Queer Migration Beyond Neo-colonial Linearity: The In-betweens and Elsewheres of Afro-Caribbean Queer Migration

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Abstract

This paper aims to expose and disrupt neo-colonial queer migration discourse, within which the Caribbean is positioned as the antithesis of the global north—a space that masquerades itself as mature in matters of equity. As its antithesis, the Caribbean is constructed as quintessentially homophobic, and queer Caribbean migration is imagined as a linear escape from homophobia's headquarters to a utopic refuge whose progressivism necessarily evokes a reverent adoration and gratitude from its refugees. Writing against this construction, this paper centres the complexities of queer Afro-Caribbean migration to, from, between, and beyond the Caribbean and the global north. Employing a critical approach to queer migration, I illustrate some of the ways in which Afro-Caribbean migrants work through the processes of home- and identity-making while being forced to confront multiple systems of oppression. Through an analysis of the book *In Another Place, Not Here* by Dionne Brand, I illustrate the ways Afro-Caribbean migrants navigate inter-related neo-colonial narratives surrounding queer migration that perpetuate the myth of northern maturity vs. southern infancy in matters of equity, the myth of the rare and/or reluctant and undesired queer Caribbean return, and the myth of "modern" queer identities as a social remittance. Through Elizete and Verlia's journeys, Brand brings to life the complexities of queer femme Afro-Caribbean migration as they exist beyond the aforementioned neo-colonial impositions—creating, longing for, and inhabiting elsewheres in both life and death, refusing the demand to worship a mirage of safety in the face of violence, and disillusionment and finding true refuge in one another.

Key Words

Queer migration, Caribbean studies, literature

Introduction

Neo-colonial approaches to queer migration scholarship often construct the global south as "backwards" and "primitive" in relation to the tolerance and recognition of sexual diversity in the global north (Horn 2008). This alleged primitivism is extended to a nation's supposed success or failure in development efforts, as scholars, activists, and white queer communities conflate the presence of their definitions of tolerance and recognition with a sense of moral advancement and maturity (Horn 2008; Walcott 2009). Within this discourse, the Caribbean is constructed as a global south locale that embodies the antithesis of the global north's "maturity" in matters of equity (Walcott 2009, 10), and subsequently shapes queer Caribbean migration as a linear escape from the "infantile" to the "mature."

Writing against this construction, this paper will focus on the complexities of queer Afro-Caribbean migration to, from, between, and beyond the Caribbean and the global north. Using a critical approach to queer migration, I will explore how queer Afro-Caribbean migrants work through processes of home and identity-making while being forced to confront and navigate multiple oppressions and inter-related neo-colonial narratives surrounding queer Caribbean migration. The first section following the introduction will introduce a critical queer migration approach as the principal theoretical framework of this work. The following section is a literature review that will provide a background for understanding queer Caribbean migration scholarship in particular. The final section will analyze the book *In Another Place, Not Here* by Dionne Brand in ways that illustrate the complexities of queer Afro-Caribbean migration as migrants confront, move, and exist beyond the aforementioned neo-colonial impositions.

Introducing Critical Queer Migration

In "Queer/Migration: An Unruly Body of Scholarship," Luibhéid (2008a) introduces questions that are central to the study of queer migration, including: where do queer migrants figure in migration scholarship, policymaking, service provision, activism, and cultural work that is centrally organized around heterosexual migrants and norms? How do we conceptualize queer migration in ways that challenge and reconfigure dominant frameworks? Luibhéid (2008a) also presents some of what queer migration work does, engaging in what she describes as a "double movement." She writes:

> queer migration scholarship insists on recovering, theorizing, and valorizing histories and subjects that have been largely rendered invisible […] in both queer and migration studies, and […] reflect both "alienation from white gay communities and "histories of multiple diasporas" forged through colonialism and capitalism (Luibhéid 2008a, 171).

At the same time, much queer migration scholarship destabilizes the idea of queer migrants as clear subjects, part of a homogenous group: many become "impossible subjects" within this framework, in that they have "unrepresentable histories that exceed existing categories" (Luibhéid 2008a, 171). This necessitates a study of queer migration that challenges the regimes of power and knowledge that produce this impossibility and analyzes the ways these subjects navigate the conditions of impossibility (Luibhéid 2008a).

In "Sexuality, Migration, and the Shifting Line between Legal and Illegal Status," Luibhéid (2008b) establishes a critical approach to queer migration, with special attention to the (re)configuration of queer migration theory as a whole and the genealogy of constructions of queer migration that it provides. She poses a challenge to the neoliberal conflation of "legal" vs. "illegal" immigration status with evidence or markers for individual character assessments: legal immigrants are constructed as persons of good character and illegal immigrants are constructed outside of that, with a particular emphasis on the ways that heteronormative immigration control has a history of refusing to recognize many types of relationships (Luibhéid 2008b). Luibhéid refutes this construction,

offering in its stead a critical analysis of these legal status distinctions that reveals them to be "outcomes of contingent, changing relations of power, including sexuality (which is often framed through a discourse of family) as it intersects with hierarchies of race, gender, class, and geopolitics" (289).

This understanding of the distinction between legal vs. illegal immigration status functions, then, as an invitation for us to consider the potential of studying sexuality within the context of migration in ways that contest and renegotiate the distinction between legal and illegal, but also reveal the multiple relations of power housed and acting within this distinction (289). Ultimately, since heteronormative immigration control has refused recognition based on sexuality (295), but also on intersecting gender, racial class, and geopolitical factors (289), the struggle for the recognition of queer migrants must be expanded to challenge these intersecting hierarchies in order to truly challenge the status quo.

Here, in this study of queer Afro-Caribbean migrants to, between, and beyond the Caribbean and the global north, with a particular focus on North America, I accept Lubhéid's invitation to consider the multiple relations of power at work within queer migration studies. This work aims to take seriously the ways in which multiple systems of oppression, with a particular emphasis on race, shape the migratory experiences of queer Caribbean folks as they move and exist, here, there, in-between, and beyond.

Literature Review

The Caribbean is a region of sustained focus within queer migration work. Often constructed within neocolonial frameworks as "one of the most homophobic places in the world—with Jamaica at its epicenter" (Walcott 2009, 4), critical approaches to queer migration studies work to disrupt narratives that position the Caribbean as the antithesis of modern ethics and development. To this end, queer migration scholars who work towards this disruption identify and deconstruct three myths that are foundational to this neo-colonial construction: the myth of maturity vs. infancy in matters of equity; the myth of the rare and/or reluctant and undesired queer Caribbean return; and the myth of "modern queerness" as a social remittance. This brief literature review engages with the work of Maja Horn (2008), Rinaldo Walcott (2009), and Carlos Decena (2008) within this context.

The Myth of Maturity vs. Infancy

Maja Horn introduces the myth of primitivism vs. advancement in development as it pertains to queerness and migration in "Queer Caribbean Homecomings: The Collaborative Art Exhibits of Nelson Ricart-Guerrero and Christian Vauzelle" (2008). Here, Horn explains that this myth encompasses a dynamic wherein tolerance of sexual diversity, or lack thereof, is used by the global north as a standard that facilitates the measurement of a country's level of development. According to this standard, the perceived "tolerance and recognition [of sexual diversity] becomes a […] measuring point of a nation's success at developing" (Horn 2008, 361). Consequently, the global north declares countries with tolerant legal frameworks as advanced, and those without as primitive. Horn then locates the Caribbean as "quite backwards" (362) in comparison to the global north, who has positioned itself as the epitomic example of advancement.

Building on this, in the article "Queer Returns: Human Rights, and the Anglo Caribbean and Diaspora Politics" (2009), Afro-Caribbean Canadian scholar Rinaldo Walcott locates this myth of primitivism vs. advancement within the broader neo-colonial narrative of maturity vs. infancy, wherein the global south is constructed as an external "infantile" entity, in need of saving via "mature" northern intervention. Within this specific iteration of this narrative, particularly as it pertains to equity for queer folks, the myth of North American "maturity" constructs and asserts its existence by establishing the presence of queer "rights talk" as a measure of maturity, and imposes infancy on the global south by identifying the Caribbean as in the "gay liberation" stage of a process that, according to

Walcott, "goes something like this: first there was queer repression; second there was gay rebellion and liberation; third there was rights talk; and now we queers in the Western world are free and full citizens" (Walcott 2009, 10). This process is evidenced by the legalization of gay marriage in Canada, for example. Within these constructs, "rescue missions" headed by white, queer folks into the global south in general and the Caribbean in particular attempt to justify themselves (6).

Following this illustration, Walcott works to deconstruct this myth by disrupting the logic behind the process. He begins by explaining that the Caribbean is, in fact, not more homophobic than the global north, specifically Canada/North America (2009, 4), even by the rules of the aforementioned hegemonic process and especially in relation to the unquestioned use of liberal "rights talk." Rights talk in the Caribbean exists, and, where present, it is often produced within the contexts of HIV/AIDS programs and services (2009, 11). Wherever present, however, Walcott argues that rights talk in and of itself is problematic. The North American example, which positions itself as the antithesis of Jamaica in particular (2009, 4), constructs lesbian and gay citizenship to mirror heterosexual citizenship, rather than questioning the roots of hetero-patriarchal systems. In short, LGBTQ+ rights are produced in ways congruent with and "consuming white [heterosexual] male citizenship, at least in the popular imaginary" (2009, 12).

Decena furthers the disruption of North American queer citizenship as the epitome of maturity and advancement in the article "Tacit Subjects" (2008) by problematizing the role of "coming out" as it has emerged within the U.S. and is imposed on queer Caribbean subjects. Decena highlights the transformation of "coming out" as it changed, for him, from a radical declaration to a preliminary step to becoming a "normal" queer subject (2008, 339). He complicates the subsequent presumption—emerging from the increasing legitimization of white, middle-class lesbians and gay men within the U.S.—that negotiations of the closet which refuse speech, visibility, and pride are suspect, evidence of denial and internalized homophobia, or pathological (2008, 339). From this standpoint, Decena explains that racialized queer folks have a tenuous relationship with "the closet," as they are inclined to resist the depoliticized "liberation" that coming out offers (2008, 339). Based on the data from a larger study on Dominican immigrant gay and bisexual men in New York City, Decena argues that it is imperative that we take seriously the distinction between a refusal to discuss an openly lived queerness and silence (2008, 340), offering the "tacit subject," to be discussed later, as a legitimate queer expression and/or refusal.

The Myth of the Rare and/or Reluctant and Undesired Queer Caribbean Return

The myth of the rare and/or reluctant queer Caribbean return is intricately linked with the neo-colonial narrative of North American maturity vs. Caribbean infancy in matters of equity. If the Caribbean is "one of the most homophobic places in the world" (Walcott 2009, 4), then it is only sensible that, when it comes to queer migration, queer Caribbeans migrate only to leave and "liberate" themselves from their "backwards" homelands and traditions and embrace the "modernity" of the new space, assumedly in the so-called "global north."

Confronting this assumption, Horn analyzes the recurring queer, artistic homecomings of Nelson Ricart-Guerrero from/between France and the Dominican Republic in "Queer Caribbean Homecomings" (2008). This homecoming goes against the neo-colonial narrative of the undesirable homecoming. Horn argues that the artistic "returns" of Ricart-Guerrero with Vauzelle and others like them from the "global north" to the Dominican Republic force a complication of migratory queer ideas and how queer social and cultural practices "travel and do work at home" (2008, 376). Dominican performer Waddys Jáquez and writer Rita Indiana Hernández, both of whom move continually between the United States and the Dominican Republic, are also presented by Horn as examples of queer, Caribbean homecomings that are neither rare nor undesired. Ricart-Guerrero in particular is credited with the first homoerotic art exhibition

in the Dominican Republic (Horn 2008, 376). Horn describes Jáquez as known for their work that presents queer subjects through a discourse of a (common) marginality, as well as discusses Hernández's work, which centres a lens of theories of gender performativity within the context of dominant Dominican notions of gender (2008, 374). All of these artists are examples of successful queer professionals who continue to travel between the Dominican Republic and the global north, both physically and with/through their work.

The Myth of "Modern Queerness" as a Social Remittance

An extension of the myth of the rare and/or reluctant and undesired queer Caribbean return is the myth of "modern queerness" as a social remittance. This myth states that when they do happen, queer Caribbean homecomings necessarily include the migration of "modern" queer identities. In other words, when queer Caribbean folks leave to "liberate" themselves from their "backwards" homelands and traditions and embrace the "modernity" of the new space, it is always in line with this modernity; if they return themselves—while it is not the desirable choice—at minimum, they return with "modern" lesbian/gay identities (Horn 2008, 362-3). Horn's analysis of Ricart-Guerrero's queer returns to the Dominican Republic also works to destabilize this myth, as these homecomings, in addition to going against the neo-colonial narrative of the undesirable homecoming, also disrupt the idea of the migration of "modern" identities from north to south in queer Caribbean homecomings (2008, 318). Here, Horn highlights Ricart-Guerrero's refusal to publicly declare himself "gay" in both France and the Dominican Republic, while also presenting the first openly homoerotic exhibition in the Dominican Republic (2008, 372), as an example of the persistence of non-northern queer identities in the migration of people and ideas (2008, 376). Importantly, Horn also highlights the role of colonial regimes in the construction of sexuality in the Dominican Republic, specifically the Trujillo regime, which constructed queerness as publicly indecent and subsequently punished all acts of "public indecency" (2008, 372). This is an important identification of the ways in which the same states claiming "maturity" are the ones who colonially imposed oppressive constructions of sexuality in many spaces they now deem "infantile" (Walcott 2009).

If they do not send/bring back "modern" queer identities as the neo-colonial narrative claims, what do queer Caribbean migrants send/bring back with them in their communications and returns? Where Horn (2008) begins to answer this question with Ricart-Guererro's return through art, Decena (2008) subverts the idea of bringing anything back at all, focusing instead on what queer Caribbean migrants bring *to* North America. In his work with Afro- and racialized Dominican immigrant gay and bisexual men in New York City, Decena tracks how these men disrupt the idea of the "out" queer subject as the "normal" queer subject in the U.S. through the notion of the "tacit subject" as an alternative expression. A more relational account of the social construction of identity in queer migration studies, and stemming from Spanish grammar, the tacit subject is one that is not spoken but can be determined by the conjugation of the verb used in the sentence (Decena 2008, 340). Decena uses the example of the verb "to go" in the sentence "I go to school": instead of "yo voy a la escuela," with *yo* meaning I, to say or hear "voy a la escuela" as the conjugation of to go, *voy* "leaves no doubt" that "I" am speaking—the subject is built into the verb (2008, 340). Extending this to understanding queer subjects in a way that de-centers "coming out," Decena argues that some of the informants in the study view their lives in this "tacit" way, which ultimately changes the landscape of queer identities in the United States.

Walcott goes a step further and complicates the idea of bringing "back" (or forth) itself, offering instead the idea of the in-between. Within Canadian contexts, heterosexual diasporic Afro-Caribbean imaginings of space often engage "home" culture, cultural symbols, ancestors, and chosen Blackness as safe spaces for self-

reinvention against racism and other forms of oppression present in Canada (Wallace 2019, 34). But this Black reinvention can be even more complicated for queer Afro-Caribbean folks: "political expressions, demands, cultural desires and identifications between place, nation and space—especially in the extensions," pose difficult dilemmas (Walcott 2009, 8). One such dilemma arises from being forced to confront homophobia and/or other anti-queer sentiments in addition to and interwoven with racism (Hill Collins 1990). The persistence of homophobia prevents queer imaginings of "home" in the place of their own or their parents' upbringing as a potential utopia; where one can potentially escape aspects of racialization at "home," homophobia remains (Wallace 2019, 34). The queer subject must then pivot, move through, and occupy "in-between spaces."

Walcott himself, for instance, "hovers between Toronto's Caribana celebrations in honour of Emancipation Day and Montreal's *Divers/Cité* celebrations in honour of contemporary queer subjecthood" (2009, 10). The conjoined existence of Black and queer identities and possibilities in his life finds him "challenging North American queer racism that seeks to imagine both the invisibility of black gays and lesbians and our incapability of speaking and acting in our own interests" (2009, 3), and "inhabiting a Caribbean authenticity that might or might not be legitimate depending upon the various contexts of invoking Caribbean-ness to substantiate speech and action" (3). Walcott acknowledges that this in-between space is riddled with the discomforts and tensions of a (sometimes) forced "authentic" regional representation and fighting to speak outside of "talking back" to white North American queer folks and ideologies.

Literature Summary

Discussions of the Caribbean within queer migration discourse often conform to neo-colonial frameworks that position the Caribbean as "one of the most homophobic places in the world" (Walcott 2009, 4), and construct the global north, with a particular emphasis on North America, as its equitable antithesis. Critical approaches to queer migration studies identify and work to disrupt three myths that underpin this framework: the myth of maturity vs. infancy in matters of equity; the myth of "modern queerness" as a social remittance; and the myth of the rare and/or reluctant and undesired queer Caribbean return. Horn (2008), Walcott (2009), and Decena (2008) disrupt these myths by problematizing the equation of rights talk and liberation (Walcott 2009), highlighting the role of colonialism in the construction of oppressive frameworks of sexuality (Horn 2008), highlighting rejections of "modern" queer identities (Decena 2008; Horn 2008) and the movement of Caribbean queer identities to North America (Decena 2008), and, finally, disrupting the strict ideological differentiations between "here" and "there" with the intervention of the "in-between" (Walcott 2009). The next section of this paper will engage with these myths and disruptions as they manifest in the book *In Another Place, Not Here* by Dionne Brand.

In Another Place, Not Here by Dionne Brand

Book Summary

In Another Place, Not Here (1997) begins by introducing us to Elizete, one of the protagonists of the novel, as she makes known her histories and presents as an Afro-Caribbean woman and forced labourer on a sugar cane plantation on a nameless island in the Caribbean. Elizete soon introduces us to Verlia, the second protagonist, also an Afro-Caribbean woman. Verlia comes to us having emigrated to Canada and since returned to the island in order to manage the sugar cane plantation Elizete works on, and with hopes of inciting a revolution. Author Dionne Brand illustrates a passionate, sensual relationship that develops between the two women. Though brief, their connection encourages life against the backdrop of the deaths of multiple oppressions:

> …because nothing ever happen to me until Verl come along and when Verl come along I see my chance out of what

> ordinary, out of the plenty day when all it have for a woman to do is lie down and let a man beat against she body, and work cane and chop up she foot and make children and choke on the dryness in she chest and only have one road in and the same road out and know that she tied to the ground and can never lift up. And it wasn't nothing Verl do or say or even what Verl was or what Verl wanted because even now I can't swear but is just that I see Verl coming, like a shower of rain coming that could just wash me cool and that was sufficient and if God spite me for this, is so things is. (Brand 1997, 4)

Throughout their romance, Elizete and Verlia navigate misogyny, anti-Black racism, homophobia, xenophobia, and class oppression on their journey through self-love, peace, and multiple elsewheres (Quynn 2015). These sites are navigated in the physical, political, and imagined, including locations like Toronto, Canada and returns to the Caribbean. Where the first part of the book, for example, gives us insight into Elizete's trajectory and "illegal" immigration (as defined by to neoliberal constructions: see Lubhéid 2008b) to Toronto from the Caribbean, the second part investigates Verlia's past, and the circumstances that lead to her death following her failed revolutionary attempts on the island upon her return.

Analysis

In *In Another Place, Not Here*, Dionne Brand traces as protagonists Elizete and Verlia navigate neo-colonial narratives of queer migration, as they move within, between, and past this unnamed Caribbean island, often assumed to be Trinidad, but also said to be reminiscent of Grenada, and Toronto, Canada (Quynn 2013). Their stories displace North America, and Toronto specifically, as a utopic safe haven for Afro-Caribbean queer migrants, refuting the myth of the global north as mature in matters of equity (Walcott 2009). Verlia's homecoming and Elizete's departure refuse the idea of the reluctant and undesired queer Caribbean return (Horn 2008) and complicates linear notions of "here" and "there," evoking notions of Walcott's (2009) in-between and introducing the beyond of elsewhere.

Despite her history of forced labour and abuse on the island, Elizete refuses a utopic imagination of life in Toronto after a short time being there. Migrating partly in hope of piecing together the life of her lost love, Verlia, and partly out of a desire to believe that there is another world worth inhabiting, Elizete is immediately confronted with racist, xenophobic, and classist dehumanization upon her arrival:

> They were Third World people going to the white man country […] That in itself lowered them in their own estimation, they could not hope to look forward to being treated right. Already what affected them was getting an inhuman quality […] They felt each morning as someone trundling a wheelbarrow and pulling a donkey as sleek cars whipped by. (Brand 1997, 60)

Elizete speaks here against the notion that to be in Toronto is to escape the class oppression of the island. Instead, it comes to mean entering into the racism, xenophobia, and class oppression of the global north, a place where she is not, in fact, a "free and full citizen," as Walcott describes (2009, 10). "We lucky to be in Canada," her uncle says. "You could do anything here." She reflects: "Anything, anything he keeps saying but his anything is small. He means there will be no hunger, you will have clothes on your back, you will have shoes on your feet, and that is enough" (Brand 1997, 148).

Pushing further against the myth of reluctant and undesired queer Caribbean returns, Brand writes for Verlia a homecoming driven by homesickness for the island, a sentiment that is shared with other Afro-Caribbean women from the island.

> She missed tamarinds, sour and stringy, and then she missed—bright bright, pooled and mountainous pink or yellow at the side of the road—branches of a

> poui tree hanging over […] So she remembered tamarinds, sour, seedy and stringy but eaten voluntarily. And without reason she started to cry and the woman cried too. They could not dig themselves out, buried underneath the pods, brittle and sandy, their fingers sinking into the cracked fruit and the taste in their mouths springing water and bringing more tears to their eyes. (Brand 1997, 193)

As Elizete searches for pieces of Verlia in Toronto following her death, she meets Abena, a woman suspected to be an ex-lover of Verlia's. Abena encourages Elizete to have a home-going of her own, in light of the racism and misogyny that constructs Toronto's landscape. After providing her with survival tips for navigating Toronto undocumented, Abena tells Elizete: "Go home, this is not a place for us" (Brand 1997, 109). She says:

> Look, this is where the white man stabs your Black woman body eleven times and goes back to work the next morning; down east, it happened, calmly […] You come home in a coffin, sister, with nobody knowing you were gone or even lived here, your womanness quartered over kitchen, factory, men's dicks […] No revolution is coming baby, no fine bright morning […] Go home, it's not a place for us. (Brand 1997, 230)

Contrary to the myth of "modern" queer identities as a social remittance within queer migration discourse, Verlia's homecoming prompts no identification with lesbian or queer identities—notably, the terms "lesbian," "queer," and "gay" do not appear at all within the text. In harmony with Walcott's (2009, 10) complication of the idea of a bringing "back" (or forth) home with the in-between, his simultaneous disruption of the myth of modern queer identities as a social remittance, and his evocation of the complexities of Black queer self-reinvention between spaces against "political expressions, demands, cultural desires and identifications between place, nation and space" (2009, 8) to substantiate this disruption, Brand writes of the impossibility of a simple sending or going back for queer Afro-Caribbean migrants as a whole. When Abena tells Elizete to go home, Elizete retorts: "Go home. And really no country will do, not any now on the face of the earth when she thought about it. Nothing existed that she could live in. What did this woman know? She know anything about cane, anything about Isaiah, anything about Verlia flying off a cliff?" (Brand 1997, 233).

Diverging from Walcott (2009), Brand introduces an elsewhere (Quynn 2015), rather than an in-between, as an alternative for the "sending back" of social remittances. This elsewhere is not tied to space, place, or time but is a somewhere Elizete longs to be:

> I dream of running though, to Aruba or Maracaibo. I hear about these place. Yes, Maracaibo. I love the sound of it yet I ever seen it. I dream of taking his neck with a cutlass and running to Maracaibo, yes. I imagine it as a place with thick and dense vine and alive like veins under my feet. I dream the vine, green and plump, blood running through it and me too running running, spilling blood [...] Is like nowhere else. I destroy anything in my way. I want it to be peaceful there. (Brand 1997, 11-2)

Verlia attempts to create an elsewhere out of the revolution: "She bet all her life on this revolution. She had no place else to go, no other countries, no other revolution, none of we neither. That day we all went to dreaming, imagining, trying to shoot jet fighters from the skies with shotguns and cures" (Brand 1997, 115). When it is revealed that the revolution she imagines will not come to pass Verlia finds her most peaceful elsewhere in death:

> She's flying out to sea and in the emerald she sees the sea, its eyes translucent, its back solid going to some place so old there's no memory of it. She's leaping. She's tasting her own tears and she is weightless and deadly. She feels nothing except the bubble of a laugh each time she breathes. Her body is cool, cool in the air. Her body has fallen away, it just a line, an electric current, the sign of lightning left after lightening, a faultless

> arc to the deep turquoise deep. She doesn't need air. She's in some other place already, less tortuous, less fleshy. (Brand 1997, 126)

Brand writes of queer Afro-Caribbean migration that resists utopic constructions of the global north, refuses notions of reluctant and/or rare and undesired queer returns to the island(s), and disturbs linear conceptualizations of social remittances that claim "modernity" is transferred from north to south. As Elizete, Verlia and other Afro-Caribbean migrants fight to survive against the misogyny, anti-Black racism, homophobia, xenophobia, and class oppression embedded in Toronto's landscape, they displace the global north, North America, and more specifically, Toronto, as a utopic safe haven for Black queer migrants, easily refuting the myth of the global north as "mature in matters of equity" (Walcott 2009, 10). Additionally, Verlia's homecoming and the aftermath of Elizete's departure disrupt the idea of the reluctant and undesired queer Caribbean return (Horn 2008). Their stories complicate linear notions of "here" and "there," evoking Walcott's (2009) notion of the in-between and introducing the beyond of "elsewhere" (Quynn 2015) in life and death.

Conclusion

Within neo-colonial queer migration discourse, the Caribbean is positioned as the antithesis of the global north, a space that masquerades itself as mature in matters of equity (Walcott 2009, 10). As its antithesis, the Caribbean is constructed as quintessentially homophobic (2009, 10), and queer Caribbean migration is imagined to be a linear escape from homophobia's headquarters to a utopia. Writing against this construction, this paper centres complexities of queer Afro-Caribbean migration to, from, and between the Caribbean and the global north. Employing a critical approach to queer migration, this paper analyzes the book *In Another Place, Not Here* to illustrate some of the ways in which Afro-Caribbean migrants work through processes of home- and identity-making while being forced to confront multiple systems of oppression and navigate inter-related neo-colonial narratives surrounding queer migration that perpetuate myths, including the myth of northern maturity vs. southern infancy in matters of equity, the myth of the rare and/or reluctant and undesired queer Caribbean return, and the myth of "modern" queer identities as a social remittance. Through Elizete and Verlia's journeys, author Dionne Brand brings to life the complexities of queer Afro-Caribbean migration as they exist beyond the aforementioned neo-colonial impositions, creating, longing for, and inhabiting elsewheres in both life and death. It is my hope that this work adds to the broadening landscape of critical queer migration scholarship and continues in a tradition of refusing and displacing colonial narratives in and with my communities.

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