MISUSING CANONICAL INTERTEXTS
Jamaica Kincaid, Wordsworth and Colonialism’s “absent things”

by Ian Smith

I

In his essay “Wordsworth in the Tropics,” Aldous Huxley poses the question: What happens when Wordsworth is exported to the tropics? He anticipates a demystification of the Wordsworthian “axiom that Nature is divine and morally uplifting” (113). The “Wordsworthian who exports this pantheistic worship of Nature to the tropics is liable to have his religious convictions rudely disturbed” when poetic panegyric comes up against a hostile natural reality (Huxley 113). It might be true that “Wordsworth never left his native continent” and that a “voyage through the tropics would have cured him of his too easy and comfortable pantheism” (Huxley 129, 128). But in an important sense Wordsworth was exported to the tropics—to the West Indies. As a fixed feature of English colonial education, Wordsworth’s work became deeply implicated in the project of curricular indoctrination, what J. A. Mangan describes as “the imperial curriculum” that promulgated “racial stereotypes, the creation of ethnocentric attitudes and the ‘labelling’ of colonial peoples” (1).

Jamaica Kincaid, in her novel Lucy, is a contemporary reader of Wordsworth’s role in curricular culture with her acute intertextual interrogation of his famous lyric about daffodils, “I wandered lonely as a cloud.” Her examination of Wordsworth’s exportation to the tropics registers a concomitant importation of desire so powerful that it requires self-invalidation and obfuscation of native, West Indian traditions. “A sort of desire for a perfect place, a perfect situation,” she observes, “comes from English Romantic poetry. It described a perfection which one longed for, and of course the perfection that one longed for was England. I longed for England myself. These things were a big influence, and it was important for me to get rid of them. Then I could actually look at the place I’m from” (Bonetti 131). Unlike Huxley, Kincaid does not simply speculate about Wordsworth “in the tropics” but testifies to the profound ideological effects of English Romantic poetry within her early colonial experience and, later, on her as a writer.

Since the publication of her second novel Lucy in 1990, Kincaid has written a series of essays on gardens appearing in The New Yorker from the early to mid-1990’s and produced My Favorite Plant: Writers and Gardeners on the Plants they Love (1998) as well as My Garden Book (1999). Kincaid’s fascination with gardens, however, can be traced back to Lucy and the memory of Wordsworth’s instrumental role within imperial ideology. In “Alien Soil” a childhood memory confirms an early source of conflict that

Callaloo 25.3 (2002) 801–820
appears endemic to a colonial context: “I can remember very well the cruel English-woman who was my botany teacher, and that, in spite of her cruelty, botany was one of my two favorite subjects in school. (History was the other.)” (50). Still, she notes parenthetically, “(I do not like daffodils, but that’s a legacy of the English approach: I was forced to memorize the poem by William Wordsworth when I was a child” (“Alien Soil” 51). In “Plant Parenthood,” she reiterates and explains her dislike for daffodils, foregrounding the political dimension of her instinctive choice: “The reason I do not like daffodils is not at all aesthetic but much more serious than that: having been forced to memorize a poem about daffodils, when none were to be found in the place I grew up” (46). She was supposed to admire something that was absent from her own cultural experience. Through repetition, this scene of forced memorization has attained a primal status in Kincaid’s oeuvre where Wordsworth, incorporated into the intransigent mechanism of colonial education, remains the sign of an unresolved relationship to English literary and cultural traditions that inform Kincaid’s history. Wordsworth functions metonymically for the attitude she names “the English approach” and a larger social history of cruelty alluded to in the English teacher to implicate literature’s political role in the work of empire.

II

In 20th-century literary criticism and theory, intertextuality emerges in response to a need to find alternate ways of accounting for such notions as “source,” “influence,” and the “author” which appear to endorse hierarchies based on temporal precedence and origin. To set out on a quest for sources in some conventionally understood way or to associate a work too closely with its author is perceived as surrendering to a stifling, paternalistic genealogical determinism. In addition, an investment in source and influence study is considered doomed from the outset since the goal of isolating one particular point of origin can only yield an unending series of indeterminate anterior texts and encourage what Roland Barthes calls “the myth of filiation” (160). Because a “text is a tissue of quotations drawn from the innumerable centres of culture,” intertextuality can proclaim the death of the author—the displacement of a totalizing figure or any notion of a centralizing authority—and instate a semiosis or a theory of signs, a “field without origin—or which, at least, has no other origin than language itself, language which ceaselessly calls into question all origins” (Barthes 146). At one extreme, the sign itself is called into question; the stable, transparent and evident relationship between the signifier and signified no longer obtains, leading to a crisis in representation or a mise en abime of any self-legitimating claims to knowledge. Still Julia Kristeva’s classic formulation that intertextuality is “the passage from one sign system to another” recognizes its broad intra- and intercultural function, not limited to language per se, where all discursive practices can be assimilated to sign systems.1 Linda Hutcheon sees in Kristeva’s proposals “the irreducible plurality of texts within and behind any given text” (6) while Thaïs Morgan also concludes on this basis that as “one text can connect significantly with
a virtually unlimited set of other texts . . . semiotics logically requires a theory of intertextuality. Indeed, *culture* itself, or the collection of signifying practices in a society, is *radically intertextual* (246).

In important ways, West Indian literary theory and practice are preoccupied with similar concerns that motivate the concept of intertextuality, starting with the distrust of sources and origins materialized both on the linguistic and socio-cultural planes. When Kamau Brathwaite maintains that it “was in language that the slave was perhaps most successfully imprisoned by his master, and it was his (mis-)use of it that he perhaps most effectively rebelled,” he raises the crucial issue of linguistic origins, the hegemonic standard which stood as the measure of imperial normativity against the deviant, barbaric dialects that marked a very distinct political underclass (237). Brathwaite’s term “(mis-)use” is a precise reference to the classical notion of barbarism that singles out cultural foreigners as those whose grammatical and linguistic errors mark them as different in the linguistic realm as did skin color in the chromatic politics of the plantation system.² The arrival of slaves from differing linguistic backgrounds within the plantation context of the West Indies catapulted English into the foreground of colonial politics, making it resonate the unfolding tensions and developments of a full-scale intercultural encounter. Brathwaite’s theory of *creolization* encompasses the idea of convergence and productivity within the geographical matrix of colonial imperialism.³ The linguistic plurality that results from colonial interaction serves as a pointer to a wide-ranging cultural cross-fertilization, “a ‘new’ construct, made up of newcomers to the landscape and cultural strangers each to the other; one group dominant, the other legally and subordinately slaves” (296). In West Indian critical praxis intertextuality is inscribed within a certain linguistic history and is inescapably linked to colonial confrontations and an imperial self-legitimation that is based on the principle of the mother country as origin, source and arbiter of value. Even though “[p]olyglossic or ‘polydialectical’ communities occur principally in the Caribbean, where a multitude of dialects interweave to form a generally comprehensible linguistic continuum” (Ashcroft 39), creolization recirculates not only the traces of the period of contested encounter but also the divergent histories that inform the various groups prior and subsequent to that momentous event. Political imposition and its resistance are evoked by and in the intertextual performativity of the languages of the dialectical continuum.

Since it is evident in the West Indian tradition that language is “the medium through which a hierarchical structure of power is perpetuated and the medium through which conceptions of ‘truth,’ ‘order,’ and ‘reality’ become established” (Ashcroft 7), literature, relying on the tools of language, is always a highly charged field of performative metafiction. The process of textual production necessarily reanimates the contestatory colonial paradigms imbricated in language and, at the same time, produces its own self-commentary on interculturation, begetting creolized texts and intertexts. The intense focus on language’s role within the colonial enterprise has been abetted by an “imperial education system which installs a ‘standard’ version of the metropolitan language as the norm, and marginalizes all ‘variants’ as impurities” (Ashcroft 7). Literature, however, particularly by way of intertextuality, creates opportunities for the *de-scribing* of empire, the continuing
process of dismantling colonial regimes of power in language: “The post-colonial is especially and pressingly concerned with the power that resides in discourse and textuality; its resistance, then, quite appropriately takes place in—and from—the domain of textuality, in (among other things) motivated acts of reading. The contestation of post-colonialism is a contest of representation” (Tiffin 10). Derrida’s critique of conventional attitudes towards representation implied in a stable signifier-signified relationship leads him to posit an open, infinite “play of differences, of the traces of differences” within the sign that suspends any final statement of meaning or precludes any sure equation between the sign and its referent (27). Thus while he champions, in effect, the intertextuality of all discourse where “no element can function as a sign without referring to another element which itself is not simply present,” he does not assure a semiotic taxonomy that would marshal a limited collection of intertexts for a particular reading (26).

The crucial paradox remains, however, that even in the most radical formulations of the sign’s crisis, “the innate ‘duplicity’ of the signifier-signified relation enables the insertion of ‘bourgeois’ values into every cultural sign” (Morgan 256). In a social context it is precisely the unstable, ambiguous relationship within the sign between the signifier and the signified which creates the possible introduction of ideological biases that would decide and determine a fixed set of applications. In the postcolonial context, the sign’s reputed radical alterity comes up sharply against the very potent political structuration of colonial ideology and authority whose traces continue to exert a limiting and containing influence on the postcolonial subject and to weight every sign toward an imperial manichean imperative. Colonial imperialism functions as the cultural “interpretant,” in Michael Riffaterre’s sense, the contextualizing “third term” that allows the reader or, for that matter, the cultural analyst to make sense of the particular kinds of relations existing between a text and its intertexts.4

The powerful role of the mother in Jamaica Kincaid’s oeuvre bears particular relevance to the distrust of origins raised by intertextuality. The subtitle of Moira Ferguson’s study Jamaica Kincaid: Where the Land Meets the Body evokes the familiar and volatile theme of Kincaid’s work—the symbolic intersection of colonial territorialisaiton and the writer’s embattled relationship to her mother: “That doubled articulation of motherhood as both colonial and biological explains why the mother-daughter relation in her fiction often seems so harshly rendered, a fact that has constantly unsettled reviewers” (1). However, in Lucy, motherhood and colonial rule are further re-articulated as canonical authority. The figure of the mother connotes source and influence, the very notions that poststructuralist analyses have found so troubling and a postcolonial critique identifies as the pernicious alibis of colonial presumption to rule and authority. The qualifications raised by some critics of intertextuality, understood here primarily in the more narrow sense of a direct citation of a metropolitan literary intertext, are revealing for they gloss precisely the ambiguous relation to the colonial-canonical mother-figure. Judie Newman calls attention to the potential detractors of intertextuality, noting that the “transfer of a European genre to a colonial environment is not without its nefarious consequences” (4). Specifically, intertextuality as direct citation runs the risk of re-valuing the metropolitan “center” and its values while perpetuating a binary that marginalizes
the “periphery.” This expected and, by now, fairly familiar critical caveat is revitalized by Kincaid as a highly charged emotional and psychological struggle cast as a familial drama pitting daughter against mother, the powerless against the powerful. The daughter’s departure for America in Lucy signals the attempt to escape from the influence of the mother, to evade the daily maternal edicts that make Lucy’s entire existence seem petty and peripheral. The mother dwarfs the daughter, having established herself as the moral and authoritative center that seems to push the daughter’s interests aside, minimizing their import. This, at least, is the way Lucy experiences her mother’s capacity to threaten to overwhelm her should Lucy reestablish any contact with her. The choice of America, understood in the novel as the neocolonial power of late capitalism, foregrounds the irony of the attempted escape from the colonial mother in the first instance and measures the complex attractions and resistances that surpass any neat postcolonial binary. The enduring emotional struggle in the novel is about the daughter’s inability to separate completely from the mother and to resist the reinscription into her experience of burdensome (colonial) maternal codes.

While the biological mother may be connected to the gendered functions of colonial power, the mother-figure also raises the specific questions concerning the English literary tradition and its consequences for the postcolonial subject and writer. Barthes reminds us of the anti-paternal gesture that subtends the critical turn towards intertextuality so that the text “can be read without the guarantee of its father, the restitution of the inter-text paradoxically abolishing any legacy. It is not that the Author may not ‘come back’ in the Text, in his text, but he then does so only as a ‘guest’” (161). In the case of Lucy, the role of the mother yields space to Wordsworth as canonical literary figure, a “transposition” that elicits “the passage from one signifying system to another” (Kristeva 60). Wordsworth does “come back” to haunt the memory of Lucy and the creative imagination of Kincaid who ensures that he reappear only as a “guest.” In this regard, she addresses the broader concern to which West Indian writers have often returned, the issue of the English literary tradition and postcolonial writing which situates Wordsworth as a singularly metonymic and patriarchal author-figure of, in particular, a poem about daffodils.

A 1994 conference at Oxford Brookes University drew the title Kicking Daffodils from the poem “Spring” by Guayanese poet Grace Nichols and has subsequently resulted in the volume of essays, Kicking Daffodils: Twentieth-Century Women Poets. “Spring” tells the story of an immigrant woman who ventures outside after an influenza-ridden winter “only to have that daffodil baby / kick me in the eye” (ll. 13–14). The editor Vicki Bertram explains Nichols’s use of the Wordsworth reference: “If the flower represents English poetic tradition (the colonial model), the poem is in no doubt of the enduring presence of that tradition: this is not a dead white patriarch’s tradition but one that issues its own challenges to the contemporary post-colonial poet” (1). In recounting various strands of her development, the Jamaican poet Lorna Goodison remarks the following that has a direct bearing on the received literary traditions: “I never knew anybody who was a poet when I was growing up. I thought that all poets were men and that they wrote poems like ‘The Daffodils’” (291). Her point pertaining to a gendered canon is not to be missed, but the misnaming of the poem, “I wandered lonely as a cloud” by Wordsworth, only serves to call further
attention to the indelible impression the subject of the poem has within the mind of Goodison and, arguably, the common experience of Caribbean readers: “I grew to resent that poem. I thought it was stupid to go on so much about a flower I had never seen. Something in me wanted to read about people and things that were familiar to me” (291). Goodison, like Kincaid cited above, registers the frustration and sense of absurdity she felt growing up in the West Indies where she never saw the flowers that her literary and educational exposure had taught her to revere as an entirely second-hand, doubly mediated English experience. In the 1802 “Preface” to Lyrical Ballads Wordsworth describes the poet as that man who is “affected more than other men by absent things as if they were present” (877–78). Together, Kincaid’s and Goodison’s remarks can be read as a commentary not only on the gender bias of Wordsworth’s language but as foregrounding a salient irony that attends the adoption of such advice in relation to the reception of Wordsworth’s own poem in the West Indies. The “daffodils” are truly “absent things” that have no material, botanical referents, a fact which complicates the process of making them “present” to the poet’s, or novelist’s, mind’s eye.

“The gap between the lived colonial or post-colonial experience and the imported/exported world of the Anglo-written,” observes Helen Tiffin, “has often been referred to by Commonwealth post-colonial writers and critics as ‘the daffodil gap’” (920 n.7). The “gap” presupposes a prior literary plenitude that exhausts everything else in its wake, so that what follows in time, such as West Indian writing, is abrogated tout court. This “gap” resurrects the problems of influence and origin. The temporal chasm opened up by the daffodils fetishizes pre- and post-, before and, therefore, better so that to engage Wordsworth is to meet head-on the challenge of negotiating a place from which to deploy the creative, deliberate “(mis-)use” of intertexts, to extend Brathwaite’s argument, in the discursive act of re-articulation and, sometimes, linguistic rebellion. Misuse becomes the classic gesture of creolization, of intertextuality West Indian style, where the English “standard,” whether the language or canonical texts, is adapted, taken over, re-contextualized, barbarized and reproduced to meet the current needs of a people shaped through a historical process of interculturation.

III

At the time of publication it was inevitable that readers saw Lucy as a semi-autobiographical sequel to Kincaid’s first novel. “In many ways, Lucy may appear to begin from where Annie John concludes,” observes Alison Donnell, with Annie leaving her home in the West Indies, setting sail for Britain (46). In an interview, Kincaid admits to the autobiographical content of Annie John: “The feelings in it are autobiographical, yes. I didn’t want to say it was autobiographical because I felt that would be somehow admitting something about myself, but it is and so that’s that” (Cudjoe 220). Lucy’s story mirrors the broad outlines and some details of Kincaid’s post-Antigua life in America: “I left Antigua shortly after my sixteenth birthday, in June of 1965. I came to America and became an au pair girl. I wasn’t quite a servant,
but almost. I was taking care of someone’s children while I went to school” (Cudjoe 215). In the novel, Lucy is nineteen when she arrives in America to become an *au pair*, but “was born on the twenty-fifth of May 1949,” Kincaid’s own date of birth (148). Lucy’s status as someone who “had wrapped around [her] shoulders the mantle of a servant” relays Kincaid’s own account of her efforts to make her way in a new, American culture (95). As a fictional autobiography, following *Annie John*, Lucy affords the reader extra-textual information that helps ground the novel within a clear history of colonialism. Based on the given year of Lucy’s birth, the novel takes place in 1968, one year after Antigua achieved partial independence from Britain. Situated at an epoch-making moment, Antigua’s political changeover from being a colony, *Lucy* is a novel about transitions and self-determination that implicate Kincaid herself.

In an ostensibly non-political context, T.S. Eliot writes of the artist’s awareness of the interaction of the past and the present: “the historical sense involves a perception, not only of the pastness of the past, but of its presence” (44). In her use of the image of the servant to describe Lucy’s transitional, social status, Kincaid demonstrates her awareness of this “historical sense,” where the past political servitude in which the colony is held prior to independence carries over to the present social reality for the young woman working in the United States. Although Lucy leaves the West Indies for America, the presentness of past servitude continues to shape her life. I cite Eliot here for several reasons. His essay “Tradition and the Individual Talent” is an influential document pertaining to literary tradition, intertextuality and the writer, a theme that has been obviously central to the concerns of writing, both critical and artistic, produced from within territories such as the West Indies that have endured a political history of colonialism. Eliot’s too narrow conception of “the historical sense” underscores the point: “the historical sense compels a man to write not merely with his own generation in his bones, but with a feeling that the whole of the literature of Europe from Homer and within it the whole of the literature of his own country has a simultaneous existence and composes a simultaneous order” (44). Writing within Europe only and its borders seems to animate Eliot’s perception of legitimate writing and consequential history. Ignored are the implications for literature of British imperial expansion that had accelerated since the 1870’s to consume, among others, vast areas of the African continent. Kincaid’s figure of servitude assumes a historical magnitude and reaches backward encompassing the Caribbean “type of settlement colonization,” requiring the replacement of a decimated indigenous population with imported slaves (Osterhammel 7), through Victorian imperialism and forward to the neo-colonial filiations that continue to entangle newly independent states. Kincaid’s “historical sense,” informed by the global effects of imperialism, is more multiform than Eliot’s and more attuned to the inevitable intersections of art and political history. Moreover, Kincaid’s Lucy is, above all, a type for the novelist herself, keeping in the forefront the issues of composition as they affect not only the male writer of Eliot’s definition. In a significant sense, the novel announces another epochal transition—the post-1968 emergence of women writers of color.

Eliot’s essay is also a response to and critique of what he considered the excesses of Romanticism, choosing to promote “a continual self-sacrifice, a continual extinc-
tion of personality” for the artist, and eschewing the cult of emotions; “It is in this depersonalization that art may be said to approach the condition of science” (47). This biographical cleansing required by the scientific method, and with it the correspond-
ing extra-literary determinants that shape the writer as a social subject, (an approach that heralds new critical and structuralist methods), is clearly at odds with Kincaid’s mode of fictional autobiography, generally, and with her relation to the Romantics, specifically. She recalls: “I memorized Wordsworth when I was a child, Keats, all sorts of things. It was an attempt to make me into a certain kind of person, the kind of person they had no use for, anyway. An educated black person. I got stuck with a lot of things, so I ended up using them” (Bonetti 130). The unidentified “they” refers to an entire educational system that was still very much under the control of England and supported by an array of administrators, teachers, politicians and government functionaries. Kincaid recognizes very quickly that the “kind of person” that she was destined to become would subscribe to Eliot’s narrow view of a venerable literary tradition, an exclusively European one, to the extent that the description “an educated black person” was at best an oxymoron and at worst an outright contradiction in terms. Such a hyphenated person, she argues, has no real value within the colonial market where racial exclusivity demands Englishness as the gold standard and where incommensurate categories—blackness, Englishness, color, culture and nationality—are collapsed into a simple operational binary. A “depersonalized” approach to Kincaid, and West Indian literature generally, is insufficient for it would erase historical and political facts that continue to be the motivating force of narratives being written. In addition, the premise of an exclusively viable European canon is itself politicized insofar as its working assumptions necessarily obscure and delegit-
imize other literatures.

The explicit references to daffodils and the consequent allusions to Wordsworth and Romanticism are concentrated in the second chapter of Lucy titled “Mariah.” The purpose of this organizational choice is evident: the recurring theme in Kincaid’s work of the pain involved in loving a stifling mother is extended and recast as the troubled and problematic legacy bequeathed the individual West Indian writer who is educated and writes within an English literary tradition. As the novel opens, the teenage Lucy arrives in the United States from the West Indies to work in the home of Mariah and her husband Lewis. Lucy and Mariah quickly form a mother-daughter bond that rivals Lucy’s relationship with her biological mother who, in contrast to Mariah, is presented as demanding and oppressive: “But I already had a mother who loved me, and I had come to see her love as a burden and had come to view with horror the sense of self-satisfaction it gave my mother to hear other people comment on her great love for me” (36). Thus what Mariah perceives as acts of love toward her young employee are already always threatened with rejection because of the private history of imposed self-erasure and invalidation that Lucy associates with insensitive moth-
er-figures.

On the occasion of Lucy’s first spring in America, Mariah bursts with excitement to share this new seasonal experience: “‘Have you ever seen daffodils pushing their way up out of the ground?’” recalling New Testament teaching that the mystery of nature, especially its smallest yet auspicious acts, should lead the observer to marvel
at God’s wisdom and greatness. She continues: “And when they’re in bloom and massed together, a breeze comes along and makes them do a curtsy to the lawn stretching out in front of them. Have you ever seen that?” (17)? Mariah’s inquiry to her friend is a compressed rewriting of the two opening stanzas of Wordsworth’s “I wandered lonely as a cloud,” where the poet observes “A host, of golden daffodils; / Beside the lake, beneath the trees, / Fluttering and dancing in the breeze” (ll. 4–6), and which are “stretched in never-ending line/ Along the margin of a bay” (ll. 9–10). Nature here is mediated through two powerful intertexts, the Bible and Wordsworth, demonstrating the degree to which perception is shaped by reading and literature in Mariah’s experience. Springtime is not just springtime; for Mariah spring is inevitably encoded in the kind of Wordsworthian pantheism Huxley criticized, which is nature shot through with religious moralizing.

Lucy’s response underscores a deep cultural divide between the two women; Mariah “is made to feel alive by some flowers bending in the breeze,” leading Lucy to wonder: “How does a person get to be that way” (17)? It is a question that is repeated like a refrain and closes the chapter, creating an interrogative frame: “I said it again. I said, ‘How do you get to be that way’” (41)? Mariah enjoys an apparently seamless union of life and literature, secure that the literary tradition she appeals to mirrors—is materialized even in—the very landscape and season she embraces like old friends. For her, there is no disjunction between art and experience, a point made clear through Kincaid’s parodic representation of Mariah’s family as the daffodil clan: “In photographs of themselves, which they placed all over the house, their six yellow-haired heads of various sizes were bunched as if they were a bouquet of flowers tied together by an unseen string. In the pictures they smiled out at the world, giving the impression that they found everything in it unbearably wonderful” (12). Her seemingly trouble-free American life, here figured through her comfortable literarization of experience, stands in sharp contrast to Lucy’s less than happy recollection of the Wordsworth intertext: “I remembered an old poem I had been made to memorize when I was ten years old and a pupil at Queen Victoria Girls’ School. I had been made to memorize it, verse after verse, and then had recited the whole poem to an auditorium full of parents, teachers, and my fellow pupils” (18). She had never seen these flowers, as Kincaid and Goodison attest above, and they remained as alien to her as the culture which produced the poetry. In spite of having to memorize and recite this literature in a public venue before local authority figures as an act of colonial affirmation, Lucy understands that she participates unwillingly in a ritual ceremony of cultural misappropriation.

Kincaid’s focus on literary colonization and Wordsworth underscores the broadened scope of the notion of territorial acquisition to include ownership of the land and its people through the subtle ideological conquests perpetrated in the hothouses of the colonial schoolroom. Gauri Viswanathan’s timely reminder that an important distinction and emphasis must be made between “literary education as opposed to literature, as a major institutional support system of colonial administration” is relevant here (4). Education, or resistance to it, has always played a major role in the dissemination of the ideology of the dominant group, with literature and language being specifically charged with this work in colonial contexts, when education was
actually offered, to meet the needs “for secondary positions in the bureaucracy. Lawyers were trained, but few scientists, agricultural experts, or qualified teachers were available when independence came” (Altbach 453). Terry Eagleton notes that “literary production, in fact, belongs to that ideological apparatus which can be provisionally termed ‘cultural.’ What is in question is not simply the process of production and consumption of literary texts, but the function of such production within the cultural ideological apparatus,” the most potent being “the educational apparatus” (56). “It is within this apparatus,” he continues, “that the ideological function of literature—its function, that is to say, in reproducing the social relations of the mode of production—is most apparent” (56). Moreover, “European imperial powers” remarks J. Edward Chamberlin, “were convinced that if language was the instrument of empire, education was the instrument of language. Furthermore, since literature was presumed to be the most eloquent expression of language, it must be a central element of education” (75).

Not surprisingly, as various writers have noted, works of West Indian literature have returned to the schoolroom and education as important loci in articulating the hierarchical and destructive social relations implied in colonialism. Lamming’s In the Castle of My Skin is an early example while H. Nigel Thomas’s recent Spirits in the Dark examines the price of success in the colonial job market when education demands a rejection of one’s family and of oneself. Erna Brodber’s Myal finds thirteen-year-old Ella O’Grady reciting Kipling’s “The White Man’s Burden,” mouthing the infamous invective, “Half devil and half child,” directed at those like herself; the listening Reverend does not miss the occasion to muse silently, “‘And whose burden is this half black, half white child?’” (6). Jo-Ann Wallace argues that Charles Kingsley’s The Water-Babies, “the focus of mid-19th-century educational, social reform, and imperialist debate, is subsequently depoliticized in the abridged Puffin Classics edition and repoliticized” in Kincaid’s short story “Wingless” from her At the Bottom of the River (171). Addressing the agents of colonialism in A Small Place, Kincaid observes: “you loved knowledge, and wherever you went you made sure to build a school, a library (yes, and in both of these places you distorted or erased my history and glorified your own)” (36).

In her reading of the episode of forced rote memorization from Lucy, Tiffin stresses the role of recitation within “imperial education systems” as the learning “by heart” of colonial ideology, as an absorption of “the lessons of the master . . . through memorizing the English script, i.e., taking it into the body and re-producing before audiences of fellow colonials that which had been absorbed by heart/mind” (913). And Donnell comments that “the process of learning by heart further supports the hegemony’s underlying need for mimicry which Lucy publicly performs but privately attempts to negate” (50). In fact, Lucy’s response is unflinching: “I made pleasant little noises that showed both modesty and appreciation, but inside I was making a vow to erase from my mind, line by line, every word of that poem” (18). From the vantage point of the novel as fictional autobiography, the “Queen Victoria Girls’ School” carries a good deal more symbolic weight than Kincaid’s own alma mater, the Princess Margaret School. This choice of school name suggests an education in the British West Indies that was blatantly Anglocentric in orientation and rigidly pedan-

810
tic in pedagogic practice while the allusion to Victorianism suggests the political context of imperialism, its massive push toward territorial expansion with the so-called scramble for Africa. In the background to evocations of Victorianism is always the emergence of a "pseudo-scientific racism" which targeted "the dark-skinned races, especially Africans"; "Victorian comments about Africans were often outspokenly derogatory, and by this time the blackest Africans were considered the grossest and the most primitive" (Brereton 276).

In Victorian Trinidad, education was seen as an alternative to the defamation that skin color bore for an aspiring black middle-class that wanted to distance itself from traditional employments too closely associated with plantation slavery: "Members of the coloured and black middle class, then, were distinguished from the black masses by their education, their familiarity with European literary culture, and their 'white-collar' jobs" (Brereton 274). In 1884 in Jamaica, in a memorandum sent to the Colonial Office, Matthew Joseph, imagining a containment of any black insurgency, supports universal education, contending that "for the civilization and enlightenment of our people it will greatly add to their love for our Most Gracious Queen and their loyalty to her throne" (Bryan 288). One suspects here a rhetoric of appeasement intended to assuage the strident opposition to the education of blacks in some quarters from those "strangers and others who have no real interest in the welfare and prosperity of our country" (Bryan 288). Still, the imperative of colonial performativity, the pressure to surrender to a public discourse of conformity, is noteworthy and bears some relation to Kincaid’s own command school performance: “I was then at the height of my twofacedness: that is outside, I seemed one way, inside I was another; outside false, inside true” (18). Concerning the labor markets, education was regarded as vital to dismantling the racial structure of plantation praxis. The Victorian sense of rightness, its civilizing mission to colonize a waiting world, suggests that the exportation of Wordsworth was part of the imperial project of establishing English attitudes and mores as hegemonic in the colonized world, attitudes first inculcated in the colonial subject only to be reproduced as if they were entirely self-motivated. Wordsworth’s poem, enshrined in the canon of Lucy’s contemporary West Indian education, refracts the legacy of a self-justifying Victorian political ethos which, in Kincaid’s analysis, produces a certain kind of colonial Caribbean oxymoron, the “educated black person.” This “black person” stands as the living embodiment of Eliot’s “historical sense,” being the cultural coefficient “not only of the pastness of the past, but of its presence.”

The nightmarish colonial subtext of the story of forced memorization is registered in the dream that the young Lucy has the night of her school performance. The strain of having to hide her true feelings under a veneer of social compliance gives way to a surrealistic nighttime release: “I dreamt, continuously it seemed, that I was being chased down a narrow cobbled street by bunches and bunches of those same daffodils that I had vowed to forget, and when finally I fell down from exhaustion they all piled on top of me, until I was buried deep underneath them and was never seen again” (18). This dream signals a return of the repressed with a vengeance. The animated, retaliatory daffodils are symptomatic of a cultural hysteria—to adapt Michel Foucault’s notion of “hysterization” (104) to a specifically colonial context—that is
engendered by the educational arm of the colonial machine. The nascent critical consciousness Lucy experiences in her rejection of the poem is threatened with death and revenge—a putting back to sleep—by suffocating, repressive cultural authorities, symbolized in the personified daffodils. Each step Lucy takes towards self-knowledge constitutes a struggle with the approved and enforced dogma.

IV

Having written the famous lyric sometime between 1804–1807, Wordsworth, of course, cannot be held personally responsible for the hegemonic purposes to which his work was put in overseas cultural management of a later date. In fact, his sonnet “To Toussaint l’Ouverture,” affirms the legacy of the imprisoned Haitian governor who resisted Napoleon’s re-institution of slavery in 1802: “thou hast great allies;/ Thy friends are exultations, agonies,/ And love, and man’s unconquerable mind” (ll. 12–14). And the 1802 governmental decree to banish all blacks from France inspired the sonnet, first published in the Morning Post in 1803 with the title “The Banished Negros,” that narrates the silent journey of a “white-robed Negro like a lady gay” (l. 3) as she makes her way to exile: “O ye Heavens, be kind!/ And feel, thou Earth, for this afflicted Race!” (ll. 13–14). However, Wordsworth’s cooptation into the regime of colonial education in the West Indies can be further illuminated by his own theories of language and poetry as expressed in the 1802 “Preface” of Lyrical Ballads. As the essay develops, he repeats his intention to “imitate, and, as far as possible, to adopt the very language of men” (873) and “to bring [his] language near to the language of men” (874). This particular formulation of his desire to shape the taste of his reading public, indeed an attempt to create a new audience, partially obscures the material and social determinants of this “language of men” on which his entire theory rests. It downplays the social implications of the intertextual transposition that his system demands. “Low and rustic life was generally chosen” as the subject matter, and the language to be imitated was socially tied to “men” of that “condition” (869, 870). Urban life with its pressures and concerns over “great national events,” such as the war with France, served “to blunt the discriminating powers of the mind, and, unfitting it for all voluntary exertion to reduce it to a state of almost savage torpor” (872). This project of restoration seeks to bring together an urban middle-class and a rural peasant class of men close to the soil, with the men of agriculture in service of the urban cognoscenti who, through education and the technologies of communication, are more in touch with “national events.” By framing his recuperative plan as a linguistic intervention to save the men of the city from falling into “savage torpor,” Wordsworth is not simply putting in play the classic pastoral division of town and country, but he invokes one of the venerable tropes of European cultural history: the men of the civilized urbs opposed to the rustic barbarians. This move is entirely consistent with the purpose of the educational apparatus in the colonial context where a double effect is desired: the universalizing of the modes and values of the dominant group as normative and a simultaneous denigration of the colonized as barbaric and
uncultured. Buried, then, behind the facade of a restorative, more natural claim to communication in Wordsworth’s formulation, “the language of men,” is an age-old cultural functionalism that is interpreted here as placing the agricultural man at the behest of an urbane project of internal colonialism.

The intertextual premise of Wordsworth’s linguistic theory from the “Preface,” asserting “that one class-shaped language can be changed so that it represents another, socially alien language,” that one socially determined language attempts to contain and represent the experience of another class, has important implications (Klancher 140). Coleridge, Jon Klancher points out, argues in Biographia Literaria that instead of “discovering an alternative language of the poor . . . Wordsworth has in fact unconsciously produced one from within the grid of his own language” (141). Klancher concludes that Wordsworth “seeks out an alien culture, the language of a remote social class, only to recover from it what was always there. To ‘represent’ this language can mean only to rescue it from its otherness, like the modern anthropologist who tries to penetrate what is most opaque in an alien culture to make it familiar and unthreatening to Western eyes” (147). Certainly the deployment of the apparently simple, innocuous lyric with its celebration of the classic Wordsworthian themes—nature and recollection in tranquility—in the colonial territories is an act of exportation of the unthreatening. Its assumption of canonical status in the West Indian educational imaginary can be traced back to the region’s earliest literary endeavors, James Grainger’s The Sugar-Cane (1764) and John Singleton’s A General Description of the West Indian Islands (1767), which presented through the eyes of Englishmen a transmogrified Caribbean with the natural landscape turned into pastiches of 18th-century English poetic diction. Notable in these works is the literary obsession with the land and its geographical refashioning within a clearly delimited English purview, a genteel but thinly veiled praxis for colonial reassignment. Similar to Wordsworth’s strategy in recreating the language of rural, rustic men, these early works rewrite the land with the purpose of civilizing the savage, inhospitable territories only to lay the aesthetic foundation for a more aggressive colonial possession. The effect of the programmatic inculcation of works like “I wandered lonely as a cloud,” as described in Kincaid, is to create false memories and identifications, implanting within the student’s mind a desire for daffodils, flowers most had never beheld and many would never see, and an intimacy with English rituals that most would never be fully allowed to share.

Exacerbating the greatness of their cultural divide, as soon as winter appears to be finally over, Mariah decides to take Lucy on a field trip to a garden so that her young charge might have a real, first-hand experience with daffodils. Lucy documents Mariah’s excitement in initiating this plan of making Wordsworth come alive as she leads Lucy blindfolded to the garden: “Mariah took me to a garden, a place she described as among her favorites in the world” (28). Mariah removes the blindfold with a magician’s flourish and declares: “‘Now, look at this.’ I looked. It was a big area with lots of thick-trunked, tall trees along winding paths. Along the paths and underneath the trees were many, many yellow flowers the size and shape of play teacups, or fairy skirts” (29). The scene materializes Wordsworth’s daffodils poem, its images and rhythms summoning once again the opening stanza with its revelatory

813
moment for the poet: “When all at once I saw a crowd, / A host, of golden daffodils; / Beside the lake, beneath the trees” (ll. 3–5). In withering prose Lucy devastates this scene, the horticultural memorial to Wordsworth: “I did not know what these flowers were, and so it was a mystery to me why I wanted to kill them. I wished I had an enormous scythe; I would just walk down the path, dragging it alongside me, and I would cut these flowers down at the place where they emerged from the ground” (29). Mariah finally identifies the flowers, hoping that their beauty would somehow eradicate the unpleasantness of their memory for Lucy, leading Lucy to wonder: “how could I explain to her the feeling I had about daffodils—that it wasn’t exactly daffodils, but that they would do as well as anything else? Where should I start? Over here or over there?” (29)? The poem, daffodils and Wordsworth are significant in themselves to the extent they are the repositories of a set of harsh cultural memories that Lucy’s earlier brief report alluded to. As metonyms, their function is representative, pointing to a larger pattern of social and historical relations that is suggestively caught in Lucy’s question: “Where should I start? Over here or over there?” That is, should she unpack the histories of European exploration and colonization, or the Atlantic slave trade, or plantation labor and society, or British rule in the West Indies and its effects, or political mimicry and chicanery in postcolonial Antigua, or the economic dependencies of newly independent nations on global financial networks, or neo-colonial realignments in the contemporary period which implicate the United States? “Here” and “there” are polymorphous, the latter, for example, possibly meaning “Europe,” “Africa” or the “West Indies” simultaneously, while the former could refer to the Americas in general. As deliberately ambiguous geographical markers, “here” and “there” suggest the interrelatedness of empire history, its “inexorably integrative” scope that extends to and includes Mariah in ways that she still ignores (Said 6). She appears to be an ideological casualty of imperialism’s “worst and most paradoxical gift”—the belief that people “were only, mainly, exclusively, white, or Black, or Western, or Oriental” and yet cannot grasp fully what these kinds of fractious divisions and separations really mean for someone like Lucy (Said 336).

The childhood daffodils episode concentrated on the extent to which cultural institutions such as the school reiterated the colonial imperatives of force, ritual indoctrination, racial difference, and self-invalidication for the colonized. In this instance, although Lucy gestures towards a more explicit formulation of the difference in historical perception between Mariah and herself, a good deal of her intended meanings remains unstated. The reader has some access to her thoughts by way of her succinct, deceptively simple yet highly suggestive internal observations, but Lucy has difficulty articulating the full imperial import of her reactions to Mariah. When Mariah tries to hug Lucy, mistaking her silence for unexpressed “joy at seeing daffodils for the first time,” Lucy finally reacts and speaks: “I moved away, and in doing that I seemed to get my voice back. I said, ‘Mariah, do you realize that at the age of ten I had to learn by heart a long poem about some flowers I would not see in real life until I was nineteen?’” (30)? It is an understated response, an attenuated narrative, a return yet again to the story of enforced learning and rote memorization of Wordsworth’s poem, a story whose apparent innocuousness conceals a deep psychic wound. Without attempting to provide a full account of this central episode in both

814
Lucy’s and Kincaid’s lives, the reader of Lucy, like Mariah perhaps, might react like Kincaid’s hypothetical reader in A Small Place who has been subjected to Kincaid’s blistering critique of England’s stranglehold on life in Antigua: “Are you saying to yourself, ‘Can’t she get beyond all that, everything happened so long ago!’” (34). Why, she seems to urge the reader to wonder, is she so stuck in this intertext, in this literary place?

Kincaid’s repeated return to this episode creates an arc that reaches back at least thirty years to V. S. Naipaul’s own account of Wordsworth’s daffodils in “Jasmine,” creating around this floral metonym a pressure point of West Indian literary theory and practice. While in London in the 1950’s, Naipaul was approached by a writer who, seeming to voice the kinds of concerns raised by Kincaid, also identified Wordsworth’s daffodils poem as the synecdochic, Rorschach text within English colonial literary tradition: “The writer was protesting against what the English language had imposed on us. The language was ours, to use as we pleased. The literature that came with it was therefore of peculiar authority; but this literature was like an alien mythology. There was, for instance, Wordsworth’s notorious poem about the daffodil [sic]” (24). Naipaul dismisses this writer’s struggle with the weight of colonial literary tradition as “political” and as self-deceiving subterfuge, a blind refusal to admit that the problem does not lie with the authority of metropolitan English culture but with the instability of “our own formless, unmade society” (24). Naipaul’s own proposal of a strategy of “adaptation” that would substitute local characters and locales for English ones using models such as Dickens for the novel simply affirms the nothingness of Caribbean culture, as he sees it, and replicates the intellectual modes, manners and authority of English literature (25). Here Naipaul’s intertextual premise of composition promotes attention to surface detail and local color but does not allow for any questioning or probing beneath the surface of the imported models. It is a solution that takes refuge in a simple aesthetics of verbal replacement. Yet even as he works his way through the essay, and seems to realize the limits and impracticality of his process of adaptation, he is loath to surrender to a “political” assessment of tradition and the individual writer. For Naipaul, a “political” reading smacks of provincialism, circumscribing “all literatures to the countries of their origin,” in effect cutting off the West Indian writer from English literature (24). The coda to the essay, which provides the source of the title, tells a second story motivated by another flower, jasmine. By way of books, Naipaul had been familiar with the name of the flower but had never connected the sign “jasmine” to the physical specimen: “Jasmine! So I had known it all those years! To me it had been a word in a book, a word to play with, something removed from the dull vegetation I knew” (31).

This jasmine episode restages the epistemological dilemma that Kincaid and Naipaul’s writer acquaintance point to despite Naipaul’s stated objection. Kincaid’s analysis, like Naipaul’s account, foregrounds the splitting of the sign and the referent, the separation of the aesthetic from the cultural. In his account, Naipaul had always reveled in the aural sensuousness of the signifier, connecting it to some imagined English signified, but the referent that was always available to him was diminished to “dull vegetation.” The “absent things” of the experience derived from English books prevent the colonial subjects from valuing the reality of their own experience.
The ready equivalence between sign and referent constitutes the stability that informs Naipaul’s view of English tradition and culture yet proves to be the radical undoing of colonial subjects’ fundamental experience with their own world. In the garden scene, Lucy’s past catches up with her present, the sign to the referent; she finally sees daffodils at nineteen years old. Both Kincaid and Naipaul are witnesses to a historical process inevitably attached to colonialism that encourages a commitment to signs emptied out of any real content and cut off from observable reality. These de-contextualized signs foster a pernicious aestheticism that not only favors cultural self-devaluation but promotes a looking away from one’s own history.

This last is the crucial idea of the garden episode. After Lucy repeats the attenuated narrative of forced memorization, she offers the reader an analysis that Mariah cannot perceive: “As soon as I had said this, I felt sorry that I had cast her beloved daffodils in a scene she had never considered, a scene of conquered and conquests; a scene of brutes masquerading as angels and angels portrayed as brutes” (30). The poem itself reifies tranquility in the wandering poet as a simple explorer and traveler content with the perusal of nature, “jocund” with the fraternal “company” of flowers, and reflective in his “pensive mood” (ll. 16; 20). Absent from the poem’s discursive colonial function is the figure of the aggressive masquerading brute of conquest. In its place is “the fairy tale of how we met you [the colonizers], your right to do the things you did, how beautiful you were, and always will be” (Kincaid, A Small Place 42). Beneath the floral veneer of the daffodils, Lucy cannot help but see a political narrative, a larger set of references to horticulture and land, brutality and possession, conquest and misrepresentation in colonial efforts to bring distant peoples and territories under subjection. Lucy unearths the embedded narrative of the daffodils to deconstruct an archetypal pattern of imperial colonialism’s *modus operandi*.

Later a journey on a train provides another occasion for contrasting readings of the evolving complex of nature, garden and land referents. Mariah revels in the “freshly plowed fields she loved so much,” having a purely sensual and aesthetic response; Lucy has a historical insight: “when I saw mile after mile of turned-up earth, I said, a cruel tone to my voice, ‘Well, thank God I didn’t have to do that’” (33). For Lucy, the “plowed fields” are icons of territorial dispossession and plantation slavery. Here and in the garden scene she forces a complete reconfiguration of the conventional maps of knowledge purported in colonial prescriptions of Romantic nature poetry. Lucy is sufficiently perceptive to recognize a political narrative in the complex network of Wordsworth as canonical English author, the colonial schoolroom as a locus of disciplinary knowledge, and Mariah as semi-maternal purveyor of Anglo-American aesthetics and attitudes. The praxis of intertextuality interferes with the monologic, aestheticizing voice of the colonial canon to engage a non-hierarchical dialogue on literary hybridity. Where the school comes to represent the institutional arm of colonialism’s ideological imprinting, the garden scene exposes the raw facts of the conquest of lands and people that are euphemistically encoded in the horticultural derivation of the daffodils. These two histories within which Kincaid locates the daffodils correspond directly to what we recognize today as the main strategies of colonial politics: force and possession along with intellectual manipulation.
The repetition of the episode of the forced memorization of Wordsworth’s poem throughout Kincaid’s oeuvre, therefore, points up a problematic psychic effect that colonial ideology intends in its West Indian forum and provides a further answer to the question: What happens when Wordsworth is exported to the tropics? Romantic poetry with its evocation of the beauty of nature is a perfect tool of empire; if the colonized people can be made to celebrate nature in a totally de-contextualized way, rapt in poetry’s rhythmic cadences, treasuring its signs as free-floating signifiers waiting to be assigned content through colonial replacement therapy, they can be distracted from seeing the history of nature conquered, appropriated and made the site of forced labor. Lucy’s description of the daffodils in the garden speaks to this point: “they looked beautiful; they looked simple, as if to erase a complicated and unnecessary idea” (29). The history of disempowerment, conquest and slavery is this “complicated and unnecessary idea” that is the obverse narrative of colonialism’s public face—lyric nature poetry. It is “unnecessary” insofar as an acknowledgement of its work would disrupt the smooth surface of ignorance that is required of the colonized if they are to be kept compliant. Kincaid’s own assessment of the work of English Romantic poetry, we recall, is that it creates a desire for a perfection “which one longed for, and of course the perfection that one longed for was England.” The colonial-effect of Wordsworth and English Romantic poetry is to create an alternative world, which leads to the devaluation of one’s own, as instanced in Naipaul’s “Jasmine,” and sets in progress a cultural forgetting, a diminishment of the historical referent, that de-politicizes thought.

Kincaid, however, maintains that it has been one of the goals of her career as a writer not to forget or look away. Her difficult task has been to cope with the material of the literary tradition given to her—imposed upon her, she would say—under colonialism’s aegis, a canon of works which she feels she had “to get rid of” in order to “look at the place” which historical circumstances have made her home. Further, her insistence on remembering that pivotal moment when she was forced to memorize Wordsworth’s poem, both in the garden essays and in a fictionalized rendition in Lucy, calls attention to a bitter dramatic irony. Where readers of the scene from Lucy emphasize the colonial ritual of “recitation,” as does Tiffin cited above, Kincaid reiterates memorization as it accentuates her focus on engaging a specifically Wordsworthian discourse. Wordsworth’s own famous theory of memory’s role in poetic composition posits that “poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings; it takes its origin from emotion recollected in tranquility” (“Preface” 441). The daffodils lyric also proclaims this notion in its closing stanza: “For oft, when on my couch I lie/ In vacant or in pensive mood, / They [the daffodils] flash upon that inward eye/ Which is the bliss of solitude” (II. 19–22). Where memory has a restorative effect and serves as an agent of poetic creativity in Wordsworth’s thinking, it is the source of a far-reaching, burdensome historical past that haunts Lucy’s and Kincaid’s imaginations.

Unlike Mariah whose presumption of an easy fit between sign and referent, literature and life seems to grant her the kind of cultural stability that Naipaul credits
to European traditions, Lucy has to work hard to make sense of the signifying practices whose goals under colonialism have been to distract and mystify. When she does reconstruct the narratives of her past, they bring her pain. After recognizing the need to uncover the embedded narratives of the daffodils—the colonial correlates to the poetry of nature taught in the West Indian schoolroom—both author and her fictional alter ego, Kincaid and Lucy, must contend with the reality that their work of recollection does not bring them immediate tranquility. Still, in the spirit of creolizing misuse of the Wordsworth intertext, Kincaid establishes practices of reading and analysis that liberate her and the reader from the institutional and political claims on colonialism’s former subjects. In Kincaid intertextuality represents a set of reading, writing and analytical practices that constantly seeks to redefine the parameters and legitimacy of the colonial interpretant. The linguistic, and by extension cross-cultural, equity that semiotic plurality promises translates into the deconstruction of lingering colonial identities. Through the democratizing agency of the notion of a semiotic culture, postcolonial subjects can reinvent substantial identities for those lost, trave-tied and revoked, can misuse the cultural texts of a colonial history that, in effect, only really ever promised “absent things.”

NOTES

1. Kristeva notes: “in language, for example, the passage may be from narrative to text. Or it may be borrowed from different signifying materials: the transposition from a carnival scene to the written text, for instance” (59).
2. Regarding the “barbarian,” Dowling observes that “the term lost none of its linguistic force when it . . . came to be used of the vastly expanded and diverse linguistic groups that stammered their obscure dialects inside and outside the borders of the Roman, and now the British, Empire” (93).
3. For further developments in Brathwaite’s theory of creolization, see Bongie (627–29).
4. Riffaterre explains that interpretants “guide the reader in his ‘comparative’ or structural reading. These signs mediate, since by their very form they represent the equivalences of two signifying systems.” He argues further that “textual interpretants,” as distinct from “lexematic ones,” are mediating texts, either quoted in the poem or alluded to . . . and lay down the rule of the poem’s idiom, guaranteeing, with the authority of a normative grammar, a tradition, or as convention would have, the semiotic practice peculiar to the poem” (81). I would qualify the reductionism implied in his expression “lay down the rule” but regard the signifying limits of the interpretant as “guide” and “mediating” signs for the reader as useful in practice. See also Morgan’s account of Riffaterre (262–66).
5. For a discussion of the historical and political circumstances attendant upon the expulsion edict, see Curtis.
6. This episode also extends Naipaul’s application of the problematic principle of adaptation that substitutes jasmine for daffodils, a flower that does grow in the Caribbean for the elusive daffodils.

WORKS CITED


