# Annie John, *the Postcolonial Palimpsest, and the Limits of Adaptation*

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Revisions of canonical English literature are almost en vogue in what has become the postcolonial canon. William Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, written in 1611, and Charlotte Bronte's 1847 *Jane Eyre* have been revised time and again in ways that give voice to the colonized subject. Two of the most popular adaptations of these works, Aime Cesaire's 1969 *A Tempest* and Jean Rhys's 1966 *Wide Sargasso Sea*, adapt their source texts in a way that exposes colonial ideology by shifting narration to the colonized subject and location to the Caribbean. Jamaica Kincaid's 1985 *Annie John* further responds

to this practice of Caribbean revisionism by signifying not only *The Tempest* and *Jane Eyre*, but also their most prominent postcolonial Caribbean adaptations (Yeoh 1993, 115). Adaptation theorist Linda Hutcheon contends that much of the pleasure of adaptations "comes simply from repetition with variation, from the comfort of ritual combined with the piquancy of surprise" (Hutcheon 2006, 4). Repetition with variation certainly occurs in *A Tempest* and *Wide Sargasso Sea*: *A Tempest* retains the characters and names of *The Tempest* while reframing the narrative to be told through Caliban's eyes, and *Wide Sargasso Sea* similarly shifts perspective to that of the madwoman in the attic while still repeating the disastrous marriage and house fire of *Jane Eyre*.

However, the domain of repetition with variation is much more tenuous in *Annie John,* which intertextually references Cesaire, Rhys, and their source texts but through layers of nuance. In his discussion of Kincaid's works and their intertextuality, Ian Smith notes that critics of theorizing intertextuality and the search for source texts read it as giving in to a suffocating "paternalistic genealogical determinism," which destabilizes both signifier and signified (Smith 2002, 802). The amorphous referentiality of *Annie John* could cause it to fall into that domain. However, looking at the myriad of ways in which literature signifies other texts can be an exploration of the "radically intertextual" (Hutcheon 2006, 246). Since the texts I group together in my analysis are what I

find to be radical rewritings of their source texts, I hope to avoid the slippage between signifier and signified and instead explore a radical intertextuality that demonstrates the significance of dialectical adaptation studies. These texts are political pieces that draw our attention to what needed saying in their source texts. In *A Tempest*, Cesaire explores contemporary race and colonial issues by pointing out these issues in a classic work of British literature. *Wide Sargasso Sea* demonstrates the sexism and fear of the Other implicated in the colonial gaze that *Jane Eyre* leaves unsaid. And in *Annie John*, Kincaid revises the masculinist ideology of *A Tempest* and racism of *Wide Sargasso Sea* but uses their own revisionist rhetorical strategies to do so. Therefore, while critics of adaptation theory still might find my desire to configure *Annie John*'s intertextual realms unpalatable or even unnecessary, I believe that it provides a useful locus to determine the limits of adaptation theory. Rather than falling into a recursive genealogical trap, I hope in this argument to show how adaptation theory can provide us with ways to think about texts that themselves are not adaptations-as-such.

Kincaid has articulated the indelible influence of Cesaire and Rhys as well as the British canon (and *Jane Eyre* in particular). Gilbert Yeoh and other theorists explore Kincaid's intertextuality with *Tempest* revisions. Yeoh argues that *Annie John* follows in the revisionist tradition of postcolonial *Tempests*, the most prominent being Cesaire's *A Tempest* and George Lamming's earlier *The Pleasures of*

*Exile*. Yeoh recognizes the metatextual rewriting I argue for here: he says that Kincaid revises tropes in *The Tempest* and through a gender-based lens takes on "a revision of the revisionist tradition itself" (Yeoh 1993, 103). That is, Kincaid moves the focus from Caliban to Sycorax and responds to a feminist lack in *The Tempest* and later revisions. Lauren Maxwell and Smith argue for Wordsworthian intertextuality in Kincaid's works, and Paul Giles and others demonstrate how *Jane Eyre* influenced her writings. Maritza Stanchich, Linda Lang-Peralta, Rebecca Ashworth, Cecilia Sandstrom, Barbara Langston, and others draw similarities between *Wide Sargasso Sea* and *Annie John* to show their analogous literary approaches. This well-established analytic tradition arguing for Kincaid's intertextuality with these texts as well as the sort of nationalistic postcolonial narrative that questions the constitution of Caribbean identity politics espoused by Cesaire, Rhys, and Kincaid both support my argument to read *Annie John* through the lens of adaptation studies.

Cesaire and Rhys write back to the canon by giving narrative agency to characters deemed sexual and racial other. Cesaire disrupts the colonizer/colonized relationship indicated in *The Tempest* and reframes it more explicitly as a master/slave paradigm. *A Tempest* fleshes out the character of Caliban, who has been read as the subaltern subject in *The Tempest*. This reading finds Prospero an arrogant colonizer in response to Caliban's subalternity. Cesaire harnesses "transformative powers" to invoke a

model of change that does not simply mimic or mirror hegemonic discourse, but instead revises it to include disaffected voices (West-Pavlov 2005, 90). Similarly, *Jane Eyre* grants Bertha little textual space; she appears only as a shadowy, savage specter that wreaks destruction and is feared for her madness as well as her darkness. Her story is told only through Mr. Rochester, who blames her promiscuity and wildness - stereotypes often associated with Creole women by contemporaneous English society - for her madness. *Wide Sargasso Sea* writes back to this text by providing Bertha (called Antoinette in this adaptation) with an entire backstory and making her the protagonist of her own bildungsroman. Rhys transpositions the novel spatially and temporally; from England to Jamaica (and back to England), and forward a few decades so that she can incorporate the island's abolishment of slavery as a locus of shifting attitudes about race. By subverting the paradigms set up in their source texts, Cesaire and Rhys encourage critical inquiry into authoritative narratives.

Like Cesaire and Rhys, Kincaid moved away from the European-colonized Caribbean island of her birth. She was born on Antigua in 1949 and lived there until 1965, two years before it became self-governing after years of British rule, when she moved to the United States. Kincaid's engagement with the English literature canon has been well-documented by Paul Giles and others, who find that in *Annie John* she intertextually connects with English literature to "valorize the protagonist's insur-

rectionary manner" (Giles 2010, 211). While Kincaid's works all reflect an intertextuality that demonstrates the continued potency of the English canon, *Annie John* and its sister text *Lucy* most explicitly signify other postcolonial adaptations and their source texts. For Kincaid, postcolonialism represents the split subject and the ways in which colonial violence is turned inward (Giles 2010, 213). This split is represented not only in Kincaid's inscription of the colonized subject through her characterization of Annie John, but also through the text itself, which responds to the traditional canon and to subsequent postcolonial critiques: "her narrative method self- consciously abjures a progressive or redemptive spirit and rotates instead on an axis where positions of domination can be inverted but not eradicated" (Giles 2010, 214). Postcolonial literature eroticizes the sadistic power dynamic of colonialism itself and, in doing so, transposes the colonial dynamic into the very act of reading. As reader, we experience the doubling, prejudice, and betrayal inherent in (re)producing the colonized subject; but also the pleasure of recognizing the transposition. Like Cesaire and Rhys, Kincaid represents the anger that necessitates the formation of the postcolonial subject (Giles 2010, 214). This reconstitution takes place through the lens of postcolonialism but also through that of intertextual adaptation studies. Identities are formulated pluralistically, stemming from and working against community, imposing imperialistic powers, and different means of language development.

Cesaire frames this double crisis of identity by adding the racial, colonial, and spatial aspects of having Caliban as hailing from Africa but living as a slave on a Caribbean island. Prospero represents, of course, the white colonial/imperial power, and his singularly constituted identity stands in stark contrast to Caliban's multitude of possibilities: kingdom-ruler/someone who loses control over an island that was once his by birthright; free man/slave; black-as-good/black-as-seen by Prospero. Similarly, Rhys examines pluralistic identities as they relate to Creolism and the double oppression of colonization and gender, and Kincaid portrays a specifically female, homosexual, black intersectional Caribbean identity. These portrayals recognize that identity is mobile and is constantly being translated between self and other in terms of power relations that inform, interpellate, and compel them. Identity cannot be constituted simply in terms of space. It also necessitates a look at political and sociological movements. The confluence of politics that informs history simultaneously informs identity and the means through which that identity is represented: in this case, literature.

Perhaps the most obvious connection between these texts is the recursive figure of the island setting. Like mobile settings (ships, vehicles, etc), islands often represent liminal, anarchic space. Anything can happen on an island, its portrayal seems to convey: it is a place of magic, growth, and escape. The allure of the island

setting resides in its translatability. It paradoxically implies both the frenzied interactivity of travel, port stops, and trade, but also the notion of inescapability, staleness, and island fever. Similarly, islands are often aligned with savagery and wildness, but simultaneously with the impetus for control - as signified through colonization, enslavement, and military presence. The significance of island culture is often neglected in postcolonial studies (De Souza 2009, 238). Although postcolonial scholars seek to destabilize the idea of the West/Europe as the default position (whether looking East towards Orientalism or expanding West), they sometimes still forget to include the intricacies of the more liminal spaces of islands. The term postcolonialism itself implies that the genesis of once/colonized spaces as a point of study lies within the power hierarchies of colonization (De Souza 2009, 239). This way of thinking disregards indigenous peoples as valid subjects because it defines them only in terms of their encounterability with hegemonic society. Pascale De Souza identifies *A Tempest* as a text which reclaims the tabula rasa ascribed to island spaces that so often shows up in European narratives. Instead, Cesaire "re-inscribes local subjectivity" onto this blank slate to allow for the proliferation of island-based identities (De Souza 2009, 239). In fact, both *A Tempest* and *Wide Sargasso Sea* radically alter the island settings either indicated or explored in their source texts by moving them to the Caribbean and expanding their portrayal through the eyes of the island-born. And following in

this tradition, *Annie John* takes place entirely on the island of Antigua seen through Annie's eyes. This serves to radically rewrite the specter of colonization indicated in their source texts. *The Tempest* and *Jane Eyre* both portray characters whose wildness and in particular their deviant sexuality is founded in being island-born.

*Annie John* revises its source texts and responds to a tradition of Caribbean revisionism through the narration of a queer islander child. Since a very young age Annie John expresses her attraction to and romances with other girls, including the dunce Sonia, the prim and proper Gwen, and the wild Red Girl. The narrator's queerness is "obvious and ordinary": her desire for homoerotic relationships is something that constitutes who she is (Valens 2004, 123). Only her mother reads these relationships as problematic, since she wants her daughter to become a proper marriageable young woman in the heteronormative tradition. Kincaid responds to canonical English texts that construct the islander as racial other as well as their adaptations, which expose the assumptions of colonial ideology, by revising the colonizer/colonized relationship through the lens of queer Caribbean romance. She redefines the colonizer/colonized relationship as one between "the powerful and the powerless" (Jackson 2007, 300). Tommie Lee Jackson reads this as a sadomasochistic impulse that is reflected through Annie John's relationships with other girls as well as the relationship with her mother, which I will address later. Like

the colonizer/colonized relationship, the sadomasochistic relationship is defined by codependency. The sadist is not a sadist without reflection off the masochist, and vice-versa. Kincaid mirrors this painful, codependent dynamic first through Annie John's encounters with Sonia, her intellectual inferior, who she torments. Annie says: "I loved very much - and so used to torment until she cried - a girl named Sonia. She was smaller than I even though she was almost two years older, and she was a dunce - the first real dunce I had ever met" (Kincaid 1985, 7). In this queer relationship, Annie John signifies the Prospero of *The Tempest* and *A Tempest*, who holds his language and supposed intellectual prowess over Caliban. Even though Caliban is older than Prospero biologically and due to his ties to an ancient power through his mother, Prospero still torments him because he is seen as a dunce. *Annie John* directly parallels this dynamic in her torment of the older but smaller and stupider Sonia.

*The Tempest* encourages its audience to root for Prospero and Miranda to escape their island prison and return to England, an oasis of hope. While the island-born Caliban has some of the most eloquent and elegant monologues, often about the beauty of the island, he is still an uncontrollable savage as seen through Prospero's eyes. Prospero justifies Caliban's enslavement because he attempted to rape Miranda. As island-born, Caliban opposes those hailing from European society, with a different set of social norms and a claim to superiority

through a supposed ability to control its innate desires. Instead, Caliban apparently cannot resist the urge to rape Miranda. Not even the drunkards Stephano and Trinculo express sexual aggression towards Miranda, which implies that Caliban's base sexuality is founded through his connection to the wild, untamable island. The island is a blank slate for the colonizer to project their dreams and desires, but for the island-born through the colonizer's eyes it becomes an ecological metaphor for savagery.

In *A Tempest*, Cesaire transposes the conflation of islandhood with deviant sexuality to show how it only appears as such through the colonizer's eyes. Caliban's supposed attempted rape of Miranda is portrayed as Prospero's own doing, as he "put those dirty thoughts" into Caliban's head (Cesaire 1969, 13). Prospero actually wields deviant desires, not Caliban. Prospero wants Caliban to be savage because he is island-born, and this is the real problematic desire. This turns the narrative of the overly sexualized animalistic island-born back on the person who created that narrative in the first place. It also signifies the insidious pervasiveness of colonial ideology, since Prospero can seemingly put thoughts into Caliban's head. The fault here lies within an external colonial force that invades Caliban's mind, not within the dynamics of the island itself. Further, Caliban's sexuality in *The Tempest* is not simply indicative of savagery; it also indicates anxieties about lineage and control. His desire to "people the isle with Calibans"

represents these anxieties, which would have vastly different meanings on an island than in Europe (Shakespeare 1611, 1.2). If the isle was peopled with Calibans, they would have twofold the claim to the island: one through nature - Caliban's relationship with his mother and her rule over the island before her death, and one through nurture - Miranda's bloodline from Prospero, who rules over the island by means of his magic and intellectual abilities. Caliban's children would have claim to the throne of the island from both Sycorax and Prospero, and so Prospero must prevent Caliban from ever reproducing to prevent colonial loss of the island.

Further, Cesaire further subverts the dominant narrative surrounding islander sexuality by including an African god in the notorious masque scene where Prospero blesses Ferdinand and Miranda's impending union. Whereas *The Tempest* only incorporates the spirits Iris, Ceres, and Juno, *A Tempest* adds the surprise of Eshu, who Prospero did not invite to the masque. He conjures the other spirits through his "art," which aligns them with Europe (Cesaire 1969, 47). In *The Tempest*, Prospero remembers Caliban's plot to usurp his throne upon the arrival of reapers to the masque, but in *A Tempest* Prospero's precarious position of power is indicated through the appearance of this pagan god. Eshu is a spirit in the Yoruba religion founded in Nigeria. Cesaire's intended audience may not have been aware of the specific allusion, but the name invokes pan-African deities in gen-

eral, which adds to Cesaire's project of translating the cannonical Shakespearean text for a different purpose and audience. He still includes the normative European spirits but building in an African spirit creates a more pluralistic narrative. Miranda views Eshu as a "devil" rather than a god, which shows his relationship to Caliban (Cesaire 1969, 47). In *The Tempest*, Prospero often calls Caliban a devil, and his mother Sycorax supposedly slept with the devil to produce Caliban. Therefore, Eshu is not only is related to Caliban through his organic location on the island, but also through ties to his mother. Eshu sings a song that names his role as trickster while simultaneously capitalizing on sexual narratives about black men and islanders. Prospero's belief in dangerous black sexuality is extrapolated to bawdy comedy. Eshu sings that he can "whip you with his dick," which destabilizes the oppressive ideology of dangerous sexuality by incorporating stereotypes of well-endowed black men (Cesaire 1969, 48). Here, the dick is portrayed as a weapon that can be used to "whip" others (Cesaire 1969, 48). Earlier, Prospero claims that beating is the only language that Caliban can understand and Eshu's overtly masculine threat twists the narrative so that the black body is the one in power. Eshu's mischievous threat to whip Prospero demonstrates the shift from the European hegemonic model to more dialogic possibilities. Cesaire implies that islanders and the enslaved will fight back against colonial powers using the realm of sexuality which has so often been used against them.

*Annie John* also queers, through a Caribbean context, its precursor texts in a more metatextual way. As a bildungsroman about a queer Caribbean girl, it alters the normative bildungsroman that tells the story of a straight white man coming of age (Valens 2004, 124). Since homosexual desire threatens colonial heteronormativity, its representation in *Annie John* signifies anti-colonialism (Valens 2004, 124). According to Teja Valens, heterosexuality as a regulated norm can be traced to a Victorian moral code with roots in British imperialism (Valens 2004, 124). Instead of simply resisting colonial heteronormativity, though, *Annie John*'s representation of homoerotic desire refocuses the lens to explore what feels correct and also Caribbean about relationships between women (Valens 2004, 124). The Antiguan setting of enslavement and colonization enforces "extreme domination-of colonized by colonizer, of slave by master, of black by white, but also of women by men, of children by adults" (Valens 2004, 124-5). Further, Annie John's partners all embody what Valens calls a "Caribbean erotics of the grotesque" (Valens 2004, 131). Sonia is covered in long, dark hair that, along with her intellectual inferiority, make her seem almost animalistic (or Calibanistic). Gwen's features, which are immensely attractive to Annie John, are markedly Caribbean. And the Red Girl is unclean, boyish, and smelly, which not only makes the stereotype "'cast back in Western faces,'" but... embraced by Caribbean ones, becoming a trope for anticolonial-

ism as well as for autonomy" (Valens 2004, 134). This subverts the perception of Eurocentric beauty espoused by Mr. Rochester in *Jane Eyre* and *Wide Sargasso Sea*. The girls reenact colonial domination through the lens of play, or repetition with a difference (Valens 2004, 124), which itself takes place through the very act of adaptation. Kincaid not only invokes and revises colonial relationships in her depiction of homoerotic relationships between Caribbean girls; she also invokes and revises the act of Caribbean revision through adaptation itself.

Kincaid writes a queer, anticolonial Caribbean sexuality that refuses the heteronormative colonial ideal and revises the colonizer/colonized relationship. She also signifies specific textual instances through this lens to situate her adaptation as such. After hearing that the Red Girl has moved away, Annie John has a dream in which she re-envisions a scene from *The Tempest* (Valens 2004, 140). She says:

> The night of the day I heard about it, I dreamed of her. I dreamed that the boat on which she had been traveling suddenly splintered in the middle of the sea, causing all the passengers to drown except for her, whom I rescued in a small boat. I took her to an island, where we lived together forever, I suppose, and fed on wild pigs and sea grapes. At night, we would sit on the sand and watch ships filled with people on a cruise steam by. We sent confusing signals to the ships, causing them to crash on some nearby rocks. How we laughed as their cries of joy turned to cries of sorrow (Kincaid 1985, 70-71).

Kincaid revises the introductory ship-crashing scene of both *The Tempest* and *A Tempest* by placing it in terms of a queer Caribbean relationship. Like *The Tempest*, A *Tempest* opens with the chaos of shipmates entering the titular tempest. In midst of the storm, the boatswain says that even more powerful than the king is "his Majesty the Gale" (Cesaire 1969, 4). In *The Tempest*, Prospero is portrayed as possessing power through his magic and books; control over Miranda, Ariel, and Caliban; and ultimately, political standing. *A Tempest* revises this to show that though Prospero creates the tempest that causes the ship to go into turmoil, power over nature is a tricky and impossible thing. Kincaid revises both of these texts by placing Annie John and the Red Girl in various positions of power: first Annie John is aligned with Prospero since she plays the rescuer, and then both Annie John and the Red Girl parallel Prospero's ability to cause shipwrecks with storms. However, Annie John argues for a potency that aligns the girls' powers with nature; together, they control even his Majesty the Gale to terrorize ships. The people on these ships represent an invasive neocolonialism that Annie John and the Red Girl are able to destroy - at least in the context of a dream. Kincaid revises the introductory scenes of *The Tempest* and *A Tempest* but places it in the middle of the book through the rhetorical device of dreaming and portrays it through the lens of homoerotic desire. Annie John subconsciously works out colonial issues found in *The Tempest*, a "marker of colonial power systems," and revises the masculinist

view of *A Tempest* in a way that argues for the power of queer desire between Caribbean girls (Valens 2004, 140).

*Annie John* also revises notions of islander sexuality in Tempests through appropriation of its tropes. Chantal Zabus finds that the codes of *Tempest* adaptations are omnipotent magic, abstract book knowledge, and heterosexual romance. *Annie John* rewrites *The Tempest* "by critical proxy" (Zabus 2002, 128). Annie's illness is cured through the magic of obeah, she possesses specific colonial book knowledge, and engages in homosexual romance. Further, while Caliban is reworked through the characters of Sonia, the Red Girl, and even Annie John herself, he is also mirrored through Mr. Nigel, the fisherman. Like Caliban, who Trinculo mistakes for a fish, Mr. Nigel is aligned with fish, which "reverse Trinculo's conjectures but also the colonial premise about the stinking native" (Zabus 2002, 129). Unlike the *Tempest* colonists, however, Annie John finds "stink," especially of the Red Girl, appealing. She finds a useful non-normative marriage model in Mr. Nigel and Mr. Earl, whose arrangement is "as close to a Caribbean resistive model as can be found" (Valens 2004, 145). Mr. Nigel visits Annie John while she experiences a mysterious debilitating illness. After she compares him to her father, he laughs so loudly that she feels like his laugh sucks the air out of the room, causing her to have a violent, hallucinatory reaction. The Caliban-like Mr. Nigel thus wields some sort of magic while being a representative of non-heterosexual romance, therefore twisting normative *Tempest* codes.

*The Tempest* and *A Tempest* explore the island setting thoroughly, even though they portray it as something that Prospero and Miranda want to escape from, but *Jane Eyre* only references the island as it pertains to Rochester's wealth and insane wife. In *Jane Eyre* the island is a place of prologue, an uncivilized space of liminality that produces the savage Bertha. Mr. Rochester describes Bertha as initially a "tall, dark and majestic" woman who wishes to marry him because he is "of a good race" (Rhys 1966, 323). This immediately sets up a dynamic wherein Mr. Rochester, a signifier of England, is racially and morally good, whereas islander Bertha becomes diametrically opposed as a signifier of the island, racially and morally bad. After his initial description, Mr. Rochester constructs Bertha's deviant sexuality through the lens of racial otherness, which is connected to her island birth; she is "coarse and trite, perverse and imbecile," with a "pigmy intellect" given to her genetically from a lunatic mother (Rhys 1966, 324). Her madness is exacerbated by tropical weather associated with her island upbringing and racial otherness, which is of course contrasted with Mr. Rochester's own respectable intellect as a subject interpellated through white English society. Mr. Rochester conflates Bertha with prostitutes and animals, affirming the European colonialist narrative about dangerous sexuality. Her madness is founded not only through the maternal tie to her mother but also from her "intemperate and unchaste" past in Jamaica (Rhys 1966, 323).

He justifies locking her away in the attic because of her deviant desires which have led to madness. His view of Bertha implies that being an islander is an indelible mark that stays with its subject even after removal from the island; while this affects how he sees Bertha, it also seems to make intertextual commentary on other island-born subjects, including Caliban in *The Tempest*. Under the colonizer's gaze, the island becomes a place of "isolation and insularity" that remains with islanders perpetually, thus continually recreating them as colonized subject (De Souza 2009, 245). In response, Mr. Rochester confines Bertha not only physically but also ideologically in his attempt to constrain what he views as dangerous sexuality.

In *Jane Eyre*, proper sexuality is demonstrated through non-islander Jane. She desires Mr. Rochester but finds this desire intolerable and impossible: "to agitate him thus deeply, by a resistance he so abhorred, was cruel; to yield was out of the question" (Bronte 1847, 322). Mr. Rochester's libidinous desire is nearly uncontrollable and regulated only by the object of said desire: Jane. Yet his desire is acceptable, while the desire attributed to Bertha is seen as the source of her madness. She is freed from this constraint only through death, after she metaphorically castrates Mr. Rochester by maiming him and shuts down the male gaze by blinding him. However, even this tenuous sexual agency is transposed in the end. Mr. Rochester gives birth to a child with Jane, indicating the attempted castration is ineffectual, and

can see the child, which demonstrates a return of the patriarchal, colonial worldview. Their child is born after a long courtship and marriage, which falls within the confines of normative regulated European sexuality.

This paradigm is critically scrutinized in *Wide Sargasso Sea*. Before allowing herself to be seduced by the promise of European genteel status, Antoinette has an ongoing loving affair with Sandi Cosway. Although she finds fulfillment and joy in this relationship, as a wealthy white islander, "she won't marry with a coloured man even though he don't look like a coloured man" (Rhys 1966, 73). Sandi's physical appearance does not deter Antoinette, but her perception of his socially constructed identity as interpreted through her lens of colonialist racist ideology does. Even though Mr. Rochester and other European colonists think of Antoinette as a sexually deviant islander, she hypocritically internalizes this view to project it onto someone she sees as less than her: a black islander. Antoinette's and Sandi's relationship serves as a foil to Antoinette's relationship with Mr. Rochester, who constructs her as the racial other even as she perceives herself to be white. Mr. Rochester does not feel love but instead "thirst" for his wife, which again associates her with base desires that can be fulfilled by animals or the environment (Rhys 1966, 55). He conflates her sexuality with the ecological landscape of the Caribbean island she was born on; both are beautiful but also disorderly and therefore danger-

ous. He desires both but simultaneously fears them, and this fear is a catalyst for his arousal but also the reason he cannot love Antoinette. Although Mr. Rochester believes himself to have an egalitarian worldview, his racism is expressed through his rejection of things he associates with the island. Even Antoinette's attempts to please him by correlating herself with European notions of desirable female purity fail because he views her as an islander. She wears a white dress, thus aligning herself with feminine chastity, but the way it slips over one shoulder "associates her with (black) female wantonness and prostitution" (Mardarossian 1999, 1076). Antoinette's sexuality is inextricable from her place of birth, and Jamaica will always inform perceptions of her sexuality. Her internalized colonialist ideology reflects this when she says, "I wish to stay here in the dark… where I belong" (Rhys 1966, 105). Antoinette feels she belongs "in the dark": the dark of her imposed racial identity, of her madness, of her island, and of her attic. Rhys writes back to *Jane Eyre* by problematizing deviant sexuality and its relation to the island in the original text.

Kincaid revises these depictions of islander sexuality alongside her revision of Tempests. Annie John envisions a future where she visits Belgium. She pictures the escape while realizing that in this vision, she would fill the position of Bertha/Antoinette; still, even with this knowledge the dream takes place through a queer Caribbean lens. Annie John imagines living in Belgium, where her favorite character Jane Eyre once lived, af-

ter Gwen tells her she should marry Gwen's brother. Her vision for a *Jane Eyre*-based future is based off a push against heteronormativity. Mr. Rochester's colonial view of islander sexuality is reflected through how Annie John's mother views her potential slut of a daughter. As was instilled in her through colonial ideology, Annie John's mother associates wildness and freeness with sexual immorality. She does not want Annie John to spend time with the Red Girl or to talk to boys. To her, both of these indicate the kind of sexual looseness Mr. Rochester sees in Bertha/Antoinette.

Kincaid further signifies islander sexuality in *Jane Eyre* and *Wide Sargasso Sea* through Annie John's mysterious illness. She is saved from her illness by Ma Rain's obeah, which her mother also uses to fend off her father's affair partners, correlating obeah with deviant sexuality. Annie John says:

> My mother would go to a woman every Friday who could tell if things were being done to us and if these women were having successes with my father. I'm pretty sure he was faithful, but that's only because he was old. But there were always these consultations, and really it was a sort of psychiatrist, someone keeping the unconscious all oiled up" (Kincaid 1985, 409).

The idea of obeah as a means of sexual control also takes place in *Wide Sargasso Sea*. After Edward (Mr. Rochester) reads the letter sent to him by Daniel Cosway and subsequently rejects Antoinette, she runs to ask the obe-

ah woman Christophine for a love potion to make him adore her once again. This scene directly situates Christophine as oppositional force to Edward's representation of patriarchal authoritarian law. Christophine advises Antoinette is to leave Edward, to "have spunks and do battle for yourself" (Rhys 1966, 69). However, Antoinette begs for help and Christophine eventually tells her how to use obeah to have Edward fall for her. Antoinette seduces Edward using Christophine's potion, rum, and candles, but Edward becomes sick and imagines she has poisoned him. The poisoning and its aftermath is the turning point of the text. Edward accuses Christophine of trying to poison him, which leads to a confrontation about her obeah powers. Readers knowledgeable about Jane Eyre recognize a final subversive act of obeah: Christophine subtly curses Edward to lose his eyes, which happens after Antoinette/Bertha sets fire to his estate.

*Annie John* mirrors this relationship between islander sexuality and obeah through Ma Chess, who to Annie John represents escape from the sadomasochistic relationship with her mother (Jackson 2007, 309). Therefore, she also represents an escape from the colonizer/colonized relationship and a new form of sexual self-understanding. Annie John becomes ill after a falling-out with her mother, during which her mother calls her a slut, but is saved from this sexual demonization through Ma Chess's obeah. While sick, Annie John is sequestered in her room, which is reminiscent of the punishment red room in *Jane*

*Eyre* (which is also reflected through the Red Girl's moniker). It also signifies the attic of Bertha/Antoinette's confinement. Mr. Rochester confines her largely because he sees her as a sexual deviant, and this is paralleled by Annie John's mother inducing her illness by calling her a slut, which leads to her confinement. Annie John's confinement reflects Bertha/Antoinette's, but she can escape with the help of Ma Chess's obeah. This subverts the paradigm set up in Wide Sargasso Sea, where Antoinette's attempt at seduction using obeah makes Edward thinks she's insane enough to lock her up in his attic. Kincaid revises this scene in a way that ultimately allows for Annie John's queer island sexuality instead of hiding it away. While in a hallucinatory fit during her illness, Annie John washes her old family pictures. She focuses especially on a picture of her in her old confirmation dress, white like the dress Antoinette wears when trying to seduce Edward. Annie John washes the picture so hard it completely erases the dress, both a signifier of colonial enforced sexual purity and *Wide Sargasso Sea*'s seduction scene. She denies the dress its symbolic power while revising its implications in previous textual incarnations.

*Annie John* plays with the trope about leaving the island written in *The Tempest* and *Jane Eyre* and signified in their postcolonial adaptations. These texts depict four different possibilities regarding a conclusion for island life: 1) the colonizer leaves the island but must give something up to do so, 2) the islander leaves the island and suf-

fers, 3) everyone remains stuck on the island, or 4) the islander leaves the island with the hope for a better life. *The Tempest* falls within the first category. To return to England, Prospero must swear off his powers and his books. This is displayed through the lens of audience interactivity, as the audience must clap to set him free from the island. Caliban's destiny is unclear: does Prospero leave him free on the island, or is he brought to England a slave? His final words onstage are a self-admonition to no longer believe in false idols. While Caliban here references his adulation for the false gods Stephano and Trinculo, his words also apply to his relationship with Prospero. He exposes the colonizer/colonized relationship, initially seen as an intellectual ideological rescue, as worship of a false idol. Even though he wields magical powers on the island, Prospero will become a dull fool when he gives up his powers and books in exchange for departure from the island. While the conclusion of island life in *The Tempest* ends with the colonizer sacrificing something to leave the island, *Jane Eyre* falls within the second category: the islander leaves the island and suffers. Bertha is given little to no backstory, and we as reader only see her as understood by Mr. Rochester. Although she potentially wished to leave Jamaica in search for a better life in England, which would place the book in category four, Bronte leaves her hopes and desires completely unexplored. Only Bertha's suffering after coming to England remains textually significant. She cannot achieve a successful marriage to

Mr. Rochester and therefore legitimize the colonizer/colonized relationship as something that can lead to equal partnership; instead, she leaves the island to live a nightmarish experience of confinement, isolation, and ultimately death. Her inability to have a happy ending demonstrates a biased view of islanders. Jane Eyre had arguably a more problematic past, with no parental ties to establish her gentility, but because she is a white English woman and not a colonized islander she is automatically found to be a better suited wife for Mr. Rochester.

In *A Tempest*, however, islander and colonizer alike remain on the island at the close of the play, which falls into the third category and denies the escapist ideal portrayed in *The Tempest*. Instead of writing a future for Caliban where he leaves the island, Cesaire subverts the narrative to leave both colonizer and colonized on the island and therefore rewrite colonizer as colonized. By the conclusion of *A Tempest*, Caliban and his army of opossums have diminished Prospero into the dull fool invoked in *The Tempest*. After decrying the island's takeover by wild animals, Prosper mutters to himself the reversal of his and Caliban's relationship: "only you and me. You and me. You-me... me-you!" (Cesaire 1969, 220-1). "You-me" becomes "me-you," which both shows their codependence and that Prospero is now the Other. Caliban does not care to reverse the oppressive lens, though, choosing instead to embrace island life and remain apathetic towards its intruder. He ignores Prospe-

ro's hailing and instead calls out to the sea "FREEDOM HI-DAY!" (Cesaire 1969, 222). While Prospero can now never be free, Caliban locates his freedom in his island home. The two remain forever on the island in a way that suggests the inescapability of the colonizer/colonized relationship. While Caliban wields supernatural powers by the close of the adaptation, his success is somewhat mitigated by his and Prospero's codependent relationship. *Wide Sargasso Sea*, however, falls between categories two and four. Antoinette leaves Jamaica in hopes for a loving honeymoon with her husband in Dominica. By the time she leaves Dominica for England, however, Rochester has decided her insane. She suffers until ending with the same fiery conclusion of *Jane Eyre*. This implies that Rochester believes that Europeans will always still see the island. *The Tempest* and *Annie John* both conclude with the promise of escaping the island setting. And in Annie John, the novel concludes with the narrator leaving her island home to go to nursing school in England, thus rewriting the notion of needing to disavow one's books to escape as put forth in *The Tempest*. While I argue that Annie John most explicitly references the source texts addressed here, the novel also cites other works of the British colonial canon and other texts that signify them. The radical rewriting that takes place in Annie John points out absences and issues in its source texts, such as colonialism and the need for queer, feminist islander representation; however, and possibly more significantly, it demonstrates the importance of revisionism itself. For years, people were satis-

fied with the powerful argument Cesaire makes against race and colonial issues in the way Rhys reclaims the island and exposes Mr. Rochester's sexist colonial standards. The masculinist view of A Tempest and racism still prevalent in Wide Sargasso Sea, and the heteronormativity of both texts, remained unchallenged because these adaptations were good enough. However, in Annie John Kincaid revises these adaptations and their source texts to show that revision is never complete.

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