



# Embodied Errantry: Constructing Relational Masculinity and Destructing Gendered Othering in *The Dragon Can't Dance*

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ARTICLE



## ABSTRACT

This article considers errantry's role in garnering a relational masculine identity in Earl Lovelace's *The Dragon Can't Dance*. In the novel, the protagonist's, Aldrick's, masculinity as well as his embodied, micro-movements take a wandering route as he searches for belonging. Aldrick begins in a hegemonic gendered position of power, later embraces hyper-masculinity, and then is driven to a non-hegemonic masculine position through incarceration. Through these three masculine spheres, either the Othering of women or non-hegemonic men occur at the hands of the protagonist or the protagonist experiences Othering directed towards him. The fluidity of gender positions provides a sense of errantry, as do Aldrick's physical movements through his community. Drawing on masculinity studies broadly and Caribbean masculinity specifically, my research demonstrates that the protagonist's masculinity evolves according to his environment and his communal needs. As he moves from Calvary Hill to Port of Spain during Carnival, and from the corner to prison, Aldrick's masculine ideals, in particular the Othering treatment of women and non-hegemonic men, change. Each prior location provides a new understanding of his current Other and as his errantry increases his Othering diminishes. At the end, a relational masculinity that is flexible and responsive to plural environmental needs results from this embodied errantry.

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Power. Most people want (at least some amount of) power, but, often, we all feel like we do not possess any. And, often, we do not realize the power that we do have—over our decisions, our commitments, our consumptions, (maybe even) over the people in our lives. But power can change. It is not static, but fluid and responds to our environmental constructions, such as our social constructs of gender. [Earl Lovelace's](#) *The Dragon Can't Dance* features a protagonist, Aldrick, whose power position changes according to different masculine constructions. The fluctuations in power result in a complex relationship with Others. In this article, I focus on how errantry changes Aldrick's masculine identity and the Othering that occurs between, on one side, hegemonic and hyper-masculine men and, on the other side, non-hegemonic men and women. Aldrick begins the novel with a hegemonic masculine identity and Othering attitudes because he has power, although both his power and his Othering slowly decrease as his movements become more errant. [Édouard Glissant's](#) theory of errantry, detailed in *Poetics of Relation*, is defined as a “wandering but with a sacred motivation” ([Wing 211](#)). Glissant argues that through the practice of errantry, individuals gain fuller identities based not only on their roots but also their Relations with Others. Glissant states that this relational identity develops the capacity for productive dialectics (relying on both the connotations of discussion and tension) between cultures, especially focusing on ethnic and racial cultures. I argue that errantry can also become a method for the diminishment of gendered Othering practices and viewpoints.

Through Aldrick's Othering, he denies personhood to Others, even as he insists upon and becomes consumed with his personhood being recognized. [Toni Morrison's](#) *The Origin of Others* clarifies how Othering also entails a desire to “own, govern, and administrate the Other” (39). Aldrick desires to control the Others around him. Aldrick learns the lessons of Othering as he wanders, purposefully trying to force recognition of his own personhood. Errantry ends up granting Aldrick a pluralistic masculine identity as he moves from living for other people and being responsible to their pre-approved lifestyle to living for himself and taking responsibility for his own actions. Upon realizing this, Aldrick takes actions considered non-hegemonic (and even disloyal to his heritage). Throughout much of the novel, Aldrick belongs to either the Yard or the Corner; when his masculine identity becomes Relational to his Other, though, he leaves the Hill to belong to his true self. Aldrick's embodied errantry moves him from a singular and dormant, although hegemonic, masculine identity to a pluralistic, Relational masculinity that harmoniously engages with feminine identities and non-hegemonic masculine identities that he Othered in the past.

Several critics have analyzed gender relations in *The Dragon Can't Dance*, but none have combined the spatio-cultural lens of errantry with Othering as a gendered action which can pluralize masculine identity. [Earl Lovelace](#) published the novel first in England in 1979, and after forty years, much of the scholarship emphasizes the novel's polyphonic nature and the minor characters of difference. For instance, [Daryl Cumber Dance](#) discusses the stereotypes of Indian women in Caribbean literature. He incorporates into his argument the minor character Dolly, Pariag's nearly silent wife, who has little dialogue. Similarly, [Kenneth Ramchand](#) and [Masood Ashraf Raja](#) focus on Pariag and relationships between Indo-Trinidadian and Afro-Trinidadian men. Other scholars marginally discuss aspects of masculine behavior but focus on analyzing resistance, power, and Carnival's evolving roles.<sup>1</sup> [Linden Lewis's](#) article “Masculinity and the Dance of the Dragon: Reading Lovelace Discursively” explores masculinity most closely as he compares the multiple masculine characters and their interactions, as well as the lack of strong female characters. Lewis examines four characters (Aldrick, Fisheye, Pariag, and Philo) and their various masculinities, along with Sylvia, who serves as “the dragon tamer” (170). Lewis provides valuable insight into masculine varieties and some progressions of masculine identity achieved through self-reflection and the desire to renegotiate masculinity. However, he does not account for how the body and its movements help shape masculinity alongside the interactions and Othering that occur between men of differing masculinities or women.

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1 See [Aching](#) and [Cohen](#) for analyses on costuming and performativity's roles in power relations and resistance. [Dalleo](#) tackles the commodification of carnival and the effects such a change have on traditional avenues of resistance. [Nakamura](#) and [Waite](#) discuss the role of carnival in identity construction and theories of personhood.

Through a study of the character's errantry and the Relations that transpire during times of errantry, a reader can track how Aldrick's masculinity progresses and becomes pluralistic. Aldrick's errantry takes four different routes beginning with his acceptance of (1) non-movement and historical idleness on Calvary Hill, which only changes during his (2) errantry-like repetitious dragon dance. Finding these types of movement unsatisfactory, Aldrick turns to a (3) circular errantry including criminal activity, ending with his purposeful (4) downhill strides towards his future. During these four occurrences, I argue that Aldrick passes through three masculine constructions (hegemonic, hyper, and non-hegemonic) while holding fluctuating degrees of power and moving away from Othering.

Aldrick begins with a hegemonic masculinity; however, this term first needs to be contextualized when used to describe non-white, non-Western masculine constructions. Hegemonic masculinity changes depending on a particular society's values and desired characteristics. Toby Miller in "Masculinity" recaps the rise of the term hegemonic masculinity, beginning with Antonio Gramsci's theories of hegemony and "consent-through-incorporation" along with R. W. Connell's adaptation of this theory to gender relations (116–21). However, in both cases, hegemonic masculine behavior is theorized based on Western European and North American white, heterosexual men. Unfortunately, few scholars have considered hegemonic masculine behavior while taking into consideration colonial relations and globalization's uneven power distributions. Those who have, such as Robert Morrell and Sandra Swart in "Men in the Third World: Postcolonial Perspectives on Masculinity," insist that hegemony is held by men in the Western world, meaning that any man, however powerful, wealthy, privileged, or autonomous, in the non-Western world cannot claim a hegemonic masculine identity. This trap epitomizes Mark Simpson's views in *Male Impersonators: Men Performing Masculinity*, which questions the "impossibility of the demands of manhood" when the sole definition of hegemonic masculine identity is held separate by an ascribed status such as race, ethnicity, or sexuality (275). Hegemony focuses on power and influence, and certain ascribed statuses grant larger amounts of these. However, it becomes detrimental to all involved when hegemony is measured from one vantage point across the globe. Keith Nurse provides a delineation for powerful non-Western masculine identities with his difference between masculinity and masculinism, where masculinity is fluid without negative hegemonic ideologies, which he views in the static realm of masculinism.

While theories of hegemony certainly began with Gramsci's understanding of the European ruling class, hegemony should not automatically be assumed to be white or Western. Bob Pease and Keith Pringle challenged writers in their anthology, *A Man's World? Changing Men's Practices in a Globalized World*, to stop assuming the anchor for gender theories is automatically found in Western culture. Similarly, for this chapter and in accordance with Pease and Pringle's challenge for contextualization, I investigate various masculine constructions, beginning with what is or is not hegemonic, according to the particular, local context found in Lovelace's novel.

## NON-ERRANTRY, NON-MOVEMENT AND NON-POSSESSION

Earl Lovelace begins *The Dragon Can't Dance* with a celebration of non-movement and non-possession, which accords to societal norms and sets up Aldrick as representing hegemonic masculine identity. Aldrick demonstrates the standard for what is "normal" and expected based on local historical traditions. He lives in a single room in the Trinidadian Port of Spain neighborhood, Calvary Hill, where the novel tracks the development of certain neighbors living on Alice Street, where all the rooms surround a common Yard. The Yard and Calvary Hill's larger neighborhood are where Aldrick locates his society, which help define his particular culture; here, Aldrick originally holds a hegemonic masculinity, where he represents a position of power. While Aldrick's power does not entail wealth, his lack of wealth is, in fact, an essential part of his hegemonic status. When asked about marriage, Aldrick proudly states he has nothing, no ties to anyone, and no responsibilities: "You don't see how I living? No chair, a little bed in a little room. A woman want things. I ain't have nothing here except my dragon costume to put on for Carnival... I ain't working nowhere" (Lovelace 32–33). At thirty years old, Aldrick purposefully lives his life with nothing. His only possession of importance is his dragon costume, which he constructs throughout the year.

Instead of seeing non-possession as detrimental, the neighbors in Calvary Hill consider it a rebellious statement about dispossession, as the neighborhood was historically abandoned by the political ruling class. The ruling class's abandonment means those holding wealth and traditional ruling power cannot be representative of hegemonic masculine behavior. According to Connell, to hold a hegemonic position one must have the community's consent to represent them through the values that are incorporated in everyday life, something Miller calls "consent-through-incorporation" (116). The residents of Calvary Hill do not value working long hours for little pay; they do not participate in political events that do not reach or benefit their community; they do not buy into the employment welfare programs that only take advantage of their strength and reject their personhoods (Lovelace 49). Instead, the neighbors endorse Aldrick's non-possession and year of work that culminates in two days of dancing his dragon message. Indeed, Aldrick's everyday life incorporates his dragon message: the importance and recognition of personhood regardless of property or possessions.<sup>2</sup>

The dragon's message of personhood and non-possession, and therefore Aldrick's hegemonic masculinity, is steeped in the history of slave rebellions and anti-colonialism. As stated in the prologue: "Aldrick Prospect [is] an aristocrat in this tradition [of] asserting their humanness in the most wonderful acts of sabotage they could imagine and preform, making a religion of laziness" (Lovelace 10). It is through this type of lifestyle, where non-possession and "laziness" is equated with non-movement, that Aldrick's "humanness" is found. His lifestyle stems from the purposeful rejection or sabotage of Western colonial values, specifically the West's working values, making him a part of Calvary Hill's aristocracy.

Aldrick's embodiment of non-possession and non-movement increases his masculine appeal to those around him, both male and female. Aldrick has many women visit his room at night (Lovelace 32), along with a trail of male friends who respect Aldrick and are loyal to him. Everyone likes Aldrick and looks to him as the Yard's leader. While speaking to his current best friend, Philo the Calypsonian, he confirms that Aldrick is "living the life. If it have one man in the world living the life is you – no wife, no child, no boss, no job. You could get up any hour of the day you want to, cuss who you want. Anywhere you go people like you. You is a favorite in the world" (Lovelace 101). Aldrick is liked by all and admired for his lifestyle of not working. Instead of unemployment worrying him, he finds freedom in not answering to anyone. His actions are his alone. Aldrick does not move unless he decides to. This time period in his life exemplifies his decision to remain motionless, representing a time of non-errantry in his life. He is not wandering for any purpose; he does not make bold or drastic decisions, except during Carnival. He lives a simple life among his friends and does not strive for any grander purpose than to play dragon for two days a year. People admire this free non-movement, non-possession lifestyle, as it harkens back to rebelling against slavery.

People seek out Aldrick as his free lifestyle gives him the power to challenge and punish others in the community. Specifically, a young boy, Basil –perhaps not coincidentally sharing the name of the first martyr of the 1970 Black Power rebellion—, seeks out Aldrick to teach him the ways of making the dragon costume (Lovelace 35). After two years of apprenticeship, Basil shares his secret of physical abuse with Aldrick in the hopes that he will intervene (45–47). Basil's actions are not simply him telling an adult about the abuse, since the abuser, Fisheye, is a feared member of the community. Basil believes that Aldrick is the only person with enough power to intercede on his behalf and stop the abuse. While the novel does not revisit the character of Basil, the confrontation ends with the young boy reentering his house and Fisheye admitting his troubles to Aldrick because he was "impressed by Aldrick's dignity" after Aldrick turns "soberly" (72–73). Aldrick's slow movements, the closest to non-movement he can achieve, effects Fisheye and grants Aldrick dignity. Aldrick, being a leader in the Yard, influences the larger community of Calvary Hill. He can address a physical abuse accusation, although the reader gains no knowledge that the abuse stopped, and still impress the other individual. Instead of Fisheye becoming violent with Aldrick, he confides in him as a person who may also have the power to help with his problem.

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<sup>2</sup> For an analysis of the positive possibility of non-possession and non-movement that focuses on personhood and 'proper'ty value of individuals, which calls for a reversal of Marxism, see Skeggs.

Sharing the same values and embracing an enforcer role, Aldrick is the community's hegemonic masculine figure. Aldrick's leadership and confidence are enhanced when Miss Cleothilda and Miss Olive look to Aldrick to discipline Pariag, a food vender of Indian descent, for showing off by purchasing a bicycle (Lovelace 104–11). The unofficial motto of the Yard is "All o' we is one," but Pariag signals his difference in his desire to do more and better his circumstances by purchasing a bicycle. Pariag views a bicycle as not only a means of increasing his vending business, but primarily to make the Yard "see" and recognize him; yet in doing so, he violates the prime tenet of non-possession. This violation along with his ethnic identity generate the reader's knowledge of Pariag as not only an ethnic Other, but also as a non-hegemonic male, thus being a gendered Other as well. Too often, cultural differences, stereotyping, and discrimination result in an automatic recasting of masculinity, where minority males are viewed as non-hegemonic. The bicycle adds movement to Pariag's character and sets him apart from the Hill's use of non-movement as rebellion. The bicycle becomes Pariag's symbol of errantry, as a mode of wandering or movement for the sacred purpose of being recognized in the Yard. However, the two matriarchal women, Miss Cleothilda and Miss Olive, look to Aldrick to correct Pariag's erroneous beliefs. Aldrick acknowledges that before Carnival, "it would have thrilled him to provide in violence an answer to Pariag's audacity" (105). Aldrick's realization that he would have violently taken care of Pariag shows that Miss Cleothilda and Miss Olive were correct in coming to Aldrick to be the Yard's enforcer of the values of non-possession and non-movement as he shared the belief that non-possession was necessary to belong to the community. He has the power to punish Pariag, just as he has the power to challenge Fisheye.

Aldrick's power in enforcing the Yard's values also translates to his power in shaping the values of the Yard, granting him further hegemony. The power to shape values is shown in first his rejection of Pariag as a member of the Yard and later when he questions who benefits from the policy of non-possession. Pariag is a relative newcomer to the Yard, only having lived there for two years. Three days before buying the bicycle, Pariag addresses Aldrick and tries to befriend him (Lovelace 74–76). Pariag realizes that if Aldrick accepts him then he will "belong" to the Yard and others will begin to accept him as well. Aldrick's hegemonic ability to shape values comes into fruition because people, like Pariag, believe in it. Pariag brags about his skills as an all-fours player, momentarily catching Aldrick's attention with the reference to the country's national card game. Unfortunately, Pariag does not convince Aldrick of his value as they do not need another player (75). The all-fours teams are already established, which means Pariag has no more of a place in their card game than he does as a member of the Yard.

Aldrick attempts to state Pariag's non-belonging and then awkwardly walks away from the sudden conversation, expanding the value of non-movements to include being opposed to bold encounters and decisions. Aldrick's slow movements demonstrate the value of non-movement; even when leaving an awkward encounter, he barely moves—never hurriedly, never purposefully. However, since Aldrick does not move with a sacred purpose, but only to get away from an awkward situation, this is not a moment of errantry and does not lead to any beneficial changes towards his Othering attitudes. He leaves Pariag to wonder about the awkwardness as the novel switches to Pariag's view (Lovelace 76, 92). Pariag sees that his "bold" move in initiating contact with the Yard's "king dragon" has failed; his personhood still hasn't been recognized and he still isn't considered a member of the community (92). While not physical, this "bold move" of Pariag's contrasts with Aldrick's slow, easy movements. Pariag's failure of contact highlights the failure of bold societal movements, extending the value of non-movement beyond physicality. The successful type of movement on the Hill is non-movement and idleness.

As the Hill's philosophies are unknown to Pariag, he instead turns to possessions. Unfortunately, his use of possessions to enhance his recognition by other community members backfires as it equates his values to those of the colonizer. Aldrick's initial rejection of Pariag in an all-fours game influences the rest of the Yard's reactions to his bicycle. However, as the Yard erupts with disdain, Aldrick begins to question who benefits from the anger and violence bestowed upon Pariag and his bicycle (Lovelace 110). Aldrick's questioning of one of the hegemonic tenets, and his eventual rejection of non-possession, does not catch on with the Yard initially. Yet, it resonates at the end of

the novel as everyone will turn towards work and ideas of “betterment” through money and jobs. Aldrick’s actions, whether conscious or not, dictate what is and is not an important value for the Yard—what values must be upheld, and which can be considered fluctuating according to current needs. He has the power as the hegemonic male figure who everyone looks up to and expects to lead them, not only during Carnival as the king of dragons, but all year long in all matters.

Aldrick’s hegemonic masculinity largely entails respecting other people’s business and being a leader for the majority’s benefit, but he also Others people of difference, primarily nonhegemonic men and women. The tension between his hegemonic masculinity and Othering is apparent in the way he treats Sylvia and his views of wealthy men, like Guy. Aldrick respectfully distances himself from men’s personal business, but he does not respect a woman’s personal body or decisions. The novel provides detailed descriptions of Sylvia, implying that the male characters focus on her body. For example, when Sylvia is introduced, her description is given from the viewpoint of the young men in the Yard: “their eyes sweeping up her ankles, along the softening curves of her thighs and breasts, desiring her, wishing, each one of them, [that] he would find his way into her flesh” (Lovelace 24). The young men focus on Sylvia’s body and their own desires. Unfortunately, her actual body is not even described, but is merely sexualized in the characterless words “soft,” “curve,” “desire,” and “flesh.” Sylvia has been Othered through men’s gazes and descriptions. In their descriptions, she is not even an individual woman with specific desirable traits; she is merely a soft, curvy desired piece of flesh. Her individuality is stripped, and she becomes no more than a body. These descriptions keep her apart from the hegemonic men who have these desires towards not her, but her body.

Sylvia does not have the power to control her own body. The novel describes men’s successful conquering of her body, with “her mind never in [the act of sex] ...She had watched, felt, the whole performance as if she wasn’t there, from a distance” (Lovelace 25). Sylvia is sexually conquered, instead of having sexual conquests herself. Morrison states the importance of such an image as it “increasingly rules the realm of shaping, sometimes becoming, often contaminating knowledge. Provoking language or eclipsing it, an image can determine not only what we know and feel but also what we believe is worth knowing about what we feel” (36). The sexual images of Sylvia not only overtake, or eclipse, any other known factor of her personhood, but also determine what is important to know about her. For this section of the novel, her only purpose is as a sexually desirable woman. Whatever individuality or autonomy she may possess is overshadowed by her image, which positions her as the Other—a person who is used and made to experience non-belonging to sustain the position of the privileged or powerful group. In Sylvia’s case, she bolsters the hegemonic and hyper masculine characters who use her body to feel a greater sense of authority and control.

Like the men in the Yard, Aldrick views Sylvia as an Other because of her femininity; specifically, she is a feminine body to be possessed. Sylvia’s Otherness is visible in her movements, which are originally seen as fast: “too fast for things to penetrate her; they could only slide off her” (Lovelace 26). Contrary to the sexual innuendos of penetration and ejaculation, her quickness places her above the Yard. It converts Sylvia’s body from an object to back under her own purposeful control. Her quickness makes a statement of non-belonging to the Yard, with their creed of non-movement. Opposing the Yard’s typical movements, she becomes symbolic of a pure life and freedom that could be possible to those living in the Yard. With her quick pace and “briskness of limb,” those watching hope Sylvia can “make the miracle, climb undefeated out of this hill” (26). Sylvia’s movements challenge Aldrick and hegemony on the Hill. Even as the men attempt to sexually claim her body, her quickness defies their claims. As Morrison states, Othering can be recognized through the “unreasonable claims” being placed on a person and a body (38). Aldrick, and those who wish to be idle, desire Sylvia’s quickness to dissipate, so that she can be molded into their ideal.

Sylvia, however, holds power through her quick movements to leave the poverty of the Hill and possess her own body. Anthony Giddens, in *The Transformation of Intimacy: Sexuality, Love, and Eroticism in Modern Societies*, warns of common consequences facing women who do not relinquish control, explaining: “the sexual control of women by men is much more than an incidental feature

of modern social life. As that control starts to break down, we see the compulsive character of male sexuality more plainly revealed—and this declining control also generates a rising tide of male violence towards women” (3). As Sylvia takes greater control over her own body and sexuality, the threat of violence follows. Sylvia’s solution to independence without violence is to choose a mate who will also help her move away from the Hill and poverty. Her body will become the means of her movement away from the Yard. During a midnight rendezvous, Aldrick witnesses Sylvia sneaking around the Yard to join Guy and decides that “it was better it was Guy, who could give her a little money...and who might, if his heart soften, even try to get her a job in a store downtown, give her some kinda protection” (Lovelace 31). Contrary to an automatic rejection of using her body, readers realize that, at this point, it is Sylvia taking ownership of her body for her own desires instead of others using her body while she mentally and emotionally floats above the scene. This move allows Sylvia to escape the poverty of the Hill but only as a maneuver to traverse the patriarchal system in which she remains without incurring in bodily violence.

The patriarchal system allows for Aldrick’s Othering of nonhegemonic men as well. Pariag is Othered to such an extent that he becomes invisible to the neighborhood until he egregiously steps out of line. Pariag’s ethnic difference sets him apart from the Yard’s community. In any description, he is first and foremost considered “the Indian.” This descriptive Othering coincides with Pariag’s imposed non-involvement, making him a perpetual stranger. Pariag’s feelings of being a perpetual stranger is part of Morrison’s originating Othering practices. Morrison explains why this Othering should not happen because the “stranger is not foreign, she is random; not alien, but remembered, and it is the randomness of the encounter with our already known—although unacknowledged—selves that summons a ripple of alarm” (38). Morrison reminds readers that individuals, especially those foreign and unknown, have familiar attributes. However, the “ripple of alarm” continues to create Othering practices. Morrison argues that these Othering practices should and can be removed, as the image of the foreign stranger is removed. An encounter between two “strangers” becomes merely unexpected and, therefore, surprising, but should not be a scary confrontation compelling actions of Othering.

In the novel, the random encounter occurs when Pariag suddenly confronts Aldrick about joining an all-fours game. The moment is unexpected, but not unfamiliar. Pariag is not so distant from Aldrick; Pariag reminds Aldrick of times when he first moved to the Hill as a child and was isolated (Lovelace 37–41). As those reminders are uncomfortable, Aldrick distances himself from Pariag and the uncomfortable “ripple of alarm” he senses. It would be expected, from Morrison’s statements, that the remainder of the community does the same. This results in episodes where, for instance during the Christmas holiday, no one celebrates with Pariag, even though he prepared for their visit (89–92). Pariag blames himself for not calling them in and stating that he “is a Indian from New Lands and I ain’t have no prejudice” (91). The necessity of Pariag’s statement on racial equality underlines his isolation by the other characters. Even after speaking to Aldrick before purchasing the bicycle, it takes until the middle of the night before Aldrick recalls, “Shit! I never try to talk to him in the two years either” (76). Aldrick’s Othering of Pariag lies in the metaphorical invisibility he bestows upon Pariag, because Aldrick fears such invisibility as a hegemonic man. Unfortunately, this fear extends so that, not only is Pariag left out, but, further, Aldrick performs these actions unconsciously.

Other than Sylvia’s feminine and Pariag’s ethnic differences, individuals’ wealth and class status set people apart and result in Othering actions. The characters of Guy and Miss Cleothilda throughout the novel garner Aldrick’s condescension. Aldrick quickly points out that Pariag’s bicycle threatens Guy and Miss Cleothilda as they are the only ones who care about wealth (Lovelace 110). The creed of everyone being equal is proclaimed loudly through the novel. However, this equality is merely propaganda for Guy and Miss Cleothilda to maintain their higher status. Miss Cleothilda never shares her wealth with her neighbors; Guy uses his position of power to gain sexual access to Sylvia when her mother cannot afford rent (25). They have secured the power that comes with wealth as long as they continue to convince everyone else that they are equal and “all one.” If the Yard, en masse, believes that they too reject possessions and work as a statement against the historical colonizer, then they can slowly gain more and more wealth. Aldrick, however, sees the

threat of their accumulating wealth and refuses to treat them as equals. Aldrick in his hegemonic masculine construction values non-possession and does not feel threatened by the wealth of Miss Cleothilda, nor does he admire the authority of Guy.

As the hegemonic enforcer of values, Aldrick necessarily becomes hostile to Miss Cleothilda and Guy because of their capitalistic actions. Miss Cleothilda, after Carnival, quickly turns from a jovial character who celebrates the community of the Yard to a grumbling elder woman who blames others for her actions. Members of the Yard then look to Aldrick to evaluate her behavior. He first refuses to excuse away Miss Cleothilda's hypocritical behavior by calling her simply "crazy" (Lovelace 134). Yet Aldrick now sees that his prior justification of her changing behavior as "crazy" each year has allowed her to belong to the neighborhood by still believing in the motto of "all o' we is one" and accumulate the wealth that sets her apart. With Aldrick's already announced hegemonic masculinity, his hostility places Miss Cleothilda's values as opposite, which begin to oust her from a powerful position in the Yard. She begins to lose control over the community and to not belong to the Yard.

Aldrick similarly rebukes Guy about rent collection, which demonstrates Guy's economic non-belonging and Othered identity. Guy attempts to collect ten months' worth of back rent from Aldrick after Carnival and is reprimanded for his insolence. Aldrick questions, "I going somewhere? Eh? Every day you get up and look out, you see me here, not so? You think I going away to America or somewhere tomorrow morning? ...Listen, man, I is still Aldrick. I is still the dragon. I could turn beast in a minute'" (Lovelace 109). Aldrick's admonishment to Guy takes place in the Yard for any observer to hear and ends with Guy "taking a step backwards" and addressing him "in a more polite tone" (109). While he ends in a threat of violently "turn[ing] beast," his larger argument is ultimately one of belonging. Aldrick belongs to this community of non-possession where a triviality like rent money is absurd. Guy, contrarily, does not belong, as demonstrated by his keeping track of how many months behind Aldrick is on rent. The difference between the two men is further indicated when Aldrick address him as "man" instead of his given name Guy. Even if stated as a pun on his first name, this address further Others Guy with the refusal of acknowledging his proper name. This is the same refusal to acknowledge wealth as power that Aldrick refuses to grant to Miss Cleothilda when asked to justify her actions as simply crazy.

Aldrick's Othering of these individuals, whether based on their differences in ethnicity, gender, or economic class, emphasizes how they do not belong to the community like he does. At the beginning of the novel Aldrick unequivocally belongs to the Yard. These differences extend notions of masculine hegemony by providing the multiple examples of what is not hegemonic. Aldrick, comparatively, is the king dragon, the enforcer of values, and the representative of non-movement and non-possession as a statement of personhood and hegemonic masculine identity. He does not move. He does not pay rent according to the argument that he will not move. He belongs to the Yard. That is until his one purpose, the one time he moves to embody the message of the dragon, is no longer effective.

## FAILED ERRANTRY: CARNIVAL'S FRANTIC DRAGON DANCE

For two days each year, Aldrick embraces the idea of errantry, becoming Carnival's dragon. For Aldrick, this "errantry" begins with a remembrance of his coming to Calvary Hill. He prepares for this moment of purposeful movement all year long as he meticulously designs and creates his dragon costume. For Aldrick, the dragon symbolizes a threatening, terrifying beauty that is his selfhood: "it was through [the dragon] that he demanded that others see him, recognize his personhood, be warned of his dangerousness" (Lovelace 36, *italics in original*). Through the tradition of, specifically Bakhtin's carnivalesque, the event typically provides space for the collapsing of social hierarchies, where complex messages exist alongside and in opposition to the dominant "authoritarian word" (Bakhtin 194). Carnival should be ideal for Aldrick's message of danger and his demand to be recognized. Aldrick's message, his dangerousness, his masculine power and leadership, comes not from violence or his physicality, but through his internal toughness. Aldrick makes his dragon costume from pieces that each "celebrated some part of his journey to and his surviving upon

this hill” (Lovelace 36). Aldrick celebrates his endurance on the hill—synonymous with poverty, governmental deprivation, and individual subsistence—through his dragon costume and the dragon dance he performs. His prior journey to the hill marks Aldrick as dangerous because he purposefully chose this location and, once here, he remains and survives upon this hill with all its associations.

Aldrick’s attempts at errantry, embodied in his hegemonic dragon dance, extend past himself and incorporate his community. Aldrick’s physical act of putting on the dragon costume results in “a sense of entering a sacred mask that invested him with an ancestral authority to uphold before the people of this Hill, this tribe marooned so far from the homeland that never was their home, the warriorhood that had not died in them, their humanness that was determined not by their possession of thing” (Lovelace 120). Aldrick, as the dragon, as the person granted ancestral authority, holds the hegemonic position of narrating and reminding the community that they are entitled to demand human rights. He becomes the sage embedded with the “mission, to let them see their beauty, to uphold the unending rebellion they waged, huddled here on this stone and dirt hill hanging over the city like the open claws on a dragon’s hand, threatening destruction if they were not recognized as human beings” (121). The juxtaposition of beauty and rebellion, as well as destruction and recognition, becomes a dominant portion of Aldrick’s dragon dance as it becomes his mission to impress these beliefs and values on Carnival’s spectators and participants. This ancestral mission corroborates Aldrick’s hegemonic masculinity, specifically in his community, if not in his country. While discussing masculine ties to the nation-state, Simpson argues that as the “manly” group increases in shows of strength so does the belief in the strength of the nation-state itself (267–68). The manliness of Aldrick as the dragon represents not only the community of Calvary Hill, but also becomes symbolic of the strength of Trinidad. This is most visible during Carnival season. The dragon narrates through his dance the people’s beauty and their threatening destruction, rebelling for recognition and changing conditions. Aldrick employs a frantic, disjointed dance, encompassing a plurality of people and multiple historical rebellions, to narrate a tale of human rights and demand recognition of personhood on a national level.

Aldrick’s frantic dance includes all the community’s hardships as he loses his individualistic masculine identity and takes on communal significance. “With a strong, piercing scream, he stepped into the street, his chains rattling, his arms outflung, his head lolling, in a slow, threatening dance of the Beast” that over the next two days interweaves “dancing the bad-devil dance, dancing the stickman dance, dancing Sylvia and Inez and Basil and his grandfather and the Hill and the fellars by the Corner ...affirming the power of the warrior, prancing and bowing, breathing out fire, lunging against his chains, threatening with his claws” (Lovelace 123). The dragon dance includes all individuals and all their hardships living on the hill. The totality and extensive reach of Aldrick’s dance lends a weight to his movements, as well as to his claims for hegemonic masculine leadership. In two days, he must complete his dance that benefits everyone on the hill. The demand for recognition as human beings, to Aldrick, also mandates a threat of rebellion if that recognition is not conceded. (Fatefully, Aldrick’s demand for recognition involves no more planning or concrete requests beyond a feeling of respect, foreshadowing its failure.) Merging both messages, recognition of personhood and the threat of rebellion, makes the dragon dance more frantic and offers two messages for two different audiences.

For his community, Aldrick wishes to impress upon his neighbors their holistic beauty—physical, emotional, and mental—as individual and collective people as well as the power that could originate from such recognition: “Oh, he danced. He danced pretty. He danced to say, ‘You are beautiful...Listen to your steelbands how they playing! Look at your children how they dancing! Look at the colours of your costumes in the sunshine! Look at your colours! You is people, people. People is you, people!’” (Lovelace 124). While beautiful and uplifting, this portion of Aldrick’s errantry still holds an urgency in its message for his neighbors. He repeats the pretty dance imbued with statements of worth and value. His movements are wandering as they respond to the people surrounding him, but the purposeful dance does not change. He frantically reminds them of their beauty and personhood alongside the importance of their recognition of them. Without them realizing their personhoods, there is no chance of demanding change or even recognition from

other people. They must collectively demand human rights. Aldrick dances this message to them, frantically hoping they see and recognize it, as well as recognize him as the hegemonic speaker of the message.

For the ruling, wealthy, Othered people, Aldrick's dragon dance is meant to cause terror. Historically, Carnival spectators rewarded entertainers (typically dancers, fighters, and orators) with money. Once they received payment for their feats, the entertainers move onto other spectators while continuing their performances. Through the possession of money, spectators hold power to dictate the entertainers' movements. In this sense, the wealthy spectators would control Aldrick as he frantically dances his message of personhood and consequence. Aldrick, as the community's hegemonic man, refuses such power to the wealthy. Monetary possession does not sway him, and he pushes against this tradition:

And he watched terror strike pale faces as he lunged towards them, and he smiled inwardly as they grinned nervously and rushed hands into their pockets to find coins to offer him in appeasement, as was the tradition. But no. No. He refused the money. He wanted it to be known that he was for real, that you couldn't just offer him a coin and he would disappear. (Lovelace 124)

Aldrick wants his message to be heeded as more than just a dance, more than mas.<sup>3</sup> This entails the act of being beheld, or looked at, as more than a performer. To show his "true" terror, "Aldrick growled and he spat and he moved to press against them, watched them grow more afraid, more confused. He wanted to frighten them. He liked it when they saw him coming and gathered up their children and ran" (124). Aldrick's purposeful terror coincides with his desire to make his message ever-present and ever-potent. He tries to make the repetitious acts and dances frighten to provide a weight to his message as his movements evoke terror again and again. In Aldrick's mind, Carnival provides the ideal location for his message as it repeats each year, and each year he can reinforce his message of terror through repetition. However, the repetition becomes detrimental for Aldrick's message as it becomes expected and commonplace to the audience. Aldrick's moment of errantry—the frightening, erratic, unpredictable dance—becomes normalized as part of a show.

Aldrick's message of terror fails to reach spectators because of spatial (both place and time) qualities, which denotes Aldrick's particular failure at errantry as well. Aldrick's desire to impart terror onto the wealthy spectators falls short because of Carnival's changes. While once a space of social change, Lovelace describes one of the unique hardships with neocolonialism's beginnings.<sup>4</sup> Carnival, on one hand, was historically linked to moments of crisis and breaking points, where relief from societal pressures became crucial and where the complex nature of laughter was therapeutic (Bakhtin 209). Yet, on the other hand, Carnival also historically has the temporal restraints of occurring for only a short time. Carnival allows for a few days of communications, including abuses, curses, profanities and oaths according to Bakhtin (203-04, 220-21), which highlight the plight of people subordinated by multiple power groups. While Aldrick succeeds in frightening his viewers in the moment, it is as short lived as one who experiences a horror movie or a haunted house. Additionally, he represents no real terror because he is in a commercial setting. While discussing a vastly different marketplace, Bakhtin comments on the heightened focus on the market during Carnival, where images of the human body dominate and all that is high, spiritual, ideal, or abstract is transferred to the material level (200-06, 213-23). Aldrick's ideal and distinguished message of recognition, personal and communal beauty, and rebellion becomes lost in the material commercialization of Carnival. Lovelace laments, through multiple characters, Carnival's commercialization, as the steelbands gain corporate sponsors and traditional rebellious characters become "outlawed from the city or just died, gone" (121). Aldrick's message of personhood and rebellion, once shared among many performers, now is feared to be "lost... among the clowns, among the fancy robbers and the fantasy presentations that were steadily

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<sup>3</sup> Caribbean societies describe "mas" as an act during a masquerade, usually Carnival; but the term can also connote acting under a false pretense or playing entertaining tricks.

<sup>4</sup> For more recent developments on Carnival and its efficacy for social change, see Browne and Harris.

entering Carnival; drowned amidst the satin and silks and the beads and feathers and rhinestones” (Lovelace 121). Aldrick’s threat occurs in a space and time that did not foster change or rebellion. As Carnival becomes more profitable and embraces celebration, it can no longer evoke terror and rebellion.

To be clear, failure to fulfill the purpose that motivates one’s wandering is not what results in the failure of errantry; however, the lack of actual wandering does. Aldrick may recreate his dragon costume each year, but his dance remains the same each year with a similar set route. The dragon dance does not involve moments of wandering, even though his dance has a sacred purpose. Aldrick’s dragon dance, being the same each year, is a repetitive and familiar movement for him and for those around him. This partially explains his inability to dance for effective change, as his audience already knows the outcome and that no rebellion or frightening consequences will transpire in the following days. Aldrick searches for terror and beauty, but he does so in the same familiar way each year. Only with his sudden vision of the Carnival’s extensive commercialization does Aldrick see his message’s breakdown of terror. The messages of beauty and personhood ring louder but do not entail the consequential addition of recognition. Aldrick’s dragon dance no longer truly threatens but merely performs a threat.

When Aldrick recognizes that his dragon dance, which has been closely tied to his hegemonic masculine identity, is a failing performance, he begins progressing towards his fluid masculine identity. Judith Butler’s theories on performativity emphasize how gender is “a constructed identity, a performative accomplishment which the mundane social audience, including the actors themselves, come to believe and to perform in the mode of belief” (520). While Butler discusses gender as a destructive, socially and historically constructed binary, her performative theory applies also to gender when viewed on a spectrum. As such, Aldrick performs hegemonic masculinity because he believes that the dragon and the ancestral authority has bestowed it upon him. Even though Carnival is, of course, a performative event and Aldrick’s dragon is, of course, a costume, they both represent his hegemonic masculine identity, which he believes and performs accordingly. Once Aldrick begins to doubt the validity of the dragon’s masculine representation, his hegemonic masculine performance also comes into doubt, stimulating a personal form of masculine crisis. Simpson’s work analyzes the “crisis of masculinity as a crisis of ‘looking’ and ‘looked-at-ness’” (6). Simpson’s perspective can help to explain how Carnival initiates Aldrick’s crisis of masculinity. As he becomes “looked-at” and his masculine dragon becomes scrutinized, Aldrick becomes more and more aware of his position and his bodily movements. As Carnival progresses, Aldrick dances more frantically. Yet, the audience remains unfazed by his message. He begins to understand his dragon dance is no longer an effective way to bring about change.

Doubting the dragon dance’s effectiveness becomes amplified as Aldrick watches Sylvia use dance to search for her own selfhood. Aldrick finds his “threatening” hegemonic masculinity inadequate to enact change. He sees that “in the face of this [Sylvia’s] scream for life, this cyclone of affirming and appealing tears, it suddenly struck him that his dragon with its threatening claws and fire was small before this girl’s scream. He wanted to give her life, her self. But, how could he?” (Lovelace 127). Aldrick loses his hegemonic power as he becomes unable to truly act on the community’s behalf, especially for the woman he claims to love. He cannot give Sylvia the change he deems she needs, and he cannot threaten the ruling class for change. As the threatening half of Aldrick’s message falls short, he realizes the importance of a spatial change. He cannot remain the hegemonic masculine representative without making a true threat of rebellion. He cannot remain the man in power when his entire life’s purpose, up to this point, holds no true power. He cannot be the dragon man after he learns that the masculine dragon is a performance. In the framework of Butler, this moment allows for “gender transformation” when there becomes a “possibility of a different sort of repeating, in the breaking or subversive repetition of that style” (520). Aldrick will seize the opportunity to transform his masculine gender, thereby breaking from the unheeded repetitious acts of the dragon’s hegemonic masculinity; his transformation is to a hypermasculine construction. Unfortunately, Aldrick’s attitudes towards Sylvia expose his true feelings at this time, which is to believe that she cannot dictate her own life or find her true self without the male providing it for her.

Aldrick's controlling attitudes towards Sylvia in this moment exemplify Morrison's understanding of desired governance. Morrison argues that Othering partially originates with the desire to "own, govern, and administrate the Other. To romance her, if we can, back into our own mirrors" (39). Aldrick wants to control and govern Sylvia's movements as well as make her fit into his understanding of personhood and agency, which he holds as necessary for the community's happiness. Aldrick finally reaches out to touch Sylvia, and "she s[ees] him, s[ees]his awkward hand reaching to her, and in one movement she sp[ins] out of his reach" (Lovelace 128). Sylvia's rebuke of Aldrick physically freezes him and stops his entire movements. However, Sylvia's power in the relationship is short lived. Only momentarily does Aldrick find "a kind of crazy new caring and respect for the girl" before he switches over to a focus on himself and also discovers a "kind of warrior's pride in himself that he had chosen her, Sylvia, in that very instant, to be his woman" (128). Aldrick finds respecting Sylvia and her determination to not submit to his desires to be "a kind of crazy" emotion. He sends the message that a hegemonic or hypermasculine man in his position of power does not usually experience such an odd emotion as respect for the woman he supposedly loves. Even though the respect is present, it becomes overshadowed by Aldrick's possessive qualities of Sylvia and his "choosing" of her, as if she has no choice herself. The callousness towards women, Sylvia in particular, highlights Aldrick's switch to his soon-to-be new masculine identity as he develops a hypermasculine construct based on warriorhood.

## CIRCULAR ERRANT MOVEMENTS ON THE CORNER

True errantry begins for Aldrick once he sees the dragon dance as performative and rejects it. He moves to hypermasculinity as a new attempt to replace his failed hegemonic masculine identity, embracing the other supposed warriors, the true rebels, who congregate at a corner at the entrance to their Calvary Hill neighborhood. While not a response to the loss of the "hegemonic imperial masculinity" due to "postwar decolonization" that Susan Brooks describes (28), readers can see Aldrick's turn towards hypermasculine construction as a response to the loss of power and standing in the community. These men believe the Corner provides a space for real rebellion that can bring social change, instead of the mas of Carnival. Studying hypermasculinity, Matt Zaitchik and Donald Mosher found hypermasculinity to be defined by four common traits: (1) acting callously towards women and/or sex and viewing (2) violence as manly, (3) danger as exciting, and (4) toughness as emotional strength. With these traits, the warrior, hypermasculine identity would typically result in an increase of Othering women and non-hegemonic men; however, because Aldrick uses his errantry to find belonging, his Othering actions decrease, he shows flashes of respect and consideration for his Others, and he begins to form the foundation for greater Relations between him and his Others. Aldrick's movements become a form of errantry, in that a sacred purpose—one that is communally-orientated, respected and selfless—motivates them and they consist of wandering. His movements are literally circular, as he circles back to the same position spatially, but figuratively the circular movements do not merely repeat. They allow Aldrick time to build an understanding of language and power with Others, hence increasing those Relations. Aldrick's circular errantry results in incorporating a hypermasculine identity construction into a growing masculine plurality comprised of respecting Others as well as demanding a voice and personhood through protest and criminality.

Desiring rebellion against the ruling class and belonging to a community, Aldrick joins a group that will become known as the Corner Nine, a parody of the Black Power rebellion that occurred in Trinidad in 1970. In this group, Aldrick begins building a hypermasculine identity as multiple neighbors are combined with Aldrick's masculine struggle. As Aldrick constructed his dragon costume, other men, in particular Fisheye, also fight with society's changing masculine expectations and concepts of rebellion and warriorhood. Fisheye heads the Corner Nine, with Aldrick taking a leadership role later. The men are "hard, tough men" described as "a few young fellars, rebels all" (Lovelace 140–41). This younger generation looks towards Fisheye and Aldrick as leaders in a rebellious, warrior-like manhood that has been lost to many. The young men angrily view the community as relinquishing acts of rebellion to acquire social change. While describing angry young men in England, Susan Brooks writes in "Engendering Rebellion: The Angry Young Man,

Class, and Masculinity” that the angry young men texts have a role in granting masculinity as they criticize “dominant” and hegemonic Western values of work; instead, they show the “authentic, free male individual” rebelling against society (24). The male characters Brooks analyzes rebel against a Western dominant culture, but from a very different vantage point than Lovelace’s characters. Specifically, for Aldrick, this authentic individual would be honest to one’s ancestry and free from unjust social constraints. This is what Aldrick seeks as he wanders and finds the Corner Nine. When Aldrick joins the group, Lovelace describes them as: “a band of maybe six or seven young fellars, warriors, who still believed in their muscles, who hushed to their bosoms an anger older than themselves, ... their gestures containing the slow sullen confidence and bravado of the old times” (151–52). Imitating the Black Power Movement in Trinidad during 1970, Lovelace’s Corner Nine duplicates much of the language, priorities, and actions of a rebellious group named the Block Five. As Brian Meeks details in “NUFF at the Cusp of an Idea,” the “Block Five” were a “loose grouping, borrowing its themes from the black power slogans and styles that had become pervasive in the City and from longer traditions of inter-community rivalry, centring on the infamous steelband clashes which often occurred at carnival time” (417). Aldrick joins this group as an equal, feeling the ancient anger of colonization and inequality and knowing the need for ancient bravado that his old hegemonic masculine ideal of non-movement overlooked.

Aldrick quickly becomes a leader of the group; but this only highlights certain aspects of his prior hegemonic masculine identity. A lieutenant role is foisted upon him as the men view him as a “veteran of rebellion, Dragon” (Lovelace 152). The men’s capitalization of Dragon removes Aldrick’s nonviolent hegemonic masculine qualities, such as helping to shape communal values. Instead, the younger generation views his entire identity as only the terror and frightening rebellion he danced for in his dragon identity, congruent with the traits of hypermasculinity. His prior leadership roles and influence in the community, which he held as a hegemonic male, have been overshadowed if not completely removed. Fisheye embraces his leadership role; however, Aldrick, after already failing in a hegemonic masculine role, is less willing. As the group emphasizes the threatening half of the dragon dance, which Aldrick knows is no longer effective, he becomes distant and sullen. Only through Lovelace’s omniscient third person point of view do readers understand the quiet and studious nature of Aldrick as he considers not only his perspective but his Others’ perspectives as well.

While not accepting their life choices, Lovelace’s wording demonstrates Aldrick’s willingness to consider the workers’ perspective as they move to gain wealth. Even though he demonstrates outwardly a hypermasculine construction, Aldrick’s Othering lessens during his time with the Corner Nine because of his errantry. Part of Aldrick’s errantry entails returning to the Corner each day to watch as his neighbors pass by. The activity of working marks the people passing by as Others to Aldrick because of his desire to maintain non-possession and non-movement as a mark of success and freedom. The hegemonic masculine values continue in the hypermasculine construction, which additionally amplify certain physical (such as violence and danger) and emotional (such as callousness and toughness) aspects as necessary. The group remains physically stationary as they are “watching the monotonous pedestrian journeying of people ensnared in their daily surviving, a ritual impelled not even by greed, set in motion by that most noble and obscene reason: the wife, the children, the belly” (Lovelace 152). The non-wandering journeys to and from work become ritualized, replacing the frantic dancing or the historic movements of Carnival. But here, the Corner Nine view it as “obscene,” determined by the need for physical survival. Aldrick once viewed surviving upon this Hill as a celebration of his inner toughness, but now his remarks indicate a judgement about *how* one survives in poverty. However, his judgement is short lived as, in Lovelace’s typical complex-compound writing style, two clauses later Aldrick announces that “he did not have the courage to [become a worker]; that even though he knew that this pose of rebellion was not power, that to abandon it for that living paraded before him was a more profound treason, a surrender, a kind of death he had not yet achieved” (153). The workers help form a foil to Aldrick’s hegemonic and hyper masculine identities as Aldrick equates their movements to treason and surrender. To this masculine composition, working is the surrender of freedom that was long fought for against the colonizer; a freedom indicated by non-possession

and non-movement. Aldrick thinks he could never become this type of man as he reaches for a true freedom, one that he thinks only comes from “true” rebellion against the work ethics that are linked to wealth and the prior colonizers.

The parade of workers contrasts with Aldrick’s parade during Carnival: one frantic, one monotonous; one terrorizing, one surrendering; one steeped with a message of personhood, one dead. Despite their differences, both are equally ineffective as a means of living freely if they constitute one’s only form of living. Aldrick’s views—that workers are different and strangers—contrast with Morrison’s explanation that there are no strangers, just “versions of ourselves, many of which we have not embraced, most of which we wish to protect ourselves from” (38). Morrison’s clarification of strangeness links each person to one another in the same way that Aldrick’s frantic dragon dance is linked to the parade of workers. Lovelace’s writing indicates a recognition of this association: Aldrick’s masculine evolution can be read in the often-overlooked recognition of the words “courage” and “achievement” (153). Subtly, Aldrick’s view of the workers begins to change. On one hand, they are a masculine Other based on economics because they refuse to rebel against working, capitalism, and neocolonialism. On the other hand, Aldrick can see this group as courageous: a group of men who have put their families or physical well-being above their supposed innate desire for freedom from work (Lovelace 152–53). They achieved a way of life that considers and includes other people, specifically their families. At this point, however, Aldrick personally sees this ending as a death that he wishes to protect himself from. Aldrick, by embracing a hypermasculine construction, possesses the freedom to not work, to state “I have not surrendered” or embraced that version of himself (Lovelace 152). Silently struggling with this thinking, Aldrick begins to view these choices as an individual’s own, even though he could not imagine living a working life himself.

This silent view of individual choice informs Aldrick’s lessening of his Othering actions with Sylvia and Pariag. With Sylvia, Aldrick wants to be “listened to” about his suggestions for her life (Lovelace 153). But even through seeing her quick-paced movements become slower, a “victorious drowsiness that was more and more becoming a part of her,” Aldrick remains silent: “It pained him, this wasting of Sylvia, this dulling of her; but he said nothing” (138). Aldrick grows in wanting to allow Sylvia to make her own decisions about how and where to live her life. Unfortunately, he also “fling[s] words after her; and she would fling back her answers” (153). Sylvia remains Aldrick’s gendered Other as he cannot let go of the desire to control her as his “chosen woman,” although he attempts to relinquish his self-proclaimed male authority over her movements and decisions. Giddens argues that the way around the violence that frequently arises when men lose control over women’s sexualities is in the transformation of sexual relations to intimate relationships. He defines this intimacy as “transactional negotiation of personal ties by equals” (Giddens 3). The transactional nature of Giddens’s statement is viewed in Aldrick and Sylvia’s “flinging” words back and forth, and the same verb being used for them both. To view Sylvia as an equal—equally able to make decisions and control herself—remains for Aldrick to learn.

While Aldrick’s attempts at silence with Sylvia collapse, his silence with Pariag enhances their Relations. After an unknown assailant(s) vandalizes Pariag’s bicycle, he leaves it as a memorial for one day before taking it to a mechanic (Lovelace 140). As he passes the Corner Nine,

everybody grew silent. They watched Pariag carry-push that bicycle, and in that moment they felt themselves closer to him than they ever had. It was suddenly as if he had become alive, a person to them; and that moment, which was sacred, for it joined people together to a sense of their humanness and beauty, they would remember and recall long afterwards. (141)

As Aldrick feels closer to Pariag and recognizes him as a person, his silence allows Pariag’s bicycle memorial to continue, enhancing Pariag’s strength. The Relations between the Others increases as they are “at that time both closer to them and farther from them” (141). The view of each other as the Other is not removed; however, the Relations between them improve. They recognize each other’s struggles and pains while seeing strength and goodness or kindness in each other. Aldrick’s errantry, as a purposeful wandering, brings him closer to his Others and allows him to

experience aspects and witness parts of their lives. Glissant stresses that “Relation is not made up of things that are foreign but of shared knowledge” (8). The shared moment between Aldrick and Pariag create a better Relation between them. They each have a shared knowledge of the Other’s strength and the Other’s respect. Aldrick comes to respect Pariag through viewing his new movements as determined and purposeful with a strength previously unseen.

Even though Aldrick’s movements with the Corner Nine take a circular route, they demonstrate errantry in that they are distinct movements. [Betsy Wing](#), in her translator’s introduction of Glissant’s *Poetics of Relations*, states that “directed by Relation, errantry follows neither an arrowlike trajectory nor one that is circular and repetitive, nor is it mere wandering—idle roaming. Wandering, one might become lost, but in errantry one knows at every moment where one is—at every moment in relation to the other” (xvi). Wing equates circular and repetitive movement; however, I argue that even though one’s path may start at the same location they can result in different understandings of Relation or be differently directed by an enhanced knowledge of Relation. For instance, Aldrick’s movements in response to the police begin with circular movements, but during his evasion of police on the Corner and the hijacking of a police vehicle, his movements become distinct wanderings for a purpose while focusing on the power relations between him and others.

Aldrick’s circular movements around the Corner, as the men leave and return according to the presence of police officers, increase his hypermasculine construction. Lovelace remarks: “the power of the Dragon even to threaten was coming to an end; but [Aldrick] remained there at the Corner out of a stubborn pride and loyalty, moving when the police came and returning at their leaving, so that Fisheye would watch him and say: ‘You is man. All those fuckin’ cowards run; you stand up. You is man.’” (164). Aldrick links his loss of power to the police presence and their decision to be “no longer hesitant, respectful” towards the men occupying the Corner (164). This is stated as though being the Dragon and threatening rebellion previously kept the police polite towards the men. However, the community’s prior support of Aldrick, specifically his beliefs of rebellion and non-movement as a hegemonic value, caused the police force’s respect. Once the community removes their support and labels the men as “hooligans” to be feared, then a larger police presence occurs to, precisely, “rid the Corner of ‘hooligans’” ([Lovelace 164](#)). As [Kate Quinn](#) comments in “Conventional Politics or Revolution: Black Power and the Radical Challenge to the Westminster Model in the Caribbean,” the Black Power rebellion varied in their community support as different organizations critiqued each other on different decisions, actions, and platforms. In parody, the Corner Nine has little community support for their rebellious outlooks. With support or not, Aldrick insists on remaining in this particular place, which begins his circular movements. His statement that this circling back to the corner is born out of “stubborn pride and loyalty” becomes an example of Glissant’s errantry in terms of his knowledge about power relations and the movements they cause. Returning to the same position is repetitive but Aldrick understands the power relation between his group and the police and offers a silent resistance against the removal of the “hypermasculine man” at the Corner. Fisheye recognizes Aldrick’s understanding of Relation, thereby confirming Aldrick as “a man” and re-labeling others as non-men and “cowards.”

Aldrick’s repetitious circling provides distinct moments of knowledge. He questions and challenges Fisheye and the other younger men about their views on the community and working. Aldrick maintains his acts of diminishing Othering in his statements that consider the working man’s point of view. When Fisheye tries to teach that “they is traitors, every one of them. They only want a excuse to be slaves again,” Aldrick counters with the idea that “maybe it’s their best they doing, man” ([Lovelace 165](#)). When pushed, Aldrick responds with a defeated “I don’t know” (165), however, Aldrick’s train of thought returns again and again to the point that all individuals do their best to survive as best they know how. Aldrick’s words indicate his mental errantry, as he wanders to better understand the motivations behind people’s actions and, thus, to better understand himself.

Aldrick’s errantry culminates with the group’s resistant climax against their removal by the police force and the desire to preserve the Corner’s hypermasculine identity. Fisheye brings a gun and whispers his “command: ‘Nobody leaving here ‘til the police come. Today we ain’t running’”

(Lovelace 170). The presence of a deadly weapon indicates the group's acceptance of violence; however, the men's astonishment and curiosity as they pass the gun around belies their familiarity with such violence. When no plan is formulated past a fistfight to draw attention, Aldrick realizes the hypermasculine aspect of the moment: "at that time there could have been no other answer, no more elaborate plan, for these men shared a belief that victory was won out of the justice of their cause and the courage of their soldiers. Plan? They needed no plan. To require a plan was to question the very truth of their cause and the bravery of their soldiers" (171). The militaristic discourse, including the new view of the Corner Nine as "soldiers," whose "courage" and "bravery" should not be questioned, plays into a form of hypermasculinity's trait of violence and danger. The militant, sans planning violence also parallels the Black Power rebellion, comprising some of the voiced flaws and failures of the movement, as noted by Deryck R. Brown, in "The Coup That Failed: The Jamesian Connection," including a lack of "political coherence," undefined and imprecise goals, and "empty shouts of 'Power!'" (558). With the goal of "justice" for the larger community, the Corner Nine's personas transform into hypermasculine military rebels who fight for the "truth of their cause," without articulating specific truths or desired outcomes, through any means necessary, including Fisheye's threatened gun violence and the hijacking and false imprisonment that does occur.

The two-day hijacking becomes Aldrick's final and ultimate hypermasculine moment and mirrors his message of Carnival, even in time length, but in a more successful environment that does produce terror. This becomes his most effective protest of the ruling class, even in its failure. The group's movements and choice of location intensify the message. A vehicle, with two police officers held prisoner, drives in circles, mostly through the town square, "the centre of downtown Port of Spain, a few blocks away from the headquarters of the Trinidad Police Force. It was where politicians gave their speeches, and where, every day, groups of men would be assembled discussing politics and religion" (Lovelace 173). Instead of parading down the city streets as in Carnival, the Corner Nine drive straight to the center, and then circle the town square, to perform their protest. Utilizing this portion of the city announces their right to be in such conversations but also contrasts the actions of these rebel warriors with the politicians' speech. Like the Black Power rebellion, where Woodford Square was reimagined as a space for "the People's Parliament" and a "democratic platform in which the stage was thrown open for anyone to speak" (Quinn 77), the Corner Nine use speech and movement to alter the city's discourse as they hope to inspire change. They state that their actions are indeed violent but also benevolent on behalf of the oppressed. Their movements through the city, specifically choosing the city square, announce the need for both action and speech to combat inequalities. Movement, even circular movement, is needed alongside language. This is not merely a violent attempt at change, but also an attempt at change that utilizes linguistic and spatial elements and understands the necessity of their inclusions. While the Corner Nine, as well as the Black Power rebellion, did little to enact the radical political change they were searching for (Quinn 73), they did succeed in bringing attention to the economic and cultural problems of labor. The cultural problems of labor in *The Dragon Can't Dance* includes the views and stereotypes of the working and non-working groups. Aldrick's errantry, through speech and movement, allows him a different viewpoint which meld the two groups together.

The combined use of language and movement highlights Aldrick's use of errantry to specifically influence masculine power and diminish Othering. Aldrick begins to add multiple concepts of masculinity together, almost in a spectrum, due to the lessons and Relations he has gained during his errantry with the Corner Nine. Aldrick hears "his own voice saying, shouting, crying: 'This is the People's Liberation Army ...with guns and jeep coming into the city seeking power, making a cry for our people to rise, to rise up and take theyself over; ... take power and rise to be people for our own self, take power, take Pow-er, Pow-er! Pow-er!'" (Lovelace 175). Aldrick's message to the onlookers (drawing from the rhetoric of the Black Power rebellion) mirrors his attempted message during Carnival. Just as he was exhausted after his two-day dragon dance, here he is "hoarse, and perspiration was streaming down his face" (Lovelace 175). His speech takes just as much effort as dancing. Toni Morrison voices how "the resources available to use for benign access to each other, for vaulting the mere blue air that separates us, are few but powerful: language... can encourage, even mandate, surrender, the breach of distances among us... whether they are distances of

culture or the distinctions and indistinctions of age or gender” (35–36). While hijacking a police vehicle is not benign, the call for action to the community is, as Aldrick calls for everybody to recognize and their personhood and power. So powerful is the moment for Aldrick that “he didn’t even know that they had been circling Woodford Square for the last hour until he heard the roar of the applauding crowd gathered in the Square: ‘Pow-er! Pow-er! Pow-er! Pow-er! Pow-er!’” (Lovelace 175). The circular errantry of the vehicle and group is seen as a purposeful wandering to reach the poverty-stricken, forgotten communities and ask that they demand change and recognition. For this outreach, the circular repetition is necessary.

As Morrison explains, language encourages the surrender of the distance. In Lovelace’s novel, this distance is what was previously felt between the Corner Nine and the community who previously called for their removal as “hooligans.” Sylvia, in particular, watches the circling vehicle and “tri[es] to fit the two [knowledges of Aldrick] together” (177). On one hand, she remembers Aldrick as hegemonic in his attempts to lead the community and work towards recognition and personhood for all individuals; on the other hand, she sees Aldrick more recently as the hypermasculine representative who wanders for his own benefit and no longer fits in the community. In reality, Aldrick has developed a pluralistic masculine construction. He is both the hegemonic, caring leader as well as the hypermasculine fighter. After the Corner Nine are imprisoned for the crime of hijacking the police vehicle and keeping the police officers hostage for two days, Aldrick adds non-hegemonic masculine construction to his plurality of manhood.

## ERRANTRY AND THE FUTURE DOWN THE HILL

Aldrick’s move to a non-hegemonic masculine construction does not begin with his own actions but includes his recognition of language’s power. The language of law designates him as a displaced individual. William Conklin begins his argument about law and Othering with the statement that “texts, interpretive practices, and social conduct differentiate among persons to render benefits to some persons and exclude others” (226). Not surprisingly, the discursive practices in law are no different. Aldrick and the other men are purposefully excluded from their own defense where “the language of expert knowers displaces the embodied meanings that an aggrieved has experienced” (Conklin 228). Aldrick’s personal experience of the police hijacking is reworded and re-remembered for him according to a socially acceptable defense. The men do not speak for themselves; they are silenced by other men who hold hegemony in the political realm. Instead of speaking, their lawyer tells their stories with unfamiliar, different words. The defense that the men are not guilty due to their demonstration of injustice, anger and frustration does not ring true to Aldrick (Lovelace 184–85). He states that it was not just a lesson or demonstration, but that “I was serious. I wanted us to take over the town, the island. I was serious” (Lovelace 185). The language of law contorts Aldrick’s experience and displaces him from his own actions, calling and labeling them something else. Conklin states that these “interpretive acts displace the everyday language through which one experiences a harm of exclusion” (228). Aldrick is again excluded from the community and displaced from his personal experiences and remembrances. This outcasting begins to create a non-hegemonic masculine identity of Other-ness.

During his five years in prison, Aldrick finds himself in the role of a gendered Othered by the correctional system and through isolation from the Corner Nine. His reasoning and deductions exile him from the other men, because they now feel displaced from their understanding. Aldrick’s errantry in prison, both his physical wandering in the confined space along with his mental errantry of thoughts, bring about an understanding of the non-hegemonic masculine identity. He is isolated both mentally and physically. After Aldrick explains a few times his new understanding of power and personhood gained during the trial, Fisheye exclaims, “‘Man, you beat me,’ looking at him with new respect, distance between them suddenly that neither of them would try to bridge in a hurry; so that from that day Fisheye didn’t seek him out, and the others passed him, respectful and half-fearing, saying to themselves singly what together they had agreed: ‘This man crazy!’” (Lovelace 189). The combination of fear of craziness, yet respect for his intellect, labels Aldrick as someone different, someone who sees the world in a different way than the hypermasculine, rebellious men they all had been. This philosophical thoughtfulness is labeled as crazy and develops a gendered

difference between Aldrick from the Corner Nine “so that the five years and two months he spent in prison were spent mostly alone...in a kind of web, a kind of cloud, a stranger in a country where he knew no one, was barred from others by a difference in language” (189). Instead of choosing a silent and brooding demeanor, he is now silenced and unable to share his philosophies. Aldrick’s separation makes him the foreign individual just like Pariag. Experiencing this disconnect and the labeling that occurs with it, Aldrick is forced into a non-hegemonic masculine role where his isolation compels a change within him and distances him from the hypermasculine construction he had built.

In conjunction with the isolation from the Corner Nine, Aldrick switches positions and now experiences the Othering of the correctional system. The correction system, largely built upon Western ideals of penance (for breaking Western values) and conformity (to Western paradigms) and rehabilitation (back to acceptance of Western principles), epitomizes Morrison’s idea of Othering that we began with, when she states that Othering is found in the “govern[ment] and administrat[ion of] the Other” with the intention of reinventing them in a more familiar, desired form found in “our own mirrors” (39). The correctional system epitomizes the controlling of Others for the intention of reinventing them into a more desirable form. However, the results are the denial of personhood: “the specific individuality we insist upon for ourselves,” in Morrison’s words (39). Aldrick suddenly experiences the consequences of being controlled when his power is removed, as someone else regulates, “govern[s,] and administrate[s]” his body and his movements. Aldrick is left only to wander in confinement without even his comrades. He now understands the results of control and begins to embrace a non-hegemonic masculine identity that pushes against the necessity of constant hegemonic masculine control.

Aldrick’s new non-hegemonic masculine construction combines with his prior experiences and knowledges of hegemonic and hypermasculinity to create a pluralistic vision of masculine identity, including the contradictions and complexities of life. Aldrick constructs a masculine identity that accounts for the need for rebellion as well as personal and communal survival; furthermore, his non-hegemonic masculine identity recognizes the need to be responsible for one’s own life while still striving for personhood and recognition from others. The isolation in prison, forced by the other Corner Nine, and the resulting separation is negative at the time. But later the non-hegemonic masculinity results in Aldrick’s embrace of masculine plurality. [Berthold Schoene-Harwood](#), in *Writing Men: Literary Masculinities from Frankenstein to the New Man*, traces the embrace of male authors towards “the imminent emergence of a socio-political plurality of multiple masculinities” while remaining concerned with “heritage[s] of systemic oppression and regulatory masculine self-deformation” (6). The imminence of multiple masculinities stems in part from the rise of a feminist studies that highlights intersectionality and nonessentialism. However, in part, multiple masculine identities also rise from the understanding of gender fluidity within an individual. For Aldrick, masculine plurality appears when it allows him to instigate contact again: “one day he was strong enough, he felt, to approach them...he began again out of his loneliness, his caring, to seek them out, taking to them ti[d]-bits of his thoughts, listening to them” ([Lovelace](#) 189). The combined feelings of strength, loneliness, and caring combine aspects across the three masculine constructions of hyper, non-hegemonic, and hegemonic ideals. Aldrick takes the first steps to bridge the divide between the men; he also does so not only for his own benefit of ending his loneliness but additionally because he cares for the other men. For the rest of the novel, Aldrick demonstrates no specific masculine understanding; instead, masculinity is constantly fluid, depending on his audience and need. With this fluidity, Aldrick relates to the individuals he encounters and ceases his attempts at control.

Aldrick’s errantry through town, after his release, guides his diminishing of Othering through respect for individual choices and differences. As Aldrick’s errantry increases, his Othering attitudes decrease. In Aldrick’s final chapter, he encounters several of his old neighbors through multiple sidetracked attempts to find Sylvia. Stopping at Freddie’s snackette, readers learn how he does not equate his prison time with defeat: he does not believe in “the consoling greeting for a defeated warrior from a band of deserters who had long made peace with the enemy” ([Lovelace](#) 193). Yet, while he does not believe in the community’s defeated views, he does not briskly voice his ideas

about prison making him want to live more. Prison did not defeat Aldrick, nor did it squash his desire for rebellion; however, he tries to politely “fashion a way in which he could say, ‘I am not conquered,’ without wounding, bruising too roughly their sensibility, without abusing their hospitality” (194). Aldrick lacked this consideration for the working people’s feelings and sensibilities about their life choices in his fervent declamation during his dragon dance and the police hijacking.

Aldrick’s consideration for individual choices extend directly to women and greatly lessens the Othering act of control that he previously sought with Sylvia. When Aldrick finds Sylvia, he proclaims his love for her and his wish to see her happy according to her own desires, as her own self (Lovelace 201–02). But unlike his actions during his two prior masculine constructions, Aldrick now “turned and walked away” (203). Aldrick’s movement away from Sylvia indicates his willingness to leave the decision to her. She can remain with Guy and pretend to be like him and Miss Cleothilda, or she can follow her true self to be with Aldrick and find happiness according to her desires. Only when interrupted by Miss Cleothilda does Aldrick turn and look back: “He didn’t wave. [Sylvia] didn’t wave either. And then she waved, thrusting both hands into the air in a saucy, brave and affirming sign. And it struck him: maybe she has not given up hope for life, for living” (Lovelace 203). Sylvia’s sign of life and hope and affirmation—embodied in her two-handed wave—confirms Aldrick’s movements away as successful since they give Sylvia space to make her own life choices. After all, if what he desires is for her to live her life according to herself, then she must be allowed to decide what kind of partner to live with. Aldrick responds physically as he “waved again, this time with both hands, signaling faith in her and a joy in the moment, signaling as a dear friend, a lover, who is going on before to be joined later by her” (203). Aldrick’s signal of faith, signed as not only a lover but a dear friend, sustains his pluralistic masculine identity. He trusts; he waits; he befriends; he goes ahead, all without pressure or control.

Relations between Pariag and Aldrick become better also through this final moment of errantry. During Aldrick’s time in prison, Pariag became the community’s shopkeeper; but even with this enhanced role in the community, he remains the Other through isolation and the lack of rebellious history. While “walk[ing] down the Hill with brave reluctance” (Lovelace 204), Aldrick contemplates Pariag, who

had been asked to bear the burden of a battle he did not know was his own, that was never shown him to be his own, and which could not be shown either, because none of them in the Yard could explain it...And even if they could have explained it, could they have offered him that life? Could they have offered him the dragon, Carnival, rebellion, the possession of nothing? (204)

Aldrick, after being in the non-hegemonic male position, sees Pariag’s perspective anew. Aldrick sees that without living the history of rebellion and non-possession for generations, Pariag could not belong to the community. He would always be slightly outside it, until the community changed. (The novel hints at this possible change since other cultural aspects evolve, such as non-possession, however, ethnic inclusivity in Carnival remains a concern).<sup>5</sup> As Aldrick wanders down into the city, he sees Pariag as someone who could have been a friend if they had ever tried to truly understand each other. However, since they remained near strangers, Aldrick can only look honestly at their Relation and why Pariag was the Other. The distance between them remains, but it has lessened. Aldrick desires to speak with Pariag, but he cannot explain his, or the community’s, prior actions to Pariag. Instead of attempting to unburden himself of his prior behavior, to explain it away for the sole purpose of making himself feel better, Aldrick continues his errantry. Aldrick sees how “each man—Pariag included—had the responsibility for his own living, had the responsibility for the world he lived in, and to claim himself and to grow and to grow and to grow” (Lovelace 204). While Aldrick is directing this new recognition towards Pariag, it more directly correlates to Aldrick’s own life and his own responsibilities. Aldrick grows as he moves downhill. He can do nothing about his Relation with Pariag; he can only be responsible for his own living, claim himself, and continue to grow.

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5 The incorporation of Indo-Caribbeans in Carnival is still an issue today, as chutney music becomes increasingly defunded. See *Mahabir* for the historical trajectories of this social change.

The end of the novel, through its focus and structure, clearly shows that Aldrick no longer needs constant control, which renews his errantry into an unknown life. Aldrick only has tentative plans for his future in the city, yet he pursues the unknown life that will bring him closer to “strangers,” instead of rejoining the familiar Calvary Hill community. Readers glimpse that his errantry, bringing him further into a life beside Others, will reduce Othering acts as well. One of Aldrick’s last statements focuses on a desire to work as a sign painter; he even speculates about signs he might paint, but when they are all directive statements, he laughs (Lovelace 205). Aldrick’s laughter is not one of amusement, but instead one confirming his understanding of the downfalls of control. Statements, such as “No spitting!” or “No obscene language!” (204, 205), become ridiculous attempts at power when such things cannot always be controlled. Instead Aldrick changes his acts of control and hopes to “paint some new signs, signs of life, of hope, of love, of affirming, and let his own living match and mirror them” (205). Working as a sign painter, Aldrick would not control his readers; however, he would attempt to influence lives with positive messages. Aldrick has moved from the prior singular masculine construction where he dictated Others’ behaviors to one where he would “match and mirror” such messages in his own life, switching his focus to himself and his responsibility.

The remaining novel focuses on Pariag, as the Other, and Philo, as the Calypsonian storyteller. This structure indicates two things. First, Lovelace’s leaving of Aldrick’s character signals the character’s unknown future. He “walk[s] down the street, alive, and ready to go on” (205). Lovelace leaves Aldrick’s character positively in a moment of errantry where Aldrick does not know the future, but he knows the position and Relations which surround him. Second, the novel’s structure reinforces Aldrick’s lack of control and centrality. He does not need to be the center any longer; someone else can tell the next installments of his future. Lovelace tells the last chapter with an emphasis on Philo, the calypsonian, and stresses everyone’s movement. Aldrick moves down the hill; Pariag moves out of Calvary Hill and into the corner shop; Philo “had to get away, to move in a larger area of space, to move, to move on” (Lovelace 232). Philo moves on to Diego Martin where he becomes the eccentric standout to the monotone identities in the neighborhood, becoming a positive Other force for change. And, through the calypsonian, readers learn, on the last page, that Sylvia moves to “look for Aldrick” (240). Each of the main characters end the novel with movement and errantry. Each recognize their need for purposeful wandering, through which they gain their desire along with the knowledge that they only have control over their own lives.

Although it has been incorporated throughout, Toni Morrison’s statement about the origin of Othering deserves to be reiterated in its entirety: she states that to understand the “unreasonable claims” one attempts to have on another person is to understand a

longing for and missing some aspect of [one]self, and that there are no strangers. There are only versions of ourselves, many of which we have not embraced, most of which we wish to protect ourselves from. For the stranger is not foreign, she is random; not alien, but remembered; and it is the randomness of the encounter with our already known—although unacknowledged—selves that summons a ripple of alarm. That makes us reject the figure and the emotions it provokes—especially when these emotions are profound. It is also what makes us want to own, govern, and administrate the Other. To romance her, if we can, back into our own mirrors. In either instance (of alarm or false reverence), we deny her personhood, the specific individuality we insist upon for ourselves. (38–39)

Throughout the novel, Aldrick’s hegemonic dragon message and hypermasculine message is one of personhood. Yet, while he remains controlling of Others, he does not allow them to claim their own personhood. Only once Aldrick sees the results of Othering control and relinquishes his desires to own, govern, and administrate his community can they claim themselves and celebrate their beauty as individuals. To do so he must continue his errantry, which he embraces now with a Relational, pluralistic masculine construction. Aldrick’s fluidity of masculine construction, which ends with a plurality, evokes Schoene-Harwood gynandric complexity, which emphasizes a fluidity of gender, as though on a spectrum, along with a confluence of self and otherness. The open structure that ends Lovelace’s novel indicates that Aldrick remains errant in his movements, as well

as the other characters accepting errant paths of their own, to increase relational identities. Through errantry, Aldrick creates a 'third space,' in Homi Bhabha's terms, for his identity after he leaves Calvary Hill. This space not only allows for all types of masculine construction without the need to control them but is created through knowledges produced by each different type of construction. Errantry will continue Aldrick's plurality of gender as he gains better Relations between his own personhood and that of his Others by diminishing his actions of gendered Othering.

## COMPETING INTERESTS

The author has no competing interests to declare.

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