

*“The litany of islands,
The rosary of archipelagoes”:
Caribbean and Pacific Archipelagraphy*

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With the insolent jet of my wounded and solemn bole I shall command
the islands to be.

AIMÉ CÉSAIRE, “Lost Body” (245)

GIVEN THE TREMENDOUS popularity of recent television programs such as “Survivor” (US) and “Castaways” (UK), it seems that Anglo-American fascination with so-called deserted tropical islands has maintained both its momentum and its persistent mystification of the colonial process. In these popular media events, predominantly young Western continentals are figured as benign occupants of others’ lands and championed as media heroes in their efforts to “go native” without having actual contact with island cultures. Ultimately, by naming these arrivants as castaways, the relationship between island inhabitants and continental imperialism is suppressed and mystified. It is in this context that we might hearken back to John Donne’s famous phrase, “No man is an *Iland*, intire of it selfe,” an expression that has gained such popularity over the centuries that it is received today as a cliché rather than a suggestive link between the intersections of literary discourse, (colonial) geographies and cultural identity. Like current media castaways, Donne’s “Iland” has become unmoored from its continental relation to the extent that the subsequent line, “every man is a peece of the *Continent*” (441), has been nearly erased. In this investigation of tropical island motifs in Anglophone discourse (including postcolonial literatures of the Caribbean and Pacific), I begin with Donne’s poem because, contrary to the stereotype of tropical islands as immobile, “pure” spaces remote from

industrial modernity, the poem's reception suggests the ways in which primarily masculine Western discursive productions have shifted, floated, and migrated in complex and fascinating ways that often erase their imperial and geographic connections to continents. Island representations by continental visitors are exceedingly complex and represent the convergence of a number of interrelated genres and disciplines, but the general lack of scholarly attention to island contributions has given me cause to begin with a brief review of some of the more obvious motifs.

An appraisal of merely the titles of the copious Euro-American works concerned with tropical islands highlights the ways in which the genre of island arrival is embedded within a particular colonial teleology: recurrent titles such as "adventure" and "journey" suggest that islands are necessarily remote from metropolitan centres; that the European (male) is an agent of migrancy (and is therefore flexible and dynamic); and that the island, once visited and departed, is central to the teleological process of European philosophical, colonial, mercantile, and scientific development. The island solitude and adventure genre of Robinsonades so popular in Western Europe in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries may have been inspired by *Robinson Crusoe*, but some of Defoe's many sources suggest that the genre's origins are much broader and extend across space and time to the East (see Hassan; Spaas; Grove). While the island genre cannot be attributed only to the West, it certainly found its most receptive audience there. *Robinson Crusoe* was so popular that it underwent six reprintings in its first year of publication; its significance to literature of the "Mundo Nuevo" is inscribed by Caribbean poet Derek Walcott who refers to it as "our first book, our profane Genesis" (92). Since the seventeenth century, European literature has increasingly seen the island as an ideal space of various political, sociological and colonial utopias and practices. British inscriptions of island topoi reflect the imperial prerogatives of England; in fact, Kevin Carpenter's research suggests that between 1788 and 1910 over five hundred "desert island" stories were published in England alone (8). Diane Loxley has shown that the island adventure genre was central to the indoctrination of young British boys into the emerging ideologies of masculine British nationalism and colonialism.

The European island genre is not necessarily homogenous, but by the end of the nineteenth century it began to circulate around persistently rigid tropes. The search for an Edenic or utopian isle is reflected in the titles of works that utilize descriptive terms such as “beautiful,” “paradise,” “blessed,” “fortunate,” “magic,” and “happy” isles and which often rework the Greek quest for “Isles of the Blessed” or “Fortunate Isles.” Implicit in this genre is a desire for spiritual and social redemption whose source is tantalizingly projected beyond European shores. But since paradisiacal islands do not always provide the kind of excitement needed for plot-driven adventure narratives, other island texts migrate towards the aspects of epistemological inscrutability suggested in titles that employ terms like “mystery,” “wild,” “secret,” “vanishing,” “uncharted,” “lost,” and “floating.” More contemporary island quest narratives dovetail with tourist discourse in which case the desire for islands, or “nesomania” in James Michener’s words (Day 1), becomes formulated as (hetero)sexual desire: *Island Enchantress*, *Island Queen*, and *Island of Desire* are notable examples.

This essay argues that no island is an isolated isle and that a system of archipelagraphy — that is, a historiography that considers chains of islands in fluctuating relationship to their surrounding seas, islands and continents — provides a more appropriate metaphor for reading island cultures. Not surprisingly, writers from the Caribbean and Pacific such as Edouard Glissant, Epeli Hau’ofa, and Derek Walcott have called for a cartography of archipelagoes that maps the complex ebb and flow of immigration, arrival, and of island settlement. Both regions’ literatures have remapped the narratives of European colonialism, the colonial desire for islands, and the islands’ presumed lack of culture and history. It is for this reason that discourses of diaspora, anti-colonial nationalism, and sovereignty are so central to island microstates whose relatively limited resources continue to be exploited by continental global capitalism.

This essay sketches an overview of some of the more apparent trends in both regions’ literatures in respect to island cartography, particularly in the shifting relation between islands, their watery borders, and the various land forms that surround them. I have argued elsewhere that aquatic theories of diaspora, such as those

produced by Paul Gilroy and Antonio Benítez-Rojo, overemphasize black and/or Caribbean histories of migration and ex-ile to the extent that discourses of postcolonial nationalism, which are not necessarily conservative and which may also entail resistance to global capitalism, cannot be addressed in all their complexity. Simply stated, theories of trans-Atlantic migrations — a focus on water — cannot always account for resistance movements which take place in the “I-land.” I will return to these points later, but first I would like to outline some of the historical discourses of island heterotopology.

I. Historicizing The Isolated Isle

The metaphor of island seclusion would not function had this not been in relation to the “remoteness” of England’s first imperial island endeavour, Ireland; of the consequent island colonies of the West Indies; and, much later, of Oceania. The convergence of imperial, scientific, literary and anthropological discourses have constructed an isolated, atemporal island space which is entirely divorced from its archipelagic neighbors and which suppresses the complex processes of island migrations. Before turning to relevant poetry from the Caribbean and Pacific, I will touch upon the ways in which these disciplines have inscribed “an exaggerated form of *anaclisis*, or ‘propping’ of one landscape paradigm upon another” (Bunn 144) where notions of geographic, botanical, and social fixity are overlaid upon islands and islanders’ mobility .

Contemporary continental discourse associates tropical island nations with isolation and premodernity (an erasure of colonial contact) and commonly relegates island spaces as “museums” for tourism, anthropological inquiry, or sociological praxis. This can be viewed in relation to Foucault’s definition of heterotopias — these are “counter-sites, a kind of effectively enacted utopia in which real sites, all the other real sites that can be found within the culture, are simultaneously represented, contested, and inverted” (24). “Their role is to create a space that is other, another real space, as perfect, as meticulous, as well arranged as ours is messy, ill-constructed, and jumbled” (27). Foucault’s term has resonance with the history of English imperialism in that England’s claim to

islandness (which entails a suppression of Wales and Scotland) derives from both the political establishment of the United Kingdom and its subsequent colonial expansion overseas. Consequent to a long history of colonial practice, the cultural topography once associated with imperial England (its isolation from continental Europe) then becomes projected onto *other* island nations that, as explained by Phil Cohen and Gillian Beer, are reformulated as remote and isolated only in relation to the geographies of industrialized Great Britain.

The discursive construction of the English isle is evident in colonial secretary C.S. Adderly's description of England: "[t]his little island wants not energy, but only territory and basis to extend itself; its sea-girt home would then become the citadel of one of the greatest of the empires" (qtd. in Hyam 2). Britain then becomes articulated as an expanding isle as it extends its insular geography through global empire building. The tension between the contained English isle and its propensity to expand outwards by maritime domination draws attention to the relationship between a limited island space which, in imperial rhetoric, is destined to send its "overcrowded" populations into colonial lands. Thus, the configuration of this "island story"¹ is transformed from a space of received colonists (early Anglo-Saxon invasion of the British isles) to a discrete sovereign entity that no longer receives visitors or settlers but propels them outwards to people its colonies. Great Britain is then discursively refashioned as a "repeating island"² throughout its colonies in the Caribbean and Pacific, as suggested by the toponyms New Albion, New Britain, New Hebrides, New Ireland, and "Little England," or Barbados.

These brief historical points highlight the ways in which the island is simultaneously positioned as isolated yet deeply susceptible to migration and settlement. Why it persists as a metaphor for seclusion, leisure, isolation, and relaxation for the continental visitor is a question well worth asking. For while some areas are easily recognizable as islands (such as those that comprise the Caribbean and Pacific archipelagoes), others, due to latitude, climate and capitalist development, are not. It seems that what the West associates with the signifier "island" is a remote, temperate, and geographical ideal which is divorced from the colder weather of the northern

climates and high industrialization, which of course was created by the occupation of these very same tropical islands. In other words, the tropical and atemporal isle can only signify as such when it is constructed in binary opposition to the history and geography of its continental visitors. But such constructions are never homogenous or static; as economic and cultural registers shift, the formulation of remoteness becomes dependent upon the emergence of new centres of island immigration and nationhood.

In the Western imagination, "island" and "islandness" have metaphorical nuances which are contingent upon the repercussions of European colonialism and continental migration towards island spaces; of course, the colonial desire for remote islands has a concrete material basis. For example, in his analysis of European colonial documents of the Medieval and Renaissance era, Alfred Crosby concludes that their experiments in the eastern Atlantic archipelagoes (the Canaries and Madeira) taught the Europeans they must seek lands: which were remote enough to discourage European epidemiological susceptibility; remote enough that they would not be occupied by horses to ensure European military advantage; distant enough so that native populations had little defense against introduced disease; and finally, lands which were not inhabited by ocean-voyaging peoples (102). The key descriptive term for the purposes of this paper is the repetition of the word "remote", which, as a near synonym for island, is seen to be central to the successful process of colonization. Closely aligned to the imposed concepts of remoteness and isolation is the colonial imperative to erase islanders' migratory histories. European experiments in the eastern Atlantic archipelagoes, coupled with ancient European narratives of mythic islands such as Antillia, Atlantis, and Terra Australis Incognita which were destined to be "found," contributed greatly to the later (re)construction and settlement of the Caribbean and Pacific islands and a discursive refashioning of their isolation. The islands and inhabitants are paradoxically positioned as "contained" and "isolated," yet this belies the consistent visitation by colonials, shipwreck, anthropology, and tourism — in fact, the narrative of island isolation depends upon these visitors.

The term "island" does not signify simply a small tract of land surrounded by water but also, according to *Merriam-Webster's*

Collegiate Dictionary, “something resembling an island especially in its *isolated or surrounded position* . . . an isolated group or area; especially: *an isolated ethnological group*” (emphasis added). *Webster’s* definition of the island is clearly dependent upon Western evolutionary and anthropological methodologies. Thus, the construction of the island as remote is contingent upon the cultural and geographic centre that employs it. For example, Patrick Kirch explains that (Pacific) island societies have been “fertile intellectual terrain for anthropology . . . (and) have long provided inspirational material for the advance of anthropological method and theory” (1). One historian referred to the “insular” Pacific islands as “so splendidly splittable into PhD topics” (Spate qtd. in Kirch 2). Kirch cites a number of important anthropological theories which are entirely dependent upon island culture and topography. As in other discursive fields, the islands are perceived as isolated and contained laboratories. Significantly, Kirch points out that anthropologists have been so entrenched in the discourse of island boundedness, isolation, and atemporality (“shallow time depth”) that archeological inquiries were hardly made until recently; interpretations of heavily scrutinized islands such as Tikopia were so focused on “internal processes of change [that] regional [archipelagic] exchange networks” were completely overlooked (4). The example cited by Kirch has ample precedence; the reductive division of the Pacific Islands into Melanesia, Polynesia, and Micronesia areas highlights the ways in which migration and exchange between the islands were inconceivable to the continental arrivants. Arbitrary cultural divisions were also made from the “peaceful Arawaks” of the Caribbean and the supposedly fierce Caribs.³ Anthropologists have traced the linguistic similarities between the Carib and Arawak to point out that, like Oceania, the region had been interconnected by trade routes for centuries before European arrival. This ideological segregation of archipelagoes into isolated islands then travelled westward from the Caribbean and finally to the Pacific.

Like the supposedly static native visited by the privileged anthropologist, islanders are often perceived in popular discourse as symbols of the evolutionary past. Arjun Appadurai asserts that the “native” association with place (especially in wake of his/her colonial displacement) has resulted in an image of native “confinement”

and “incarceration” (37). Such constructions, according to Appadurai, derive from the “quintessentially mobile” anthropologist who visits the native in his or her “natural environment.” In this sense, natives and islanders become “creatures of the anthropological imagination” (39). Others have pointed out that Enlightenment ideology and anthropological praxis position the native in a homogeneous, prepositional time antecedent to the narrative of European, linear-based progress. It is in this way that, as both Johannes Fabian and James Clifford assert, island societies are de-historicized and represented as an undeveloped and premature moment in the trajectory of Western biological and cultural evolutionism. Ultimately,

any form of temporal reference — even geological time, the time of erosion and sedimentation — is potentially threatening because it may remind of prior historical violence that prepared the way for this foreign invasion. Time, in other words, is experienced in a peculiar way. The settler landscape cannot afford the Romantic luxury of bathing in the past, in deep history, because the past is the domain of the Other, and history is the history of dispossession. (Bunn 143)

This construction of isolated island space is an implicit consequence of European colonialism and has a tremendously complex history. The island has functioned ideologically in various historical eras as a “new Eden,” a socio-political utopia, a “refreshment” stop for long maritime journeys, and the contained space where shipwrecked men (or boys) may reconstruct their metropolitan homes. The island archipelagoes of the Canary and Madeira islands of the eastern Atlantic were the first laboratories for European maritime colonialism and the first sugar plantations of the Atlantic Ocean. This continental experiment in island colonization, deforestation, sugar plantocracy and slavery was then repeated throughout the Caribbean islands. The use of one island archipelago as an ideological template for the next reveals the ways in which continental discourse of islands repeated itself along a westward trajectory. For example, the Canary Islands were not only ideological and colonial laboratories of Europe, but also an important cartographic point that caused Christopher Columbus to situate his “discovery” of the Caribbean as “off the Canary Islands” (16). The ideological mapping is rendered materially visible when we remember that Columbus picked up sugar cane in the Canaries and transplanted it to the Caribbean.

Islands have not only functioned as colonial or socio-political spaces of experiment, but have facilitated tremendous ecological, anthropological, and biological theory. As Crosby and Grove point out, European deforestation of the Canary and Caribbean islands created the first environmental conservation laws of Spain, Britain and France. It was primarily due to the island environments of Mauritius and the Galapagos that Charles Darwin was able to theorize the “origins of species”; the Caribbean (and later the Pacific) islands were one of the first sites of European ethnography;⁴ and Atlantic, Indian Ocean, and Pacific islands were the templates upon which Rousseau based his vision of the *homme naturel*.⁵ Island topographies have not only materially benefitted Europe (seen most obviously in the sugar plantation systems of the Caribbean), but have provided the botanical, anthropological, biological, environmental, and ideological space for European laboratories, experimentation, and development. The trope of island refreshment, fecundity, and exoticism would be repeated throughout Pacific island visitation,⁶ and finds its contemporary manifestation in tourism discourse. Yet this continental discourse of “pacific” (peaceful) island visitation has been largely ignored. As Marshall Sahlins explains, “[t]he heretofore obscure histories of remote islands deserve a place alongside the self-contemplation of the European past — or the history of ‘civilizations’ for their own remarkable contributions to an historical understanding” (72).

II. Western Heterotopias: Antipodes and Antilles

My objective is not to homogenize the role of the island across history but to call into question its significations in different cultural and historical movements, and to argue that, in the words of Peter Hulme, “a particular ideological discourse comes into existence through a process of tactical adaptation of earlier discourses” (“Hurricanes” 56). I have already cited a few of the elisions that occur when islands are segregated from their archipelagoes and associated continents to the extent that the island becomes isolated from historical time. Some contextualization might be useful here, especially in reference to “lost” islands such as Plato’s Atlantis. While Plato originally described Atlantis as a continent surrounded by archipelagoes, Atlantis has been reimagined as an

isolated utopian island. Plato's Atlantis originally was situated as a "counter-land" to the imaginary Athenian empire; the ideological duality of the two empires reflects what appeared in Greek cartography where Terra Australis Incognita would function as the "counter-land" to the continents of the Northern Hemisphere. The Atlantis legend was submerged from popular discourse and did not reemerge until the early imperial voyages of Europe, a history which highlights the narrative conflation of isolated utopian isles and colonialism.

Other imaginary isles inform the reproduction of Caribbean and Pacific islands and represent a system of island heterotopology. In the early fifteenth century, an eighth-century legend re-emerged in Europe which detailed the exodus of seven Bishops from Lisbon to uncharted Atlantic islands where they erected seven cities and a Christian utopia. These islands were significantly called "Antillia" (counter-island) and frequently appeared on pre-Columbian maps. Clearly the notion of the "counter-island," like the "antipodes" ("opposite feet"), is conflated in these myths of "lost" and "found" islands. In addition to signifying the circulation of island myths across Europe, such terms also suggest a discursive construction of predetermined islands that were literally mapped before they were found. These island myths were well known by Columbus; Flint observes that before Columbus departed on his first trans-Atlantic voyage, the astronomer Toscanelli suggested Antillia as a stopover on the way to Cathay. The myths represent a slippage between the etymological definition of the word "utopia" as "no place" to an idealistic space of expectation (eutopia) that would be incorporated into Medieval and Renaissance cartography. This "Columbian hermeneutics of discovery" (Zamora 136) is articulated in Barbadian poet Kamau Brathwaite's "The Emigrants." The Caribbean speaker observes, "Columbus from his after-/deck watched heights he hoped for/rocks he dreamed, rise solid from my simple water":

What did this journey mean, this
new world mean: dis-
covery? Or a return to terrors
he had sailed from, known before?
("The Emigrants" 53; lines 77-80)

The legends circulating amidst European circles of this time inevitably formulated anticipated island landfall on the westward passage to “the Indies.”⁷ Since Marco Polo’s narrative had already described great island archipelagoes along the coast of China, Columbus’ arrival in the Caribbean islands seemed to have been predestined in a variety of space/time collapses between Antillian and Asian island narratives. This predestination is strikingly apparent in Columbus’ dual name for the Caribbean as the “West Indies” and “Antilles.” These imagined islands were also central to the naming of the Virgin Islands (based on the European legend of St. Ursula), Brazil (an Irish island legend), and Tahiti’s reformulation as the island of Aphrodite, or the “Nouvelle Cythère.”⁸

In Derek Walcott’s imagination, Eden and the Nouvelle Cythère are merged in the Caribbean where pomegranates or “Pommes de Cythère” are understood as “bitter Cytherean apple(s)” (14). As a writer who is particularly concerned with unraveling the ideological, human, and botanical transplantations from the old world to the new, he calls attention to how the spatial mapping of western desire follows the trajectory of Greco-Christian spiritual fulfillment:

So where is Cythera? It, too, is far and feverish,
it dilates on the horizon of his near-delirium, near
and then further . . . it is as much nowhere
as these broad-leafed islands . . .
Paradise is life repeated spectrally.

(Collected Poems 481; lines 9-16)

Walcott’s stanza highlights the ways in which articulations of the island, a chronotope of desire, conflate the temporal and spatial longings of Christian imperialism.

In contrast to the notion that islands represent fixed, static spaces, these “repeating island” stories highlight how ideological island constructions have traveled with European migration and voyaging. While St. Ursula’s islands and Antillia became cartographically fixed by Columbus in the Caribbean, other imagined islands like the Antipodes (Terra Australis Incognita) moved westward, out of the Atlantic region towards the Pacific as more islands were charted by Europeans.⁹ Of course, these imagined island topographies that “dilated on the horizon” were never homogeneously defined. Within their own time period they represent a system of

"ante-islands" or heterotopias, alternately idyllic or inhabited by ruthless cannibals. This contradiction is apparent in the colonial naming of the Caribbean Islands (the "caribees" or cannibals) and the supposedly more peaceful "Pacific."

One can read a system of heterotopology in the ideological construction of anticipated island landfall, the colonial botanical gardens generated from European imperialism, and the vast array of artistic and literary depictions of island topoi, shipwrecks, and contact with "Indians" which dominated the European imagination. Like orientalism, a system of *islandism* was constructed less through contact with others than through complex textual exchange between Europeans.

III. Remapping the Porno-Tropics

Our space has strange effects. For one thing, it unleashes desire. . . .
Searching in vain for plenitude, desire must make do with words, with
the rhetoric of desire.

HENRI LEFEBVRE (97)

The continental desire for islands has not escaped the notice of Caribbean and Pacific Island writers who have created an alternative system of heterotopology which both refashions the colonial construction of island spaces and also suggests more pressing post-colonial concerns. For example, Fijian poet Sudesh Mishra parodies Euro-American male "Beachcombers" in the Pacific who "breathed the virginal oil from a Gaugin canvas/and trafficked fantasies of semening the splayed pages/of banana leaves" (*Rahu* 33, lines 10-12). Dominican Phyllis Allfrey also addresses this desire in her poem "Love for an Island," where "passion" for islands expands from the private, sexual realm; it "overflows the boundary of bedrooms/and courses past the fragile walls of home" (171; lines 2-4). As in Mishra's poem, the colonizing and "rapacious/craving for a possession rude and whole" is specifically marked in Allfrey's work as a masculine desire where "lovers of islands drive their stake" into the feminized soil to regenerate race and nation: "Their passion drives them to perpetuation" (line 17). Yet science and technology, the general means by which continental visitors conquer and suppress island landscapes, are shown to be ineffective against the actively resistant tropical landscape. The colonial men "dig . . .

plant . . . build and they aspire,” but “when they die/the forest covers up their set desire” (19-20). Allfrey undermines colonial erections to immortality by asserting that the “ultimate memorial” becomes their corporeal remains of “decay.” Although one could certainly argue that the Caribbean islands were the first spaces permanently transformed to feed the machines of early industrial capitalism, Allfrey’s poem resists the European reconstruction of the landscape by inverting the colonial hierarchy between nature and culture. Ultimately, the imposed historiography decays and the colonials “blend their flesh with the beloved clay” (172). The process of European/continental anaclysis is forced (to use a Jamaican term) to “ruinate.”

Derek Walcott also highlights the ways in which island space is eroticised by continentals, but he complicates the relationship between passion for islands and colonial arrivants, while also highlighting the importance of imaginatively and discursively remapping the archipelago. He explains that to merely name an island is “for readers who like travellers praise/their beds and beaches as the same.” Beds and beaches are metonymically linked to highlight what Anne McClintock in another context has called the colonial discourse of “porno-tropics” (22). Ultimately, Walcott asserts that “islands can only exist/if we have loved in them.” Walcott’s definition of love is far from the porno-tropic inscription of colonial desire; “to love in them” is to write

Verse crisp as sand, clear as sunlight,
Cold as the curled wave, ordinary
As a tumbler of island water.

(*Collected Poems* 52; lines 8-10)

The steamy haze of colonial desire is reconfigured into “crisp,” “cold” and “ordinary” prose.

As an island traveller, Walcott reveals the ways in which European heterotologies such as *Robinson Crusoe* and *Treasure Island* can still appeal to the contemporary Caribbean imagination. From Crusoe’s narrative the Caribbean writer “learns to shape . . . the language of a race” (94). If islands are ideal sites to explore origins, particularly phylogeny, then the trope of the European castaway who needs to refashion his culture and language in isolation from his origins can be reconfigured as a (masculinist) metaphor for African diasporic island cultures. “Posing as naturalists/drunks,

castaways, beachcombers, all of us/yearn for those fantasies/of innocence" (94). In a similar vein, Mishra's travels between Fiji and Australia contribute to his wish "to be cast/Adrift . . . oblivious to destination and destiny" ("Dear Syd" 96-97). Like Walcott's desire for "fantasies of innocence," Mishra articulates a "romantic" castaway's wish to escape "an island/where tyrants" rule in post-coup Fiji (97). Some Caribbean and Pacific male writers have thus reformulated the Western trope of the island castaway into the postcolonial writer in ex-isle; they may be critiqued for their reliance upon masculine literary paradigms, but overall these works reflect one method of remapping island spaces.

If geography is the first site of colonial rupture — the material space where colonization takes place — then the process of decolonization must begin with revised cartographies. Ultimately, "the land is recoverable at first only through the imagination" (Said 225). This has particular relevance to the Caribbean, a site of the violent relocation of peoples from all over the globe. In *Caribbean Discourse*, Édouard Glissant theorizes that due to the plantation system, Caribbean peoples have not yet developed a relationship to the landscape that is disentangled from the history of enforced labour. Because of the material compression of land/labour, "Caribbean people did not relate even a mythological chronology of this land to their knowledge of this country, and so nature and culture have not formed a dialectical whole that informs people's consciousness" (63). Glissant calls forth the region's literary figures to initiate a reterritorialization that reflects the various positions of the Caribbean subject. An effort to remap and reterritorialize the Caribbean islands can be found in Kamau Brathwaite's poem "Harbour" where

the islands float. unmoored and moisture laden . . .
 lidded with dream and dew . . .
 and find no anchor of love . . . no safe hollow . . .
 bleeding the pages of history's horror.

(63; lines 27-29, 31,33)

Brathwaite echoes Walcott's sentiment that "these islands have drifted from anchorage" (12). Like Walcott's effort to "love" the islands by writing them into being, an aesthetic "eros of home" cleverly suggested in the title of his collection *Omeros*, Brathwaite's poetry also seeks an "anchor of love" amidst a history of violence. It is in this way that Lefebvre's remarks on the spatialized "rhetoric of

desire” are refashioned from the discourse of porno-tropics to an inscription of domestic, naturalized, and often national passion.

IV. Nationalist Island Heterotopias

The attempt to chart a national and regional geography can also be seen in Sam Selvon’s early novel, *An Island Is a World*. In that work, the protagonist Foster despairs over his lack of identification with his repatriating Indian family and his inability to feel a sense of national roots in his (still colonial) Trinidad. He despairs: “Of what material loss would it be to the world if the island suddenly sank under the sea?” (212). In contrast to the sinking of Atlantis, which was mourned and sought for millennia, Foster senses that in this world which entirely “consisted of the continents” (211), the disappearance of a small island like Trinidad would not alter political cartographies. Like Walcott, Selvon suggests that the ability to fix small island states on the map has everything to do with a domestic passion — in the broadest sense of the term — for islands. In the works briefly discussed here, it takes a particular effort of both cultural faith and national love to write and sing the islands into being. Walcott describes this as “The litany of islands/The rosary of archipelagoes/The amen of calm waters” (46).

The process of excavating and remapping island spaces involves an archeology which unearths the layers of colonial anaculis. Walcott is not alone in refashioning an older utopian discourse which speaks more directly towards contemporary island experiences. Jamaican poet Dennis Scott’s “Homecoming” explains that like the European searches for Antillia and the Antipodes, “the wind is making countries/in the air” and that his narrator is enmeshed in “Eldorado voyages [and a] sea of dreams” from which arise beckoning “sirens.” Like Selvon’s protonationalist novel, Scott’s “thin topographies of dream” become “old, familiar maps” (299) from which to navigate an independent course. In a similar vein, Jan Carew’s poem “Our Home” deliberately draws upon the island utopia of continental vision, describing the “emerald” Caribbean landscape, “silver sands . . . moon burnished seas . . . (and) golden beaches” to juxtapose them with a heterotopic “archipelago of famished hearts” where islanders are “caged [within] tiger-orchid teeth” (211). But the theme of island redemption, so central to Western historical inscriptions of island colonies, becomes

resuscitated in a Caribbean context where “secret Fanonesque dreams” erupt, and relief from “half a millennium/of pain” (211) is achieved when Fidel Castro overthrows the US-backed dictator Fulgencio Batista. Carew’s poem revisions the early utopian text of Sir Thomas More to gesture towards a political and social vision which resists European and American imperialism and firmly locates the utopian “no place” in socialist Cuba.

If the poets mentioned above are revisioning Western discourses of idyllic islands to produce a poetics of anticolonial nationalism, they do so with the cognizance that discourses of island paradise can also be utilized in ways which perpetuate islanders’ social stratification. Recent poetry from both the Caribbean and Pacific suggests that it is not merely continental visitors who impose the notion of an ahistorical paradise upon islands, but that this is also a function of island nation-building and a strategy of the elite adapted from colonial discourse to disguise uneven economic relations in postcolonial nations. The narrator of Walcott’s “Tropic Zone” observes a “mural that has nationalized Eden/in vehement acrylics, and this universal theme” is used for a beer advertisement in Cuba (498). In Walcott’s poem, capitalism finds its way to Cuba and is rendered as colonial nostalgia for an island Eden. In Samoan Albert Wendt’s work, the discourse of “fa’a Samoa,” or the Samoan way, is exposed as an alignment between the social strata of colonials and the native elite:

the faa-samoa is perfect, they sd . . .
 we have no orphans, no one starves
 we share everything, they sd . . .
 and we all have alofa [love]
 for one another, they sd . . .
 its true, they sd, our samoa
 is a paradise. (46; lines 1, 4-5, 7-8, 10-11)

Yet the narrator recognizes that the island is “alive with corpses . . . (and an) army of hungry kids.” He observes

malnourished children in dirty wards
 an old woman begging in the bank
 my generation migrating overseas
 for jobs . . .
 all growing fat in
 a blind man’s paradise.
 (46; lines 19-22, 27-28)

Ultimately, “this tropical paradise is all a vampire’s lie” (49). Wendt reveals the ways in which elite emigrations from island spaces may result in the appropriation of continental discourses of nationalist, pre-contact utopias.

V. Remapping Small Islands

And my special geography too; the world map made for my own use, not tinted with the arbitrary colors of scholars, but with the geometry of my spilled blood, I accept both the determination of my biology . . . measured by the compass of my suffering.

AIMÉ CÉSAIRE, “Notebook of a Return to the Native Land” (77)

Like the schooners whose “needles of their masts . . . thread the archipelagoes” (Walcott 44), both Caribbean and Pacific writers have imaginatively threaded islands together to form an interconnected, regional archipelago. The remapping of small island states into larger archipelagoes is central to the process of decolonizing the balkanization of both regions. In his essay “Our Sea of Islands,” Tongan writer Epeli Hau’ofa writes that he was led to believe that “the small island states and territories of the Pacific . . . are much too small, too poorly endowed with resources, and too isolated from the centres of economic growth for their inhabitants ever to be able to rise above their present condition of dependence” (88). Hau’ofa was “so bound to the notion of ‘smallness’ that [he felt that] even if we approved our approaches to production for example, the absolute size of our islands would still impose such severe limitations that we would be defeated in the end” (89). Hau’ofa’s sentiments echo V.S. Naipaul’s infamous statement, “nothing was created in the British West Indies. . . . There were only plantations, prosperity, decline, neglect: *the size of the islands called for nothing else*” (emphasis added 27). Naipaul’s lament that “Trinidad was too unimportant and we could never be convinced of the value of reading the history of a place which was, as everyone said, only a dot on the map of the world” (42) is prefigured in Selvon’s *An Island is a World*, published seven years earlier, which begins with a remarkably similar image:

The world spun in [Foster’s] brain, and he imagined the island of Trinidad. . . . He saw it on the globe, with the Americas sprawled like giant shadows above and below, and the endless Atlantic lapping the

coastlines of the continents and the green islands of the Caribbean.
 . . . Foster imagined Trinidad as it was, a mere dot on the globe. (1)

Working within the western power structures which prioritize size, might, military, and technological power (seen in both regions in continuing global capitalism and in what Teresia Teaiwa describes as “militourism”), the island voice is often cartographically diminished to the supposed insignificance of its very landscape; small size becomes a metonymy for the lack of history. In “Homage to Gregorias,” Walcott’s narrator laments, “[t]here was no history. No memory/Rocks haunted by seabirds, that was all” (256). The inability to represent the space/time of small islands within continental cartography is highlighted in Hau’ofa’s short story “Blessed are the Meek,” which describes a resident of the fictional island of Tiko as:

A citizen of a tiny country, so small that mankind is advised not to look for it on a classroom globe for it will only search in vain. More often than not cartographers leave Tiko out of their charts altogether because they can’t be bothered looking for a dot sufficiently small to represent it faithfully and at the same time big enough to be seen without the aid of a microscope. (69)

Hau’ofa’s quote is a direct parody of an early colonial observation on Fiji where the Fijian is said to “look with pleasure on a globe, as a representation of the world, until directed to contrast Fiji with Asia or America, when his joy ceases, and he acknowledges, with a forced smile, ‘our land is not larger than the dung of a fly’; but, on rejoining his comrades, he pronounces the globe a ‘lying ball’” (Williams 95).¹⁰

Here “geography serv[es] as a metaphor for history — as well it might in islands whose history has been so deeply influenced by geographical factors” (Rohlehr 235). It is in this way that narrative, cartography, and colonial history are shown in shifting relation to each other and highlighted as central to the process of colonial excavation. This is most apparent in Brathwaite’s poem “Islands,” where he reveals the process to be primarily a matter of (re)vision. In this poem, each stanza begins with the phrase “So looking through a map/of the islands” (204), where the reader perceives “rocks, history’s hot/likes, rot-/ting hulls, cannon wheels, the sun’s slums: if you hate us,” but “[J]ewels/if there is delight in your eyes”

(204). Brathwaite asserts that if “the dust/ is not swept out” of the houses and history, then “the islands’ jewels . . . will remain rocks” (205). Like Walcott, Brathwaite reveals the intersections between literary discourse, cultural history, and island cartography. The transformative and metaphoric power of literary creation enables the possibility of new island maps. In this way Brathwaite challenges De Gaulle’s description of the Caribbean islands as “specks of dust” (qtd. in Rohlehr 237) and offers an alternative vision of “rocks” and “dots.”

Although Caribbean poets like Eric Roach (Tobago) have written that “Islands cage us/and we long to leave them” (161), or, as Jamaica Kincaid observes of Antigua, “it is as if . . . the beauty were a prison” (79), it seems that the island “expansion” from colony to nation provides one means of remapping these “dots” and “cages.” Jamaican poet/performer Louise Bennett draws attention to — and gently mocks — the nationalist remapping of island spaces. In her poem “Independance” she writes:

She hope dem caution worl'-map
 Fe stop draw Jamaica small
 For de lickle speck can't show
 We independantniss at all.

(169; lines 17-20)

By anthropomorphizing “worl'-map,” Bennett calls attention to cartography’s human origins, the ways in which colonialist occupations of land facilitate ideological reductions of colonized cultures, and gestures towards the postcolonial nationalist movements that enlarge island cartographies. If “an island is a world, and everywhere that people live, they create their own worlds” (Selvon 73), then, like nationalist agendas, archipelagic identifications such as the (West Indian) “Federation [become] the big move to put us on the map” (Selvon 147).

The poems briefly reviewed in this section share a concern with imaginatively remapping a nationalist agenda for islands spaces and as such might be termed “I-land” discourse. I borrow this term from M. Nourbese Philip (Trinidad & Tobago), who calls attention to how island history has been recorded by occupants of larger, continental landscapes without the presence of the “I-lander.” She writes, “[f]or me, the ‘story’ that wanted out, wanted to tell itself, is one of islandness and its transformation into *I-landness*” (41). By

prioritizing the subjectivity of the I-land dweller, the island subject can reclaim and reoccupy the land/seascape in a way that recharts colonial and heterotopic discourse. Philip draws attention to the primacy of “I” to foreground the self-expression of the I-land subject and her complicated relationship to the land/sea. The interrelationship between the I-land body, the watered landscape, and nation/region building are thus recentered.

VI. Tidalectics: The Unity is Submarine

We sweat and cry salt water, so we know that the ocean is really in our blood.

TERESIA TEAIWA (qtd. in Hau’ofa, “The Ocean in Us,” 124)

By employing more complex geo/aquatic metaphors, reductive images of the island can be freed from their supposed isolation from continental metropolises. If one uses the perspective of the continental peoples, islands are isolated “emergences” in vast oceans, separated from their archipelagic counterparts. Yet island chains are connected subaquatically. Geologist Patrick Nunn, remarking on the “the continuation of the islands under the sea,” explains that “most Pacific islands are no more than the tips . . . of huge ocean-floor volcanoes: to pretend that their formation can be diagnosed solely from looking at those parts above sea level is ludicrous” (112). If “the unity is submarine,” as Brathwaite writes (*Contradictory* 64), then islands can be seen as both autonomous and geographically, politically and culturally connected to their island neighbors. As Jean Binta Breeze explains of the Caribbean, “under this ocean/we hold hands” (77). Islands inevitably incorporate a dialectic between seclusion and invasion, the ocean and land, and arrivants and migrants. As Glissant reminds us, “each island embodies openness. The dialectic between inside and outside is reflected in the relationship of land and sea” (*Caribbean* 139).

The primacy of the sea is evident in Hau’ofa’s work, which provides an important theoretical framework with which to view the literatures of archipelagoes. Hau’ofa asserts, “[t]here is a gulf between viewing the Pacific as ‘islands in a far sea’ and as ‘a sea of islands.’ The first emphasizes dry surfaces in a vast ocean far from the centres of power . . . [which] stress[es] the smallness and remoteness of the islands. The second is a more holistic perspective in which things are seen in the totality of their relationships” (91).

Hau'ofa reorients land and territory-based analysis towards the complex processes of intercultural generation by trans-oceanic movement. Inspired by Walcott's sentiment that "the sea is history" (*Collected Poems* 364), Hau'ofa concludes that "our roots, our origins are embedded in the sea," which is "our pathway to each other" ("Ocean" 147, 148).

In a remarkably similar vein, Glissant draws upon an oceanography that represents a nativizing return to island transculturation. "Before the arrival of Columbus the Caribbean archipelago was constantly linked by a system of communication." Yet "colonization has balkanized the Caribbean . . . and disturbed this relationship" (*Caribbean* 248). Despite the continued segregation of the Caribbean and Pacific Islands, the reconstruction of this "system of communication," a view of the archipelagoes as an aquatic rhizome, is shared between these theorists whose works permeate various linguistic, cultural, and geographic borders.

The focus on aquatic trajectories is a hallmark of island theorists and diasporic discourse. Like Hau'ofa and Glissant, Antonio Benítez-Rojo also employs aquatic metaphors to focus more specifically on the waters that encompass the Caribbean, asserting that the Caribbean is a "meta-archipelago" which has the "virtue of having neither a boundary nor a centre" (4). He highlights the historic diaspora of Caribbean peoples in an effort to destabilize ethnic essentialism, and configures the region as much in flux as the waters that surround it. By visualizing the archipelago as an island that repeats itself into varying fractal spaces, Benítez-Rojo concludes: "[t]he culture of the Caribbean . . . is not terrestrial but aquatic. . . . The Caribbean is the natural and indispensable realm of marine currents, of waves, of folds and double folds, of fluidity and sinuosity" (11). Water appeals because of its lack of fixity and rootedness; a "transitory element, it is the essential ontological metamorphosis between heaven and earth. A being dedicated to water is a being in flux" (Bachelard 6). Since migration and creolization are so characteristic of island cultural formations, watery trajectories provide an apt metaphor for ethnicities "in flux." For example, Wendt refers to himself as "a pelagic fish on permanent migration" (13). Walcott refers to the Caribbean as "the liquid Antilles" (44) and charts the "iconography of the sea" (240). To

Walcott, the sea holds what “the historian cannot hear, the howls/ of all the races that crossed the water” (285). All of these “tidalectics”¹¹ are concerned with aquatic spaces that are materially unmarked by European monuments. To foreground middle passage historiography and other oceanic trajectories which brought various African, Asian and European settlers to the Caribbean region destabilizes genealogical or filial roots and offers an aquatic reterritorialization in opposition to the colonial architecture that literally constructed the region as European. But an overemphasis on the spatial and historical trajectories of the sea is most poignantly highlighted in Roach’s poem “Love Overgrows a Rock.” His narrator explains: “[m]y eyot jails the heart” and “every dream is drowned” because the island represents “too narrow room pressed down.” The speaker leaves his island by boat in order to “explore” and “turn Columbus’s blunder back” (127). Ultimately he decides to “disdain the sea” and asks his audience to “come, seine the archipelago . . . gather the islands’ hills/Into the blue horizons of our love” (127). The sea, a vehicle of migrancy in an already diasporic region, may provide a means of addressing colonialist history or as an escape from an “eyot jail,” but ex-isle prevents the careful “sein[ing] of the archipelago.” This poem is all the more significant when we remember that Roach committed suicide at Quinam Bay: “from the spot where he imagined Columbus had landed, he swam out into the green sea” (Ramchand 11).

Roach sets an important example of the ways in which the sea may provide a temporary spatial fix for island writers seeking a larger metaphoric mapping of the region. In its glorification of aquatic migrations, *The Repeating Island* problematically uses marine currents as its trope for superseding social and political hegemonies where “the Peoples of the Sea” (16) travel across the globe, seemingly without linguistic or national boundaries. Yet there is a multiplicity of dangers in turning to the sea to facilitate regionalism. One is that aquatic trajectories may ignore the territorial demands and responsibilities of “I-land” subjectivity. Glissant highlights this when he describes the Caribbean as

a sea that explodes the scattered lands into an arc. . . . *Without necessarily inferring any advantage whatsoever to their situation*, the reality of archipelagos in the Caribbean or the Pacific provides a natural illus-

tration of the thought of Relation. (*Poetics of Relation* 33-4; emphasis added)¹²

Unlike Benítez-Rojo, Glissant refuses to idealize the trajectories of Caribbean migration, warning that “rootlessness provides the space for [Western Historical] glorification. He who never stops leaving, whose route is the Sea . . . is the one who breathes in pure History” (*Caribbean* 230). According to Glissant, overt reliance on marine trajectories to the metropole avoids the need for reterritorialization of the I-land by the postcolonial subject and denies the eruption of (lower case) histories. Ultimately, “when one rediscovers one’s landscape, desire for the other country ceases to be a form of alienation” (234). This calls for a careful balance between roots and routes: “The hope for a Caribbean cultural identity must not be hampered by our people not achieving independence, so that the new Atlantis, our threatened but vital Caribbeaness, would disappear before taking root” (224). Given the high rate of migrancy in the Caribbean region, which is often determined by corporate and neo-imperial capitalism, the “Peoples of the Sea” have circumscribed patterns of migration that are more defined by exploitative labour initiatives than by romantic adventure or quests for regional unity. This is equally an issue in the Pacific; consider, for example, Donald Kalpokas’s poem, “Who am I?”:

I travel abroad with an identity card
 For I am stateless and have no right . . .
 Who am I, lost in this ocean of confusion?
 . . . I am the third citizen of my country
 The only condominium in the world.

(50; lines 9-10, 12, 18-20)

The Pacific Island responses to Hau’ofa’s “Our Sea of Island” also point to important material, cultural, and economic ellipses in his idealistic vision of Oceania. Many of the writers find Hau’ofa’s vision utopian, in that it fails to account, for example, for the ways in which Japanese drift-net fishing, French and US nuclear testing, and toxic waste dumping in the Pacific Ocean circumscribe local sovereignty over the largest ocean on the globe. Others fear that romanticizing emigration from the region supports a continued “brain drain” and the increased economic dependence of these MIRAB societies on migration, remittances, aid, and bureaucracy

(see Bertram and Watters). Vanessa Griffen warns, "let us not romanticise the movement of people, their efforts to survive, and their cheerful embracing, sometimes, of their newly adopted countries" (62). Many other Pacific Island writers remind Hau'ofa of the pressing territorial, national, and local concerns that must take precedence before turning to the sea.

Ultimately, it is not enough simply to reclaim the marine currents of archipelagoes in order to reposition I-lander agency. It is the dialectic *between* land and sea that is of crucial significance. Current theoretical production of the black diaspora shares this tendency to rely upon the ocean as a site of history, a tendency evident in Paul Gilroy's *The Black Atlantic*. The focus on marine currents is a conceptual break from the homogenizing discourses of the nation-state, where historical, cultural, and socio-economic events are traditionally viewed within national parameters.¹³ Yet marine routes cannot be divorced from their associated national territories. As Scott explains, "It is time to plant/feet in our earth. The heart's metronome/insists on this arc of islands/as home" ("Homecoming" 300).

VI. To Seine the Archipelagoes

There are so many islands! As many islands as the stars at night.

DEREK WALCOTT, "The Schooner *Flight*" (361)

This article provides a broad sketch of island discourse in the Caribbean and Pacific and gestures towards some of the alternative mappings of these regions. I'd like to conclude by turning to writers who have addressed the limitations of exclusive I-land or marine subjectivities and who offer new paradigms for conceptualizing literatures of the archipelagoes. Paul Sharrad observes:

An archipelago is a loose system that does not homogenize its constituent islands: each is unique but all are interconnected and they owe their identity not just to what they individually contain but to the sea between them: sea here being not empty space, but road, history, cultural text. (103)

By drawing on ancient Pacific navigation systems, Sharrad outlines a territorial and aquatic mapping of the archipelagoes. Archipelagraphy provides a local focus on "particular sites within the

pattern” yet also functions as a “structure existing only as a network of tracings of wind and tide, flight and quest, ancestors and arrivals, a dynamic of multiple anchorages and constant commuting amongst them” (105). In this way, Sharrad’s contribution dovetails with the alternative mappings provided by Glissant, Philip, and Benítez-Rojo.

This complex system of archipelagraphy is most visible in Walcott’s famous epic, “The Schooner *Flight*.” In this eleven-part poem, the speaker Shabine abandons his wife and mistress to “ship as a seaman” (345); although he laments abandoning his family and home, he must do so because the corrupt elite of Trinidad “poison [his] soul” (346). Shabine, of “a sound colonial education” (346), and of African and European heritage, informs us,

... Well, when I write
 this poem, each phrase go be soaked in salt;
 I go draw and knot every line as tight
 as ropes in this rigging; in simple speech
 my common language go be the wind
 my pages the sails of the schooner Flight (347)

Writing in what Brathwaite would term “nation language,” Shabine goes “salvage diving” (349) through the region’s history; “but this Caribbean so choke with the dead” (349) that he “encounters [the bones of] the middle passage” (352), eighteenth-century pirates who morph into corrupt ministers of the present, and slave-owning ancestors called “History” who refuse to recognize their descendants. The dredging of the region’s history results in a journey through the archipelago and an encounter with a “Blanchisseuse” (351), an imaginative, historical cleansing and renewal. Unlike Ulysses’ journey, Shabine’s voyage is not teleological. Walcott’s reconstruction of the region’s history does not circulate around a particular “I-land” but gestures towards the complexity of archipelagoes. Shabine remarks:

Open the map. More islands there, man
 than peas on a tin plate, all different size,
 one thousand in the Bahamas alone,
 from mountains to low scrub with coral keys,
 and from this bowsprit, I bless every town.

...

I have only one theme:

The bowsprit, the arrow, the longing, the lunging heart —
 the flight to a target whose aim we'll never know,
 vain search for one island that heals with its harbour . . . [yet]
 . . . There are so many islands!

As many islands as the stars at night. (360-61)

Shabine, our sailor-poet, takes us through the currents and I-lands of the Caribbean archipelago — the landscape is transformed from “rocks” and “dots” into the largest conceivable universe. The islands become as vast as stars and as central to the earth’s cosmology — “just as this earth is one/island in archipelagoes of stars” (361). “The sea is History” (364) in this work as in Walcott’s other poems, but diverse island landfalls are central to the enactment of this historiography. It is in this way that Caribbean and Pacific poets share a vision of charting migration practices that emphasize island agency and make significant connections between “I-lands” and “ex-isle.” Although metaphors of trans-oceanic migration are most often gendered masculine, they do not necessarily preclude women’s mobility. For example, Teresia Teaiwa’s poetry collection, *Searching for Nei Nim’anoa*, draws upon this female “figure from Gilbertese mythology” who represents “rootedness and routedness” (ix). Nei Nim’anoa originated from “the tree of life”; in her navigations outside the Gilberts, she “bequeathed a wonderful voyaging tradition to her descendants” (ix). In the poetry from both regions, the ebb and flow between I-lands are brought in complex relation through the paradigm of ancient navigation systems that chart a system of archipelagraphy.

Given the political and material fragmentation of regionalist efforts in both the Caribbean and Pacific, the archipelagraphy outlined here represents a vision, perhaps no less utopian than the continental literature discussed at the beginning of this essay, but one that does interrogate the colonial process of anaclysis, the heterotopic discourses of the islands, and the difficulties of nation building in an era of corporate globalization and ex-isle. The Pacific and Caribbean may represent in many respects a “broken archipelago,” subject to militourism and in danger of being sold to continentals as a “chain store of islands” (Walcott 12, 391). Yet bringing together the utopian, dystopian, and heterotopian island

discourses — always in relation to their respective continents — generates a materialist archipelagraphy that seeks to undermine colonial discourses of island isolation and to fashion broader, anti-colonial alliances across both regions. As the writers addressed here suggest, not until we have remapped island heterotopology, and instituted a loose system of archipelagraphy, can the islands “finally be born” (Breeze 84).

NOTES

- 1 I borrow the term from Gillian Beer. Cohen explains, “in literal, cartographic terms, the landmass of Great Britain was far too large and complex to lend credence to its existence as a simple eye-land. Indeed the colonial enterprise owes much of its utopian drive to the quest for an ideal surrogate island state, an Illyria, whose small-scale physical geography would furnish a natural symbol of sovereignty immediately given to the senses, yet still subject to investigation and control by an empire of the mind furnished with fabulous prospects” (19).
- 2 I employ this differently than in Antonio Benítez-Rojo’s well-known work. This is a point I develop more fully in “Tidalectics.”
- 3 Hulme explains that Carib and Arawak “mark an *internal* division within European perception of the native Caribbean. . . . Indeed the radical dualism of the European response to the native Caribbean — fierce cannibal and noble savage — has such obvious continuities with the classical Mediterranean paradigm that it is tempting to see the whole intricate web of colonial discourse as weaving itself in its own separate space entirely unaffected by any observation of or exchange with native Caribbean cultures” (*Colonial Encounters* 46, 47).
- 4 “‘Carib’ had been the first ethnic name reported to Europe from the New World” (Hulme, *Colonial Encounters* 62), although it did not reflect the islanders’ self-ascription.
- 5 When the majority of the native Caribbean peoples were being destroyed by disease, warfare, and slavery, Enlightenment writers sought to textually incorporate the Caribbean “noble savage.” Rousseau drew upon the documents of French missionaries to celebrate the “natural state” of Caribs in his *Discourse on the Origins of Inequality*. See Hulme and Whitehead for a more thorough description.
- 6 As Bitterli explains, it was the long distance of Pacific island nations from Europe (and hence their lack of military protection and need for water and food) that contributed to the construction of island “refreshment” stops and configured the Pacific Islands differently than the Caribbean. See Grove for a discussion of how Mauritius and St. Helena functioned in similar ways. Of course, European imperialism was not limited to appropriation of island space, but as this has received so little attention I make it the focus of this article.
- 7 Washburn argues that to Columbus, discovery meant “known before.” Columbus’s 1498 letter to the Catholic King argues that he had discovered land that was “well known to the ancients and not unknown, as the envious and ignorant would have it” (Columbus qtd. in Washburn 30). In his analysis of the fifteenth-century documents which circulated around Columbus’s first voyage to the Americas, Washburn points out that landfall was anticipated due to the circulation of voyaging narratives and Spanish documents repeatedly mention the objective to acquire “tierra firme” and “yslas.” Washburn points out that “tierra firme,” unlike our present definition as “continental” land, was not the antonym to island but its synonym.

- ⁸ Imaginary islands such as Antillia and the Antipodes virtually disappeared from maps for centuries until the early voyaging narratives of Marco Polo (1254-1324) were reprinted with the addition of a conjectural southern continent during the early maps of the Renaissance. For romantic constructions of Tahiti see the works of Smith. Eisler discusses the search for the antipodes.
- ⁹ Later eighteenth-century voyages into the Pacific would "transport" Terra Australis further westward with the explorers. "The persistence of this myth is astonishing since it received no support by any voyagers" (Bitterli 157) for over three hundred years of trans-Pacific crossings. The contradictory imaginings of the great southern continent are remarkably like other colonial constructions of the islands of the Caribbean. Before the Euro-Pacific navigations of the late eighteenth century, Terra Australis was a "bipolar" discursive configuration: "on the one hand, that of a generally barren region inhabited by brute savages; on the other, a more beautiful, plentiful land with a far more attractive and hospitable population" (Eisler 2). This bipolar vision was then transferred onto the Pacific peoples, segregating "soft" primitives of Tahiti and Tonga from the "hard" primitives of Aotearoa, Papua New Guinea, and Australia.
- ¹⁰ My thanks to Jolisa Gracewood for calling my attention to this connection. Sudesh Mishra's poem "Feejee" also builds upon Williams' observation by remarking that while cartographers represent the islands as "rude dollops of flyshit on the blue, [and] insignificant," after the 1987 coups, Fiji became "half-stocked with picarons and yahoos/Savouring the nascent turd of nationalism" (8).
- ¹¹ I draw the term from Brathwaite's interview with Nathaniel Mackay. Much of this particular argument derives from my article "Tidalectics."
- ¹² "Poetics of Relation" are defined as "the dialectics between the oral and the written, the thought of multilingualism, the balance between the present moment and duration, the questioning of literary genres, the power of the baroque, the non-projectile imaginary construct" (35).
- ¹³ I develop this point in "Gendering the Ocean Voyage," arguing that Benítez-Rojo and Gilroy ignore the ways in which departures and arrivals are circumscribed by national border policing and gendered migrations. Both avoid the question of postcolonial nationalism in the Caribbean.

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