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Research Article



A Reinvention of the “Contact Zone” and the Myth of “Caribbean-ness” in Edwidge Danticat’s *The Farming of Bones* and Grace Nichols’s *Whole of a Morning Sky*

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Abstract

The essence of history, on the most part, is to provide discursive knots that either hold a people together or provide tissues of asymmetrical relations that separate them permanently. Hence, through the Postcolonial lens, this paper argues that Edwidge Danticat and Grace Nichols have used their historical novels: *The Farming of Bones* and *Whole of a Morning Sky*— the novels that not only take their setting and some events and characters from history, but make the historical events and issues crucial for the course of the narrative to (re)inscribed historical

codes that harbour a constant shift in individuation among the colonized people. Their aim is to unearth certain salient relational frontiers – ones that have created a “...radically asymmetrical relations of power” in modern Caribbean nations. The reason for this, on the one hand, is to show “...the marks of a shifting boundaries that alienates the frontiers of the modern (Caribbean) nation”, and on the other, to show how these shifting boundaries have not only created what Bhabha calls the “Third Space” – the process of ‘splitting’ of national subject – but how this space has hindered the realization of Caribbean-nests. By using the Caribbean example, the paper concludes that history provides a lasting memory to the Third world nations and through it the slippage of categories, such as sexuality, class affiliation, territorial paranoia, or cultural difference can be understood and bridged for the advancement of the people.

Keywords: Subjugation, Symmetry, Paranoia, Ethnicity, Community, Essentiality, Contact Zone, Myth of Caribbean-ness, Postcolonialism, Selfhood

Since the ‘discovery’ of the “New World” by Christopher Columbus in October 12, 1492, the Islands have been a hub of fierce contestation for power of dominance, for ownership of land, for economic control, for political superiority, for social relevance et cetera. Expressed differently, Akuso maintains that the Caribbean is “... a place of struggle for monopoly, material gain and political subjugation” (8). This struggle by colonial elements such as Spain, Portugal, Britain, the Netherlands, France, and later the United States of America was at the expense of the native owners of what is today referred to as the Caribbean– the Arawak or Taíno, the Carib and the Cibony and later the imported slaves of African origin and East Indian indentures among others. These struggles have, over and beyond strangling the essence of the humanity of the ‘Caribbean people’, redefined their bio-geographical and linguistic distributions. These distributions, therefore, have (to this day) created and sustained almost irreconcilable polarities within the Caribbean. It is in part because of this artificial grafting of the Caribbean as a unified region that Premdas sees the sense of common citizenship and community conferred to it as “a figment of imagination” (1). This varying degree of distribution, in transcultural discourse, is referred to as the “contact zone.” Pratt says the notion of the “contact zone,” describes social spaces where “desperate cultures meet, clash and grapple with each other, often in highly asymmetrical relations of dominance and subordination – like colonialism, slavery, or *their aftermaths as they are lived out across the globe today*” (4). Therefore, the concern with this social space in this paper is, on the one hand, to underscore the implosion of human essence as its corollary and on the other, to show ways through which this implosion has further created “a space of engagement where the inequalities of the relations between the parties engaged can be confronted...” (Ashroft, Griffit and Tiffin, 49).

The concern with this social space is replicated in the novels of Edwidge Danticat’s *The Farming of Bones* and Grace Nichols’s *Whole of a Morning Sky*. The essence is to enable them to unearth the salient relational frontier – one that has created a “...radically asymmetrical relations of power” in the Caribbean. The reason for this portraiture is to show “...the marks of a shifting boundaries that alienates the frontiers of the modern nation” (Pratt, 7). This is because

the word “contact” from where Pratt coined the term “contact zone” “[...] emphasizes how subjects are constituted in and by their relations to each other. It treats the relations...not in terms of separateness or apartheid, but in terms of copresence, interaction, interlocking understandings and practices...” (7). Defined within this frame, Schorch maintains that the term “contact zone” indicates “a shifting self within a pluralist cosmopolitan space” (68).

Implicated in Schorch’s definition above is that the contact zone harbours a constant shift in individuation among the colonized people – from being ‘an-Other’ that (re)generates it/*Self* from the weight of such repressing and subjugating ‘an-Other-ness’ into a dominating *Self* along a vertical (and most times, very temporal) trajectory. It is this tension that creates what Bhabha conceives as the “Third Space” – “the process of ‘splitting’ of national subject” (147). This is why he concludes that “the space of the modern nation...is never simply horizontal”. Bhabha’s summation gives credence to the fact that most post-colonial nations like the Dominican Republic and Guyana (as captured in the above-mentioned novels by Dandicat and Nichols) have become “...apparatus of symbolic power...” which “...produces a continual slippage of categories, like sexuality, class affiliation, territorial paranoia, or cultural difference...” (Bhabha, 140). These nations are, in Althusser’s view, a “space without places...” (294) and hence, a liminal space – the ambivalent identification of love and hate that binds a community together. This liminal space exist, as Freud posits, because it is always possible to bind together a considerable number of people in love, so long as there are other people left over to receive the manifestations of their aggressiveness (61). Hence, he concludes, “it is in this space of liminality, in the ‘unbearable ordeal of the collapse of certainty’ that we encounter once again the narcissistic neuroses of the national discourse” (Freud, 149).

The Contact Zone and the Problematic of Selfhood in the Caribbean

According to Immanuel Wallerstein:

Nothing seems more obvious than who or what is a people. Peoples have names, familiar names. They seem to have long histories. Yet any pollster knows that if one poses the open-ended question ‘what are you?’ to individuals presumably belonging to the same ‘people,’ the responses will be incredibly varied, especially if the matter is not at that moment in the political limelight. (71)

The remark above summarises the complexity that exists among people who have been labelled with and defined by a disarming past– the past that is key to and inheres in the notion of peoplehood. First, this manipulative past “as a central element in the socialization of individuals, in the maintenance of group solidarity, in the establishment of or challenge to social legitimation” (Wallerstien, 78) (re)constitutes and (re)categorizes people permanently. In the context of the Caribbean, this past is responsible for the creation of the prevailing sub-categorizations of the peoples on the Islands – as Liberian or Peninsular (Europeans), Criollos or Creoles (descendants of Peninsulars), Mestizos (Caucasian Indian), Mulattoes (Caucasian African), Native American Indians, Afro-Caribbean, Indo-Caribbean et cetera – and the ensuing demarcation of borders (social and/or physical) along these divides. By accentuating these socio-cultural and bio-geographical boundaries, the people are polarized and separated saliently.

As captured by Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin, the process of remaking the colonized people, in the context of the Caribbean,

...is reinforced by the construction of maps, whose existence is a means of textualizing the spatial reality of the other, naming or, in almost all cases, renaming spaces in a symbolic and literal act of mastery and control. In all cases the lands so colonized are literarily reinscribed, written over as the names and languages of the indigenes are replaced by new names, or are corrupted into new and Europeanized forms by the cartographer and explorer. (28)

These ideals and practices of racial admixture, creating distinctive cultures and geographical splitting, which characterize almost all colonized nations, have, in numerous ways, 'recreated' the people both biologically and ideologically. This recreation has, therefore, opened up new and even more antagonizing categories within the colonized, often, once unified people. The reason is that the process of '(re)mapping' is often set to privilege one sub-category against the other, especially in relation to their bio-social similarities, "...climatic regions, population densities and, not least, natural resources" (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, 29) and by so doing, it creates and justifies the prevailing discriminations across the islands. On account of this, the realization or reinstitution of selfhood in the Caribbean becomes highly displaced if not completely eroded.

In this regard, Ewidge Dantica's *The Farming of Bones* and Grace Nichols' *Whole of a Morning Sky* are allegorical depictions of the contact zone prevalent in the Caribbean. Through these novels, the authors project the various tissues of divisiveness within the Caribbean and how these have created and have continued to create a complex and irreconcilable differences among the Caribbean people. For example, in *The Farming of Bones*, Danticat captures this complex reality when, through the stream of consciousness, Amabelle, the participant narrator, reports her conversation with Sabastien, thus:

Your clothes cover more than your skin" he says. You become this uniform they make for you." Now you are only you, just the flesh.

It's either be in a nightmare or be nowhere at all. Or otherwise simply float inside these remembrances, grieving for who I was, and even more, for what I've become (P2).

This opening is significant in that it recapitulates the polarity that exists in Hispaniola – the Caribbean Island that once housed a unified people divided into what is known today as Dominican Republic and Haiti. According to Chapin,

The histories of the two countries on the island of Hispaniola, the Dominican Republic and Haiti, have been inextricably intertwined. However, despite their similarities, they have important differences. The whole island, the first Spanish settlement in the New World and named Santo Domingo by Christopher Columbus in 1492, experienced decimation of its indigenous Indian, primarily Taino population as a result of the Indian's treatment by colonial settlers. African slaves were brought to both sides of the Island as early as the sixteenth century to supply the needed labour force for sugar cane plantation (xix).

The near extermination of these indigenous Indians, the dominating presence of the Spanish, British and later French and other colonial settlers and essentially, the displacement of African

slaves into the Island, brought about the demographic differences prevalent in this Island. Demographically, the Dominican, which is a Spanish speaking island, has an “approximately 75 percent of ...mulatto, a legacy of black slavery during the colonial period. Approximately 10 percent white; 15 percent black” (Chapin 2).

The term ‘mulatto’, according to Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin, is derived “from the Spanish word ‘young mule’...referring to the progeny of the European and a Negro...The term is sometimes used interchangeably with mestizo/mestizaje/métisse to mean a mixed or miscegenated society and the cultures it creates” (133). The term, in this regard, is used as a means of mapping or labelling a ‘slave’ which is one half white. This explains the position in postcolonial studies that offers that “the interaction of cultures creates blended ones, mixtures of the native and colonial, a process called hybridity...” (Dobie, 209).

This socio-biological mapping, therefore, places the Dominicans in a more privileged position against the Haitians. This is why Danticat presents Doctor Javia, a mulatto Dominican, as Amabelle maintains in the novel, as one that “[...] was [...] looking down at everyone around him” (p 15) who is not like him. This reflects the strand of postcolonialism which holds that “the practice of othering, viewing those who are different from oneself as inferior beings, divides people and justifies hierarchies” (Dobie, 208). Historical records have shown ways through which the demography of Haiti has placed them in this position of social disadvantage. In 1790, as Chapin explains, Haiti “had some 30,000 whites, 27,000 freedmen, and 400,000 black slaves” (xix). This shows, therefore, that aside the pigmentation of their skins, the Haitians were seen and treated as slaves at the time the Dominicans had an egalitarian society with “a more racially stratified population” (Chapin xix).

This diversity is further heightened by the fact that some Islands such as Haiti “...are poorly endowed with natural resources” (Pramdas, 2). Recounting the frustration of Haitians with this asymmetric relation in the novel, Amabelle, relating Sabastien’s position, posits:

Sometimes the people in the fields, when they’re tired and angry, they say we’re an orphaned people, he said. They say we are the burnt crude at the bottom of the pot. They say some people don’t belong anywhere and that’s us. I say we are a group of vwayajè, wayfarers...that is what we are (p 56).

Corroborating this submission, Truillot advances that, “Caribbean societies are inescapably heterogeneous...the Caribbean has long been an area where some people live next to others who are remarkably distinct...” (21) especially in terms of natural endowment. In this kind of settings, inhibiting social categories are evidently created and appended on people who are so disadvantaged. When this is done, such people feel less citizens, and less human “[...] like humanoid, those things who have all the characteristics of human beings but are really artificial...it must be the curse of Ham” (Wallerstein, 73). Replicating this reality in *The Farming of Bones*, Danticat shows how the word “foreigner” is used in the Dominican to label people “whose appearance is obviously not White or Indian and who is not a member of an aboriginal race [...]” (Wallerstein, 74). To this end, Amabelle relates the lamentation of a black Dominican woman caught within this myth of definition based on exclusion thus:

I pushed my son out of my body here, in this country, one woman said in a mix of Algerian kreyòl and Spanish, the tangled language of those who always stutter as they

spoke, caught as they were on a narrow ridge between two nearly native tongues. My mother too pushed me out of her body here. Not me, not my son, not one of us has ever seen the other side of the border. Still, they won't put our birth papers in our palms so my son can have knowledge placed into his head by a proper educator in a proper school. To them we are always *foreigners*, even if our granmèmès' granmèmès were born in this country, a man responded in kreyòl... (p 69).

These crises of identity or the formation of sub-identity by and among the Caribbean people justifies Premdas' summation that the Caribbean is a myth or, as stated earlier, "[...] a figment of the imagination" (2). The reason for this, Premdas offers, is that:

There are [...] many people who describe themselves as Caribbean persons, claiming [...] unique identity which has its own cohering characteristics that distinguish them from others. And there are many tourists and other foreigners who can swear that they went to this Caribbean place and met real Caribbean persons. They will all attest to this Caribbean reality. The truth, however, is that the Caribbean even as geographical expression is a very imprecise place that is difficult to define. Some analysts include Florida, the Yucatan, Nicaragua, Colombia, and Venezuela, while others exclude them altogether. It is not only an imaginary region but one that is arbitrarily appointed to its designation. It will be difficult to pinpoint precisely where this Caribbean place is, for no country carries the name Caribbean either separately or in hyphenated form (2).

It is precisely the uncertainties that shroud this notion of Caribbean-ness (due to its multi-racial, multi-lingual, stratified and multicultural nature) that further polarizes the people and makes the realization of selfhood illusive. Hence, one's identity – as belonging to a distinct 'Caribbean' nation is strictly dependent on one's possession of a "paper". Danticat's *The Farming of Bones* further testifies to this complex reality as follows:

You heard the rumours? Another woman asked, her perfect Kreyòl embellished by elaborate gestures of her long fingers. They say anyone not in one of those Yanki cane mills will be sent back to Haiti.

How can the Yanki cane mills save anyone? the Dominican-born woman with the Dominican-born son replied. Me, I have no paper in my palms to say where I belong. My son, this one who was born here in this island, has no papers to say where he belongs. Those who work in the cane mills, the mill owners keep their papers, so they have this as a rope around their necks. *Papers are everything. You have no paper in your hands they do with you what they want* (p70) (my emphasis).

The whole point of these categories is not only to play out the divisiveness in the Caribbean but is set "...to enable us to make claims based upon the past against the manipulable 'rational' processes of the present" (Wallerstien, 78). This past, with its paraphernalia of identity shows, to align with Wallerstein's summations, "that...a 'people' is said to be or act as it does because of either its genetic characteristics, or its socio-political history, or its 'traditional' norms and values".

In Grace Nichols' *Whole of a Morning Sky*, the notion of "Pastness" as "a mode by which persons are persuaded to act in the present in ways they might not otherwise act" (Wallerstein, 78) is represented. In their case, the past of Guyana is defined, like many other Caribbean

nations, by its contact with and the activities of the colonial powers. Historical records show that this region was once occupied by Taíno who moved north from Brazil to settle and farm the area. Eventually, they were driven by the aggressive warlike Caribs who occupied the region until the coming of the Dutch in 1616 and the British in 1700s. Because of the intensity of plantation work (which was the mainstay of the region), African slaves were deployed, followed by other ethnic groups such as Portuguese, Chinese and (later in late 1800s) the East Indians who were contracted to work the sugar fields. With this, the colony became a “...mélange of Africans, Europeans, and Amerindians” (Mirill, xvii).

By presenting this cultural admixture, Grace Nichols opens up the region as, to borrow from Bhabha, “...a terrain of cultural negotiation and contestation” (60). The novel is temporally set during the struggle for election in 1960– the election that would eventually usher Guyana into political independence. The concern in this novel is, essentially, not about the elections as it is, to a very large extent, about those socio-biological dynamics that polarize the people – ethnicity, race and language – perpetually. Portraying these divisions, the narrator in the novel announces that:

As with the previous elections, Archie could feel the tensions: the East Indians talking about everything else except politics, keeping that for when they were among themselves. And the black people talking hostile, some of them even a little bitter because they could see Mohabir coming to power again, and what could they expect from a coolie Premier? Nothing. Coolie was for coolie when all was said and done (p 30).

This asymmetrical relation is eminent in the country as political parties are formed along ethnic lines. As captured in the novel:

everyone knew that the fight is really between Mohabir’s party, the National Labour Party– the NLP– and the People’s Independent Party– the PIP– headed by the black leader, Atwell. Ferreira, the Portuguese man, heading the National United Front, had the votes of the big shots and middle-class coloured people, including the rich East Indian businessmen (p 31).

These socio-political divides, as recorded in historical documents, have been a trend in Guyana. As captured by Merrill:

The twentieth century saw a rising consciousness among the country’s ethnic groups and a struggle for political power between the new, disenfranchised, nonwhite middle class and the old plantocracy. Economic changes gave momentum to the growing call for political changes. The country saw rice production, dominated by the Indo-Guyanese (descendants of East Indians), and bauxite mining, dominated by the Afro-Guyanese (descendants of Africans) grow in importance, whereas sugar growing, controlled by the European plantation owners, declined. The British [...] responded to the demands for reforms by...allowing the formation of political parties.

The People’s Progressive Party (PPP), the country’s first political party, quickly became a formidable force. The PPP was formed by two men [...] Cheddi Jagan, a Marxist Indo-Guyanese, and Linden Forbes Burnham, an Afro-Guyanese with leftist political ideas [...]

[...] Personal rivalries between Jagan and Burnham and growing conflict between the Indo-Guyanese and the Afro-Guyanese widened into open split. In 1957 Burnham and most of the Afro-Guyanese left PPP and formed the rival People's National Congress (PNC) (xviii).

This socio-political formation as reflected in the novel establishes the concept of divide and rule – a strategy used by the colonialists to dominate the colonized nations. In *Whole of a Morning Sky*, Dinah acknowledges this when she, speaking of the role the Americans played during the political crisis that erupted in 1960, maintains that:

The Americans are hypocrites [...] they playing they so concerned about the poor people but they're only supporting the strike because it suits them [...]

Is all part of bringing down the government" [...] divide and rule. Divide and rule. Why the Americans don't give aid to the sugar workers? Why they're only helping the strikers? (p 127-128).

Underlying these social categories which transmogrify a people is the desire to separate them politically. Harboring this suspicion, Freud admonishes the colonized nations to “[...] find fault with the present state of [...] civilization for so inadequately fulfilling [...] demands for a plan of life that shall make us happy, and for allowing the existence of so much suffering which could probably be avoided [...]” (62).

The Contact Zone and the Myth of Nationhood in the Caribbean

Based on the foregoing analyses, it can be said, that the contact zone, in the context of the Caribbean, is a space of contestation where “desperate cultures meet, clash and grapple with each other [...]” (Pratt, 4). The reason for this is that the marked difference in this space creates what Bhabha calls the “Third Space”. This ‘Third Space’ which “...is conceived as the process of ‘splitting’ of national subjects” (147), presents itself with several possibilities for conflict especially in a heterogeneous society like the Caribbean. The concept of the “Third Space” – reinterpreted in this paper– provides a way of understanding how (re)mapping of a people along differential boundaries: of race, of ethnicity, etc., not only splits their cohesiveness but also, and more dangerously too, enhances the possibilities of national implosion.

The concern with this Third Space as a metaphor of the slippage and collapse of nationhood forms another thrust of argument in Edwidge Danticat’s *The Farming of Bones* and Grace Nichols’s *Whole of a Morning Sky*. In her novel, Danticat presents a striking analogy of this reality using Señora Valencia’s twins to show two nations on the same island fiercely contending with each other:

Valencia tells me the little child had a struggle, he said.

She had a caul over her face and the umbilical cord was badly placed, yes.

Badly placed, around her neck? It’s as if the other one tried to strangle her.

If you will permit me, Doctor, I would rather not condemn these little children by speaking such things.

Many of us start out as twins in the belly and do away with the other, he persisted....

On the other hand” he continued, “sometimes you have two children born at the same time; one is still born but the other one active and healthy because the dead

one gave the other a life transfusion in the womb and in essence sacrificed itself (p19).

This analogy is symbolic of the tensions that exist between the Dominicans and the Haitians (and even among the mulattoes and black Dominicans)– both originating from almost the same background, Africa. In this kind of society, the contention is internal, and the focus in this postcolonial discourse is to show how these contentions enhance national split.

Explaining the dangers of national split within itself, Bhabha argues that, “the ...nation *itself*, alienated from its eternal self-generation, becomes a liminal signifying space that is *internally* marked by the discourse of minorities, the heterogeneous histories of contending peoples, antagonistic authorities and tense locations of cultural difference” (148). This notion of the liminal space – as the ambivalent identification of love and hate that binds a community together – is significant here. This is because it shows how “once the liminality of the nation-space is established, and its signifying difference is turned from the boundary ‘outside’ to its finitude ‘within’, the threat of cultural differences is no longer a problem of ‘other’ people. It becomes a question of otherness of the people-as-one...” (Bhabha, 150).

Therefore, Danticat’s subjectivity in *The Farming of Bones* is illuminated – she shows how cultural diversity has become a divisive mechanism among the Caribbean people and hence, questions the very concept of Caribbean-ness as a unifying essence. The result of this, she projects, is the prevailing mutual hatred and extermination of sub-groups on the grounds of these differences. Foregrounding this reality in the novel, Amabelle reports that “Many had heard rumours of groups of Haitians being killed in the night because they could not manage to trill their “r” and utter a throaty “j” to ask for parsley, to say perejil” (p114).

It is this mutual hatred among the Caribbean people that has extended and sustained the plot of Danticat’s *The Farming of Bones*. In the novel, the effect of this hatred is summarised by a woman who:

began telling stories that she’d heard. A week before, a pantry maid who had worked in the house of a colonel for thirty years was stabbed by him at the dinner table. Two brothers were dragged from the cane field and matcheted to death by field guards...It was said that the Generalissimo, along with the border commission, had given orders to have all Haitians killed. Poor Dominican peasants had been asked to catch Haitians and bring them to the soldiers (p114).

This justifies Freud’s position that where the liminal space exists, a considerable number of people are bound together in love, so long as there are other people left over to receive the manifestations of their aggressiveness (61).

This alienating syndrome in the Caribbean is further expressed in Nichols’s *Whole of a Morning Sky*. The novel depicts the mutual suspicions and heightened segregations prevalent in the Caribbean – one that hinders the people from realizing and expressing the sense of nationhood. Based on this, the novel shows how jobs and government positions in Guyana are given with regard to ethnic considerations. This is why when Dinah eventually gets government employment, her mother points that “everyone was surprised...since it wasn’t in keeping with the feeling of the Georgetown black people that the government was taking on only their own ‘coolie’” (p 58). Expressed in another place, Mrs Steward accuses Mohabir of “putting his people into top positions” (p 59).

This suspicion is, therefore, justifying given that promotions are given based on ethnic considerations. This is so largely because when the blacks eventually get government employment in Guyana, they are hardly ever promoted like their Indo-Guyanese counterparts. Giving reasons why she would march for the protest against Mohabir's government on this ground, the tall brown skin, Mrs. Steward said:

Well I marching (sic)...I damn fed up with the situation in this country.... she added hotly, turning to the Portuguese typist. You want to sit back and enjoy the sweetness when it come. Is five years now I working in this place and can't get promotion. This country don't have no future... (p 59).

MacDonald substantiates this reality when he posits that:

the 1957 elections were convincingly won by Jagan's PPP faction...its support was drawn more and more from the Indo-Guyanese community. The faction's main planks were increasingly identified as Indo-Guyanese: more rice lands, improved business opportunities and more government posts for Indo-Guyanese. The PPP had abrogated its claim to bring a multiracial party (20).

It is no wonder, therefore, he adds, that "from 1961 to 1964...riots and demonstrations against the PPP administration were frequent, and during disturbance in 1962 and 1963 mobs destroyed part of Georgetown" (MacDonald, 21).

Grace Nichols' *Whole of a Morning Sky* is, therefore, an evocation of "a world that was part of her own Guyanese childhood" (blurb). In this regard, the subjectivity in this novel is to draw the attention of the Guyanese people, in the context of the Caribbean, to the need for a collective effort in building a total sense of nationhood in the Caribbean. Hence, using Dinah as a mouthpiece, she said:

What I can't understand...is why Guianese people can't pull together, to work for the good of the country. Everybody pulling everybody down. Everything is race. If anyone gets promotion in the Ministry, is because of race. The East Indians for Mohabir because he's East Indian. The black people for Atwell because he black. The Portuguese and coloured people for Ferreira, because he's Portuguese... (p129).

Conclusion

Using Edwidge Danticat's *The Farming of Bones* and Grace Nichols's *Whole of a Morning Sky*, this chapter presents the relational tension prevalent in the Caribbean. To provide a theoretical platform for exploring this relational tension, the paper deploys the "contact zone" as a concept in postcolonial studies used to interrogate social spaces with asymmetrical relation of dominance and subjugation. By opening up the Caribbean space as a contact zone and highlighting the dangers it heralds, the paper reveals that the works of these Caribbean women writers have created more favourable perspectives that would guarantee a greater access to social mobility and political self-determination in the Caribbean. Therefore, understanding the subjectivity of these Caribbean women writers will enable the Caribbean people to begin to define themselves not along the divisiveness of racial and cultural differences but largely along the uniting essence of nationalism. The significance of this understanding, to emphasize, is that the Caribbean people will begin the process of forging national cohesion which, on the long run, will reconstruct the totalizing essence of Caribbean-ness.

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