"Perfection with a hole in the middle": Archipelagic Assemblage in Tiphanie Yanique's *Land of Love and Drowning*

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After storms, porcelain fragments surface in the sand and soil of the United States Virgin Islands (USVI). Dislodged by wind and water, these remnants of colonial matter remind residents of the US territory of their Danish history. Known as *Chaney*, these shards function as memorial currency for children to exchange and artists to repurpose. While 2017 marked the one-hundred-year anniversary of Transfer, when Denmark sold its last holdings in the Caribbean to the United States, the implications and experience of shifting national identity remain evolving and dynamic, resurfacing at key moments through the artistic production and material culture of USVI. Similar to circum-Caribbean Emancipation Day celebrations, the commemoration of Transfer Day in the USVI registers archipelagically as an enduring, constitutive feature of belonging in the Caribbean basin. Through a paratextual reading of Tiphanie Yanique's novel *Land of Love and Drowning* (2014) that places her multigenerational narrative in conversation with Wangechi Mutu's and La Vaughn Belle's art, I demonstrate how archipelagic assemblage works as a literary strategy that reshapes colonial legacies that, like Chaney, recede and resurface in the islands' land and seascapes.

Yanique's cultivation of a specifically Virgin Island literature is necessarily archipelagic; it participates in interisland exchange based on circuits forged by colonial practice, dynamically revised through global black freedom struggles taking place in the islands and continents that comprise their diasporic communities. Using archipelagic assemblage to build a diasporic mythology that is nevertheless grounded in the specific ecologies of the USVI allows Yanique to counter trenchant, stereotypical

portrayals that reify the islands' invisibility in American culture, and more urgently, as a forgotten US archipelago in times of crisis such as the wreckage of hurricanes Irma and Maria. Yanique's fictive hybrids, her "ocean-grown" folks (a term borrowed from Mutu) are key manifestations of archipelagic assemblage; reading *Land of Love and Drowning* alongside Mutu's *Nguva na Nyoka* (Sirens and Serpents) exhibit and Belle's counternarratives of Danish slavery underscores the archipelagic nature of Yanique's writing via a transnational perspective that considers multiple mediums and modes of exchange and encounter.[1] Mutu's and Belle's visual reckonings with the splintered identities that result from an accumulation of colonial practice and diasporic sensibilities amplify Yanique's myth-building thematics. Through her characters' struggles to articulate their national identity in the midst of transition, what it means to "go from Danish to American like it ain nothing. Like it ain everything," Yanique rewrites the experience of Transfer from an archipelagic perspective. In so doing, she mines the diasporic archive of the Atlantic world to emphasize the distinctiveness of the Virgin Islander.[2]

Reading Yanique's expansive, generational epic through the lens of archipelagic American studies provocatively illuminates circuits of connectivity oscillating between the United States, the Virgin Islands, and Denmark. Archipelagic American studies elucidate the relationship of islands connected by trade, topography, and migration through bodies of water as well as their connection to continents.[3] Reading archipelagically foregrounds how island networks interact with the continents that comprise black diasporic space, thus diminishing hierarchies that privilege continents in discourses around race, identity, and migration. As Edward Kamau Brathwaite explains, the configuration of islands and atolls in the Caribbean evince a submarine unity that challenges continental conceptions of nation.[4] Continental bias literally overshadows islands, reinforcing an invisibility that has tangible effects like the nonresponse to damage caused by hurricanes or the proliferation of texts that traffic in tropical stereotypes of islands as primitive or Edenic sites that have been propagated and promoted ever since the economic shift from a plantocracy to tourism. An awareness of an archipelagic diaspora, arising from the circulatory patterns of commerce, migration, and culture through the human and nonhuman vessels that travel interisland and intercontinental routes, also reveals how island tropes resonate in the literature and visual culture of continental landform nations.

Reading archipelagically is an interdisciplinary practice that also requires reading paratextually. Beth A. McCoy's articulation of paratextual reading practices in African American literature expands Gérard Genette's cautious attention to the elements of a text that exist in "threshold" or border spaces, namely footnotes, prefaces, and epigraphs, to incorporate the visual texts that have been critical to black literary culture since its inception: "[T]angled throughout books (and other printed texts) as well as around the images that are the stock in trade of an increasingly visual culture, the paratext is territory important, fraught, and contested."[5] Reading

paratextually is critical to my understanding of archipelagic assemblage—it allows for transhistorical interpretation that datamines the submarine elements of Yanique's writing. Mutu's series, tropicalization photography, and USVI concerns in New Negro print culture become more than just histotextual footnotes: [T]hey are central to the archipelagic assemblage working throughout *Land of Love and Drowning*.[6] The idea that a "paratext is territory" also amplifies the status of those archipelagic sites that intersect with the US insular cases—those US territories "neither subordinate nor undisputed" outside the protection of statehood.[7] In their introduction "Relational Undercurrents: Toward an Archipelagic Model of Insular Caribbean Art" (written to accompany their cocurated exhibit), Tatiana Flores and Michelle A. Stephens posit that "[t]he visual arts are uniquely equipped to bridge the region's language and cultural divides."[8] I similarly situate the visual paratexts assembled here as linguistic and cultural bridges between diverse ethnocultural histories that extend beyond the Caribbean to the continents of Africa, Europe, and North America to illustrate how Yanique's mythmaking occurs within intersecting visual, and occasionally sonic, terrains of archipelagic assemblage.

Understanding the cartography of Yanique's novel—which is composed of multiple islands, atolls, coasts, and parts of the continental United States and Denmark—requires an awareness of the types of landforms and sea passages that make up the archipelagic circuits I trace. The Virgin Islands represent a unique hinge between the North American continent and the Danish archipelago of Jutland (which includes more than four hundred islands). The Danish purchased St. Croix from the French in 1733 and settled St. Thomas (1672) and St. John (1717). The United States acquired these islands, which occupy a strategic location on the Anegada Passage, a prime shipping lane leading to the Panama Canal, for twenty-five million dollars.[9] Island chains are one of the geographical features that constitute an archipelago. For my purposes, the chains of connection that comprise archipelagic diaspora include shared experience of plantocracy and/or colonial/imperial conquest/administration, cultural practices, rituals, and language, to name just a few of the elements that circulate via land and sea. Elizabeth DeLoughrey, a key theorist within island and archipelagic studies, repurposed Braithewaite's concept of tidalectics to capture the ebb and flow of displacement and settlement, or "roots and routes."[10] The complex displacement resulting from the politics of Transfer enables Yanique's particular manifestation of archipelagic diaspora: one that reveals the submerged history of Atlantic slavery in Denmark and the resulting circulation of mythic figures that surface from colonial encounters.

In rewriting the experience of Transfer from the Virgin Islanders' archipelagic perspective, *Land of Love and Drowning* incorporates European maritime culture, West African mythology, and the artful evocation of resistant ecologies all the while illustrating the specific ethnic and cultural hybridity resulting from Danish colonial legacies. Mapping the novel's aquatic terrain also reveals subtle, submerged histories of interracial relationships forged to promote the Atlantic slave trade of the Danish

colonies in West Africa, such as those explored in historian Pernille Ipsen's *Daughters of the Trade* (2015). Ipsen's research on West African entrepots, spaces of trade and encounter that facilitated the Danish slave trade and established interracial, multigenerational communities, undergirds the novel's complex familial history. The afterlife of slavery shapes the novel's intimate exploration of belonging and sovereignty as competing and layered historiographies of the island nation and its inhabitants. This afterlife haunts three generations of women connected by the love and legacy of their drowned patriarch: Owen Bradshaw. Owen and Annette's eldest daughter, Eeona, belongs to her father body and soul; the phonics of her name, "he own her," is a reinforcing echo of their deep, incestuous attachment. Owen frequently calls his daughter "my own" and silently repeats "I own her" like a mantra in his head when making love to his wife. His given name further underscores, perhaps even overdetermines, his and the novel's preoccupation with possession. The youngest daughter, Anette, belongs to her mother's birthplace of Anegada, "the drowned land," where Owen's ship goes down after crashing on the "submerged reef [that] surrounds it eight miles out."[11] Beginning the novel on Transfer Day entangles understandings of ownership and citizenship as the narrative seeks to answer "the strange secret to freedom and belonging" (344). The transfer and division of the Virgin Islands throw these concepts into jeopardy. One gradual, salient change is beach access, which becomes increasingly privatized and inaccessible to island inhabitants after US transfer. Island protests extend beyond St. Thomas as radical ideas circulate throughout the archipelago, prompted by the particular circumstances of each individual island as well as a diasporic sensibility of resistance, disseminated through televised images of Civil Rights protests and the experience of VI servicemen abroad, who though "mulatto … educated and high-bred, could go to American colleges and become Negro overnight."[12] The BOMB, or Beach Occupation Movement and Bacchanal, dramatized in the novel exists on a continuum of interisland and intercontinental protests that incorporates the grammar of Civil Rights through terms like *wade-in*, *soak-in*, and *lime-in*. Alongside Yanique's characters' struggle to articulate their national identity in the midst of transition, *Land of Love and Drowning* also recovers an alternative understanding of the Virgin Islands that counters the stereotypes created by Herman Wouk's *Don't Stop the Carnival* (1965) and the controversial film *Girls Are for Loving* (1973), which until very recently dominated perception of the Virgin Islands as a place of primitive pleasure and idleness.

The impressions created by Wouk's novel and the soft porn film evince the persistent, sexualized connotation of the USVI in particular, and the entire Caribbean archipelago more broadly, as sites of hedonism and abandon; other cultural forms, like the calypso song "Rum and Coca-Cola" and tropical photography, also propagate these impressions through corporatized appropriation. In *An Eye for the Tropics: Tourism, Photography, and Framing the Caribbean Picturesque,* Krista A. Thompson discusses the visual economy of tourism and the stakes of representing islands and seascapes through what she calls tropicalization: a process that renders the Caribbean

accessible through various photographic technologies in order to replace obsolete economies. Through a cultural history of photographic representations of the Caribbean, Thompson traces how sightseeing became the "new sugar" by transforming islands from "colonial outposts into societies that seemed perfectly managed, domesticated and stable."[13] Through a similarly appropriative process, the lyrics of Lord Invader's transgressive calypso song become popularized and americanized by the Andrews sisters, despite the fact that it initially offered an ironic critique of the inequity of United States–Caribbean encounters: "And when the Yankees first went to Trinidad, Some of the young girls were more than glad / They said that the Yankees treat them nice / And they give them the better price / They buy: rum and Coca-Cola/ Went down Point Cumana, / Both mothers and daughters working for their Yankee dollar."[14] Vestiges of this song reappear at critical moments in Yanique's novel, reflecting an archipelagic understanding of how sound disseminates and reinforces the USVI's connection to other islands in which the United States has military and corporate interest because of proximity, like Trinidad, Haiti, and Cuba. The United States "find we absolutely necessary because they backside sitting on the Caribbean. Just so we get pass from hand to hand."[15] While this essay cannot fully attend to the sonic implications of all the song's iterations, the lyric fragments that appear in the text are part of a transnational landscape of sonic resistance that Yanique embeds in her novel. As Carter Mathes argues, *listening* to textual renderings of sound in post–Civil Rights literature opens up an "imaginative landscape of experimental sonority" that "reframes late capitalist racial formation with a particular attention to the reconstitution of domination indicative of the post-Civil Rights era, and an attunement to a historical genealogy of black resistance to white supremacy."[16] Though Mathes's study primarily focuses on African American literature, *Land of Love and Drowning's* treatment of "Rum and Coca-Cola" situates it within a transnational civil rights discourse. The song's sexually inflected lyrics echo a Pan-Caribbean understanding of US imperialism as a kind of prostitution, a sentiment amplified by Lord Invader's version, but that is minimized in the Andrews sisters' appropriation.[17] Though the song originates in Trinidad, its presence in the USVI is indicative of how culture—in this case sound—travels throughout the archipelagic diaspora of Yanique's novel, provocatively reinforcing Antonio Benítez-Rojo's concept of the repeating island.[18] In addition to Yanique's repurposing of Trinidadian folklore, she utilizes "Rum and Coca-Cola" as a refrain that reinforces interisland cultural continuity even as it questions the song's shared status as transgressive calypso tune and national anthem for US military service personnel. As Anette narrates:

> *Rum and Co-caa-Co-la …*. I know this song from Lord Invader scratching it out over the radio. Is much later we hear 'bout the Yankee Andrews Sisters thiefing the song ... . The Caribbean is the rum and America is the cola and with the Virgin Islands is both, so everything sweet, sweet, sweet … (147)

In the giddy postwar atmosphere, Anette hears the calypso song and initially feels "[h]appiness at being an American." Only later, when she encounters the Andrew sisters' version does she "realize Lord Invader is the one who get invade" (147). The US acquisition is part of a geopolitical expansion that reveals the falsity of the country's continental boundaries. If calypso is the soundtrack for BOMB, the collective iterations of "Rum and Coca-Cola" embedded with the tense pleasure of cultural fusion pushing up against the imbalanced economics that still persist wherever capitalism makes landfall, the misheard song represents a rupture in the archipelagic soundscape that evacuates its anticolonial critique and makes way for its adoption as a US anthem. This passing reference to the song's evolution and appropriation works as a synecdoche that figures the USVI's Transfer as a kind of theft and their Americanization as commodification.

"Flash[es] of Beauty": Submerged Encounters and Colonial Counter-narratives

The first lines of Lin-Manuel Miranda's *Hamilton* ventriloquize Ron Chernow's bestselling biography: "How does a bastard, orphan, son of a whore and a Scotsman, dropped in the middle of a forgotten spot in the Caribbean?" Several times throughout the musical Miranda emphasizes Hamilton's Caribbean heritage as a "Creole bastard" who survives a hardscrabble West Indian childhood on Nevis and St. Croix.[19] The irony is that *Hamilton*'s retelling of American revolutionary history also reifies the mythos of the American immigrant narrative without much challenge. The mass appeal of the musical resides in its power to expansively redeploy Horatio Alger/rags-to-riches US mythology, utilizing late twentieth-century hip-hop and nontraditional casting to enable people of color to inhabit a history that marginalized and disguised their centrality. But the runaway success of *Hamilton*, which premiered in New York in 2015, is not the only reason that the USVI has been in the news. In the aftermath of 2017's Hurricane Maria, the majority black population living and working in St. Croix and St. Thomas remained in desperate need of support, yet the preponderance of news coverage focused on tourist areas that suffered minimal damage. The delay in aid replays US inaction in response to natural and manmade disasters affecting areas that constitute, to borrow from Sylvia Wynter, "poverty archipelagoes" in the African diaspora, such as New Orleans in the wake of Katrina, parts of Houston, and Puerto Rico.[20] The slow reaction to crises in US territories reinforces their status as "foreign in the domestic sense."[21] In concert with ceremonies and public events recognizing the anniversary of Transfer (commemorative stamps have been issued, statues commissioned, conferences and other memorializing events have been held), *Hamilton*'s popularity has served to spotlight that "forgotten spot" "across the waves," sparking renewed interest in the unique relationship of the Virgin Islands to their Danish colonial past and their neocolonial present with the United States.[22] In the *New York Times* travel section, journalist Ann Mah tours historical sites associated with

Hamilton, including a sugar plantation and a slave market, in a lengthy piece entitled "Hamilton's Caribbean Island."[23]

More than mere coincidence, these events illuminate the transcontinental connectivity of archipelagic relationships while gesturing towards the transoceanic. After Miranda grafted an archipelagic sensibility onto Alexander Hamilton's revolutionary narrative, he subsequently made use of his US territorial affinity to craft an indigenously informed songbook for Disney's 2017 animated musical *Moana.* Michelle Stephens and Tatiana Flores have argued that the Caribbean basin is ruled more by a logic of analogy than of difference; as a result, the Pacific can provide a relative counterpoint regardless if its specific geographies are invoked.[24] Following this reasoning, the Caribbean's archipelagic assemblage is both in dialogue with and shaped by oceanic discourse arising from Pacific archipelagoes. When considered alongside Miranda's advocacy to ameliorate the suffering of US territories in the wake of 2017's severe weather, the sonic aspects of archipelagic assemblage evinced in his songbooks reveal a complex negotiation of transnational diasporic fields. It is into this interstitial maelstrom of archipelagic connections that Yanique's novel intervenes to offer an alternative and substantive counter to the fragmented flashes of USVI culture on the US mainland.

Concern and awareness about US involvement in the USVI also have a longer, if overlooked, history in African American print culture.[25] In 1925, Casper Holstein published "The Virgin Islands" in *Opportunity*; his article strikingly overlaps with Mah's "Hamilton," as both authors reference the same landmarks and historical figures. Born in St. Croix, Holstein moved in 1894 to New York, where he became an infamous racketeer; he was largely responsible for instituting a black market lottery system called "the numbers" and used the earnings to invest in multiple businesses and philanthropic endeavors in Harlem and the Virgin Islands. His article includes an image of Hamilton's mother, "Rachael Fawcett Levine," and shares Hamilton's now-familiar tale:

> It was in the little town of Bassin, or Christiansted, in St. Croix, that the boy Alexander Hamilton grew up and labored as clerk, and first exhibited those remarkable powers that took him through what is now Columbia University in New York at the age of sixteen and made him the active genius, and "father of the American Constitution."[26]

Hamilton, however, is not Holstein's main concern; his primary intention is to acquaint *Opportunity*'s African American audience with the newly installed naval government in the Virgin Islands. Like Miranda, he begins by invoking Hamilton's biography to establish common ground: a storied bridge between the continental United States and the Atlantic world. But Holstein's real purpose is to condemn the militarized structure of the VI government as undemocratic and repressive. Calling it a "brutal anomaly" that renders the VI a "tropical dependency," Holstein is particularly irritated by

American importation of "American race-prejudice, from which the islands had been free." Holstein's observation that racialized oppression operated differently under Danish rule is an effective juxtaposition given that his objective is to protest US imperialism. In actuality, Danish slavocracy was as brutal and manipulative as plantocracies elsewhere in the Caribbean. Holstein later contradicts his own assessment that "under Danish rule the islanders were more or less happy and contented," by stating "on the same island slavery was abolished by the slaves themselves after a bloody uprising in 1848." [27] Such assertions counter assumptions that remain in currency today that the Danish voluntarily emancipated their subjugated property.

Though slavery was abolished in 1848 on the Virgin Islands, the legacy of the plantation transformed the island ecosystem; the ghosts of the Middle Passage and its victims haunt USVI land and seascapes. Capitalism's thirst for endless profit created a permanently altered environment in which indigenous flora and fauna, not to mention human inhabitants, were replaced with lasting implications.[28] Andrea Stuart's 2013 memoir succinctly chronicles the generational ramifications resulting from the extreme brutality of "saltwater slavery" and the cane sugar industry, concluding that the region's "obscene death rate" stemmed from "the West Indian planters' initial decision that it made economic sense to work their slaves to death rather than sustain them from generation to generation." Another result of this murderous practice was the arrival of "a steady stream of new Africans who brought with them fresh energy and newly minted resentment."[29] Though Stuart's memoir focuses on Barbados, the repetition of this dynamic throughout the archipelago sparked a long tradition of violent revolt across the region that finally escalated in the Haitian Revolution (1791-1804). The rebellion(s) in Haiti continued to spark ancillary resistance through the Caribbean, including the Virgin Islands. For instance, in 1878, half of Frederiksted was burned in a violent resistance known as the Fireburn, a protest of labor conditions for workers supposedly emancipated in 1848. The celebrations in USVI and Denmark associated with Transfer Day have both brought to surface misconceptions regarding Danish slavery as well as inspired artistic projects—like a trio of statues of "Queen Mary, Matilda, and Agnes"—three enslaved women who spearheaded the rebellions.[30] In 2018, La Vaughn Belle and Danish artist Jeannette Ehlers placed their collaborative sculpture entitled *I AM QUEEN MARY* at the Danish West Indian Warehouse in Copenhagen.[31] The statue sits on a wicker "throne" holding a torch and canebill; the pose intentionally mimics the photograph of Black Panther Huey P. Newton seated in a peacock chair holding a spear and gun, linking the project to the iconography of transnational black freedom struggles. These public artworks are part of continuing efforts to acknowledge Denmark's role in the perpetuation of Atlantic slavery.[32]

Figure 1 La Vaughn Belle, *Collectible* series. 2008. Drawing. Courtesy of artist. © La Vaughn Belle.

The suppression of Denmark's involvement in the slave trade in national narratives around the islands' transfer is the subject of Pernille Ipsen's *Daughters of the Trade* and La Vaughn Belle's visual art and video installations, respectively. Although interracial marriage was uncommon in Denmark's colonies, Danish merchants formed respected alliances known as "cassare marriages" with African women to cement trading ties with the communities they plundered and bartered with. As go-betweens, interpreters, and facilitators, these women and their children comprised an intermediary class that created a culture of transference and exchange traceable in iconography and myths circulating throughout the diasporic Caribbean and the port cities of Europe and North America. Far from hidden, these relationships are chronicled in the travel writings of Danish agents and in the trading archives of Christianbourg, but until the 1970s scholars rarely looked for or considered the multiple and complex roles enslaved and free African women played as important historical agents in the history of the slave trade.[33] St. Croix–based artist La Vaughn Belle's visual art recalls Denmark's central role in the slave trade and how this economic relationship is often concealed within official histories beneath a public rhetoric of tolerance and race blindness. Belle's artistic practice repurposes iconic Danish artifacts, like the distinctive blue-and-white chinaware pattern of Royal Copenhagen, and features images that allude directly and indirectly to colonial relationships. *Collectible* (2008), a series of drawings on paper plates, includes maritime iconography, bucolic tropical scenes, trees, and a striking image of a white-clad woman holding the hand of a small, naked

black child (*see Figure 1*). Belle's deliberate choice of an ephemeral medium to simulate dishware evokes what she perceives as Denmark's view of the islands as disposable.[34] Another series entitled *Chaney (we live in the fragments)* magnifies china patterns (*see Figure 2*); this collection (2014) primarily features floral, geometric shapes in which the maritime images in the drawings are notably absent; however, the very name of the exhibit, a colloquialism combining *china* and *money* that "describes shards found in the dirt on many properties and locations throughout the Virgin Islands that often resurface after a hard rainfall," brings to the forefront Belle's aesthetic concern with the residual effects of Transfer and historical recovery.[35] By exhibiting these new "artifacts" of slavery and colonialism at Christianbourg Palace as well as galleries throughout the Virgin Islands, Belle unearths and recirculates important history, artfully provoking mindfulness without being overtly proscriptive.

Figure 2. La Vaughn Belle, *Chaney (we live in the fragments)*. 2014. Painting. Courtesy of the artist. © La Vaughn Belle.

A similar ethos marks the subtle reference to Danish slavery and commerce in *Land of Love and Drowning*, particularly in the storyline involving Eeona, the Lovernkrandts, and *The Homecoming*'s shipwreck; these flashes or shards are part of the archipelagic assemblage that surface in Yanique's USVI. The downfall of the Bradshaws (including Owen's shipwreck, which is based on the actual sinking of the *Fancy Me*, the VI's *Titanic*) is intimately tied to Transfer Day and the economic changes that follow when "Denmark decide it don't want we. America decide it do" (10).[36] Such cultural interlapping, to use Edward Kamau Braithwaite's term, is as intimate as it is a result of foreign policy and trade. I'm attracted to Braithwaite's "word-image," as Brian Russell Roberts describes the loosely articulated concept, because it reflects an archipelagic relationality that pinpoints the flow and recession of water into sand, coral, and other landforms in a way that both connects and transforms.[37] Interlapping is particularly useful for thinking about the surfaces and circuits constituting the multiple geographies of archipelagic assemblage.[38]

In the novel, the Virgin Islanders' Creole heritage is evident on the surface of their skin: "Eeona always say Papa was British and Danish, but anybody could watch the picture of him and see that he part Frenchy and plenty Negro" (11) as well through deliberate naming practices that reiterate multiple ancestral lines, but also selectively sever or suppress certain familial connections. Denmark's formative presence appears through the character of Liva Lovernkrandt. Like other Atlantic colonialists, the Danish traded rum, sugar, and slaves. Mrs. Lovernkrandt,

> a mulattress herself, was generally of a nutmeg color. When she returned from New York, she was very pale, as though there were milk under her skin instead of blood. She looked almost like a white woman. And truth be told, her Danish husband had told the Americans that his wife was of Portuguese descent in order to dampen any Negroid suspicions. Now Mrs. Lovernkrandt always wore a hat when outside and she always sought the shade. (80)

Liva's relationship with her husband reflects the opportunistic marriages with Euro-African women Ipsen has recovered in colonial archives and oral family histories. Of Mr. Lovernkrandt, "an eminent Danish businessman," Yanique writes:

> Despite his Danish parentage, Mr. Lovernkrandt was a native of the Virgin Islands, according to the US declaration. A Caribbean man, but also an American all the same. We all were. (84)

The Lovernkrandts' union echoes the complex trade agreements and partnerships formed in other Danish colonial outposts, including those on the Gold Coast. Like the Euro-African women of Christianbourg, Liva, and her family, were able to attain and pass down a modicum of autonomy, privilege, and material benefits through the negotiation of unions in which value accrued according to family, status, religion, and

ancestry in addition to skin color. The *cassare*-like marriage of the Lovernkrandts and Owen Bradshaw's business ventures with them eventually result in exile for the former and financial ruin for the latter when these already hierarchal partnerships are upended after the US transfer, and they have to reckon with the economic and social ramifications of becoming subject to US laws such as prohibition. Transfer forces Bradshaw to switch his cargo from the more lucrative rum to "bull bones" from Puerto Rico and deepens his debt to the Lovernkrandts (22).

Just as naming practices, financial ties, and other subtle manifestations locate Danish legacies in *Land of Love and Drowning*, La Vaughn Belle's installations powerfully exemplify the difficulty inherent in recovering Danish influence through objects**.** Belle's painting *Chaney (we live in the fragments)* repurposes Royal Copenhagen's trademark blue-and-white motif with USVI images: "These shards tell the visual story of power and projection and how cultures reimagine themselves in this vast transatlantic narrative."[39] With the exception of a "rattled" cup, Yanique doesn't describe the china Eeona and Liva use for their "bush tea" in the scene where Eeona swallows her pride to appeal for help, but given the Lovenkrandts' commercial interest and investment in their colonial ancestry the tea service *could* be Royal Copenhagen.[40] In this tense scene, the parlor's décor amplifies the devolution of Eeona's status as a result of her father's "bone debt" to the Lovenkrandts that ruined the family's finances.

The evocative interiors of Yanique's narrative and Belle's paintings and installations imagine Denmark's colonial influence as a dynamic, still evolving, and differentiated process of national/cultural transference and loss. When Liva offers to employ Eeona as a "handmaiden," or glorified servant, the term turns her blood to "saltwater" (83). In retaliation, she sheds her contained respectability by unleashing her outrageous ocean hair. In response to her defiant act of unloosing, the servant "sent the tray he was holding crashing to the floor and the sugar on the tray spraying across the room." Eeona then utters a curse that travels the archipelagic circuit from the island to the continental United States: "When the Lovernkrandts left, they were forced to sell their estate, for they could not maintain it from abroad. They sold it and everything in it" (84). The wreckage of the bone china invokes the spillage of bones, Owen's lost cargo that continues to surface on Anegada's reefs: The sugary leftovers of Danish commerce wash ashore on British and newly acquired American territory. The severance of Danish ties also results in an economic reorientation that has material ramifications for a USVI society structured by race and class lines, even as the meaning of American citizenship for the islanders remains ambiguous and idealized.

The focus of Transfer is on land exchange: "[T]he land becoming American, but we people still Caribbean" (11); but just as human inhabitants have an interlapping sense of belonging that disrupts a seamless transition of national affiliation, the waters and submerged landforms like the coral also manifest a complex relation to redrawn borders that the event of the shipwreck underscores. The ironically named *Homecoming* sinks in the Anegada passage: a medium that that does not recognize

newly conceptualized national boundaries. Although the passage presumably marks an aquatic border between US (formerly Danish) and British border waters, the catastrophe has an archipelagic resonance as "[e]very family of note from the U. S. Virgin Islands and the British Virgin Islands had a relation who went down with the ship" (59). Temporally, the wreck is a palimpsest: "[w]e can imagine what will happen to the cargo on *The Homecoming*. How the bones will be released from their sacks by nibbling fish. How for years fishermen will pull up mandibles with their lobster catch. How for generations children will find femurs in the sand" (59). Over time, flotsam mingles with the bones from other wrecks on Anegada's notorious reef as well the remains of those victims of the Middle Passage whose bones comprise the Atlantic graveyard and whose exaqua exhumation, to borrow a term from M. NourbeSe Philip, remains incomplete.[41]

The novel's suppression of familial microhistories that resurface in fragments is an apt analogue to Belle's artistic excavation of the Chaney that litters the soil of the archipelago. Just before her father's shipwreck, Eeona visits the atoll with her fiancé, Louis, not as a daughter returning home, but as a tourist from a not-so-large island to an even smaller one. As she disembarks, the Anegada men carry her as if she was "a case of china dishes" (49), simultaneously reinforcing her value and fragility while alluding to the origin of the remnants that comprise Chaney. Her intended husband, however, has more than romance on his mind—his family wishes to build a golf course; he "spoke of the entire land as if it were his already," all except "Flash of Beauty," the most scenic, treasured beach on Anegada, which he promises Eeona will remain "a refuge for women and fish."[42] Louis's development plans reveal that the dreamy overtones of the couple's visit mask their union's true purpose: French consolidation of wealth through marriage to a woman with indigenous ties to the land. Ignorant of her ancestral connection and the sinister resemblance of her engagement to the Lovernkrandts' cassare/*signare*-like union, Eeona experiences her Anegadian heritage only in flashes of recognition during brief encounters with her extended family: "I know a Stemme when I see one … you just like those Duene stories they tell the children" (50). Yet without ancestral (or paratextual) knowledge, these moments are ephemeral, incapable of lasting transformation, and so Eeona returns to St. Croix ignorant of her ancestry and condemned to an isolated existence. It is only in the next generation via Eve Youme (Anette's daughter/Eeona's niece) that heritage and self-knowledge awaken in a way that cultivates resistance and manifests social change.

Ocean-Grown Folks

Yanique uses her fiction as a tool to recover, speculate, and imagine a distinct USVI that is as Pan-Caribbean as it is North American and dynamically Afrofuturistic in ways that resonate with visual artists at play with the polytemporality of the archipelagic diaspora. Viewed through an archipelagic framework that incorporates an oceanic understanding of interspecies kinship, Yanique's ocean-grown folks epitomize what

Stacy Alaimo describes as "thinking with sea creatures."[43] Yanique's is not a reparative ecological impulse that reifies hierarchies between humans and other forms of life; instead, her text manifests an adaptive syncretism that mirrors the processes and transformation resulting from the transatlantic slave trade. One of the particularities of interisland exchange in Yanique's archipelagic diaspora is that her deployment of anthropomorphism does not apply solely to conscious beings. Anegada—"[p]erfection with a hole in the middle"—is inhabited by lobstermen: people who resemble their livelihood so much the lines between human and lobster blur (29). Her "Duene" are "ocean-grown folks" (Mutu 104) who occupy nationally contested ecologies that are not quite land, not quite sea: such as the Anegadian atoll which navigators anthropomorphically identify as resembling "the flat chest of a child floating in the water" (59). Atolls are precarious places to live. The center of the mass is submerged; what can be seen above water is only the rim of the bowl. Similarly, many of the novel's salient events, like the wreck, occur under or on the surface of water; Anegada's inhabitants are more s*ub*marine than human.

Even as I read the novel within a circum-Caribbean histotext, I acknowledge the author's aim to instantiate a specifically Virgin Island literary tradition through archipelagic assemblage. Her main protagonist (Anette) is a historian, and Yanique intentionally seeds a cultural archive that includes hybrid beings like the Duene:

> the duene is based on two elements: The douen and the duende. Now, the douen are mostly from the southern Caribbean (Trinidad is where I know them most prominently to be). There the douen are indeed little people with backwards facing feet who live in and protect the natural environment. They are people only in that they used to be children. But they are the spirits of children who died unbaptized and so keep their childlike forms. The duende, which I know mostly to be of Belize, is also a mythical creature, small and childlike and mischievous. Like the Douen it protects the natural elements and is connected to children. It seems obvious that there is a connection between the Douen and the Duende, but, failing to find evidence of the connection (a missing link, maybe or a common ancestor noted by some anthropologist or literary scholar) I, and here is my secret, I created it. I called it Duene. When I created the duene I was creating (via fiction) what I know to be a true connection between these two geographical ends of the region—Trinidad to the South east and Belize to the north west. I seated one such possible connection in the Virgin Islands. By putting it in my novel I created an archival element of this connection. But I also know that by telling the story of that connection (writing a novel with that connection embedded there) I was actually creating the connection. Making my Virgin Islands novel the archive of that connection. Though no such archive existed in the culture before (that I know of), fiction, like all story

> telling, is part of any cultural archive. And so by making this connection exist in my novel, I wanted to make it exist—period.[44]

Yanique creates an archive by providing an additive account of cultural mythology that innovatively expands the boundaries of her fiction. Similar to scholars who practice critical fabulation—Saidiya Hartman's term for a method that speculates inventively while simultaneously putting pressure on the tension between "brutal, real, lived history" and the metaphoric to read against the grain of mainstream archives of Atlantic slavery and colonialism—Yanique insists on the act of storytelling as evidence and the storyteller as a generative cultural authority.[45] Following this logic we can turn to another Caribbean novelist who corroborates Yanique's attributions. In the glossary of Harold Sonny Ladoo's novel *No Pain Like This Body*, he defines the Duenne and the Jables (diablesse) as spirits of African origin:

> Duennes are the spirits of children who die before they are born. The heels of the foetus-spirits are in the front, and the toes are turned backwards. These tiny spirit creatures dwell in small communities deep in the forest … Jables: (corruption of the French term *diablesse*, or female devil). A witch, or agent of the devil, who takes the shape of a beautiful woman. People in the countryside believe that the jables has one normal human foot and one cloven. Keeping the normal foot on the road and the cloven one in the grass, she lures men who travel at night along country roads to their destruction.[46]

In offering glossaries and cataloging characteristics, both novels serve an ethnographic function. That is, they assert their authenticity by inviting readers to utilize their stories as repositories that archive folk culture and memory.

A similar imperative informs Lisa Ze Winters's tracing of the "missing link" between Mami Wata and Erzulie in *The Mulatta Concubine*. Ze Winters's study of the *signares*, the French counterpart to Pernille Ipsen's cassares, illustrates how economic, interracial alliances impacted how the enslaved imagined the transformation of the African water goddess Mami Wata to a phenotypically hybrid mermaid known in the Haitian Vodou pantheon as Lasirèn. Ze Winters convincingly argues that the mixed-race incarnations of Lasirèn, and other feminine water deities, constitute "an archive of what captive subjects passing through slave ports like Gorée and Saint-Louis may have understood when they saw free(d) black and mulatta women who profited from their sexual connections with white men."[47] Lasirèn's New World iconography is intrinsically related to African women's negotiation for freedom and power through interracial sex and compromised servitude. The complex social structure in which status and kinship ties mattered as much as what would increasingly become codified as race was also elided by what Pernille Ipsen identifies as "ethnopornographic" fantasies that circulated about African women in Europe through biased travel accounts and the persistence of exotic/orientalist visualizations of women of color in

colonial archives.[48] Yet, a *counter*iconography can be traced in Caribbean art and writing and through mythic figures like the ones appearing Yanique's novel. *Land of Love and Drowning* features mermaids, iterations of Anancy, the trickster who can be found in West African, Caribbean, and African American folklore, and Pan-Caribbean figures like *la diablesse* (also known as the cowfoot woman). The Duene's backward-turned feet also invoke the *ciguapa*: a diminuitive female trickster indigenous to the Dominican Republic that also traces her origin to a work of fiction—Francisco Guridi's *La Ciguapa* (1866)—before entering the transnational Caribbean imaginary.[49] In addition to interisland, archipelagic assemblage, Yanique's Duene merge Danish mariners' lore with West African deities associated with water and miscegenation. Her Virgin Island mermaids evince an atavistic "wildness" passed down through oral history and incest. Like rum, sugarcane, and chattel, Hans Christian Andersen's (1837) *The Little Mermaid* also traveled Atlantic trade routes. Unlike the retold and adapted versions popularized by Disney, the original tale, like many fairy tales, is one of suffering and sacrifice, pain and despair, with a resolution that scarcely offsets its tragedy. Various forms of diasporic Caribbean mermaids embody Mami Wata's associations with wealth, love, contracts, danger, and sacrifice, but they also reflect the interracial unions formed between African women and Danish men in Gold Coast towns like Christianbourg.[50] Like Andersen's little mermaid, women entered into these relationships at great cultural cost and compromise, and while potentially advantageous, the unions could also be forgotten and dissolved like sea foam when the traders returned to Denmark.[51]

Yanique weaves the submerged and mythically embodied history of the cassare and folklore into her sweeping intergenerational tale; late in the novel, Eve Youme emerges as a resistant and agented water woman. Her complex ancestry is an amalgam of Jewish, African, multi-island, incestuous, interspecies heritages. Yet, unlike her maternal aunt Eeona, she galvanizes her otherness, her "wildness," to resist the privatization of beaches and argues for the full American citizenship of Virgin Islanders through her participation in the BOMB movement.[52] The explosive acronym mirrors the archipelagic impact of the BOMB whenever and wherever a strategic intervention is staged.[53]

A turning point in the novel occurs when Eve Youme strips off her clothing during a "lime-in," swims gracefully through the water, and inspires the other protesters to do the same: "Her beauty was so disturbing, so unusual, and so unfair that even the protesters lowered their voices." Later, "[w]hen Eve Youme was being hauled out of the water by the Guardsman, she looked like something of the sea. … Everyone watched as her body was revealed. Everyone waited for the fish tail. Her legs appeared but her jeans, wet and heavy, flared at the bottom like fins."[54] In this scene, Eve Youme's hybrid/magical ethnicity is empowering and erotic, rather than isolating and tragic. The novel relays the oral history of the Duene through an embedded "paratextual glossary" that situates the Duene within the ancestral atoll of Anegada, from which the family moves to St. Thomas:

> [Annette Stemme] began with the female Duene who live in the sea of the Anegada Passage. They sink ships with their singing. They are tall with thin angular legs that push like fish through the water. On parts of their bodies they have scales the colours of precious metal. This hides a bit of their bursting beauty when they come to land … . Their feet face backwards. (25)

Recessive genes recur in the Stemme/Bradshaw lines. Red hair and skin marks French, Danish, and "lobster" heritage; Eeona's weaponized "ocean hair" and "Eve Youme's backward turning foot" mark Duene and diablesse ancestry. It is significant that the female Duene are inseparable from the geography of Anegada, while the males live in Frederiksted on St. Croix. Like their classical antecedents, they are sirens. When the experienced sea captain Owen Bradshaw breaks his contract with the sea by betraying his wife with his daughter and his mistress, they come to collect: "[T]he captain must have been called to the island, as though by a siren." While the community speculates that the Duene or Owen's witchy mistress are at fault for the wreck, Eeona blames herself for uttering a curse made material by her Duene heritage—"I wish you would just die"—when her father ends their relationship (59, 58). Yolanda Martínez-San Miguel has described the novel's normalization of incest as an "illegible register of love located in the most intimate space of the human."[55] This illegibility partially explains why Owen's actions can be simultaneously read as both a romantic and paternal betrayal. In fact, the novel persistently illustrates his conflation of the roles of mother/daughter/lover: "He could see the bodies of his wife and daughter against other's like courtesans" (23). When Jacob, Owen's son with Rebekah McKenzie, sees his mother making love with Owen, whom he knows only as the "ocean-dancing man," he confirms his mother (known in the community for her skills as healer) also has the inhuman form of the diablesse:

> One perfect smooth brown foot. The toes pointing and flexing into the air silently. And the other foot was not a foot at all. But a hoof. A hoof all the way up to what should be his mother's ankle. A bone-colored cleft in place of toes. Thick brown hair all the way up to the knee. (55)

He will forget this memory and with it his paternal parentage. Its suppression, together with Eeona and Rebekah's conspiracy to keep his identity secret, will result in his passing on the maternal diablesse trait to his daughter Eve Youme through an incestuous affair with his half-sister Anette. Forgotten or submerged history that inevitably resurfaces is an emblematic theme that situates the novel comfortably within the multimedia pantheon of Afro-Caribbean visual culture.

Wangechi Mutu's Afrofuturist composite water women resonate paratextually with Yanique's innovative take on the Trinidadian douen, which she reconceives as Pan-Caribbean, hybrid figures resolutely tied to their evolving environs. Based on a fusion of the Belizean Duende, mischievous forest folk, and what Ladoo terms "foetus-

Figure 3. Wangechi Mutu, *Beneath lies the Power*, 2014. Collage painting on vinyl. 231 x 175.1 cm, 91 x 69 inches. © Wangechi Mutu. Courtesy the artist and Victoria Miro, London/Venice (photography Bill Orcutt).

spirits,"[56] their derivation recalls Annette's "washing the womb" (9) of her unborn children in Caribbean waters already thick with tossed-overboard offspring of enslaved women hoping to spare their infants a life of servitude. Like Yanique's "secret" revelation that she "created" the Duene, Mutu admits that "to make things make sense, I have to make things up";[57] their brutal and occasionally grotesque sirens challenge sanitized Eurocentric mermaids. Similar to the diablesse, who has one human foot and one cloven, the hybrid figures in Mutu's *Nguva na Nyoka* are often doubled, coexisting simultaneously where land meets water. In *Beneath Lies the Power* (2014), a figure with tree branches for hair and eyelashes upon which parrots and other birds perch sits half-submerged in liquid and upon another shadowed humanoid with a split tail, fins, scales, and skeletal hands (*see Figure 3*). Together they are *nyuva na nyoka*: "chimeras of animal, plant, and human mixtures," unifying and challenging how we conceptualize diasporic water women in the twenty-first century.[58] Despite some significant distinctions between the nyuva, who derive from stories told in East Africa, and Mami Wata, who is West African, Mutu's "na" provides an interlapping bridge, or an undersea current, that enables a powerful connection across the African continent through the Caribbean basin to the Americas and back again. As Binyavanga Wainanna writes, "Nguva, accompanied by pythons in vinyl land, feral in a weave, and starving after sinking and bursting over the Atlantic, meets Mami Wata posters as she walks through West Africa and Congo and swims across the lagoon in Mpeketoni to Lamu where Nguva looks to eat again."[59]

We can track the archipelagic assemblage practiced by Yanique and Mutu through black feminist theory and its interrogations of how visual representations of "slavery project the continued enfleshment and ungendering of black subjects."[60] Mutu's collage takes off the flesh, replacing it with a coalition of organic and inorganic material that troubles how we identify and label the female. Hybrid males also populate Yanique's archipelagic diaspora: Eeona's lover embodies Anancy by growing eight legs, and living in an octagon, while Anette's first love is a lobster-man thrice over. These hybrid, interspecies subjects are an enfleshment of a circum-Caribbean diaspora that has multiple bifurcations and derivations, including Danish–French–African–American identities and citizenship, the commodification of human and nonhuman labor, and mythos that circulates through an aqueous environment linked through reefs, waterways, swimmers, and ships. The queer embodiment of "ocean-grown folks" appears to be the only way to excavate the transformative/apocalyptic simultaneity of the colonial/neocolonial enslavement/emancipation experienced in, felt by, and grafted onto bodies of humans, animals, land, and water.

Images like Mutu's *Beneath lies the Power* announce that what is going on underwater is as important as what appears above; in most of her *Nyuva* series, to rectify the land-based privilege of air-breathers, three-quarters of the space represents the oceanic world. "Submersing ourselves," Alaimo writes, by "descending rather than transcending, is essential" to counter human exceptionalism; similarly, Mutu's submarine realms remind us that "we dwell within and as part of a dynamic, intra-

active emergent, material world that demands new forms of ethical thought and practice."[61] Mutu's collage paintings are also examples of what Elizabeth DeLoughrey calls "interspecies worlding." [62] Along with the subjects, titles like "All you Sea, came from me," and "The screamer island dreamer" invite viewers to rethink the relation of water to land and the beings that inhabit both media. *My Mothership* (the title references the Afrofuturistic vehicle that will convey black peoples via the music of Parliament-Funkadelic into a new astro-promiseland) features a hovering earth–sea creature more serpentine than siren with its reptilian and gastropod features. A tangle of hair and scales form a diaphanous shell darted with black spikes; the face is humanoid, with red lips, gap teeth, and large eyes. A crown of spikes—red outlined with gold—protrude from a cloudy afro. The body has a gelatinous quality: Free-form circles of purple, lavender, and magenta attenuate into a split, while a snake's tail curls in or out of a cluster of pearls that might be eggs or another excretion. Mutu's *mothership* is decidedly of the terrestrial, rather than extraterrestrial, plane, accentuated by shades of brown and landmasses that could be mountains of dirt or kelp-covered coral. Manifesting what Adrienne Edwards calls a "practice of magical manufacture," Mutu demarcates an Afrofuturist discourse that remains earthbound, yet claims as its terrain the unexplored, unknown potentiality of adaptive life forms that exist in the depths of the ocean as opposed to deep space.[63]

With her diablesse feet and "her hair swimming behind her like an impossible school of barracuda" (319), Eve Youme's image becomes analogous to Mutu's nyuva—an incestuous and fearful beauty, not unlike that of Anegada, the atoll of her ancestors whose reef shipwrecked her grandfather. Within this context, Eve Youme's activist performance during a "lime-in" registers as an individual revelation and collective epiphany. Uri McMillan's concept of the embodied avatar, which has the "agile ability to comment back on identity itself, to subvert the taken-for-granted rules for properly embodying a black female body" aptly captures how Youme uses her hybrid subjectivity to distort and disrupt the US naval government's militarization of the shoreline.[64] By revealing her backward-turning foot and showcasing her aquatic skills—her dis/abilities—which are also nothing less than the unique configuration of black women's "paradoxical blending—of human, object, animal" she both enacts and inspires resistance to the oppressive corporatization of the beach (as synecdoche for the entire archipelago) resulting from US imperialist acquisition.[65] Just as "Rum and Coca-Cola" delivers its critique through the lyrics of a calypso song, the lime-in on the beach provides Youme's stage. Like McMillan's polytemporal, transhistorical avatar, Youme literally shifts time in multiple directions, enabled by her duene, and transnational ciguapa, heritage: "Though she was running to the water; it seemed as though she were running in every direction," both recursive and futuristic (319). Galvanized by her "[b]ackward, forward," movement, Youme's community recovers an ancestral connection that empowers them to transform the lime-in to a swim-in (320). Her act has a collective reverberation. As soon as she enters the water, "every single person on the beach was filled with an ancient urge" and "flooded after her"

(319). Subsequently, the *Daily News* disseminates Youme's, or "me" as she is nicknamed, "indecent" photograph in the arms of the naval government representative throughout the archipelago; the circulation of her transgressive act results in the passing of the Free Beach Act. Her act is a powerful example of how Yanique uses the politics around Transfer as a jumping-off point for a profound reorientation of the USVI's simultaneous distinctiveness and connectivity to diasporic communities and their efforts to resist the spread of antiblack neocolonialism throughout the archipelago.

Youme's individual act of performative transgression becomes an effective personal, as well as political, affirmation. In revealing her identity as an ocean-grown descendant of the Duene, she also powerfully reshapes the "disability" of her backward-turning foot that Jacob (her physician father) wishes to correct, causing him to reconsider a Spanish doctor's offer to "cure" her affliction though "codeine, exorcism, surgery … prayer" (328). However, once the circulated photograph archives her activism, Jacob comes to understand Youme as "the symbol, like a statue of liberty for the Virgin Islands" (328). Though he doesn't believe her disability to be a "thing of God" and fears that her biblically tempting beauty will provoke recursive memories of his traumatic childhood, he lets her be as she is made (328). In convincing her father that her otherness is worth "holding onto," she also confirms the agency of the USVI residents "[to] be able to go back and forth from water to land as you please" and to negotiate and acknowledge that the chaos of Transfer is an evolving process that extends beyond the date of transaction (328, 318–19).

The circulated photograph that records Eve Youme's act of resistance activates interisland protest networks by underscoring that the power of the image resides in how it is recognized in its multiple, mythic iterations. Visual culture is a central part of Caribbean culture and identity; photographs, especially those that comprise the colonial and anticolonial archive, retain a special power. Within the novel, Youme's photograph is an archipelagic image that recalls similar historical acts of resistance, like that of the journalist Evon Blake, who jumped into the segregated pool at Myrtle Bank Hotel in Jamaica on a summer afternoon in 1948. Instead of Honeymoon Beach, the site of a swim-in Yanique's novel, Myrtle Bank Hotel has a saltwater pool that serves as a "beach surrogate."[66] Blake's position as a journalist should have provided a ready mode of wide distribution for images of his plunge, but ultimately there appear to be no extant photographs in local papers. Instead, the live performance, what Krista A. Thompson calls "the vivid mental image of Blake's escapade" acquired an enduring, mythic effect through its recounting. This act was one link in an interisland chain of resistance that "ultimately influenced the desegregation of other spaces in Jamaica."[67] Just as Youme's act of resistance instantiates policies protecting USVI beaches, Blake would later chair a commission granting local access to beaches in Jamaica.[68]

In closing, I return to the Anegada passage, a waterway that flouts conventional national and geographic boundaries; Anegada is not part of the US or the former Danish Antilles, but lies within the British Virgin Islands. When Eeona visits with

her "real French" fiancé, she is unaware of her maternal connection to the atoll; it is Louis Moreau who tells her: "'The Spanish named this island Anegada, the drowned land, because it has a history of drowning ships. Thousands of ships, and they remain here, under the ocean'" (51). Eeona imagines that her marriage will confer respectability; she will be a "real Madame," but also a benign steward of "native people" she insists will be allowed to "trespass" on the beach without "permission" (49, 52). This dream does not come to pass. Instead, Louis' prophetic words "'Unless you know where the reef begins, you will crash into it and sink your ship'" foretell the *The Homecoming*'s impending wreck, as well as Eeona's subsequent dislocation and alienation (51). The historical traces of Danish colonial relationships, African diasporic religions, and civil rights resistance all comprise the submerged history that shapes the lives of the characters inhabiting *Land of Love and Drowning,* which Yanique movingly uncovers.

The historic succession of hurricanes in 2017 and the confused governmental nonresponse that devastated Caribbean and US coastal communities sharply underscore how imperative archipelagic thinking is to recognizing the complex, interconnected relationship between former colonial powers and islands that are contiguous to the North American continent. Another way to think of this archipelagic assemblage is as a gathering of Pan-Caribbean thought, a diverse, activist collaboration of theory and praxis manifested in the art as well as in philosophical and politically informed analyses of identity and belonging. Reading *Land of Love and Drowning* within an archipelagic frame invites intersections with fields like oceanographic and environmental studies that map time through means alternative to human-centered constructions of temporality. Derek Walcott's oft-quoted poem, "The Sea is History," invites us to dive beneath the language and view the underwater monuments of the Middle Passage: "Bone soldered by coral to bone, / mosaics / mantled by the benediction of the shark's shadow."[69] Walcott's lyricism uncovers the traces left by the outrage and trauma of forced removal, dispersal, and disposal: cathedrals raised from ocean materials fused with bone—these are also Mutu's "ocean-grown folks," animated remnants that, unlike the static gallery holdings of Western preservation practices, are dynamic, evolving, and lying in wait. Having an enhanced understanding of how the multilayered, ecologically varied, polytemporal, and persistent circuits of exchange and encounter shape the current culture and politics of the circum-Caribbean archipelagic diaspora increases connectivity between the human and nonhuman inhabitants of the region. Yanique, Mutu, and Belle share an artistic vision that both generates and draws upon a dynamic archive that reorients and reshapes prevalent tropes of the region as it exists in weather reports and popular imagination as a site of pleasure, conquest, and debris.

Notes

[1] Wangechi Mutu as quoted in Teju Cole, *Known and Strange Things* (New York: Penguin, 2016), 104.

[2] Tiphanie Yanique, *Land of Love and Drowning* (New York: Riverhead Books, 2014), 130.

[3] In contrast to other modes of demarcation and categorization (racial, national, etc.) the archipelagic diaspora evokes a sense of planetary connectivity. For a comprehensive understanding of *Archipelagic American Studies*, see Brian Russell Roberts and Michelle Stephens, "Introduction: Archipelagic American Studies, Decontinentalizing the Study of American Culture," in *Archipelagic American Studies: Decontinentalizing the Study of American Culture*, eds. Brian Russell Roberts and Michelle Stephens (Durham: Duke University Press, 2017), 1–54.

[4] Edward Kamau Brathwaite, *Contradictory Omens: Cultural Diversity and Integration in the Caribbean* (Monda: Savacou Publications, 1974), 64.

[5] Beth A. McCoy, "Race and the (Para) Textual Condition," *PMLA* special topic *The History of the Book and the Idea of Literature* 121, no. 1 (January 2006): 156.

[6] *Histotextuality* is P. Gabrielle Foreman's term for an intertextual reading practice "predicated on the recognizable historicized markers that authors and readers share, rather than on the recirculation of formal text." Though initially deployed to illuminate hidden political agendas in nineteenth-century black women's writing, I find this term usefully distinguishes historical fiction from narratives like Yanique's, which hold in tension contemporary and historical concerns. See P. Gabrielle Foreman, "'Reading Aright,' White Slavery, Black Referents, and the Strategy of Histotextuality in *Iola Leroy*," *The Yale Journal of Criticism* 10, no. 2 (Fall 1997): 1.

[7] The insular cases are a series of Supreme Court decisions that sought to determine whether or not to extend full constitutional rights following the 1898 acquisition of new territories following the Spanish–American war. The debates determined that full rights and citizenship did not automatically apply to what would become known as unincorporated territories. For more on the insular cases, see Kal Raustiala, *Does the Constitution Follow the Flag? The Evolution of Territoriality in American Law* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009).

[8] Tatiana Flores and Michelle A. Stephens, "Relational Undercurrents: Toward an Archipelagic Model of Insular Caribbean Art," in *Relational Undercurrents: Contemporary Art of the Caribbean Archipelago* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2017), 15.

[9] The United States also eventually acquired several atolls, which it finds suitable primarily for the testing of bombs: the bikini atoll being the most well known as a site of multiple detonations of nuclear bombs, resulting in the removal of the Indigenous

population to other islands in the chain. *United States History*. http://www.u-s-history.com/pages/h1064.html.

[10] Elizabeth DeLoughrey takes her book title, *Routes and Roots: Navigating Caribbean and Pacific Island Literatures* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2007), from Paul Gilroy's articulations of roots and routes to capture the movement and origin of the Black Atlantic. *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double-Consciousness* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993).

[11] Yanique, *Land of Love and Drowning*, 39, 49.

[12] Yanique, *Land of Love and Drowning*, 118.

[13] Krista A. Thompson, *An Eye for the Tropics: Tourism, Photography, and Framing the Caribbean Picturesque* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006), 23.

[14] Lord Invader, "Rum and Coca Cola," *Genius*, https://genius.com/Lord-invader-rum-and-coca-cola-lyrics.

[15] Yanique, *Land of Love and Drowning*, 10.

[16] Carter Mathes, *Imagine the Sound: Experimental African American Literature after Civil Rights* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2015), 11.

[17] Nicole Waligora-Davis excavates the song's circulation as an embedded critique of US imperial policy: "The circulation of this song, the copyright infringement cases pursued in (1945–48), and the social histories marshaled in its lyrics provide an entry point for understanding US militarization in the West Indies and its reciprocal, social, political, economic, and cultural effect." Waligora-Davis pursues the social history and legal battles surrounding the song as a way of pinpointing a turn in US foreign policy, "away from isolationism and toward an understanding of the world as a global theater of potential threat" that prompts a "landgrab" that transforms borders of the continental United States. Nicole Waligora-Davis, "Myth of the Continents: American Vulnerabilities and 'Rum and Coca-Cola,'" in *Archipelagic American Studies: Decontinentalizing the Study of American Culture*, eds. Brian Russell Roberts and Michelle Stephens (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2017), 191–212.

[18] Antonio Benítez Rojo, *The Repeating Island: the Caribbean and the Postmodern Perspective* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1992).

[19] Hamilton was born on Nevis in either 1755 or 1757 and moved with his mother to Christiansted, St. Croix around 1765.

[20] Sylvia Wynter, "Unsettling the Coloniality of Being/Power/Truth/Freedom: Towards the Human, after Man, It's Overrepresentation—an Argument," *CR The New Centennial Review* 3, no. 3 (Fall 2003): 260–61.

[21] See note 6.

[22] Hamilton's story resonated with Miranda's own migration narrative. As a Puerto Rican, he understands the contested identity that results in the island's status as US territory, not unlike St. Croix. The Caribbean also provided a creative catalyst: Miranda wrote sections of the musical on islands. "You'll be back," a celebrated song from the perspective of King George, was written while he was "on my honeymoon in the South Pacific" (57); other songs, like "My Shot," include a riff on Rodgers and Hammerstein's "South Pacific"; two songs, "Alexander," and "Hurricane," reference the formative role of hurricanes (materially and metaphysically) on West Indian subjects. Lin-Manuel Miranda and Jeremy McCarter, *Hamilton: The Revolution* (New York: Grand Central Publishing, 2016).

[23] Ann Mah, "Hamilton's Caribbean Island" *New York Times*, May 7, 2017, pp. 1, 6.

[24] Flores and Stephens, "Relational Undercurrents: Toward an Archipelagic Model of Insular Caribbean Art," 26.

[25] Harlem Renaissance studies often elide the role of Caribbean immigrants in the New Negro Movement; in fact, Holstein, with W. A. Domingo, did much to shape the political and literary culture of the era.

[26] Casper Holstein, "The Virgin Islands," *Opportunity* 3, no. 34 (October 1925): 304.

[27] Holstein, "The Virgin Islands," 305.

[28] On the interdependency of capitalism and development of the slave trade see Eric Williams, *Capitalism and Slavery* (Chapel Hill: University of Carolina Press, 1994) and Stephanie Smallwood, *Saltwater Slavery: A Middle Passage from Africa to American Diaspora* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008); on the cultivation of cane sugar see Sidney W. Mintz, *Sweetness and Power: The Place of Sugar in Modern History* (New York: Penguin Books, 1986).

[29] Andrea Stuart, *Sugar in the Blood: A Family's Story of Slavery and Empire* (New York: Vintage Books, 2013), 275.

[30] A bronze statue of the three rebel women was unveiled in 2005. Designed by the sculptor Richard Hallier, the fountain is located in a four-acre garden in Charlotte Amalie, St. Thomas.

[31] See Martin Selsoe Sorensen, "Denmark Gets First Public Statue of a Black Woman, A 'Rebel Queen,'" *The New York Times*, March 31, 2018, https://www.nytimes.com/2018/03/31/world/europe/denmark-statue-black-woman.html.

[32] On the project of national forgetting in the Haitian context, see Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1995).

[33] Pernille Ipsen, "Epilogue: Edward Carstensen's Parenthesis," in *Daughters of the Trade: Atlantic Slavers and Interracial Marriage on the Gold* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 2015), 175–80.

[34] Conversation with the artist on December 28, 2018.

[35] La Vaughn Belle. "*Chaney (we live in the fragments_001-015)*." Artist's website. http://www.lavaughnbelle.com/#/infinite/.

[36] Re the sinking of the *Fancy Me*, see Yanique, *Land of Love and Drowning*, 354.

[37] Brian Russell Roberts, "What Is an Archipelago? On Bandung Praxis, Lingua Franca and Archipelagic Interlapping," in *Archipelagic Thinking*, ed. Yolanda Martínez-San Miguel and Michelle Ann Stephens (London: Rowman and Littlefield, 2020), forthcoming. I want to thank the editors and reviewers for encouraging me to explore interlapping further.

[38] Although Brathwaite does not elaborate on the term *interlapping*, it is part of his effort to locate a place-based Caribbean vocabulary for understanding the ambivalent, fragmentary, and often contradictory relationships resulting from the colonial enterprise and its attendant systems of oppression. Interlapping appears alongside multiple interprefixed terminology— including integration and interculturation—recruited to expand on the processes of creolization. Edward Brathwaite, *Contradictory Omens: Cultural Diversity and Integration in the Caribbean* (1974; reprint, Mona, Jamaica: Savacou, 1977), 5.

[39] Belle, "*Chaney*," http://www.lavaughnbelle.com/infinite?rq=statement on chaney.

[40] Yanique, *Land of Love and Drowning*, 81.

[41] NourbeSe Philip defines exaqua as *to exhume from a watery grave*. M. NourbeSe Philip, *Zong!* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2011), 201.

[42] Yanique, *Land of Love and Drowning*, 49, 51.

[43] Stacy Alaimo, "New Materialism, Old Humanism, or Following the Submersible," *NORA—Nordic Journal of Feminist and Gender Research* 19, no. 4 (December 2011): 280–284.

[44] E-mail to the author. July 2016.

[45] Saidiya Hartman, "Venus in Two Acts," *Small Axe* 12, no. 2 / no. 26 (June 2008): 11.

[46] Harold Sonny Ladoo, *No Pain Like This Body* (Toronto: Anansi, 1972), 128.

[47] Lisa Ze Winters, *The Mulatta Concubine: Terror, Intimacy, Freedom, and Desire in the Black Transatlantic* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2016), 104.

[48] Pernille Ipsen, *Daughters of the Trade: Atlantic Slavers and Interracial Marriage on the Gold Coast* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 2015), 176.

[49] Historian Carlos Esteban Deive (as translated in Candelario) describes the Ciguapa as a "female being" who walks "with her feet pointing backwards," while Ginetta E. B. Candelario in "La Ciguapa y el ciguapeo: Dominican Myth, Metaphor and Method" notes that the myth of the ciguapa acquired an indigenous status despite the fact that the figure was a writer's nationalist invention. The implication here is that the ciguapa myth accrued significance as a metaphor that navigates the "contradictions, tensions, and complex desires surrounding the past/present/future of race, gender, sex, sovereignty, *progreso* and *regreso* in the Dominican Republic and its diaspora," *Small Axe* 2, no. 3/no. 51 (November 2016): 102, 106.

[50] Henry Drewal, *Mami Wata: Arts for Water Spirits in Africa and Its Diasporas* (Los Angeles: Fowler Museum at UCLA, 2008).

[51] It is striking that the little mermaid, *den lille Havfrue*, though beautiful and graceful, is disabled by the loss of her voice as well as her fishtail. The prince sees her not as his savior, but as a "dumb child," though she uses what charms she has left, dancing with intense pain alongside "beautiful slaves, dressed in silk and gold," until "her eyes spoke to the heart more deeply that the song of the slave girls." Hans Christian Andersen, *The Little Mermaid*, *Den lille Havfrue*, trans. M. R. James; illus. Pamela Bianco (New York: Holiday House, 1935), 391.

[52] Yanique, *Land of Love and Drowning,* 26.

[53] The basis for BOMB is an actual interisland resistance movement linked to global black freedom struggle strategies deployed during the Civil Rights movement, which VIs watched on television and whose ethos was carried back by islanders who attended black colleges and served in the segregated US military. Their efforts resulted in the passing of the Virgin Islands Open Shorelines Act, guaranteeing public access to beaches.

[54] Yanique, *Land of Love and Drowning*, 319, 320.

[55] Yolanda Martínez-San Miguel, "De Macondo a Anegada: El Incesto common dispostivo narrative," *80 grados: Prensa sin prisa,* April 18, 2016, http://www.80grados.net/de-macondo-a-anegada-el-incesto-como-dispositivo-narrativo-en-el-caribe/.

[56] Ladoo, *No Pain Like This Body*, 128.

[57] Wangechi Mutu, as quoted in Teju Cole, *Strange and Known Things* (New York: Penguin, 2016), 105.

[58] Adrienne Edwards, "Nguva na Nyoka," in *Nguva na Nyoka* (London: Victoria Miro, 2014).

[59] Binyavanga Wainaina, "A Short Biography of Wangechi Mutu," *Nguva na Nyoka* (London: Victoria Miro, 2014), n. p.

[60] Alexander Weheliye, *Habeas Viscus: Racializing Assemblage, Biopolitics and Black Feminist Theories of the Human* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2014), 99.

[61] Alaimo, "New Materialisms, Old Humanisms," 283.

[62] Elizabeth DeLoughrey, "Ordinary Futures: Interspecies Worldings in the Anthropocene," in *Global Ecologies and the Environmental Humanities: Postcolonial Approaches,* eds. Elizabeth DeLoughrey, Jill Didur, and Anthony Carrigan (New York: Routledge, 2015), 360.

[63] Adrienne Edwards, "Preface," in *Nguva na Nyoka* (London: Victoria Miro, 2014), n. pag.

[64] Uri McMillan, *Embodied Avatars: Genealogies of Black Feminist Art and Performance* (New York: New York University Press, 2016), 12.

[65] McMillan, *Embodied Avatars*, 9.

[66] Although there are several other foreign-interest hotels referenced in *Land of Love and Drowning*, including a Hilton and a Grand Hotel with Danish architecture, the Gull Reef club is used as a film set for the pornographic film *Girls Are for Loving*, presenting a deplorable "debut" that "put[s] [the USVI] on the map in America" (Yanique, *Land of Love and Drowning*, 245). A beach surrogate is part of a process of "decontextualization (the absence of reference to the local context) [that] is a characteristic feature of the seaside universe" (Urbain 115 as qtd. in Krista A. Thompson, "Diving into the Racial Waters of Beach Space in Jamaica: Tropical Modernity and the Myrtle Bank Hotel's Pool," in *An Eye for the Tropics: Tourism, Photography, and Framing the Caribbean Picturesque* [Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006], 232). The Gull Reef Club also appears in Wouk's *Don't Stop the Carnival*.

[67] For a thorough analysis of the history and ramifications of Blake's plunge, see Thompson, "Diving into the Racial Waters," 249.

[68] Thompson, "Diving into the Racial Waters," 250.

[69] Derek Walcott, "The Sea is History," https://www.poets.org/poetsorg/poem/sea-history.

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