cruise) in an uncritical consumption of the Caribbean through the cruise ship industry. Her transformation takes place only once she realizes that she is connected somehow to the people and to the space of the Caribbean. Thus, this novel not only posits African Diasporic cultural connections, but it does so through heritage tourism and an alternative travel narrative.

Avey experiences a figurative re-birth through her journey leaving the (white) imperial cruise ship to reconnect with her African Diasporic identity in Grenada and Carriacou. While on the cruise, Avey becomes suddenly ill from the opulence and indulgence she sees around her, and after a sequence of dreams in which she is being haunted by her great-aunt Cuney, she decides to leave the cruise. The novel opens with Avey's urgent packing and reflecting on her daughter Marion's opposition to her annual trip. She remembers her daughter's disbelief in her choice to go "on some meaningless cruise with a bunch of white folks" (13). Marion has asked her mother a few times to visit places like Brazil and Ghana, "to go off on your own somewhere" and "learn something" (14). Perhaps Marion sees a cruise as a terrible choice for travel, particularly African Diaspora travel. Marshall draws an explicit connection between the cruise ship and imperialism (and white supremacy) through the name of the boat "Bianca Pride" meaning "white pride" and her description of wealth and riches in the Versailles Room. During Avey's recollection of dinner in this room on the cruise ship, she remembers Marion's voice, "*Versailles ...*" Marion had echoed despairingly when Avey Johnson had mentioned once the name, "*Do you know how many treaties were signed there, in that infamous Hall of Mirrors, divvying*

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questions about women re-claiming their stories in a context in which storytelling becomes part of a larger project of self-revalidation" (196). See also Sheila Smith McCoy's "The Limbo Contest: Diaspora Temporality and Its Reflection in 'Praisesong for the Widow' and 'Daughters of the Dust'" and Susan Roger's "Embodying Cultural Memory in Paule Marshall's 'Praisesong for the Widow'."

*up India, the West Indies, the world? Versailles' –repeating it with a hopeless shake of her head"* (47). Versailles is certainly a symbol for the era of European colonialism and empire, built from the blood and bodies of enslaved Africans during the Transatlantic Slave Trade, which made both Europe and North American incredibly wealthy. While Avey looks around the room, starting at the glittering chandelier and Persian carpets, she begins to feel Marion's words through her body as she notices the fellow white diners who avoid looking at her table (47). But Avey sees herself as the model of respectability and refuses to see racism, yet as she looks in the mirrors around the room she cannot see herself (48-9). These feelings culminate with her being unable to eat the desert, aptly called "*Peach Parfait a la Versailles*," and she must leave the room (49-50). Marshall's descriptions of her physical illness and discomforts on the ship imply Avey's disconnection to whiteness and mark the beginning of her re-birth and reconnection to her African Diasporic identity. Furthermore, while on the ship, Avey appears haunted by whiteness and perhaps slavery when she sees a white man turn into a skeleton (59). These experiences combined with her dreams and visions of her great aunt Cuney drive Avey off the cruise ship. The dreams force her to remember the story of Ibo Landing, which her great aunt told her over and over again during her childhood summer visits to Tatem in South Carolina. She remembers that the story of Ibo Landing was passed down from Cuney's grandmother Avatara (Avey's namesake) to Cuney, who was passing on this oral history to Avey, who was to continue this oral tradition and sustain this family history. But Avey has not fulfilled her mission, and her great-aunt has returned through her dreams to wake her from slumber and remind her of her family duty. This story of the Ibo is not only important for Avey's own family history, but it is also significant for African American history and memory in terms of its

celebration of resistance to slavery and connectedness to an African heritage that begins before enslavement.

Running from the cruise and also from her dreams, Avey ends up in Grenada trying to leave on the next flight out to New York, which is of course not as easy as Avey has imagined in her tourist fantasy of everything being just as she needs it—there are no more flights that day and she must stay in Grenada for one night. While on the dock waiting for a taxi, Avey is reminded of Tatem when she hears people speaking (she also feels this when she is in Martinique and hears the Creole there), and she realizes that the locals are not treating her like a tourist. This marks the beginning of her journey and sets into motion Marshall's orchestrated unveiling of the connections between Avey (African Americans) and the locals (African Caribbeans) she will encounter during the novel. In her hotel room, Avey remembers and traces her adult life with her husband Jerome and recognizes all the sacrifices they made in order to achieve middle-class success. She grieves for all she has lost—the time, the struggle, and her sense of self and rootedness to family, community, and African heritage. She continues this remembering the next day on a walk down the beach, and here she partakes in the typical tourist fantasy of sun, sand, and sea, but her journey takes quite a different path. Avey gets lost, and feels over heated and disoriented; she finds a rum shop far from her hotel and begins the second part of her journey. There she meets Lebert Joseph, a local rum shop owner in Grenada who is from Carriacou, and he convinces her to travel to the Carriacou excursion with him.

Joseph does not see her as a typical tourist or visitor even though she insists that she is simply “a visitor, a tourist, just someone here for the day” and says that he must have mistaken her “for someone around here, or from one of the other islands” (167-68). It is significant that Joseph accepts Avey as a member of the African Diaspora and not a tourist. In the Carriacou

tradition, Joseph asks what her nation is because he sees her as an African person, and even though she makes it clear she is from New York and has no nation, Joseph is sure she must have a nation. He explains to her that there are quite a few people like her “who can’t call their nation. For one reason or another they just don’t know. Is a hard thing. I don’t even like to think about it. But you comes across them all the time here in Grenada. You ask people in this place what nation they is an they look at you like you’s a madman. No, you’s not the only one” (175). Joseph understands that some people of African descent have lost their connection to their roots, and he explains to Avey that this is why they have the Beg Pardon dance for those who don’t know their nation. As he describes all the dances, Avey remembers hearing about the Juba dance, and this is when he insists that she must come to Carriacou for the excursion and the Big Drum. Here the African Diasporic connections are re-affirmed, and Avey is drawn into the final part of her journey to participate in the Big Drum on Carriacou.

While Avey is deciding to go to Carriacou, she asks Joseph about the travel arrangements, and she uses the typical tourist discourse—“And how would someone like myself get there?” (182) “And where would someone like myself stay? Does the place have a hotel or a guest house...?” (183). But Joseph ignores her tone and separation from the people of Grenada and Carriacou, letting her know everyone goes by boat and that she would stay with his daughter Rosalie. However, the “everyone” that Joseph refers to are locals because these boats are not usually the way tourists would travel to Carriacou—they would go by plane. Joseph includes Avey in with locals and also treats her like family; he wants her to experience the excursion as a local because he does not see her as a tourist but rather as an African Diasporic person. We can see Joseph as her facilitator of sorts for this excursion and the experience she is about to have at the Big Drum. He represents Papa Legba, who is the governor of crossroads between the living

and dead in Vodou, and as ruler of communication and understanding and speaker of all languages, he is the facilitator that Avey would need on this journey. On the boat trip to Carriacou from Grenada, Avey experiences ancestral memory and loses herself completely in what is essentially a re-creation of the Middle Passage; she is re-born in this process:

She was alone in the deckhouse. That much she was certain of. Yet she has the impression as her mind flickered on briefly of other bodies lying crowded I with her in the hot, airless dark. A multitude it felt like lay packed around her in the filth and stench of themselves, just as she was. Their moans, rising and falling with each rise and plunge of the schooner, enlarged upon the one filling her head. Their suffering—their depth of it, the weight of it in the cramped space—made hers of no consequence. (209).

It is through this experience of feeling her ancestors' pain and suffering that Avey is able to reconnect to her history/herstory and find the courage to embrace her great aunt's tale of the Ibo. This prepares Avey for the Big Drum and her participation in the Beg Pardon dancing, where she (re)discovers her nation and history. Joseph's daughter takes care of Avey when she gets off the boat—sick, dehydrated, and exhausted—and treats her like a new-born baby; Avey has been re-born through her middle passage experience, which ushers in her final transformation. After this experience on the boat trip, her recovery with Rosalie, and at the Big Drum Ceremony, Avey is able to reclaim a sense of Black consciousness and becomes ready to share her history and stories with her children and grandchildren.

During this uncomfortable and difficult journey, Avey is transformed from a tourist consuming the Caribbean (an African-American woman participating in the racist discourse of the tourist industry) to an ethical tourist who consumes the Caribbean through shared history and African Diasporic connections. Avey stays to see the Big Drum because of Joseph's insistence, and what I see as a "calling" of sorts, through her dream, sounds on the docks of Grenada, Joseph's rum shop, and finally at the excursion in Carriacou. However, one could make the argument that she is using Joseph and other local Caribbean people just as she participates in the

consumption of the Caribbean during her cruise vacations; but the difference here is that she lets herself actually see him and his life. In spite of her reluctance and skepticism about Joseph and his intuition, Avey finds herself drawn to him from their first conversation in his shop where she tells him about the dream. Although she tells him she has no nation, she knows the names Joseph recites have something to do with Africa (167). Their conversation in the rum shop is the catalyst for her journey to Carriacou and the reclamation of her identity and heritage, which is then fully realized during the Big Drum ritual.

The Big Drum is an African ritual of music and dance created by enslaved Africans on Carriacou who celebrated and re-created dances from their different nations across the West coast of Africa. It is celebrated yearly by people who live on Carriacou and Grenada—especially those who have family or who were born in Carriacou but have moved to Grenada for job opportunities and other reasons. Hence, the excursion is really for locals, and by the 1980s was still a relatively contained cultural form—meaning it was not as yet promoted in Grenada’s tourist industry. Consequently, as Marshall uses the Big Drum in her novel about African Diaspora travel and reconnection, she introduces heritage tourism as an ethical form of tourism for African Americans traveling to the Caribbean. When her protagonist experiences the Big Drum, she makes it clear that this ritual unveils for Avey the relationship between her childhood and family history/herstory in Tatem and her African heritage, which she is remembering through the dance and the music. Avey finds herself caught up in the moment as she feels that connection she once had with her body in motion, in dance:

Yet for all of a sudden unleashing of her body she was being careful to observe the old rule: Not once did the soles of her feet leave the ground. Even when the Big Drum reached its height in a tumult of voices, drums and the ringing iron, and her arms rose as though hailing the night, the darkness that is light, her feet held to the restrained glide-and-step, the rhythmic trudge, the Carriacou Tramp, the shuffle designed to stay the course of history. Avey Johnson could not have said how long she kept her arms raised or how

many turns she made in the company of these strangers who had become one and the same with people in Tatem. (250)

Avey not only connects with the Big Drum dance in this space of Carriacou, but she also reconnects to her childhood at Tatem, the Ring Shout dance, and her great-aunt and the Story of Ibo Landing—remembering and finding pride in her history and her people. At the end of the dance, she also reclaims her namesake, responding to a fellow Big Drum dancer Bercita Edwards of Carriacou who asks “And who you is?” (251). Avey remembers to say it the way her great-aunt told her to – “Avey, short for Avatara” (251). The day after the Big Drum, Joseph and Rosalie agree that she is of the Arada nation, and even though she is not convinced, it is clear that she has experienced a transformation during the ritual of the Big Drum. She understands what connects her to Rosalie and Joseph, and therefore sees the cultural ties among the African Diaspora—she is no longer the typical tourist, she is an African Diaspora tourist.

It is because of her journey and transformation that she decides to keep her promise to her great-aunt and continue the family oral history of the Ibo Landing. The transformed Avey who has reconnected with her roots and family legacy decides to relocate to her great-aunt’s house in Tatem, and her thoughts of maintaining her family history are what close the novel (256).

Marshall’s novel is as a counter-narrative to the dominant narratives of tourism because of the ways in which Marshall posits self-discovery through reconnecting with one’s African roots through the Caribbean. However, Avey certainly has mobility, and that is made very clear as she flies out of Carriacou back to the United States to begin her new life, and waves at Joseph and Rosalie—the Caribbean locals who facilitate her transformation. While this novel reveals a kind of ethical consumption because it shows the ties among African Diaspora peoples through the shared history of slavery and displacement, Marshall’s description of the people in Carriacou may leave out important economic struggles that many deal with, which is why so many of its

children have left to seek work on Grenada. And this is why the excursion and celebration of the Big Drum are so important to the people and children of Carriacou—those who have left to work in Grenada return to Carriacou to participate in the Big Drum. Indeed, in this respect Marshall's use of the Big Drum and Carriacou as the entry point and facilitation of Avey's transformation is problematic because she is consuming, but Marshall writes about this journey in African Diasporic terms and posits a kind of ethical consumption. Thus Marshall's novel remains a counter-narrative to the dominant discourses of tourism and consumption even while Avey's relationship to the people of Carriacou is asymmetric. Furthermore, Marshall's use of the Big Drum ceremony indicates her reverence for Afro-Caribbean rituals and ceremonies. Marshall could have used any ceremony or even invented one given that her work is fictional; therefore, I see her choosing the Big Drum as an acknowledgement not only of its significance, but also as an established author who creates awareness of these relationships among African peoples in terms of history and culture. More specifically, the relationships that Avey has with Joseph, Rosalie, and other people in Carriacou exude mutual respect that often does not exist within the tourist/native dichotomy—in other words, it matters to the people of Carriacou that Avey is of African descent and it matters that she experiences this journey of reclamation. Therefore, Marshall reveals how an African American can be an ethical or responsible tourist—a tourist who understands his/her position as an African Diasporic subject.

Grenada and Carriacou's Big Drum are the ideal locations for Marshall's African Diasporic novel that is insistent upon re-connecting, remembering, and honoring our shared history and African heritage and rituals. Certainly, Grenada has used and marketed many festivals, including the Big Drum, Quadrille Dance, Maroon Festival, and Carnival, among others, to help sell itself in the global tourist industry. It can certainly boast "authenticity" for

some of these festivals, particularly the ones held on Carriacou. Marshall's novel was a major influence for the academic text *The Big Drum Ritual of Carriacou: Praisesongs for Rememory of Flight* (published in 1998) by Lorna McDaniels. In fact, McDaniels says in her introduction that Marshall's novel "directed" her "discovery of Carriacou's ancestral ritual," and that it "inspired" her to study Carriacou's musical traditions (1). Moreover, she organizes and names her chapters after the four sections in the novel—Runagate, Sleeper's Wake, Lave Tete, and The Beg Pardon. McDaniels also says that after reading the novel and knowing the specific references to African American culture and music that Marshall must have also done careful research about Carriacou (1). This attention to Carriacou's Big Drum may have encouraged the government of Grenada to promote and market Carriacou as the heritage spot in Grenada, with a number of festivals that are described as "unique customs handed down from African and European ancestors" on Grenada's official website. While this may or may not be the case, it is important to note that tourism boards in Grenada and Carriacou promote the Big Drum in a very different way than Marshall or McDaniels would promote this vibrant African ritual.

Even as Marshall's novel encourages heritage tourism, it does not have the same power and lure that the dominant narratives of tourism have, and the powerful global tourist industry has many ways to manipulate and control representation. For example, even though Marshall's novel inspired academic and scholarly research on the Big Drum, her novel has also been used within travel guides as a way to promote both Grenada and Carriacou. In the magazine *Travel Caribbean*, Henry Chase writes an article published in 1995 titled "Grenada and Carriacou: the beat goes on – the setting for Paule Marshall's novel *Praisesong for the Widow*," which essentially uses the novel as a kind of guide into Carriacou but then insists that what Avey

missed out on was traveling through Grenada. However, he opens his article with this comparison of literature and journalism:

In 1983, television news introduced most Americans to Grenada, as U.S. troops stormed the strife-torn Caribbean island and replaced its brutal regime with one more to the liking of Washington – and the local populace. Paule Marshall's *Praisesong for the Widow* also appeared in '83, providing another window onto Grenada and its associated Grenadine island, Carriacou. Once again literature trumped journalism as a means of understanding our world – and ourselves (1).

In addition to the problems with his American-centric tone and lack of history or context about the Grenadian revolution, Chase appears to miss the African Diasporic message of the novel and presents it as if the novel is about understanding “our world and ourselves.” However, we can only hope that those who are introduced to Marshall's novel from this travel guide will have quite a different reading of their own. This reading would see Marshall's work as a “literature of reconnection” and this novel as a powerful counter-narrative to the dominant discourse about Grenada, even as it promotes heritage tourism for African Americans.

### **African Diasporic Politics: Audre Lorde, Black Liberation, and Revolutionary Tourism**

While Marshall's novel posits African Diasporic travel in fictive terms and asserts and African Diasporic identity and connectivity, Lorde's writings about her travels to the Caribbean and literal return provides another perspective to the complexities of travel for the African Diasporic subject who is of Caribbean heritage. In identifying “home” as her mother's home in Grenada, Lorde consciously positions herself as both Caribbean and African American subject.<sup>5</sup> Her vision of “home” in *Zami* is represented through spiritual return or spiritual tourism, and her travels to “home” represented in her political essay “Grenada Revisited” and re-location to the

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<sup>5</sup> Audre Lorde continuously engages in a “return” to Africa—particularly in her poetry. And while this is very important to any reading and understanding of Lorde's work, my focus here is on her “return” to the Caribbean, and connections to Africa will enter the discussion inasmuch as it relates to her construction of an African Diasporic identity.

Caribbean are revolutionary tourism. In her spiritual and literal return “home,” Lorde asserts her sense of belonging and connection to the Caribbean even as she acknowledges her position of being born and raised in the United States. Throughout *Zami*, she defines “home” in multiple ways: as her mother’s homeplace of Grenada, the mother’s actual birth island of Carriacou, and Lorde’s own birth place in New York City. By contrast, Lorde explains that she is a relative of Grenada and that it is not her country even as she locates her heritage and family there.

Lorde’s literal “return” to the Caribbean fuels her critique of neocolonialism and drives her call for resistance, specifically to people of African descent and people of color in the United States, who she argues ought to have a vested interest in fighting against imperialism. In her essay and poem about Grenada, Lorde challenges the neocolonial discourse about the Grenadian revolution; she emerges as a revolutionary tourist because she travels there to see the impact of the U.S. invasion and to understand its implication for Black liberation struggles across the African Diaspora. When Lorde moves to the Caribbean, spending her final years in St. Croix, she describes living there in African Diasporic terms. In an interview with *Callaloo* editor Charles Rowell in 1990, she responds to the question about differences between the United States and St. Croix: “As a Black woman, an African-Caribbean American woman, there are certain realities of our battles here that are similar to those of many others who are part of the African Diaspora” (Interview in *Callaloo* 53). She explains her relocation in another interview with William Steif in 1991 by saying that she moved because of her desire to live somewhere warmer and smaller during her struggle with cancer, and she “always felt a pull back to the Caribbean” (Progressive). I am interested in this pull back to home, and it is this pull that facilitates her revolutionary tourism as well as her relocation. This is something she feels from

childhood, which she writes about in *Zami*; hence, Lorde's biomythography marks the beginning of her "return" to the Caribbean.

Within her mythic journey or spiritual tourism to Carraicou in *Zami*, Lorde explores her identity and home through her maternal line and the stories of women in Carriacou. In this mythic representation of *her self*, Lorde presents the Caribbean as the foundation of her identity as a Black lesbian warrior poet. *Zami* opens with the story of her parents' migration from the Caribbean into the United States. While we know her Caribbean heritage is both Grenadian through her mother and Barbadian through her father, Lorde identifies with her mother's description of home in Grenada and its sister island Carriacou as her "home" in a mythic, story-telling tradition:

Once *home* was a far way off, a place I had never been to but knew well out of my mother's mouth. She breathed exuded hummed the fruit smell of Noel's Hill morning fresh and noon hot, and I spun visions of sapodilla and mango as a net over my Harlem tenement cot in the snoring darkness rank with nightmare sweat. Made bearable because it was not all. This now, here, was a space, some temporary abode, never to be considered forever nor totally binding nor defining, no matter how much it commanded in energy and attention. For if we lived correctly and with frugality, looked both ways before crossing the street, then someday we would arrive back in the sweet place, back *home*. (13).

During Lorde's childhood, "*home*" comes through her mother's mouth—the stories and details from home that gave Lorde's imagination fuel to paint and weave pictures, sounds, and smells of home. As her mother tells the stories, Lorde uses them to bring the far away "home" into Harlem over her bed in order to make sense of the place they lived that was a temporary space, never home. She understood the pull back home through her mother—the desire for return—but Lorde must create her own visions of this "sweet place" and imagine it as home and believe in the possibility of return, while at the same time seeing Harlem as home.

Her mother provided vivid descriptions of Grenada and Carriacou, her family history, and female ancestry. It is through Lorde's re-telling her mother's stories of women taking care of

each other on the island of Carriacou that Lorde explains her use of the term “Zami,” which is a Carriacou word for women who work together as friends and lovers: “Women who survived the absence of their sea-faring men easily, because they came to love each other, past the men’s returning. *Madivine. Friending. Zami. How Carriacou women love each other is legend in Grenada, and so is their strength and their beauty*” (14). Lorde explains that her mother was a very powerful woman, and she knew as a child that her mother was different from other women. She attributes this to her being Caribbean, and also being powerful and women-oriented, which is how Lorde begins to carve a space for herself and her identity as a Black lesbian<sup>6</sup>: “I believe that there have always been Black dykes around—in the sense of powerful and women-oriented women—who would rather have died than use that name for themselves. And that includes my momma” (15). In a sense, Lorde uses her mother’s stories of home to find acceptance and discovers ways to understand herself and her mother in spite of their tenuous relationship. Boyce Davies argues that *Zami* offers a way of understanding Lorde’s difficult journey in accepting her Caribbean identity: “a reintegration of the meaning of heritage is achieved through a fuller knowledge of her Caribbean female ancestry and the articulation of all the aspects of identity or all the identities recognized along the way” (117). Lorde essentially constructs a biomythic re-telling of her mother’s stories of Carriacou women, and she uses the concept of powerful women-oriented women as an entry way for her own identity, or we can say multiple identities, as a Black woman, lesbian, African-Caribbean, and warrior poet.

Lorde also re-conceptualizes her own childhood and experiences with her mother as the adult writer who (re)imagines these connections and bonds, which are grounded in the “home”

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<sup>6</sup> See Barbara DiBernard’s article “Zami: A Portrait of an Artist as a Black Lesbian” for a discussion about *Zami* as an alternative model for female development in which a new image of poet and female creativity as a Black lesbian.

space of the Caribbean and her mythic spiritual travels there in *Zami*. Lorde explains how she became a poet through her mother: “When the strongest words for what I have to offer come out of me sounding like words I remember from my mother’s mouth, then I either have to reassess the meaning of everything I have to say now, or re-examine the worth of her old words” (31). Lorde understands the influence of her mother on *her self* as warrior poet and the wisdom of her mother coming through her. These are insights that Lorde surely gains as an adult, and she is able to have perspective on her mother in ways that she couldn’t as a child. As she remembers her mother’s words and use of language, Lorde says “I am a reflection of my mother’s secret poetry as well as of her hidden angers” (32). These moments in the book must be remembered as one reads of her difficult and alienating teen years and early twenties because even though she feels so alone and separated from her family, as an adult she understands her struggles and ability to survive as coming through her mother.

When I moved out of my mother’s house, shaky and determined, I began to fashion some different relationship to this country of our sojourn. I began to seek some more fruitful return than simple bitterness from this place of my mother’s exile, whose streets I came to learn better than my mother had ever learned them. But thanks to what she did know and could teach me, I survived in them better than I could have imagined. I made an adolescent’s wild and powerful commitment to battling in my own full eye, closer to my own strength, which was after all not so very different from my mother’s. (104)

Lorde identifies her strength with her mother’s strength, which she locates through her Caribbean heritage in Carriacou and Grenada. Her mother’s exile and place that was supposed to be temporary has become home for Lorde. She is determined to create a relationship to New York that is different from her mother’s, yet it is because of her mother that she is able to survive in its streets. My point here is that Audre Lorde consistently locates her power and strength as a Black women-identified woman, lesbian, warrior poet within and through her Caribbean heritage—specifically, the Carriacou tradition of “*Zami*,” her mother’s stories of home, and her female ancestry.

Her vision of Carriacou and Grenada is necessarily mythic in scope and spiritual as Lorde deliberately constructs her biomythography to trace “home,” heritage, and account for her multiple identities. In the epilogue of *Zami*, Lorde says, “Once *home* was a long way off, a place I had never been to but knew out of my mother’s mouth. I only discovered its latitudes when Carriacou was no longer my home. There it is said that the desire to lie with other women is a drive from the mother’s blood” (256). In other words, she embraces New York as home by integrating her mother’s *home* into her own identities as Black lesbian, African Diasporic subject, African-Caribbean American, warrior poet, and women-identified woman. As Boyce Davies asserts, Audre Lorde’s reclamation of her Caribbean heritage occurs through her writing of *Zami* and her travels: “Her journeys throughout the North-Eastern United States, the West Coast and Mexico, and finally back to New York as she pursues and critiques the meaning of home and of enforced heterosexuality provide her with the space to come to her own identification as *Zami*” (120-21). Boyce Davies sees this public reclamation of her Caribbean identity as dealing mostly with issues of sexuality, and I would add that her journeys and writing of home in *Zami* can also be seen as the beginning of her “return” and “pull back” to the Caribbean and her conceiving of herself through African Diasporic terms. These journeys in *Zami* culminate in her travels to Grenada, her first in 1978 before the revolution and second one in 1983 post U.S. invasion, which she writes about in her essay. Lorde’s mythic vision of Grenada is re-envisioned through her travels there and understanding of the neocolonial controls at work on this island-nation.

In Lorde’s political essay “Grenada Revisited,” she radically critiques the U.S. invasion of Grenada and uncovers the silences about U.S. imperialism. Lorde begins her essay comparing her first and second visits to Grenada, and she explains that she came for the first time “seeking

'home' for this was my mother's birthplace and she had always defined it so for me. Vivid images remained of what I saw there and of what I knew it could become" (176). She moves quickly from her description of the landscape, places, and people that re-affirmed images she remembers through her mother's stories to the socio-political climate in Grenada. Lorde explains her first trip to Grenada in the context of the revolution which happened shortly after her visit: "I came to Grenada for the first time eleven months before the March 13, 1979 bloodless coup of the New Jewel Movement which ushered in the People's Revolutionary Government (PRG) of Grenada under Prime Minister Maurice Bishop. This brought an end to twenty-nine years of Sir Eric Gairy's regime – wasteful, corrupt, and United States sanctioned" (177). Lorde engages here in a critique of U.S. imperialism and their support of a corrupt regime, and she reveals an understanding of Grenada as a neocolonized space. She continues her critique with different examples of neocolonialism with a prime example being control over natural resources. Although Grenada is a major exporter of spices, as a significant producer of nutmeg, cocoa, mace, cinnamon, cloves, and ginger, the country ends up of importing back the very same products they cultivate at very high prices. Lorde explains that even though Grenada's cocoa sells for premium prices of the world market, Grenadians have to pay eight times more than that for processed hot chocolate (177). By drawing this connection between the cocoa they produce for export, which is then used to make processed hot chocolate that they then import at exorbitant prices, Lorde unveils the inequities and silences that exist in the market economy—which have all been worsened through globalization since Lorde wrote her essay.

While this is a small point in her essay, her engagement with the socio-economic and political landscape of the Caribbean emerges as resistance against the neocolonial machine operating through U.S. foreign policy, trade relations, and multi-national corporations. Hence,

when she begins her poignant critique of the U.S. invasion of Grenada, it is clear that she is not only creating awareness about what the United States has done, but she is also fighting against the silences around U.S. imperialism:

The second time I came to Grenada I came in mourning and fear that this land which I was learning had been savaged, invaded, its people maneuvered into saying thank you to their invaders. I knew the lies and distortions of secrecy surrounding the invasion of Grenada by the United States on October 25, 1983; rationalizations which collapse under the weight of facts; the facts that are readily available, even now, from the back pages of the *New York Times*. (177)

Lorde uses a number of books and articles about the invasion to prove her assertion here about the lies the United States told in order to support an invasion of Grenada. As Lorde describes her journey through post-invasion Grenada, she details the successes of the PRG Revolution, which included socialized medical care and education and an agro-industry that supported local farmers and cooperatives. She then explains many of these infrastructures that benefited the people of Grenada were destroyed post-invasion (178-179). She asserts that the real reason for the United States' invasion was simply to stamp out Black revolution and independence—making important connections between U.S. racism and the historical dehumanization of Black people, and exposing why the United States would refuse to recognize or support an independent Black island nation not under their control. Her deliberate and focused travels through Grenada along with her writing and research about what really happened demonstrate her position as revolutionary tourist. Her impetus for travel is to understand the Grenadian revolution and the U.S. invasion first hand.

Lorde asks the following question that will re-appear later in interviews during her time in St. Croix; she demonstrates her concern about U.S. imperialism and the hypocrisies that exist within U.S. “interventions” across the world, which are really about power, control, money, global capitalism, and resources, but never about human rights issues or democracy:

If the United States is even remotely interested in seeing democracy flourish in the Caribbean, why does it continue to support Haiti and the Dominican Republic, two of the most corrupt and repressive governments in the Americas? The racism that coats the U.S. government lies about Grenada is the same racism that blinded American eyes to the Black faces of 131 Haitians washed up on shore in Miami, drowned fleeing the Duvalier regime. It is the same racism that keeps American eyes turned aside from the corrosive apartheid eating like acid into the face of White South Africa and the Reagan government which shares her bed under the guise of “constructive engagement” (180).

As Lorde explains, the United States’ invasion tactics are well known from the Monroe Doctrine in 1823 and described as everything but what it actually is—imperialism. The aftermath of the U.S. invasion in Grenada including rise in unemployment and destruction of local farms and cooperatives and the United States’ resolution to support the private sector (mostly foreign owned) clearly demonstrates the extent to which the U.S. interests were maintained. The private sector and the work done in Grenada for “international development” by the United States not only created more factories for cheap labor and continued export of Grenada’s natural resources, but it has also supported and participated in the expansion of the tourist industry there. Lorde makes it clear that the United States did not want there to be a successful Revolution in Grenada, especially one that was peaceful, socialist, and determined to control the country’s resources for its own people and to provide education and healthcare to the masses (186).

In essence, Lorde provides a counter-narrative in her essay to the U.S. media reports that made Grenada and Maurice Bishop’s PRG appear a fascist violent state about to join forces with Cuba and start a war. Clearly, this was not the case and the evidence exists to prove that Grenada was not a threat to the United States or the rest of the Caribbean. However, the U.S. government still supports its story in spite of the wealth of evidence to the contrary, and the circumstances surrounding the assassination of Maurice Bishop and members of his government remain shrouded in mystery. Lorde explains that the Bishop government and the Revolution were threatening to the United States precisely because they sought to establish a sustainable and

independent national economy (187). She also offers different perspectives from Grenadians about what they think of the Revolution and the invasion, which provides a counter-narrative to the mainstream press.

Lorde's essay is a political analysis of U.S. imperialism that provides a snapshot of the socio-economic and political climate of Grenada pre- and post-revolution. Furthermore, her essay also reveals an understanding of her place within the struggle as an African Diasporic subject with Caribbean heritage. She says:

I came to Grenada my second time six weeks after the invasion, wanting to know she was still alive, wanting to examine what my legitimate position as a concerned Grenadian-american was toward the military invasion of this tiny Black nation by the mighty U.S. I looked around me, talked to Grenadians on the street, the shops, the beaches, on porches in solstice twilight. Grenada is their country. I am only a relative. I must listen long and hard and ponder the implications of what I have heard, or be guilty of the same quick arrogance of the U.S. government in believing there are external solutions to Grenada's future. (188-89)

Lorde asserts her identity as a Grenadian-American person, and as a relative of Grenada living in the invading imperial country, she must not participate in outsider savior discourse—the view that outsiders/foreigners can “save” the poor and “backward” countries in the “Third World” and that they know the best solutions. She demonstrates here that there is a need for internal solution building and for the communities in Grenada to decide upon their future. Lorde continues her conclusion to what she calls her “interim report” of “Grenada Revisited” with a vision of a Grenada still alive and surviving another colonization: “I am proud to be of stock from the country that mounted the first Black english-speaking People's Revolution in this hemisphere. Much has been terribly lost in Grenada, but not all – not the spirit of the people” (189). Boyce Davies argues that Lorde's embrace of her Caribbean heritage through the specific identity of “Grenadian-american” is sparked through the Grenadian revolution:

This identification as Grenadian-American specifies an identity, narrowed beyond the broader Caribbean-American identification. Lorde's connectedness to the Caribbean has

its impetus in revolutionary Grenada (not colonial Grenada) and the sense of possibility and challenge which it held. For Lorde, cultural identification has to be addressed along with an overtly anti-hegemonic discourse. (122)

While Lorde does identify in specific terms as a “Grenadian-american” in this political essay, she does so strategically in terms of her resistance to U.S. imperialism and disrupting the “us vs. them,” as she locates her identity as both. However, it is clear that Lorde also identifies broadly as African-Caribbean American and positions herself as an African Diasporic subject. In other words, Lorde re-claims her Caribbean heritage not only through her biomythic reclamation of “zami” and female ancestry, but also through identifying with Revolutionary Grenada and fighting against U.S. imperialism and hegemony. She works through her struggles as a revolutionary tourist—an African Diasporic female traveler who espouses change and liberation.

When Lorde relocates to the Caribbean, specifically to St. Croix in the U.S. Virgin Islands, she gains an even greater understanding of U.S. imperialism. In both her essay “Grenada Revisited” and in interviews after she moves to St. Croix, Lorde says that the United States either ignores or stands on the wrong side of every liberation struggle on Earth. It is clear from her work that she thinks people of color in the United States must fight against this because it has serious implications for the future of the planet. When asked in an interview about her move to St. Croix and what it was like, she responded by explaining the colonial relationship between the United States and St. Croix and what it means: “This is a Black Caribbean island which exists in a frankly colonial relationship to the United States, and the issues this raises for us as Blacks and people of color, anti-racist and anti-imperialists, cannot be underestimated” (53). She goes on to explain the complexities of U.S. neocolonialism in St. Croix with regard to the largest oil refinery (Hess) in the Western Hemisphere being located there, and how the United States values the refinery more than the people who live there. She discusses the day to day living issues on the island, specifically low wages for locals versus foreigners and other

labor issues as well as environmental concerns. Her analysis of neocolonial control that the United States exerts over St. Croix reveals a clear call for people of color to use our differences and join the struggle against U.S. imperialism and exploitation:

Whether it's oil and land in California and Georgia or creating an oil plantation out of St. Croix, the issues of exploitation by a white militaristic economy are essentially the same, although expressed differently in different locals. How can we use our differences to work together better against the exploitation and destruction of our children, our land, our resources, our planet? And as hyphenated people, and members of the African Diaspora, what is our relationship to the indigenous peoples of those lands we call home? (54)

She calls on people of African descent—as African Diasporic subjects and hyphenated peoples—to consider how we are implicated in exploitation and what we can do to create change.

What I find most interesting about this interview is that whenever Rowell asks questions about being a poet she consistently returns to issues of neocolonialism.

When she is asked specifically about the relationship between the poet and her responsibility to society and people, Lorde responds by saying, “Being a poet is not merely a question of producing poems. Being a poet means that I have a certain way of looking at the world, involving myself in the community around me. I am committed to work, and I see myself as a poet moving through all the things I do” (54). She then asks and responds to her own question of so what do social and economic issues such as over-development and racial tensions have to do with being a poet:

There is a poem in everything I lend myself to, and more than one. Poetry grows out of the textures of life. Local workers may or may not read poetry, but they know very, very well what it means to be paid half as much for the same kind of dangerous work as Hess Oil pays white workers sent down from the States. Now being able to capture the feeling and sense and the experience of that worker and how I feel being part of a community that tolerates that—this is something I can evoke in poetry. That is what I mean when I say poetry is part and parcel of who I am, and how I experience my world around me; it is also part and parcel of the world in which I move. I am part of the U.S. colonial community, as well as part of the international community of people of color. I am also part of the Black women's community. I am part of many communities. Poetry is a way of articulating and bringing together the energies of difference within these communities, so that energies can be used by me and others to better do what must be done (54-55).

Lorde continues to challenge us to work together in spite of and because of our differences—she has done this through her essays and speeches (collected in *Sister Outsider*) as well as her poetry. She insists that creating poetry is about the community in which the poet lives and that ought to be a major priority for the poet. Lorde experiences the world through her poetry, and she deals with her multiple identities and communities through her poetry. Even though, as she readily admits, local workers whom she writes about may not read her poetry, it is still her duty as a poet to write these experiences and bring these “energies of difference” together so they can be used to create and facilitate change. We certainly can see this through reading her poetry—Lorde maintains her commitment to the struggle against all forms of oppression while also carving spaces for multiple identities and difference through an African Diasporic lens.

Lorde writes about the U.S. invasion of Grenada in her poem “Equal Opportunity” (found in the collection *Our Dead Behind Us*), which can be read not only as a critique of the imperialist efforts of the United States in the Caribbean but also of U.S. racial politics. The poem opens with the speaker telling us that “the american deputy assistant secretary of defense / for equal opportunity / and safety / is a home girl” (369). Lorde’s signature resistant grammar move with the lower case “a” for American places this poem in her matrix of challenging the first world/third world, white/Black, euro-america /Africa paradigm. The Black woman in the poem works in the U.S. military, and she is in Grenville, Grenada, presumably a soldier or officer. The speaker calls her the “deputy assistant secretary of defense for equal opportunity and safety,” which can be seen as a play on bureaucracy and the failed use of affirmative action to achieve equality in the United States: “Blindness slashes our tapestry to shreds” (369). The woman cannot see how she is blinded and used within these oppressive systems. The speaker positions the woman’s body and her belief in the power of the uniform against the backdrop of the U.S.

invasion of Grenada and what it is doing to the island and its people. And then the speaker moves into a local perspective of the invasion:

An M-16 bayonet gleams  
slashing away the wooden latch  
of a one-room slat house in Soubise  
mopping up weapons search pockets of resistance  
Imelda young Black in tattered headcloth ...  
... armed men in moss-green jumpsuits turn out her shack  
watching mashed-up nutmeg trees  
the trampled cocoa pods  
graceless broken stalks of almost ripe banana  
her sister has been missing now ten days (369)

Here we feel the invasion from the individual and community level where a young Black woman's house and community are torn a part in search of "resistance" by U.S. military armed soldiers, and she can do nothing but watch and remain silent. Her sister is missing, and it seems that the invading army has no concerns for the people of Grenada but rather on asking the locals, "any Cubans around here, girl? any guns?"—looking for the so-called "rebels" (370). The poem continues by dealing with U.S. propaganda that they were helping Grenada during the invasion:

For a while there was almost enough  
water enough rice enough quinine  
The child tugs at her waistband  
but she does not move quickly  
she has heard how nervous these green men are  
with their grenades and sweaty helmets  
who offer cigarettes and chocolate but no bread  
free batteries and herpes but no doctors

The speaker offers a very different picture of U.S. occupied Grenada, one in which water was needed, people were scared, and soldiers were spreading disease and drugs. Lorde makes the connection between the U.S. military and their support of sex tourism, and hence sexual abuse and exploitation of the places they invade and occupy. The speaker continues with this Grenadian perspective of the invasion:

no free buses to get to the St. Georges market  
no reading lessons in the brilliant afternoons  
bodies strewn along Telescope Beach  
these soldiers say are foreigners  
but she has seen the charred bits of familiar cloth  
and knows what to say to any invader  
with an M-16 rifle held ready  
while searching her cooking shed  
overturning the empty pots with his apologetic grin  
Imelda steps forward  
the child pressing against her knees  
"no guns, man, no guns here, we glad you come, you carry water?" (370)

As Lorde exposes the lies about this invasion in her essay "Grenada Revisited," she uses this poem to capture the feelings and experiences of local Grenadians, which adds another dimension to her resistance and her position as revolutionary tourist in Grenada.

She uses her poetry to illuminate even more the untold stories from the invasion and hence show through multiple mediums that this history/herstory must be (re)written. In the poem, Imelda must tell the soldiers and by extension the United States what they want to hear, which is that they are grateful to its "U.S. saviour," in order to get basic, necessary supplies. The poem closes by returning to the Black woman soldier who supports the "equal opportunity for our women" record in her department, and leaves us with a vision of her swimming "toward safety / through a lake of her own blood" (371). The poet Lorde forces her readers to see through the lies, blinders, and propaganda of U.S. imperialism, especially for people of color in the United States who may be pulled into these vehicles of oppression and neocolonialism. She makes us see the connections between the Black American woman soldier and the Black Grenadian woman as members of the African Diaspora. Throughout her work, Lorde maintains her African Diasporic subjectivity and consciousness, even as she writes with local specificity or global reach, while at the same time demanding a space for difference in the struggle for social justice, equality, and Black liberation. She does this work while positioning herself as an

African-Caribbean American woman, conscious and engaged with her mobility and multiple identities in terms of heritage and sexuality.

Both Paule Marshall and Audre Lorde complicate notions of travel and return for people of African descent into the Caribbean. While they do this work in different ways, they are able to offer alternative visions of tourism because they are African-Caribbean Americans who identify themselves as African Diasporic subjects. Moreover, I find that since both of these writers have engaged with and spent time in Caribbean spaces, they are able to explore the nuances of people, culture, history, language, and current issues. Lorde does this through an intense critique of neocolonialism, specifically U.S. imperialism, and she literally returns to the Caribbean as a revolutionary tourist in her visits to Grenada and her relocation to St. Croix. Marshall does this through her “literature of reconnection” in which she continues to posit an African Diasporic identity and asserts the shared diasporic culture among people of African descent. Both Lorde and Marshall (re)write Grenada and Carriacou into the literary imaginary and political consciousness of their readers, while at the same time, resisting the dominant representations of Grenada during the U.S. invasion. In different genres, they position a sense of urgency in their work for people of African descent to recognize and embrace the shared cultures and histories/herstories across the African Diaspora. Similar to the writers, intellectuals, historians, and scholars addressed in this study, Marshall and Lorde reveal through their work the importance of knowing the past in the present for there to be a better future. They participate in the creation of a literary model of ethical tourism that African Americans, Afro-Caribbean Americans, and people from other parts of the African Diaspora can surely learn from and model their own travels after. Therefore, both writers do more than counter the exploitative nature of tourism and neocolonialism, they encourage their readers and consuming publics in North

America and Europe, particularly ones of African descent, to literally create an ethical and responsible relationship among themselves and the places they choose to visit.

## CHAPTER 6 CONCLUSION

The vision of African Diaspora tourism in the final chapter of this study encourages people of African descent to have responsible and ethical relations with the Caribbean and in the tourist industry. Marshall and Lorde posit these visions in the 1980s and early 1990s. While their literary models of tourism are hopeful for change and insist upon this change for a better and more equitable future, one recent literary representation of tourism in the Caribbean does not reflect such hope. In the 2002 novel *Tide Running*, Indo-Caribbean British writer Oonya Kempadoo represents intra-Caribbean travel and sex tourism through the story of a Trinidadian woman who mimics North American and European touristic exploitation of the Caribbean in her travels and relocation to Tobago. Born in England of Guyanese parents, raised in Guyana from the age of four, and having lived across the Caribbean (Trinidad, St. Lucia, Tobago, and currently in Grenada), Kempadoo has personal experience in transnational and intra-Caribbean travel. Hence, she offers keen insights into the troubling and vexing issue of consumption and blackness within tourism. This novel highlights the ways in which “Blackness” is commodified in the Caribbean tourist industry, specifically in terms of how Caribbean people have ingested the myth-reality of paradise discourse and can therefore participate in exploitative consumption. In the introduction to this study, I present this problem as a major concern for the struggle to create change in the Caribbean tourist industry. Therefore, I end my project with an analysis of this novel and the sexual politics of tourism because it presents the greatest challenge in terms of creating alternative and ethical models of tourism.

Moreover, Kempadoo’s novel reflects upon the migratory flows and consumption patterns found in the Caribbean because of globalization and neocolonialism. She offers a challenge to neocolonialism through her representation of the sexual politics of tourism and the

adverse effects of globalization on the island of Tobago, particularly in terms of identity (race, class, gender, and sexuality). While this novel does not posit an alternative model or ethical vision of tourism, it does contribute to “resistance culture” by creating awareness of the vexed relations and continuities slavery (colonialism) and tourism (neocolonialism). Furthermore, she engages in the racial, sexual, and gender politics of the contemporary Caribbean space while at the same revealing its roots in slavery and colonialism. Despite the racial and ethnic diversity of the Caribbean, the region is often imagined as a Black space, and it is through this representation and images of paradise that Caribbean culture and people are often marketed within the global tourist industry. As we have already established, the region is not only selling the trademarked “sun, sand, and sea,” but it is also selling desire and sex. The Caribbean has a long history of sexual exploitation of women of color, particularly during colonial rule when white men would often act out their racial fantasies onto the bodies of the “other,” and the tourist industry perpetuates this discourse within the postcolonial period. Sex tourism is grounded in the objectification of the sexualized and racialized “other,” which is further complicated by the current heterogeneity of sex tourists. While a number of anthropological and ethnographic studies have been done on sex tourism in the Caribbean, only a few Caribbean novelists have delved into its complexities. I analyze the representation of sex tourism in Kempadoo’s *Tide Running*, with a specific emphasis on the conflicts that emerge based on class, race, and gender. Kempadoo’s novel brings to light the sexual politics of tourism by revealing the ways both sex and blackness are sold, and hence become commodities, within (sex) tourism.

*Tide Running* presents a fascinating engagement with a post-independence Caribbean immersed in the current socio-political moment of neocolonialism. Within a specific context of Trinidad and Tobago, Kempadoo explores a myriad of issues that reflect concerns across the

region, such as tourism, globalization, migration, mobility, power dynamics, and the forces of international and regional cultures and identities. She also deals with the complicated divisions among class, race, and gender within and between the islands of Trinidad and Tobago, as well as the Caribbean as a region (“Third World” developing island nations) and North America and Europe (“First World” developed nations). She explicitly represents the impact of globalization and its cultural impact on the young people of Tobago through their fascination with American television, films, hip hop, and Jamaican dancehall. Moreover, Kempadoo presents an intriguing and very complex case of sex tourism. However, what is markedly different about Kempadoo’s representation of sex tourism is that it is intra-Caribbean sex tourism—as the novel unfolds, a problematic friendship and then sexual relationship emerges between Cliff, a young local Black man from Plymouth, Tobago, and a “foreign” couple, Bella, a mixed-race woman from Trinidad, and Bella’s husband, Peter, a white man from England. The story’s narration switches back and forth between Cliff and Bella, who are the two main characters, and this transition between the two illustrates Kempadoo’s attempt to deal with the relationship between Tobago (literally the Black space of Trinidad and Tobago) and Trinidad (the more ethnically diverse space) and highlight the differences between the islands in terms of class, race, and gender. Moreover, Bella and Peter’s fascination and desire for Cliff must be interrogated through the history of (sex) tourism that is consistently raced and gendered.

In the global tourist industry, the Caribbean has long been configured and represented through exotic, racialized, and sexualized images, in which sexual pleasure is an expected and even inextricable part of the vacation package. The Caribbean as a tourist destination is continuously promoted vis-à-vis service and sexuality, and as a number of scholars (including Kamala Kempadoo, who is Ooyna Kempadoo’s sister, Beverley Mullings, Julia O’Connell

Davidson, and Jacqueline Sanchez Taylor, among others) have discussed, the informal sector of tourism includes sexual services with women and men working as sex workers (also dancers, escorts, and nightclub/bar workers), and these “informal services” are encouraged and even promoted by the tourist industry and generally tolerated (even regulated in some places) by Caribbean governments. While local communities may benefit from the profits of sex tourism particularly on an individual and short term basis, the majority of these profits support the global tourist industry and the multinational corporations and foreign investors that dominate the industry. In other words, as Kamala Kempadoo argues “the tourism product, which includes the sexual labor and bodies of young Caribbean women and men, that is consumed in the Caribbean, by and large enables the accumulation of capital by corporations in industrialized nations” (21). As discussed throughout this project, many Caribbean nations are trapped in a double bind of neocolonialism where tourist industry demands outweigh the needs of local communities, which then cause the “leakage” of the majority of profits from the tourist industry to import goods and services that rarely benefit the local communities. The fact that the tourism product includes and even depends on the range sexual services provided by locals is something that tourism scholars and cultural critics have been grappling with for years, even though it is often considered to be under-studied and ignored.

What studies continue to show (particularly the collection of essays in *Sun, Sex, and Gold*) is that sex work in the Caribbean is complicated and reveals the extent to which sexual and racial exploitations of Black and brown bodies and labor continue, how women attempt empowerment through a strategic use of their sexual labor for themselves and their families, and that both men and women involved in sex work are struggling against oppressive neocolonial conditions (K. Kempadoo 28). Kamala Kempadoo posits in what she calls “tourism-oriented sex

work” that “racialized and ethnic differences are critical” (21). This is clear through not only the ways in which the Caribbean is marketed, but also through the ethnographic and anthropological studies done on sex tourism.<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, as K. Kempadoo asserts: “Clients are foreign by culture, language, and often race to the sex worker, with the ‘Otherness’ of the sex workers being a source of desire for the clients. Notions of ‘authentic’ Blackness, signified by both skin color and culture characteristics such as dreadlocked hair and dance style, dominates the imaginations of female tourists visiting the islands” (21). But these notions of ‘authentic’ Blackness also dominate the imaginations of male tourists, and clients do not have to be entirely ‘foreign’ to participate in this “othering” process; increasingly, who we think of as being ‘the tourist’ has changed. Considering the migratory flows of Caribbean people and the increased mobility that some Caribbean people have achieved through jobs and/or education through migration, we must think about new kinds of tourists, Caribbean people who return home to visit and intra-Caribbean travel among different islands.

Discourses about sex work in the Caribbean are not only racialized but also gendered and thus vary greatly in terms of male and female sex workers; hence, they reflect the different and often polarized constructions of masculinity and femininity across the region. A number of studies reveal that while female sex workers are often denigrated for being “whores” within their communities, male sex workers tend to be valorized and even reaffirmed in their hyper-masculinity to a certain degree even though both are working for an exchange of sex/romance for money, status, or material goods (K. Kempadoo 25). While critics often discuss the over-

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<sup>1</sup> See Denise Brennan’s “*What’s love got to do with it?: Transnational Desires and Sex Tourism in the Dominican Republic*” for a detailed study of sex tourism and how it is exacerbated through globalization in the Dominican Republic. George Gmelch’s *Behind the Smile: The Working Lives of Caribbean Tourism* is an ethnography of stories from tourism workers in which sex and romance tourism come up in conversations about tourism. Polly Patullo also discusses sex tourism in her study of the costs of tourism in *Last Resorts*.

representation of women in the global sex trade and how they are subordinated and dominated through the historic control of female sexuality and bodies (especially Black women and other women of color), recent cultural productions, such as the film *Heading South* and Kempadoo's *Tide Running*, have drawn critical attention to the ways in which male sex workers are also exploited through the asymmetrical relationship between female tourists and local males. Ooyna Kempadoo adds another dimension to this relationship through a triad affair with Cliff and the "foreign" couple (who can be seen as representing a product/effect of colonialism and slavery—mixed-race Trini woman married to white English man), in which the couple do not seem to relate to Cliff as a sex worker but rather as a romance or friend of the family, and at times they treat him as another child. While the couple rarely acknowledges the class and race divisions that exist between themselves and Cliff, it is quite evident through Cliff's narration that he is very aware of their class, privilege, mobility, and the racial differences among them.

In *Tide Running*, Cliff, along with other characters particularly his brother Ossi, make clear divisions between themselves, white tourists, Black people from foreign, and Trinis who "look like Black people from foreign" (O. Kempadoo 17). Cliff mentions the couple early in the novel as "dem people is from Foreign" even though he says the woman looks like she's from Trinidad but she doesn't sound like it (19). Cliff admires them from afar describing their car, clothes, and the free time they have on vacation—in essence, he recognizes their privilege and mobility, particularly in their visits increasing from twice per year to quite regularly (19-20). As he describes watching them with their son on the jetty, talking and laughing and being happy, Cliff says "them good for theyself, good for each other... Them is people, boy. I does watch them" (20). What Cliff sees in this family is almost the opposite of his family—where his mother works constantly to bring food home, his sister being a single mother with a baby who he

thinks needs a father, and overall the daily struggles to keep the family going. It is interesting that he says “them is people,” which implies the extent to which Cliff sees this family as the model of a perfect nuclear family, which is reinforced through the American television shows he watches (Bay Watch, Oprah, and various soap operas, among others). Once Cliff and Ossie are invited to Bella and Peter’s home, the class divide between these families is made even more evident. Cliff describes the house as a film-style house that “made you feel like you on TV” (53). After talking, laughing, and watching TV, Cliff remarks that they are not “stiffy or poshy like them uppa-class people” and they are just as friendly as they look—and hence their friendship begins with this visit and the promise of a car ride the next day (57). However, we know that they are of the “upper-class” and are in fact rich, but there is something different about this couple in the eyes of Cliff and Ossi—Bella is from Trinidad or who they call a local-foreign.<sup>2</sup>

During this first visit, it is clear that both Peter and Bella are attracted to Cliff (and Ossi) through Bella’s narration of the visit in which she describes Cliff’s silent beauty and exclaims to Peter that they are so good looking (59-60). They both compare Cliff to the wood carving they have in their room—called “Black Dallie” or *Little Black Boy* which by the end of the novel comes to symbolize Cliff in their life—and she calls Cliff “Nubian Nike” (60). Peter remarks on their style and no trace of the usual “Plymouth attitude,” while their son Oliver thinks of them as “cool dudes” (61). In all of these descriptors, both Cliff and Ossi, but especially Cliff, are

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<sup>2</sup> As Jennifer Rahim asserts in her article “Eletronic Fictions and Tourist Currents: Constructing the Island-Body in Kempadoo’s *Tide Running*,” the discourse on sex tourism is pushed in this novel beyond “the typical white/local (mostly Black) nexus to engage appropriated or localized globalization tendencies of conditioning” in which Bella’s mixed-race status signifies multicultural possibility; however, her socio-economic status and marriage to a white Englishman “allow her to replicate the patterns of the white tourist cruising for local sex” (12).

described through their blackness—not only in terms of their looks but also their style and young bodies. When they all go for a swim after their car ride, Bella’s attraction to Cliff intensifies, and it is through her description of his “dark limbs” guiding her through the ocean as she says “a dream ran through me” that we can feel her “shivery rush” confirming her desire for Cliff (72). Meanwhile, Peter on shore with Ossi tells Cliff and Bella as they emerge from their swim that while he kept his shorts on, Ossi’s huge penis kept falling out of his pants—they all have a laugh as both Cliff and Ossi’s bodies are objectified and sexualized (74). Cliff and Ossi are desirable through and because of their blackness in this place that essentially serves as Trinidad’s “exotic other.” Bella explains Tobago from her and Peter’s vision:

Just visiting from Trinidad, we could never have seen the darkness of this island. The strength of it overpowered and silenced you. Only after moving here did the calm become unsettling. Traces of resentment glowing under the skin of proud faces, in the gait of mobile bodies. The house, our holiday haven from Trinidad city life, seduced us into its womb, promising peace of mind, crime-free living, and the blue Caribbean Sea. (64)

After moving more permanently from Trinidad to Tobago, Bella begins to feel the resentment from Tobagonians perhaps because of the unequal and pseudo-colonial relationship that Trinidad has with Tobago. She makes even her house culpable along with the peaceful, small-town, safe feeling and the ocean for creating this “haven” for them. Despite her insight about the resentment of people in Tobago, Bella still utilizes a “tourist” gaze onto the island with a clear division of Trinidad as the city center and Tobago as the island life getaway.

However, Bella does have insights into the history of African enslavement and colonization, and how this still affects Trinidad and Tobago, particularly in the ways tourism is marketed and promoted. When Peter and Bella have lunch at a local spot in Plymouth that still has the remnants of a sugar mill and steam boiler from 1857, Bella says that “history still lives here” (115). She explains that this spot was an Amerindian settlement before the “sugar days” and now “struggling to be the best restaurant, historic site, and nature center in Tobago. But the

spirits are too close. Like in the rest of this beautiful island, the bitter taste of slavery is in the earth itself, drawn up by the trees into their leaves, a rot in the seed of their fruit. A bile in people's mind" (116). It is clear from this history lesson of sorts that Bella is aware and conscious about the effects of slavery and colonialism in the Caribbean and in Tobago specifically—she knows the reasons why Tobago has more Black people than Trinidad. She knows how this works within the context of tourism: "Now tourism is the trade, the new crop. But still it brings people who have to be served, white people expecting something in return for the Yankee dollar. It feeds politician's egos, fattens their pockets, is regurgitated in public speeches, eagerly swallowed by voters, mixed up with a sense of justice and angry pride, spiked with bile" (116). Here, Bella is able to connect tourism and slavery and to critique the asymmetrical relationship between white tourists and Black tourist workers, as well as explain how local politicians use tourism and the money it brings. However, when it comes to her own participation in the tourist industry through her travel from Trinidad to Tobago, Bella is unable to see the asymmetrical relationship between herself and local Tobagonians, especially when it comes to the sexual relationship she and her husband begin with Cliff and how they consume Cliff specifically and Tobago more broadly—how they consume blackness in different ways.

At first the sexual encounter or "threesome" between Peter, Bella, and Cliff seems innocent and experimental, not the usual picture we have of sex tourism and sex workers, and as Jennifer Rahim argues "Kempadoo treats the affair as a kind of benign or masked sex tourism" (10). However, as Rahim suggests, "sexual experimentation as the leisure afforded the wealthy, rather than over solicitation for sex, seems the motivation behind the couple's seduction of Cliff" (10). Regardless of the couple's intention, Cliff expects something in return for his services albeit subtle expectations, such as him expecting to spend time at their house, eating with them,

going sailing, and sleeping in their extra room. These can be seen as an exchange of services rendered and compensation for his time spent with them. The first few months of this relationship go well, and according to Bella, Cliff eased into their lives and became apart of their family, with Ossi also visiting occasionally and Cliff spending more and more time—as she views the brothers growing up and apart. From Bella’s narration, the affair/relationship appears surreal and beautiful with no problems, and she feels that they are getting closer to Cliff everyday. But as the months progress, Bella’s thinking about Cliff and their relationship evolves; she begins to see how Cliff is a man to them when they are having sex, but otherwise he remains a boy. She is troubled by this and says to Peter,

*Just so, from one to the other. From man-friend, equal in sex, to boy. Like it doesn't trouble him. It doesn't trouble you, Peter? Big men behaving like boys in the place, young men like children. Women too. Carrying on as girls. But, same time, that's the attractive thing, the spontaneity, the naturalness. The unsteady, uncontrived mess of a growing society. Born in it and still can't make sense of it. Watch it—calm and laid-back on the surface but deep undercurrents stirring. Strong tides turning. (127)*

It seems as if Bella can see the unequal power dynamic within this sexual relationship between them and Cliff; however, she fails to understand it and perhaps this has everything to do with her class and economic privilege.

Cliff’s narration of his thoughts about the affair are very different than Bella’s—as Ossi asks him if he is sure he can handle it, Cliff thinks to himself: “But I can handle meself. Sweet sexing skin, and Peeta only encouraging. How could man do that, boy? He own wife. Me and another fella sex a girl same-time already, we was just ketching a t’ing, but this is the man own woman. And is not to say he don’t love she, you could see it in he eye” (95). Cliff is shocked by Peter’s willingness to “share” his wife with Cliff, and he makes it clear that he couldn’t do something like that even though he likes Peter. Moreover, Cliff comments on how he doesn’t know what Bella wants from him given the way she looks at him and how she touches him,

which explains her rendering of him (and the island of Tobago) as exotic and her obsession (in a way) with his blackness. In line with the gendered way sex and sexuality are viewed in the Caribbean space, Cliff has become very popular among his friends and they now look at him with respect—he has essentially become a man through this affair. Interestingly, Peter’s masculinity is also affirmed through the affair in terms of him asserting his white male colonial privilege. Jennifer Rahim argues that Peter is re-enacting “the ‘master’ discourse that hypersexualizes and eroticizes blackness;” as evident through his interest in Cliff and Ossi’s bodies and penis sizes and “the partially voyeuristic role he adopts in the orgy episodes that reinforce the construction of the Black body (male and female) as a site of pleasurable entertainment and consumption” (12). We never know if Peter and Cliff ever have sex, but it is certain that Peter is enjoying the affair and that Bella is having sex with Cliff. In essence, as Bella consumes Cliff (and his Black body) through sex and desire, Peter is consuming both of them (Black and brown bodies) vis-à-vis the white male neocolonial gaze with his approval and presence.

The novel’s tragic end with Cliff locked and caged in a prison begins with a sequence of events that may have been avoided had Cliff and Bella and Peter been on the same page in terms of expectation of their exchange. Cliff perhaps assumes they would be there for him if he needed them, while Bella and Peter treat him as a friend/child/sex partner. After money goes missing, Cliff is arrested for stealing goods, and he spirals into a series of poor decisions that culminate in him joy-riding in Peter and Bella’s car with his friends, attempting to show off and assert his masculinity. Cliff is arrested again, charged, and sentenced—and the unequal class, race, and power dynamics become quite clear between Cliff, the local, and Bella and Peter, the tourists (local-foreign and foreign). In the last few chapters narrated by Cliff, his voice and tone change drastically as he begins to live the “film style life” and reflects on Bella and Peter who can do

anything they want, “them have it good,” which contrasts sharply with his description of feeling lost and empty (188-89). During his second arrest, Cliff is beaten so badly by the police he cannot be taken to his first court hearing, and it is not only his body that is beaten—his mind and spirit are beaten down as well—and in the last scene of the book, it is clear that Kempadoo wants us to feel his immobility and pain and to think about the larger socio-political context that contributed to Cliff’s situation.

What is most troubling by the end of this novel is Bella’s inability to see how she has participated in the unethical consumption of a fellow Caribbean person. She has ingested the myth reality of paradise along with racialized and sexualized fantasies of Caribbean people that the tourist industry promotes. These images and fantasies are what white tourists have projected onto Black and brown Caribbean bodies, which are rooted in the white colonial gaze.

Kempadoo’s novel illustrates a major concern of this project and the question Strachan raises in his book *Paradise and Plantation*—what happens when Caribbean people begin to believe in the myth-reality of tourism and notions of Caribbean paradise. In essence, they can participate in unethical consumption of the Caribbean because Caribbean identities remain deeply affected by tourism and the tourist industry. These kinds of unethical relations are inextricably connected to the racial, gender, and sexual politics of the contemporary Caribbean and those dynamics are bound to slavery and colonialism. In order to facilitate and posit ideas for change, Caribbean writers, scholars, artists, historians, and economists, among other intellectuals, are creating awareness about these relations and continuities.

Since the Caribbean remains effectively colonized through neocolonial economic relations, the tourist industry, having supported and benefited from these relations, is the most powerful form of neocolonialism. This neocolonial order is not only economic but also cultural

because of the lingering effects of slavery and colonization on the minds, bodies, and spirits of Caribbean people. Hence, the tourist industry reinforces the destructive psychology of slavery, and this has promoted numerous critiques of tourism and the industry from an array of Caribbean scholars who posit that decolonization has yet to be completed in the region. As this study demonstrates, Caribbean writers, artists, and intellectuals address the combined cultural and economic exploitation of neocolonialism and tourism in their work. They do this by exposing the continuities between the racial, sexual, and gender politics of slavery, colonialism, and tourism. Operating within the Afro-Caribbean tradition of resistance, these writers and intellectuals resist the dominant discourses of tourism by (re)writing history and dismantling historical silences, to use Trouillot's term. Marion Bethel, Erna Brodber, Jamaica Kincaid, and Edwidge Danticat forge literary and cultural models for the (re)writing and righting of history/herstory in the face of neocolonial tourism. Oonya Kempadoo and Christian Campbell illustrate concerns about the sexual politics of tourism that emerge from the history of slavery and colonialism. Caribbean local writers and cultural activists have taken the troubling neocolonial situation and worked for change from within the system; they have created alternative models of tourism that are sustainable and ethical visions, such as Arlene Nash-Ferguson's Educulture and Brodber's Blackspace and Educo-tourism. Other writers have created literary models of African Diaspora tourism like Paule Marshall and Audre Lorde. Hence, this project reveals various negotiations with and resistance to neocolonialism and exploitative consumption that Caribbean people, writers, artists, scholars, intellectuals, and cultural producers employ.

Furthermore, Marion Bethel, Christian Campbell, Erna Brodber, Jamaica Kincaid, Edwidge Danticat, Paule Marshall, Audre Lorde, and Oonya Kempadoo all vex the dominant

narratives of Caribbean tourism and the travel narrative more specifically. This not only produces resistance but it also makes visible the link between tourism discourses and the history of colonialism and slavery. More specifically, they appropriate, mimic, and write against typical travel narratives to reveal how discourses of tourism are an integral part of a much larger colonial and neocolonial history. Bethel connects the celebration of Columbus and 18<sup>th</sup> century travel narratives with contemporary exploitative tourism, and Campbell builds upon her critique by illustrating the gendered and sexualized aspects of tourism that emerge from slavery and colonialism. Brodber engages in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century's sensationalist discourse on Afro-Caribbean religion and spiritual practices that were prominent in travel narratives about the Caribbean and in the cultural productions they inspired (for example, the play and film represented in the novel *Myal*). Kincaid challenges the travel narrative through satire and parody, while Danticat, similar to Brodber, (re)writes/rights a contemporary understanding of Afro-Caribbean spirituality, thereby resisting the sensationalism in colonial discourses. Both Kincaid and Danticat transform the travel narrative genre and participate in the tradition of Caribbean intellectuals in exile—by arguing that the Caribbean is part of modernity and the contemporary position of the “West” is a product of the profits of colonialism and slavery in the Caribbean. Marshall and Lorde also transform the travel narrative by positing heritage and revolutionary tourism as ethical models of African Diaspora travel. Moreover, Marshall presents a counter-vision of Afro-Caribbean spirituality like Brodber and Danticat; while Lorde turns the travel narrative genre into a political critique of U.S. imperialism that calls on members of the African Diaspora to challenge this new form of colonialism. Further complicating the realm of African Diaspora tourism with intra-Caribbean travel, Kempadoo connects the unethical relations during slavery and colonialism to the contemporary sexual politics of tourism, and the

adverse effects of globalization. These writers and their work illustrate the crosscurrents among tourism, diaspora, and mobility—as they at times flow together and at other times overlap—in the realm of representation.

While these critiques of tourism and neocolonialism and alternative models discussed throughout this study reveal the work that has been done, there is still more work to do if Caribbean tourism is to be transformed, locally-led, and not participate in the exploitation of Caribbean cultures or people. The chapter on the Bahamas includes interviews with tourist and cultural workers to support this very notion—to call for more local input on the changes that are needed in Caribbean tourism. While these interviews and my analysis of them are certainly in no way meant to speak for workers in tourist and culture industries across the region, they offer a glimpse into the wealth of information and critical perspectives that people who work daily in the tourist and culture industries have. To be clear, these interviews were a very small sample, and what I reported in that chapter was only a taste of all the insights I gained. Moreover, it is important to note that my field work in both the Bahamas and Jamaica provided me with a better sense of the complexities and nuances of contemporary tourism and how people located in the region negotiate with the over-reliance on the tourist industry. Also, this field work and study of cultural production led me to various alternative models of tourism that I would not have gathered from studying only literature. Therefore, the field work and cultural studies enhanced and complicated my readings and analyses of Caribbean writers and their work and activism in relationship to tourism. Thus, my project and its interdisciplinary approach offer dynamic possibilities for tourism and diaspora studies, as well as for postcolonial studies. Furthermore, my work suggests that while the region has begun to work through certain kinds of problems in the tourist industry, silences remain about sex tourism and the ways in which both sex and

blackness are packaged and sold in the tourist product. Alternative models created by Caribbean local people ought to be seriously supported by ministries of tourism and their visions maintained. Finally, models for change should encompass the message of Sankofa, the Adinkra symbol which means “upon the past, we can build a good and strong future.”

Hence, I have demonstrated the ways in which Caribbean writers and artists are changing and transforming the way we think of tourism in the Caribbean by tracing its neocolonial (and unethical) dimensions and re-claiming histories/herstories for the present while envisioning a different/better future. While it may in fact be impossible to create systems completely outside of colonialism, perhaps it is possible to *imagine* a world beyond colonialism, like Erna Brodber does, through new paradigms that are centered and grounded in the experiences of people still affected by the process of colonization. Caribbean writers, artists, intellectuals, scholars, and cultural workers have paved the way for this work by exposing the colonial and neocolonial relations found in contemporary Caribbean tourism. Yet there is more work to do, cultural decolonization must be completed and silences about sexual politics of tourism unveiled, in these crosscurrents of tourism, diaspora, and mobility.

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## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Born and raised in Nassau, Bahamas, Angelique Nixon worked in the tourist industry and offshore banking, which led to her receiving a scholarship to attend college in the United States. In August 2000, she graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree in accounting and minors in humanities and global studies from Nova Southeastern University in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. She then pursued graduate work in literature because she wanted to continue studies in the humanities. Also, her strong desire to be a writer led her to complete a Master of Arts in English in August 2002 from Florida Atlantic University in Boca Raton. Through the master's program, Angelique was trained as an undergraduate college instructor. After graduating, she worked as a full-time instructor of English at FAU for two years.

Angelique decided to continue her graduate studies and pursue a doctoral degree and career in academia. In August 2004, she began the Ph.D. program in English at University of Florida, specializing in postcolonial studies and Caribbean literature; her areas of interest include: African diaspora literatures, postcolonial and feminist theories, U.S. multi-ethnic literature, and gender and sexuality studies. She graduated in August 2008 with her Ph.D. in English and graduate certificate in women's studies and gender research. She began a post-doctoral fellowship in Africana studies at New York University in September 2008.

Angelique has presented her scholarly work at numerous international and national conferences. Furthermore, Angelique is both a poet and scholar. Her scholarly work has appeared in *SAIL: Studies in American Indian Literatures* and in *Lucayos: Caribbean Studies Journal* (School of English Studies, College of the Bahamas). Her poems are published in *Julie Mango: International Online Journal of Creative Expressions*, *ProudFlesh: New Afrikan Journal of Culture, Politics & Consciousness*, and the *Journal of Caribbean Literatures*.