Marie Berndt

“Jamaicans wid ah different flag” Representations of Precarious LGBTQ Lives in Jamaican Fiction of the New Millennium

Masterarbeit
zur Erlangung des akademischen Grades “Master of Arts (M.A.)”

vorgelegt am 20. August 2018 an der

Rheinischen Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität Bonn
Institut für Anglistik, Amerikanistik und Keltologie

Erstgutachterin: Prof. Dr. Barbara Schmidt-Haberkamp
Zweitgutachterin: Dr. Silke Meyer

Table of Contents

1 It's Complicated! – Jamaica's Relation to LGBTQ

When looking at the news of the past two decades one is regularly confronted with reports of the violent persecution of sexual minorities in many parts of the world. Instantly, the mass shooting in a gay nightclub in Orlando, USA, in 2016 comes to mind (cf. "Orlando"); then perhaps the newly instated Anti-Homosexuality laws in Uganda[1] (cf. ILGA 104, 152) and in Russia (cf. Chan) in 2013; moreover, the tremendous number of 340 murdered LGBTQ people in Brazil in 2016 alone (cf. ILGA 161) and a considerable, but never confirmed number of gay men sentenced to death under Shari'ah law in the Middle East (cf. Banning-Lover; Kamali Dehghan) – the list goes on and on. When reading of these developments and incidents the most common reaction appears to be one of incredulity, shock, and outrage over the fact that people are still persecuted this severely on the grounds of their sexual orientation. Nonetheless, there are still 72 states worldwide that criminalise same-sex sexual behaviour (cf. ILGA 8), ten of which are located in the Caribbean (cf. ILGA 38).

"When addressing the region as a whole, Jamaica is typically singled out as a place where it is nearly impossible to be *gay*" (King, *Island Bodies* 83, original emphasis), TIME Magazine even famously identified it as "the most homophobic place on earth" (Padgett). Labelling the country in this manner seems understandable and justified when reading report after report about the laws criminalising same-sex relations and the violent methods used to enforce these laws. However, the most important thought to bear in mind when discussing any issue of sexuality in the Caribbean region is – it is complicated!

> Although sex and sexuality are at the heart of human life, openly addressing these topics is taboo in many societies. Colonized, formerly colonized, and minority peoples often find these issues particularly problematic because their sexual behaviors have been derogated, exaggerated, and exoticized by imperial and colonial powers, and then held up by those same powers as examples of their inferiority and justification for their oppression. Such a complex history is evident in the case of the Caribbean. (King, "Sex and Sexuality" 24)

Black people have been "hyper-sexualised" (Lovell 88) by Europeans from the earliest days of colonialism on, both in their African places of origin as well as in their often forced diasporas. As a consequence of the transatlantic slave trade, the Caribbean came to be the largest of these African diasporas (cf. Palmié and Scarano, "Introduction" 8) and the region "has been regarded by the rest of the world as the very epitome of excessive sexuality" (F. Smith, "Introduction" 6) ever since. Slavery was abolished in the British colonies in the 1830s, however, racist discourses of black

1 These have since been annulled; however, this is is only a fractional success as it led to the previous penal code being reinstalled according to which homosexual acts are punishable with imprisonment for life (cf. ILGA 104).

inferiority did not end then. Caribbean subjects still had to fight against oppression, and from the early 19th century on, “moral rectitude” in questions of sexuality gradually became a potent tool of nationalism in the region (cf. Alexander 12f.). Exemplifying ‘sexual correctness’, i.e. heteronormativity, became a strategy to prove that Caribbean subjects were at least equally reasonable and responsible as their colonisers – if not more, considering the Europeans’ sexual excesses in the Caribbean. Heteronormativity was firmly established as an implicit, but important argument in the nations’ claims for independence and self-governance and has been upheld as a value ever since (cf. LaFont; Alexander 13f.; Thompson 45).

Scholars engaging in questions of sexuality in the Caribbean must be aware of these complex processes and their controversies and take them into consideration when discussing homophobia in the region. There can be no doubt that this discussion must be led; however, placative denominations such as “the most homophobic place on earth” might be ill-fitted opening points. Kei Miller warns to be careful with such phrasings, since “it isn’t always useful to use the term homophobia. Some words close down a discussion as surely as a fullstop closes down a sentence” (“Homophobia”). They might unintentionally widen the gap between Jamaica’s society and its LGBTQ community instead of helping to bridge it and get a conversation started.

> To agree with ‘the West’ that the region is violently homophobic, or even that homophobia is reprehensible, is to risk yielding the hard-won sovereignty of a region historically subject to the whims of colonizers and foreign military and financial institutions. It is to concede the spectacular and exceptional nature of the region’s violence and its not quite modern character. The continuing legacies of slavery, indenture, and colonialism and the attendant threat to the integrity of the Caribbean (particularly nonwhite) body and psyche dictate that any departure from a wholesome, clean, straightforward sexuality would risk a return to the scene of colonial degradation. (F. Smith, “Introduction” 10)

Lightly dismissing or ridiculing the value of heteronormativity that is held so high by Caribbean people can easily turn into neocolonial patronisation. An uncompromising condemnation of Jamaican attitudes and standards regarding sexuality and of their ways to implement these can easily be read as an attack on the Jamaican society and even black people as a whole. Nevertheless, completely “[r]epudiating these ideas about the Caribbean […] also means denying that homophobia exists, or that it is a plausible cause for concern in the region, or that the discussion of homosexual desire is appropriate” (F. Smith, “Introduction” 11). Ignoring LGBTQ issues equals not just tolerance of, but complicity in the discrimination of sexual minorities.

Hence, the discussion should be led in a manner that forecloses this fear of imperialist incapacitation. It is essential not to speak for or about Caribbean societies, but to listen to what they have to say. However, it is equally important for the vulnerable subgroup of LGBTQ people in Jamaica to be granted a voice, to listen and support

them as well as possible. Scholars, as well as political activists, need to balance between the two ends of this debate. This balance appears to have been hard to find in the past, which has led to a significant absence of LGBTQ issues from the public discourse.

> [W]hile sex and sexuality appear throughout Caribbean literature, often as major themes, critics and scholars have largely shied away from these subjects, perhaps wary of re-inscribing myths and stereotypes of threatening and wild Black sexuality, mysterious and seductive Asian sexuality, and the Caribbean as embracing a homophobia disproportionate to its size. (King, "Sex and Sexuality" 35; cf. Sharpe and Pinto 247)

Apparently, the difficulties of the subject-matter, and especially the controversies around non-heterosexual orientations, have scared academic researchers off for a long time. Although a small number of sociological studies on sexuality in the region were published since the late 1940s (cf. Kempadoo, "Sexuality" 65ff.), and despite the fact that sexuality has been a theme in literature and other art forms for even longer (cf. King, "Sex and Sexuality" 25ff.), there has hardly been any criticism in the field of queer studies (cf. Kempadoo, "Sexuality" 60; King, "Sex and Sexuality" 24). Only

> [i]n the last two decades, the visibility of LGBT issues in the Caribbean has gained momentum especially through international pressure from bodies such as the United Nations Human Rights Council, high-profile court cases across the region, the outspokenness of queer Caribbean writers and filmmakers – largely though not exclusively based in the diaspora – a host of advocacy groups and grass roots activism in the region […]. (Jackson)

While the stance of national and international politics and regional LGBTQ activism are certainly of interest for this thesis and will briefly be introduced in Chapter 2.2, the main focus will lay on what Shona Jackson praises as the new "outspokenness of queer Caribbean writers".

Homosexuality in the region has been mentioned in early Caribbean novels published from the 1920s onwards by Claude McKay, Sam Selvon and Paule Marshall among others (cf. Chin 81ff.; I. Smith 2ff.; F. Smith, "Caribbean Literature" 405),

> however these portrayals exist in a heteronormative frame that assumes homosexuality is 1) abnormal and immoral, 2) is engaged in primarily by white and non-Caribbean folk, with Caribbean people only involved out of the desperation of loneliness or poverty, and 3) that when homosexuality does exist it should remain unseen and unacknowledged. (King "Sex and Sexuality" 33)

It was not until the 1980s and 90s that more positive and empathetic representations of homosexuality were published and publicly discussed, for instance by the Caribbean-American writers Audre Lorde and Dionne Brand, as well as the Jamaicans Michelle Cliff and Patricia Powell (cf. King, "Sex and Sexuality" 33f.; Cummings 323f.). These works were the first that "spoke into the relative silence around Caribbean homosexuality" (King "Sex and Sexuality" 33) and really brought the issue to the table, countering "the heteronormativity that is relentless in earlier novels […], not with

homonormativity, but rather with homonormality, that is the concept that homosexuality is *a* normal sexuality" (King, "Sex and Sexuality" 34, original emphasis). They have laid important groundwork in the field, which, together with other pressuring factors such as a worldwide advance of queer studies and heated controversies surrounding homophobic song lyrics[2], facilitated recent debates about the situation of LGBTQ people in Jamaica. In the past two decades, finally, more and more queer writers have emerged from within this newly created space for discussion, and they produced more and more candid and provocative depictions of LGBTQ life in the region. It is precisely their increased explicitness that distinguishes these new writers of the twenty-first century from the aforementioned authors of the eighties and nineties.

The works of four of these currently active authors will be discussed in this thesis: Nicole Dennis-Benn (*1982), Thomas Glave (*1964), Marlon James (*1970) and Kei Miller (*1978). All of them are of Jamaican origin and have published prose fiction on LGBTQ matters since the beginning of the new millennium, thus, they correspond to the geographical, temporal, thematic and generic parameters that form the basis of this thesis. Furthermore, they all identify as LGBTQ, Dennis-Benn being an 'out' lesbian woman, the others gay men. More important, however, are their stories and how they present new approaches and perspectives. As the analyses in Chapter 3 will show, they feature LGBTQ characters as protagonists instead of just sidekicks and they portray these characters as neither perfect nor evil, but as nuanced human beings. They show a full picture of LGBTQ life with its positive and negative aspects and, in doing so, they move away from stereotypical representations of mental instability, immoral sinfulness, or helpless victimhood (cf. King, *Island Bodies* 82f.). Moreover, they go about this move more loudly and proudly than their predecessors did – they simply can, because they have the world's attention. The publication of Dennis-Benn's debut novel *Here Comes the Sun* in 2016 has been long anticipated and accompanied by an ample media campaign (cf. King, "One Moment" 253) and it has since received even more attention in the form of awards and nominations. Thomas Glave, as a long-established and award-winning writer of fiction and essays, a distinguished academic and political activist, "has in many ways become the public face of a Jamaican queer identity" (Sharpe and Pinto 265). Marlon James rose to elite literary status over night when he became the first Jamaican author to ever win the Man Booker Prize for Fiction in 2015 (cf. Brown). Last but not least, Kei Miller was elected one of Britain's

2 The high level of homophobia in dancehall and reggae music was brought to international attention in the early 1990s with the publication of Buju Banton's infamous song "Boom Bye-Bye" in which he demands for gay men to be shot dead (cf. West and Cowell 297f.). For more information on this debate please see the essays by Donna Hope, Cecil Gutzmore and Tara Atluri (pp. 302-306).

prestigious ‘Next Generation Poets’ in 2014 and was awarded numerous other honours for his poetry, short fiction, novels, and essays (cf. “Kei Miller”). None of them are based in Jamaica any more, but they live and work in the USA and in the United Kingdom (cf. Moore, “Authors”; Campbell 33; Miller, *Saltire Flag*). Their diaspora status and their enormous success rates enable and demand them to speak out for LGBTQ causes in their fiction, at public events, or in interviews, blogs, tweets, and via other social media streams. In this way, they keep “demonstrating that Caribbean homosexuality is not an oxymoron, and that literature can be used to counter stereotypes and not just to reinforce them” (King, “Sex and Sexuality” 34). Albeit they share so much, the four selected authors are on no account homogeneous in their views on LGBTQ matters, which makes a comparison of their respective fiction worthwhile and interesting.

The literary canon for this thesis includes twelve works of primary fiction: the two novels *Here Comes the Sun* (2016) by Dennis-Benn and *John Crow’s Devil* (2005) by James, as well as ten short stories by Dennis-Benn, Glave and Miller. That there is only one female author included in this thesis unfortunately leads to a considerable imbalance in so far as the lives of gay men are overrepresented while lesbian lives are in the focus in just one novel and one short story and trans identity is explicitly portrayed in only one story. This is a regrettable disparity; however, it mirrors the broader canon of Jamaican prose fiction and the state of local socio-political debates, which, so far, tend to concentrate largely on gay men as well. Women in Jamaica, also within the group of sexual and gender minorities, still appear to fall prey to patriarchal structures with regard to publication opportunities and public attention (cf. WE Change; Sharpe and Pinto 264).[3] In addition to structural sexism, it is noticeable that female authors tend to write about a wider variety of subject matters, adapting lesbian as well as male or transgender voices, whereas male authors tend to write more exclusively from male perspectives. This tendency is visible in the works presented here, but can also easily be traced in the earlier works by Brand, Cliff, Lorde, and Powell (cf. King, *Island Bodies* 103f.). Nonetheless, this thesis will attempt to provide an extensive and balanced discussion of specific female and trans issues, alongside male concerns and matters that cut across genders, in order to present as many facets of precarious Jamaican LGBTQ lives as possible.

To begin with, the following second chapter of this thesis will provide the background that is necessary for a qualified discussion and analysis of the literary

3 There are of course many more outspoken female LGBTQ writers in the Caribbean region who, in general, are not to be disregarded, but cannot be discussed in this thesis since they either work in different genres, like the poet Stacey-Ann Chin, or are not that closely affiliated with Jamaica, like Oonya Kempadoo and Shani Mootoo from Trinidad and Tobago.

texts. In three subchapters, its first part will outline relevant theoretical concepts, starting with queer theory as well as its critique and amendments by black scholars and authors. In the course of this debate, a concise terminology to work with throughout the rest of the paper will be acquired. Secondly, the basic principles of precarity theory will be presented, and thirdly, the role of literary representation in precarious contexts will be discussed. The second part of this second chapter will deal with the factual situation of the LGBTQ community in Jamaica in the twenty-first century. It will expand on the historical development at the root of today's condition, at which the introduction has already hinted, and provide detailed insights into both, the structural discrimination and the incidental violence that LGBTQ people have to face. Furthermore, a brief overview of LGBTQ activism will be given. In addition to constituting the necessary socio-political context, this subchapter will also serve to illustrate why considering Jamaican LGBTQ lives within the theoretical framework of precarity is justified and to point out the significance of representation for this issue.

The main part of the thesis will consist of the analysis of the two novels and ten short stories in Chapter 3. The thesis will follow a thematic structure, presenting four aspects of LGBTQ lives: institutional discrimination, social exclusion, self-alienation and violence, in that order. Because most of the texts included here focus on multiple facets of LGBTQ life, it would be pointless to establish a strict one-text-per-chapter sequence that presents one story from cover to cover before moving on to the next. Instead, the text analyses will be arranged according to the four topics listed above, to the effect that there will be more than one text per subchapter, and also mostly more than one subchapter for each text to appear in. Thus, a comprehensive study shall be compiled of how the LGBTQ experience is represented in selected Jamaican fiction of the new millennium.

In order to so, first, institutional discrimination will be discussed in the particular sectors of religion and education. The former is presented in the novel *John Crow's Devil* by Marlon James and the short story "He Who Would Have Become 'Joshua', 1791" by Thomas Glave; the latter plays a role in *Here Comes the Sun* by Nicole Dennis-Benn and "Walking on the Tiger Road" by Kei Miller. The second subchapter will centre around instances of social exclusion, either from a broader circle such as the town community as presented in Miller's "Fear of Stones" and in both Dennis-Benn's novel and her short story "Patsy's Letter", or from the close family circle, as it is the case in two short stories by Glave, "The Final Inning" and "Leighton Leigh Anne Norbrook", and in "What's in a Name" by Dennis-Benn. In the third subsection, focus will be laid on feelings of self-alienation and psychic pressure, which will be examined through a close reading of Miller's stories "Fear of Stones" and "This Dance" as well as

Glave's "The Final Inning". The fourth subchapter will then show in how far all three previously discussed factors, institutional discrimination, social exclusion and self-alienation, augment the physical dangers threatening LGBTQ people. Different examples of violence with a prophylactic intention will be addressed first, that is violent attempts to 'fix' or 'prevent' LGBTQ sexualities. One example that will be discussed in detail in this context is 'corrective' rape, which is directed specifically against lesbian women and plays a role in *Here Comes the Sun* and Glave's story "Whose Song?". Secondly, depictions of mob violence in Miller's "Tiger Road" and Glave's "Out There" will be analysed and compared. As a consequence of this thematic arrangement, the analysis will assume the shape of a spiral of precarity, from an ample scope of underlying components of social inequality to more and more personal and concretely threatening experiences. Importantly, however, each subchapter will also present how the literary works attempt to disrupt and dissolve the spiral. At the end of the thesis, a conclusion will summarise the findings of the previous chapters, tie up all potential loose ends and present the final thesis.

2 Concepts and Contexts

2.1 Concepts: Queer Precarity Representation

2.1.1 Queer Theory and Black Queer Theory: Borders, Identities and Politics

The supposition from which all queer theory appears to depart is that society is defined by and divided into two spheres: "a pure and natural heterosexual inside and an impure and unnatural homosexual outside" (Fuss, "Inside/Out" 2). The assumption that this binary of two mutually exclusive, strictly separated opposites is fundamental to sexuality – and to humanity as a whole – is taken as a fixed starting point. On its basis, queer theory then "rais[es] the questions of the complicated processes by which sexual borders are constructed, sexual identities assigned, and sexual politics formulated" (ibid.). In other words, while the existence of the two categories is undisputed, it is queer theory's task to investigate how they came into being and what exactly defines and divides them. Only when understanding the precise origins and characteristics of the hetero/homo distinction, theorists can move on to consider this polarity's consequences and form a plan of (re-)action. Therefore, this subchapter is to follow the structure suggested by Diana Fuss and address her three questions one by one.

First to be investigated then are "the complicated processes by which sexual borders are constructed". Of course, borders are at all times codependent on the spheres which they separate, as neither could exist without the other, thus searching for the border between homo- and heterosexuality must concurrently aim at locating

these two domains themselves. To this end, queer theory follows a constructionist approach, in which "[t]he social world is understood as an artifact, constructed or constituted in discourses and practices that produce social categories and taxonomies" (Oakes 381). Accordingly, any category of identity is considered a changing product of social circumstances, rather than a stable product of eternal, unalterable material preconditions.[4] Applying this scheme of thought to the question at hand, Gayle Rubin concludes "that sexuality is constituted in society and history, not biologically ordained" (10; cf. Marinucci 5, 7), and therefore, "human sexuality is not comprehensible in purely biological terms. […] The body, the brain, the genitalia, and the capacity for language are necessary for human sexuality. But they do not determine its content, its experiences, or its institutional forms" (Rubin 10).

So, if it is a process, rather than a pre-given state, that produces sexual borders, how exactly has the landscape of sexual identities been formed?

According to Judith Butler, a 'heterosexual imperative' has been established over centuries, which

> enables certain sexed identifications and forecloses and/or disavows other identifications. This exclusionary matrix by which subjects are formed thus requires the simultaneous production of a domain of abject beings […] who form the constitutive outside to the domain of the subject. The abject designates here precisely those 'unlivable' and 'uninhabitable' zones of social life which are nevertheless densely populated by those who do not enjoy the status of the subject, but whose living under the sign of the 'unlivable' is required to circumscribe the domain of the subject. […] In this sense, then, the subject is constituted through the force of exclusion and abjection, one which produces a constitutive outside to the subject, an abjected outside, which is, after all, 'inside' the subject as it own founding repudiation. (*Bodies* xiii)

Heteronormativity as a concept and value is formed and reformed over and over again by deciding what is *not* heteronormative. In this sense, "lesbian and gay sex, the 'pervert', the 'unnatural' are all indispensable to the formulation of the 'natural', the conjugal, the heterosexual" (Alexander 9). The border is not static, but the result of a constantly operating dynamic of comparison. Therefore, identifying a person or a group as hetero- or homosexual is always an instantaneous judgement and needs to be seen in context.

As a second point of analysis, which is to follow the survey of queer theory's view on the mechanics of sexual border formation, Diana Fuss had suggested to examine

4 Constructionist theories in general, queer theory among others, are often criticised for their self-destructiveness that results from their central argument. If all existing categories are the results of social processes and conditions rather than fixed institutions, and if, subsequently, they do not carry any inherent value and might therefore be changed or abolished, the same is also true for any statement that constructionist theory tries to make. In other words, if all social practices and discourses are grounded on unstable inventions and have no claim to truthfulness, then neither has social constructionism (cf. Oakes 381ff.). While there is some truth to this argument, following it would mean cutting off the discourse completely and prevent any positive outcome discussions about gender and sexuality might bring forward.

the processes by which sexual identities are assigned. For this purpose it seems instrumental to retrace how sexual identities have been characterised and negotiated in the past in order to understand the constitution of the status quo. While same-sex desire, love and sexual interaction have always existed,[5] the categories that form the basis of western discourse today were only conceptualised and established in general linguistic usage during the nineteenth and early twentieth century. "The word 'homosexuality' […] publicly appeared in print for the first time in 1869" (Deschamps 27), and "[t]he terms heterosexual and homosexual apparently came into common use only in the first quarter of this [i.e. the twentieth] century; before that time, […] people did not conceive of a social universe polarized into heteros and homos" (Katz 10). Prior to this, same-sex relations were mostly referenced using biblical terms such as 'buggery' or 'sodomy', but these did not devise sexuality as a central identity trait to the same extent as nineteenth-century discourse did. In his famous *History of Sexuality*, Michel Foucault writes about 'the nineteenth-century homosexual' that

> [n]othing that went into his total composition was unaffected by his sexuality. It was everywhere present in him: at the root of all his actions […]. It was consubstantial with him, less as a habitual sin than as a singular nature. […] the psychological, psychiatric, medical category of homosexuality was constituted from the moment it was characterized […] less by a type of sexual relations than by a certain quality of sexual sensibility, a certain way of inverting the masculine and the feminine in oneself. Homosexuality appeared as one of the forms of sexuality when it was transposed from the practice of sodomy onto a kind of interior androgyny, a hermaphrodism of the soul. The sodomite had been a temporary aberration; the homosexual was now a species. (43)

Clearly, these early discussions of sexual categories considered the physical sexual act between members of the same sex to be merely one of a line of factors that contribute to the definition of a homosexual. Foucault's retrospect thus points straight towards the central question: what – besides sexual intercourse with a person of the same biological sex – are the other factors marking a person as homosexual?

He speaks of "inverting the masculine and the feminine in oneself", of "androgyny" and what he calls a "hermaphrodism of the soul", in other words of transgressing the boundaries between being a man and being a woman. The hypothesis that such a transgression is in fact possible, strongly suggests that the border between these two is not static either, but can be shifted by changing circumstances or conduct. The differentiation between the two is no longer made by the means of biological indicators of the two sexes alone – male and female genitalia – but in addition the distinction of initially two genders becomes relevant to the discussion. Thus, the attempt to locate one border, the one between hetero- and homosexual identity, leads to a confrontation with a number of new borders, most importantly the one between sex and gender.

5 It is estimated that about 10 per cent of any population in any period of time engaged in same-sex intercourse (cf. Marinucci 3).

Often, the two are employed as superimposable, so that the male sex is equated with a distinct set of masculine gender traits on the one hand, and the female sex is in conformity with feminine gender traits one the other hand.[6] In this school of thought, gender traits are considered the result of the biological circumstances of a sex, e.g. that, due to genetics, men are more rational, stronger, more active, whereas women are emotional, weak, and passive. However, queer theory insists that there is

> a radical discontinuity between sexed bodies and constructed genders. Assuming for a moment the stability of binary sex, it does not follow that the construction of 'men' will accrue exclusively to the bodies of males or that 'women' will interpret only female bodies. Further, even if the sexes appear to be unproblematically binary in their morphology and constitution […], there is no reason to assume that genders ought also to remain as two.[…] The presumption of a binary gender system implicitly retains the belief in a mimetic relation of gender to sex whereby gender mirrors sex or is otherwise restricted by it. When the constructed status of gender is theorized as radically independent of sex, gender itself becomes a free-floating artifice […]. (Butler, *Gender Trouble* 9)

Queer theory thus promotes a concept of gender as a multi-faceted expression of identity that is in no way restricted by the apparent duality of sex or by physical biological conditions in general (cf. ibid. 152). Of course, if sex is not the only significant parameter, and if there are more than two genders, this complicates the question of assigning sexual identity enormously. If man and woman are not the only two options, a classification into hetero- or homosexual orientation is not sufficient.

Accordingly, ever since it emerged as a field of scholarship, queer theory has been busy diffusing the original binary concept of sexual identities and developing a more appropriate theoretical framework and vocabulary. To that effect, "the accepted paradigm of sexuality has undergone a series of adjustments in an effort to account for the existence of a wide range of people who do not conform to the heterosexual norm" (Marinucci 30). In the late 1960s, the gay liberation movement brought forward gay identity as an alternative or addition to homosexuality, as the latter term was associated with a clinical, apologetic standpoint (cf. ibid.). Shortly after, "many lesbian women wanted the movement to recognize and include lesbian identity more explicitly" (ibid. 31), so the phrase 'gay and lesbian identity' was increasingly used due to its nominal inclusiveness. However, this self-description still expressed a binary structure that other people with non-normative sexualities felt uncomfortable with. Hence, bisexual and transgender people, the two next largest subgroups, needed to be explicitly mentioned too, leading to the abbreviation GLBT (Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender) or the

6 Of course, biological sex in itself can be ambiguous as well. It is estimated that about one per cent of all people are born intersex, i.e. anatomically or genetically different from typical definitions of male and female (cf. ISNA). Therefore, the presentation of sex as a binary system in this paper is undoubtedly an oversimplification. Nonetheless, the issue cannot be elaborated on in more depth due to its relative irrelevance for the literary texts to be analysed in the third chapter and the restricted scale of this thesis.

symbolically more women-friendly LGBT (cf. Marinucci 31). All four of the referenced identities "challenge the widespread expectation that biological females and biological males should exhibit the specific collection of attitudes and behaviours assigned to each sex category, and that they should partner sexually only with biological members of the opposite sex and corresponding gender categories" (ibid.). However, following this pattern of naming, more and more subgroups demanded to be acknowledged as part of the opposition to heteronormativity, leading to further additions to the initialism, including Q for 'questioning', I for 'intersex', O for 'other', and numerous others. Aside of the fact that such long abbreviations proved to be rather impractical, this method of self-identification came to be criticised for eventually enhancing the chasm between normative heterosexuality and the 'deviance' of all the groups comprising LGBTQIO+ (cf. ibid. 32f.; Johnson and Henderson 5).

In recent years, queer identity has emerged as an alternative to this approach of endless subclassification. The term 'queer' "has a history as a pejorative slur against those who violate – or are perceived as violating – the heterosexual norm" (Marinucci 33), but has been reappropriated and is now used in an attempt to "avoid[…] binary and hierarchical reasoning in general, and in connection with gender, sex, and sexuality in particular" (ibid.). Queer is not only an umbrella term for any person who inhabits a non-normative gender or sexuality, but "encompasses even those who do not identify as homosexual (or even as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender), but find that we are nevertheless incapable of occupying the compact spaces to which our cultural prescriptions regarding gender, sex, and sexuality have assigned us" (ibid. xv). That is to say, those who might fit the long-valued categories of male/masculine or female/feminine and are in fact sexually interested exclusively in people of the opposite sex and gender may also identify as queer if they are critical of how these categories are constructed and thus do not want to be defined by them.

This disposition leads right into the third question that was raised at the beginning of this chapter – how are sexual politics formulated? To queer theorists, the establishment of queer identity is a political act in its own right, because it facilitates alternative ways to think about gender and sexuality and thereby deconstructs the socio-political categories that have defined society for ages (cf. Cohen 22). It includes a wide range of people and lays focus on their common mindset rather than dividing them according to fixed standards, and thus challenges binary structures by "trading duality for multiplicity" (Marinucci 36). The abolishment of the established binary thought patterns by promoting their own alternative approach might then be considered queer theory's first and foremost political ambition (cf. Fuss, "Inside/Out" 6; Oakes 379;

Cohen 23; Moore, “Structurelessness” 258).[7]

However, while this may be an idealistic aim, its practical impact on global or regional politics remains questionable. To wait for the world to adapt a queer viewpoint is often seen as a vain hope and however fiercely queer theorists promote their position, their stance is often considered too passive to really make a change (cf. Oakes 380).

> What […] are the ethical and material implications of queer theory if its project is to dismantle all notions of identity and agency? The deconstructive turn into queer theory highlights the ways in which ideology functions to oppress and to proscribe ways of knowing, but what is the utility of queer theory on the front lines, in the trenches, on the street, or anyplace where the racialized and sexualized body is beaten, starved, fired, cursed – indeed, when the body is the site of the trauma? (Johnson 129)

Patrick Johnson’s questions acknowledge the value of queer theory as a notional backdrop, while casting doubt over its applicability to real life struggles for the equality of sexual minorities. Preventing hetero-patriarchal discrimination and stigmatisation appears to require a more active, more aggressive approach that initiates visible change more quickly – and this kind of approach might function better under the label LGBT. With regard to sexual politics, queer theory’s focus on commonality and multiple inclusiveness seems to be a drawback. By obliterating all sexual borders and categories on purpose the position of currently disadvantaged sexual minority groups is weakened – for if there are no opposed sexual groups, there cannot be discrimination on the grounds of sexual difference either, and without discrimination there is no problem (cf. West 1108; cf. Moore, “Structurelessness” 260). This train of thought disclaims the problems that countless LGBT people have to face every day and is harmful to their struggle.

So while theoretical discourse can doubtlessly be a potent weapon, it might deal out blows in many directions. According to Michel Foucault, it can be “an instrument and an effect of power, but also a hindrance, a stumbling-block, a point of resistance and a starting point for an opposing strategy. Discourse transmits and produces power; it reinforces it, but also undermines and exposes it, renders it fragile and makes it possible to thwart it” (101). The discourse surrounding queer theory appears to be both, a starting point and a stumbling block in the fight for sexual equality.

---

7 Critics of queer theory find this objective highly controversial – after all, binaries are constitutive to the field. First, the label ‘queer’ establishes a new binary opposition: those who identify via the new system of ‘queerness’ versus those who continue to use conventional categories. Second, if all binary structures were to be abolished, queer theory itself would become redundant and eventually cease to exist (cf. Oakes 382ff.). These two statements are valid criticisms, as they are indeed inevitable corollaries of queer theory, paradoxical as that may seem. However, they may be overlooked as irrelevant for the current state of theory. If, indeed, queer theory would succeed in abolishing all binaries one day and consequently cease to exist, the binary queer/conventional would inevitably disappear with it and the paradox would be resolved.

Consequently, it ought to be seen as an addition to the discourse that precedes it rather than as an alternative route. “Queer politics has not just replaced older modes of lesbian and gay identity; it has come to exist alongside those older modes, opening up new possibilities and problems” (Warner xxviii). Although queer identity aims for a complete amalgamation of sexual groups in the long run, it needs to be able to incorporate individual stories of LGBT people and to support their fight for equal rights today (cf. Marinucci 34). When combined, these diverse strategies of sexual politics can hopefully create full equality one day.

It is precisely by reason of the complementary relation between political activism under the name of LGBT on the one hand and queer theory on the other hand that this paper will proceed to use the combined label LGBTQ, standing for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer. In its first four letters, this denominator explicitly includes and values the four most significant sexual minority groups and follows up on the efforts and achievements made in the past six decades. By appending the letter Q, it furthermore provides an additional label for anyone who does not feel at home within either of these four groups or who rejects categorisations such as LGBT altogether, thus supporting the idea of a gradual abolishment of traditional labels.

Even though queer theory is an important part of discourse and may contribute to the fight for gender equality, a central point of critique towards it is concerned with its isolated view and purpose. Human identity is a complex construct made of numerous interlinked attributes, none of which can effectively be discussed separately from the others. Sexuality is one of these attributes; others include gender, ethnicity, class, education, and many more. They need to be seen “as part of a dynamic map of power in which identities are constituted and/or erased, deployed and/or paralyzed” (Butler, *Bodies* 79; cf. Butler, *Gender Trouble* 3). Hence, a theoretical field revolving around a single characteristic without taking any other aspects of identification into account is prone to be accused of being one-dimensional and over-simplifying. “To prescribe an exclusive identification for a multiply constituted subject, as every subject is, is to enforce a reduction and a paralysis” (Butler, *Bodies* 78; cf. “Remarks” 385), and often queer theory seems to be guilty of exactly these, as it puts so much focus on sexuality and perhaps gender, but rarely ever discusses ethnicity and class. It does not allow for the oppression of those we might categorize as heterosexual, but who are subject to sexism, racism or classism, or for the privilege of those who operate as ‘queer’, but can live relatively carefree because they are white, male and rich (cf. Cohen 36; cf. Moore, “Structurelessness” 257ff.).

This omission appears comprehensible, considering that most of queer theory has

been developed in the environment of US-American academia, which means that it is mostly founded in a realm of experience that is predominantly white and middle- and upper class.[8] From its early stages on, "it has marked a predominantly white movement that has not fully addressed the way in which 'queer' plays – or fails to play – within non-white communities" (Butler, *Bodies* 174). For this reason, many black people and members of other ethnic minorities do not feel represented in queer theory. They see the field as "inevitably covered with the fingerprints of race and class privilege" (Marinucci xiii; cf. Cohen 34) and they reject being termed and defined out of a discourse that is purely white and western in origin – after all naming and shaming has been passed in this direction for too long. They fear that LGBTQ "discourses work similarly to colonial naming that seeks to make the 'other' understandable", and intend to inscribe white values and viewpoints onto their identities, experiences and desires (cf. Calixte 129). Subsequently, the label 'queer' "is not necessarily embraced by gays, lesbians, and transgendered people of color. […] the term often displaces and rarely addresses their concerns" (Johnson 128; cf. Cummings 326). Such concerns include cultural or regional specifics that shape the identities of LGBTQ people who also belong to other minority groups, as well as their specific experiences with increased marginalisation not only as a result of homophobia, but also of racism, poverty and sexism. Thus, even within the USA, queer theory's homeland, the absence of these issues in the field of queer theory has stirred up controversies and repudiation. In the Caribbean, a region that is geographically and culturally removed from the US, where legislation and politics work very differently, and where black people are in the majority, the repugnance against queer theory is even more pronounced. After all, "[c]ategories of sexual identity are unique to the cultural contexts through which they are defined" (Marinucci 10), and since the USA and the Caribbean share little cultural context, many aspects that are linked with western LGBTQ identities might be of little use on the ground (cf. Sharpe and Pinto 262).

A primary example for this inapplicability can be found in one of the central paradigms of queer theory – the closet metaphor. Perhaps since its emergence in the 1960s (cf. Mangeot 107, 109), but at the latest from the publication of Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's *Epistemology of the Closet* in 1990, the closet has been an axiomatic symbol for LGBTQ experiences and its "universalization […] appears so natural as to need no explanation" (Tinsley, *Thiefing Sugar* 26). In this image, LGBTQ people who keep their sexual identities and desires to themselves are in the closet, whereas those

8 The list of the most significant and influential thinkers of queer theory traditionally includes the US-American scholars Judith Butler, Michael Warner, Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, Gayle Rubin, Judith Halberstam (cf. Cohen 22; Cummings 325; Valens 8).

who openly show and speak of this facet of their identity to everyone else have come out of the closet. Interestingly, this figure of speech is not only applied to individual behaviour, but also to measure the extent of sexual freedom in groups or entire societies (cf. Mangeot 107f.). If a society is 'out', this observation on sexuality is transmitted onto its entirety and it is generally seen as modern and progressive, whereas 'closeted' societies are considered backward, archaic and primitive.

> The 'coming out' or closet paradigm has been such a compelling way of fixing homosexual identification exactly because it enables this powerful narrative of progress, not only in terms of the psychosexual development of an individual and the sociopolitical birth and growth of a legitimate sexual minority group, but also more fundamentally as a doorway marking the threshold between up-to-date fashions of sexuality and all the outmoded, anachronistic others. (Ross 163)

In its dominant claim for global validity, the Euro-American structure of the closet "normalizes one mode of same-sexual identity by marginalizing other experiences and representations of intragender affiliation" (ibid. 183), so that it is eventually invested with precedence and superiority over any other version of LGBTQ communal living. Instead of denying the value of the closet altogether – after all it can successfully be applied to blacks and other minorities in many cases – Caribbean critics question the self-evidentiality with which the closet is standardised and other life models are devalued (cf. ibid.).

Even in an American or European context, where being 'out' is predominantly seen as a good thing, there are downsides to it: while it means being openly visible, honest, and in a position to speak and be heard, it also inevitably results in an exclusion from the majority group, and therefore simultaneously causes invisibility to some degree (cf. Fuss, "Inside/Out" 4). In Jamaica, in contrast, the downsides of being 'out' prevail for most LGBTQ people and to get to a position to be heard is much harder, as Chapter 2.2 will show later on. As a consequence, 'outness' is not an available and affordable option for many LGBTQ people there, and other modes of communal existence have formed over time, one of which is the 'open secret' policy, or 'el secreto abierto' as Rosamund King calls it. This concept, which is used all over the Caribbean, entails a silent agreement stating that it is prohibited under any circumstances to speak about the existence of non-heteronormative behaviour and orientation. Nonetheless, LGBTQ people certainly do exist, and in the scheme of the open secret their sexual preferences and identities may be known to many of their friends, families and fellow citizens by implication and are collectively accepted as long as no one speaks out loud on the matter and a heteronormative façade is preserved.

> El secreto abierto allows an understanding of Caribbean same-sex reality that is very different from the 'closet' metaphor and 'coming out' narrative that are dominant in Euro-America. Instead of a mandate of constant revelation, in

> Caribglobal[9] communities there is a mandate of discretion, which is not (always) the same as hiding. In the tradition of el secreto abierto, the 'secret' is not fully hidden, and thus explicit revelation is not necessary and could, in fact, be redundant. […] Northern perspectives might see el secreto abierto, at best, as politically incorrect and, at worst, as self-loathing. But, in fact, this Caribglobal tradition is one of many social realities that […] 'suggests a mode of reading and 'seeing' same-sex eroticism that challenges modern epistemologies of visibility, revelation, and sexual subjectivity.' (King, *Island Bodies* 64, quoting Gayatri Gopinath)

This is not to say that all Caribbean LGBTQ people are content with the 'open secret' – to the contrary, as the following chapters will show many desire to have the option of being 'out' – but it serves to illustrate that there are local traditions and customs regarding LGBTQ life that are different from Euro-American paradigms. These have their own value and cannot be assessed through queer theory's standards.[10]

Of course, there is a broad scale of varying degrees of agreement with Euro-American queer theory and rejection of it. Some Jamaican authors and activists consider the bond between LGBTQ people worldwide as stronger than ethnic and cultural differences. They want to enter the ongoing queer debate and make use of the work already done. They see no harm in asking for help from organisations based in the global north, using their language, tools, resources and experience and they hope that the global queer community is colourful enough to provide a space for Caribbean LGBTQ people's input. Others, in contrast, reject the existing queer debate as a whole and insist that none of its terms and concepts are applicable to Caribbean contexts. They replace dominant paradigms such as the closet with more regionally knowable images and introduce alternative modes of living, such as the open secret policy or matiism[11]. Instead of using the terms LGBT, queer, or homosexual, they prefer culturally specific labels originated in Caribbean tradition, such as 'sodomite'[12], 'chi chi man',

9 By the term 'Caribglobal', King means "the areas, experiences, and individuals within *both* the Caribbean and the Caribbean diaspora" (*Island Bodies* 3), which she sees as "interdependent and mutually constitutive" (ibid. 6).

10 Aside of the different relationship between LGBTQ people and the broader society, the closet as an image is also not fully suitable because the literal object itself is less prominent in everyday life. According to Omise'eke Natasha Tinsley, the important question should be in how far "an obsession with inside versus outside, closet versus street, is or is not relevant to field and yard cultures like those of the Caribbean, where home life is generally lived outdoors and the division between interior and exterior space does not hold the same cultural anxiety" (*Thiefing Sugar* 26). Other images, mostly nature-related, might be much closer to people's lived experiences (cf. ibid. 22ff.; King, *Island Bodies* 81f.; Campbell 53).

11 'Matiism', or 'mati work' is a form of sexual and emotional intimacy between women with rules, rights and obligations that differ from those that are commonly associated with lesbianism in the global north (cf. Calixte 130; Tinsley, *Thiefing Sugar* 7f.) For more detailed information please see Gloria Wekker's essay.

12 'Sodomy' is a term that was taken from from the biblical story of Sodom and Gomorrha, and initially described any sexual act considered 'unnatural' – meaning not aimed at procreation – i.e. oral and anal sex, paedophilia, bestiality, etc. (cf. "sodomy"; Revol). In today's Jamaica, 'sodomite' is frequently used to describe both male and female homosexuals.

'batty bwoy' or 'batty man',[13] 'bulldagger' or 'buller',[14] 'man royal', 'mati' or 'zami',[15] amongst others (cf. Calixte 133; Cummings 326; Jackson; Crichlow 101, 128n6; Wekker 368ff.; Silvera 345; F. Smith, "Introduction" 9). These denominators all have a derogatory homophobic history and are still commonly used to insult and marginalise LGBTQ people, but nonetheless some authors and activists promote their reappropriation (cf. Cummings 326f.). Their use remains a sensitive subject though, as "Creole grammars are as likely to police and authenticate as they are to affirm and liberate. The local names for things do not inherently promise liberation" (F. Smith, "Introduction" 10).[16]

Naturally, in between the antithetic reactions of uncritical adaptation and complete renunciation of LGBTQ concepts, there are all shades of grey.

> While the growth and institutionalization of queer studies in the North American academy, and its continued globalization, undoubtedly constitutes part of the context for the increased visibility of queer discourses in the Caribbean, the exploration of queer concerns in Caribbean literary discourse does not simply represent an instance of the imposition of foreign concerns, methodologies and discourses. The work of the region's writers and critics, particularly over the last two decades, has been marked by attempts to offer a Caribbean semiotic of non-heterosexual desire as a way of marking out a counterdiscursive space for the acknowledgement of cultural difference within the remit of queer theory. (Cummings 330)

In other words, Caribbean authors of both fiction and criticism, have entered a dialogue with queer theory, in which they observe and appropriate some of its claims, and hope to widen its scope in order to include their own specific experiences. It is one of the central tasks of this thesis to highlight and negotiate their diverse angles and viewpoints that will surface in the novels and short stories to be analysed in Chapter 3.

---

13 These terms are all directed at gay men. 'Chi chi' is a Jamaican word for termites, therefore it carries two demeaning symbolisms when applied to gay men: first, it contains the image of the 'chi chi man' eating wood and thus insinuates the sexual practice of fellatio, and second, it compares gay men to an insect that is a pest, suggesting that they corrupt society in the same way termites corrupt wood (cf. Hope 9). 'Batty' is a slang term for 'buttocks', accordingly 'batty man' or 'batty bwoy' are pejorative terms for men who have or are suspected to have sex with men (cf. HRW, "Not Safe" iii).

14 'Buller' can be directed at gay men (cf. Crichlow 127n1) or at lesbian women, who are more often referred to as 'bulldaggers' though. In the former case the word part 'bull' is generally interpreted as an allusion to the animality of anal sex, in the latter it might refer to an increased masculinity in women (cf. Krantz 217ff.).

15 A 'man royal' is a very masculine woman which by implication is often considered the same as a lesbian (Cummings 326); 'mati' and 'zami' are both patois words for 'friend' that are used in the same sense (cf. Crichlow 111f., 128n8), and additionally have come to signify especially close friendships between women including sexual relations (cf. footnote 9).

16 In some cases seemingly neutral terms like MSM (Men who Sleep with Men) or WSW (Women who Sleep with Women) are also employed in the Caribbean, but since they don't leave any space for non-binary gender identities, they will not be used in this paper. Neither will this thesis be using any of the aforementioned local terms, first, because of their complicated ambivalence in being simultaneously used as slurs and self-identifiers; second, because they are often too specific for this paper's purposes, only really fitting for a very narrowly defined group in one or two Caribbean states; and third, because they are very particular to singular writers and their interpretations, and do not offer the same standardised, fixed meaning that the label LGBTQ carries.

2.1.2 Precarity: Living at a Heightened Risk

As this thesis's title indicates, the representations that will be discussed here will not simply be representations of LGBTQ lives, but of *precarious* LGBTQ lives, and in order to do the discussion justice it will be necessary to look into the concept behind the term 'precarious'. For Judith Butler, who has coined the field of precarity studies more than any other theorist, the fundamental principle of human interaction lies in the fact that everyone's life is inherently in danger, because "[t]o live is always to live a life that is at risk from the outset and that can be put at risk or expunged quite suddenly for reasons that are not always under one's control" ("Remarks" 382). These reasons can include accidents, diseases, or violence, self-inflicted or from the hands of others, and no one is completely immune against them. In short, "there is no living being that is not at risk of destruction" (Butler, *Frames* xvii), possibly destruction through other living beings. Accordingly, vulnerability is "a principle […] that governs all living beings" (ibid. xvi) and that makes all humans social and interdependent (cf. "Remarks" 383).

The conclusion people tend to draw from this common state of being is something that Butler finds problematic and therefore worthy of debate. She observes, somewhat surprisedly, that "what might be understood as a shared condition of precariousness[17] leads not to reciprocal recognition on this basis but to a specific exploitation of targeted populations" (ibid.). Taking advantage of the vulnerability of others is an illogical action to Butler, who reasons that recognising another's precariousness means apprehending one's own precariousness in the process (cf. *Frames* xvi), and this insight should lead towards common ground rather than to a battle field. This idealism is not a universally shared mindset though, and what the human condition of vulnerability and interdependency means "concretely, will vary across the globe. There are ways of distributing vulnerability, differential forms of allocation that make some populations more subject to arbitrary violence than others" (Butler, *Precarious Life* XII). Butler singles out violence as a somewhat special parameter of precariousness, since

> [v]iolence is surely a touch of the worst order, a way a primary human vulnerability to other humans is exposed in its most terrifying way, a way in which we are given over, without control, to the will of another, a way in which life itself can be expunged by the willful action of another. […] In a way, we all live with this particular vulnerability, a vulnerability to the other that is part of bodily life, a vulnerability to a sudden address from elsewhere that we cannot preempt. This vulnerability, however, becomes highly exacerbated under certain social and political conditions, especially those in which

17 In Butler's texts, the terms 'vulnerability' and 'precariousness' seem to be used synonymously to a certain degree to describe the general risk of being injured or killed which every human being is exposed to. 'Precarity', in contrast, is defined as a state of disproportionately high precariousness (cf. *Frames* 25, 28), as explained in more detail in the following paragraph. Judith Butler herself does not appear to follow this differentiation too closely, as Barbara Korte and Frédéric Regard note (8f.), and some of her essays have the terminology mixed-up. This paper will adhere to the differentiation Butler originally intended though.

> violence is a way of life and the means to secure self-defense are limited. (*Precarious Life* 28f.)

So, even though all living beings share an equal fundamental risk from conception onwards, external circumstances can influence and increase the vulnerability to violence for individual people or for certain groups within a population. Furthermore, other factors that contribute to everyone's fundamental vulnerability, such as disease and deprivation, can be largely enhanced depending on external circumstances, too, as this and the following chapters will show. Such an exacerbated vulnerability due to social and political conditions is the prerequisite for what Butler eventually terms 'precarity'.

Her definition reads as follows:

> 'precarity' designates that politically induced condition in which certain populations suffer from failing social and economic networks of support and become differentially exposed to injury, violence, and death. Such populations are at heightened risk of disease, poverty, starvation, displacement, and of exposure to violence without protection. Precarity also characterizes that politically induced condition of maximized vulnerability and exposure for populations exposed to arbitrary state violence and to other forms of aggression that are not enacted by states and against which states do not offer adequate protection. (Butler, "Performativity" ii; cf. *Frames* 25f.)

There is, accordingly, a significant difference between living in precariousness or vulnerability on the one hand – which every human being inevitably does – and living in precarity one the other hand – a fate that only certain groups of people have to endure. The phrase 'precarious lives', as used in the title of this thesis, refers to the latter condition. It will be pointed out in the chapter on Jamaican history, politics and society in how far all of the increased risks listed by Butler above – disease, poverty, starvation, displacement, violence, etc. – apply to the group of LGBTQ people in Jamaica, who are firmly anchored in a state of precarity. The lives of this specific group, as well as any other lives that are 'precarious' above the ordinary in this sense, are "insecure, unpredictable, endangered, on the edge and out of balance, threatened in their corporeal and mental integrity, and therefore often resulting in trauma" (Korte and Regard 7). Living under these strains is of course an incisive experience which is essential to literary works by and about Jamaican LGBTQ people, as the analysis will illustrate later on.

While giving an extensive list of the effects precarity may have, Butler does not elaborate too much on its causes. By stating that precarity is a result of a "politically induced condition" producing "failing social and economic networks", she gives an overall umbrella explanation that needs to be dissected into smaller components as soon as a specific situation or group is the subject of discussion. Barbara Korte and Frédéric Regard attempt to give a more precise list of potential causes for precarity in Butler's sense, which are manifold and can occur alone or in varying combinations in

different geographic areas and points in time. They can include, but are surely not restricted to,

> re-organisations of the labour market, the globalisation of neoliberal capitalism and the recent wave of inequality and poverty it has generated worldwide. […] the devastations caused by war and terror, the (ab-)use of science and technology, exploitation of the environment, political persecution, voluntary and enforced migration, sexual exploitation, or racial and gender discrimination. […] serious illness or personal loss and deprivation. (Korte and Regard 7f.)

The fact that some items – disease and poverty for example – appear on both Butler's list of risks *resulting from* precarity and Korte's and Regard's list of potential causes *leading to* precarity illustrates that the relations between causes and effects are not always well-defined and separable, but, to the contrary, often mutually causative. Notwithstanding these intersections, discrimination due to sexual orientation must definitely be added to the latter register because, like any of the other listed factors, it may lead to all of the precarious risks on Judith Butler's list, especially if it coincides with other factors, such as discrimination based on ethnic origin or gender identity.

In her well-known essay "Thinking Sex", Gayle Rubin outlines a scheme that essentially measures the degrees of precarity aligned with various sexual orientations in the USA, the so-called 'pyramid of sexual value'. According to this,

> [m]arital, reproductive heterosexuals are alone at the top of the erotic pyramid. Clamoring below are unmarried monogamous heterosexuals in couples, followed by most other heterosexuals. […] Stable, long term lesbian and gay male couples are verging on respectability, but bar dykes and promiscuous gay men are hovering just above the groups at the very bottom of the pyramid. The most despised sexual castes currently include transsexuals, transvestites, fetishists, sadomasochists, sex workers […]. (11f.)

Considering that this model is from the year 1984, it is still shockingly fitting in most European and North-American countries today, even though, like many concepts of queer theory it, too, fails to take ethnicity or class into account. As they are othered and marginalised based on more than one of their identity traits, black and/or poor people of any sexual orientation would presumably be settled one or two steps below their respective white and affluent counterparts. The practical effect of Rubin's structure presents itself in the fact that

> [i]ndividuals whose behaviour stands high in this hierarchy are rewarded with certified mental health, respectability, legality, social and physical mobility, institutional support, and material benefits. As sexual behaviours or occupations fall lower on the scale, the individuals who practice them are subjected to a presumption of mental illness, disreputability, criminality, restricted social and physical mobility, loss of institutional support, and economic sanctions (ibid. 12; cf. Butler, "Imitation" 24)

– in short, their lives become increasingly precarious. This idea of sexual social 'ranks' and a corresponding gradual depreciation and punishment might be transferred to a Jamaican context as well, even though, as the latter chapter on Jamaican politics will show, the groups receiving the 'rewards' are much more exclusive. So far, no LGBTQ

orientation would be commonly regarded as “verging on respectability”, and therefore the average level of precarity is correspondingly higher for sexual minorities there.

It is important to note that the condition of living in precarity does not occur instantaneously. A life does not become precarious in the precise moment when a person feels a same-sex desire for the first time, or in the moment of admitting to oneself that one’s biological sex does not match one’s gender identity, or even in the moment of publicly ‘coming out’ as LGBTQ. Rather, the lives of sexual minorities are constantly subject to the “ongoing process” of what Judith Butler terms ‘precaritization’ (cf. Puar 169). This notion emphasises how relevant it is to

> not reduce the power of precarious to single acts or single events. Precaritization allows us to think about the slow death that happens to targeted or neglected populations over time and space. And it is surely a form of power without a subject, which is to say that there is no one center that propels its direction and destruction. (ibid.)

Precarity, according to this, not only arises and intensifies over a series of moments and incidents, but is also exerted on its victims by multiple forces of power. The passages by Rubin, Butler, and Korte and Regard quoted above have all already hinted at the two principal causes for increased vulnerabilities – state and institutional regulations on the one hand and resentment from the general public on the other hand.

Both of these sources of precaritization derive from and reinforce prejudices simultaneously, hence, it may prove useful for their juxtaposition to differentiate between the terms of ‘structural prejudice’ and ‘personal prejudice’, following Keon West. He explains that “[s]tructural prejudice refers to more systemic limitations that prevent LGBT individuals from participating fully in society” (1108), i.e. any legislation or lack thereof that denies precaritized people, for instance LGBTQ people, equal rights compared with the dominant group and/or factually bars them from social positions, such as spouse, student, employee or tenant. “Personal prejudice, on the other hand, refers to a more individual level of antipathy toward LGBT individuals” (West 1108), by which he means more affective responses towards precarious subjects, such as avoidance, ostracism, fear, disgust, or disapproval, that may hurt them and their standing in society as well, but are not codified in any manner. Both patterns of prejudice present systematic means of oppression, one firmly entrenched in legislation and the other constantly reinstated in social attitudes and thought structures, and both contribute equally to the precaritization of, in this case, LGBTQ lives (cf. André-Simonet 144; Jackson).

In order to connect these social and political circumstances, causes and effects of precarity with the field of literary fiction, as this thesis aims to do, it needs to be understood that all forms of prejudice, structural or personal, share one indispensable

precondition without which they could not be put into practice. The first action in formulating and establishing any prejudice is to identify a norm and simultaneously an 'other', that is, "to distinguish, label, categorize, name, identify, place and exclude those who do not fit a societal norm" (Mountz 328). As Alison Mountz points out here, denying the 'other' group access to an element that is constitutive to the character of one's own group eventually entails an exclusion. As soon as an 'other' is distinguished, the overall category of humans is divided into more than one subcategory and thus different classes of humans are established. By assuming that one group is the norm and the 'other' group deviates from it, these classes of humans are appointed implicit values, ranging from the normative, complete, model humans, to 'others' who do not comply with all the requirements of that group and are thus less human. Depending on the degree of their deviation, some 'others' might not be considered human at all any more. This notion of strategic othering and dehumanising was originally described by Edward Said, Gayatri Spivak and others in a context of postcolonial discourse where colonising – mostly white – peoples utilised the strategy to justify their conquest, oppression and exploitation of colonised – mostly black – peoples (cf. Ashcroft et al. 154f., 156). Nevertheless, it can easily be applied with regard to the relation between heteronormativity and queerness as well, as has been shown in the discussion of sexual border construction in the previous subchapter. In fact, as othering and dehumanisation present the first step in any subclassification of humanity, they inevitably also form the foundation of sexual borders and binaries.

In conclusion, othering and dehumanisation are at the root of the vicious circle in which structural and personal prejudice are generated and serve to take advantage of the vulnerability of some, thus rendering their lives precarious (cf. Butler, *Precarious Life* 33f.). A side effect coming out of this circle is, according to Judith Butler's observations, the phenomenon of 'ungrievability'. She states that there is a difference even in the deaths of people who have been othered, in that "certain forms of grief become nationally recognized and amplified, whereas other losses become unthinkable and ungrievable. […] Some lives are grievable, and others are not; the differential allocation of grievability […] operates to produce and maintain certain exclusionary conceptions of who is normatively human" (ibid. XIVf., cf. 32). The fact that mourning for distinct lives is not commonly tolerated is a product of dehumanisation, and a consequence of the precarity of the deceased. Simultaneously, it reinstates their status as non- or less-human and precarious, so, in short, ungrievability continues the precaritization post-mortem.

This advance into precarity theory evokes a rather pessimistic sentiment, for if not even death can break the circle of precaritization – what can? Where and how should

one even begin to counter prejudices? One popular approach can be found in an advance of representations of precarious lives. It is often assumed that literature, especially works of fiction, can break through the interplay between dehumanisation, precarity and ungrievability. The potential of this modus operandi is to be discussed in the next subchapter.

2.1.3 Representation of Precarity: A Challenge

The dependency of precarity on representation is disclosed by Judith Butler herself when she proclaims that "[t]he critique of violence must begin with the question of the representability of life itself" and poses the question "what allows a life to become visible in its precariousness and its need for shelter, and what is it that keeps us from seeing or understanding certain lives in this way?" (*Frames* 51). Giving the answer to her own question, she hypothesises that it is an omission of the media that causes precarity to remain unnoticed in many instances. The nature of the mainstream media's content influences largely of which issues people become aware, what weight is given to those issues and what opinions are formed referring to them. The media "differentiat[es] the cries we can hear from those we cannot, the sight we can see from those we cannot" and "since a life can be accorded a value only on the condition that it is perceivable as a life […] it is only by challenging the dominant media that certain kinds of lives may become visible or knowable in their precariousness" (Butler, *Frames* 51; cf. *Precarious Life* XVIII). With specific regard to the precarious lives of LGBTQ people in the Caribbean, they have long been hardly perceivable because the media spreads "a dominant fiction in the region that Caribbean families should be heterosexual and patriarchal" (King, *Island Bodies* 8). In order to change this status of invisibility and unknowability, the existing media coverage, both national and global, of Jamaican LGBTQ matters must be challenged and expanded on many levels. In the following paragraphs it will be shown that an augmentation and diversification of LGBTQ representations may help reduce both structural and personal prejudice as defined by Keon West above, and are absolutely essential in forming an imperative inner-group identity and discourse.

West explains that structural prejudice, i.e. discriminating laws and regulations, "can be effectively reduced with collective action strategies" (1108). Hence, political activism in its multiple forms – political campaigning, petitions, demonstrations, strikes, etc. – can be considered the most powerful set of tools to override such unequal legal structures. In order to use this toolbox effectively, however, media representation is indispensable, on the one hand, because the circulation of information on the issue in question is vital for political activism to emerge in the first place, and on the other hand,

because all of the political actions listed above require public attention and pressure in order to be taken seriously by state institutions. “In contrast, personal prejudice is more effectively handled with strategies that promote cross-group friendship and harmony, such as intergroup contact and its derivatives” (West 1108; cf. West et al.). According to this, negative emotional reactions towards LGBTQ people can be reduced, if not eliminated completely, by the means of personal interaction with members of said group (cf. West and Hewstone 60). In Jamaica, however, explicit intergroup contact hardly ever arises naturally, as intolerance levels are extraordinarily high and LGBTQ people have to fear severe physical and verbal retributions as soon as they reveal themselves as members of this group. In such situations, imagined contact can present a valid alternative as it, too, “can reduce prejudice in a variety of ways, against numerous groups, and in varied social contexts”, though to a slightly lesser effect than personal contact, and “has thus been suggested as an option for prejudice reduction where direct contact strategies may not be easy or practical” (West et al.). In social studies, “[i]magined contact is defined as ‘the mental simulation of a social interaction with a member or members of an outgroup category’” in a documented experiment (ibid., quoting Crisp and Turner); in a broader definition, however, imagined contact can be understood as including the consumption of audio, video and literary representations of that outgroup category (cf. ibid.), in this case LGBTQ people. Such representations provide their audiences with “mental imagery [which] elicits emotional, motivational, and neurological responses similar to real experiences” (ibid.). As a consequence, they “may be a highly effective first step on the route toward tolerance and reduced prejudice, paving the way for bolder strategies” (ibid.).

In addition to their enormous potential for prejudice reduction in a wider societal context, one of the most important effects of representations is their constitutive contribution to the inner-group identity. The ‘performance of self’ that is conveyed in a representation of an LGBTQ person “is not only a performance or construction of identity for or toward an ‘out there,’ […]. It is also a performance of self in a moment of self-reflexivity that has the potential to transform one’s own view of self in relation to the world” (Johnson 137f.). In this sense, it can help strengthen the self-image of the person producing or actively participating in the representation. Moreover,

> ‘[…] [p]erformative reflexivity is a condition in which a sociocultural group, or its most perceptive members acting representatively, turn, bend, or reflect back upon themselves, upon the relations, actions, symbols, meanings, codes, roles, statuses, social structures, ethical and legal rules, and other sociocultural components which make up their public selves.’ (ibid. 138, quoting Turner)

And it is not just the performers who reflect upon their status and identity, but the performance will inevitably have an effect on its viewers, listeners or readers as well.

Thus, even if the performance never attracts the heteronormative majority's attention, the self-representation of minority groups often changes the image they have of themselves and thus has a potential politicizing impact. At its most basic level, representations can trigger the realisation that there *is* a group in the first place – after all in some regions of Jamaican society sexual diversity is so hushed up that LGBTQ adolescents may come under the impression of being the only trans or same-sex desiring person ever (cf. Dennis-Benn in Miller et al.; Glave in Campbell 41f.). In further steps, hearing, viewing or reading about other LGBTQ people may initiate contact among members of sexual minority groups, help to form strong community ties and evoke higher self-acceptance and appreciation, individually and as a group. Eventually, a strong – though not necessarily uniform – inner-group identification and community is key to a lively discourse both within the group and with others. Therefore it is this last aspect of representation, the moulding of the minority group, that renders the previous two, communal activism and inter-group exchange, possible in the first place. To reconnect to Butler and her idea of the first and foremost purpose of representations: they make LGBTQ lives visible and knowable both among those who live them and among those who precaritize them.

Literary representations in particular "[are] held to have significant impact on [their] audiences' ideas and potential responses concerning poverty and precarity […] and may be an influence in shaping people's opinions and perhaps even affect their behaviour" (Korte 7). They are especially versatile in implementing self-expression and most effective in causing empathy in readers. Furthermore,

> Literary studies is a useful tool for exploring Caribbean sexuality both because of its narrative nature and because of its worldwide circulation. The project of literary analysis and criticism cannot, by definition, factually analyze or explain the lived realities of sexuality in the Caribbean. Nevertheless, the ideas raised both in the literature and in literary criticism can be useful in the consideration of lived realities and in deconstructing social and cultural mores and hierarchies. (King, *Island Bodies* 13)

So, while fictional literature should not be mistaken for reality, it can help to draw attention to real-life matters, promote respect and understanding and spark debates that may lead to real-life changes.

It is precisely because of literature's great potential to influence the minds of the inner as well as the outer group that its portrayal of precarious lives is particularly challenging. "A leading question […] [is] how precarious and injured lives can be represented – and thus become recognisable – even when their circumstances seem unspeakable in both the literal and metaphorical sense" (Korte and Regard 7). How should such representations be played out? What is necessary for them to achieve the desired effect? Foucault stated that, in any discussion about sexuality,

> [t]he central issue […] is not to determine whether one says yes or no to sex, whether one formulates prohibitions or permissions, whether one asserts its importance or denies its effects, or whether one refines the words one uses to designate it, but to account for the fact that it is spoken about, to discover who does the speaking, the positions and viewpoints from which they speak, the institutions which prompt people to speak about it and which store and distribute the things that are said. What is at issue, briefly, is the over-all 'discursive fact,' the way in which sex is 'put into discourse.' (11)

In a nutshell, the form of the discussion is often more important than its content, and although he is referring to all sexuality at this point, the same can be considered particularly true for precarious minority sexualities. Judith Butler makes a similar point when she points out that

> a certain reality is being built through our very act of passive reception, since what we are being recruited into is a certain framing of reality, both its constriction and its interpretation. […] The frame does not simply exhibit reality, but actively participates in a strategy of containment, selectively producing and enforcing what will count as reality. […] This means that the frame is always throwing something away, always keeping something out, always de-realizing and de-legitimating alternative versions of reality […]. (*Frames* xii f.)

Whether and to what effect a life is perceived as precarious or not depends largely on the angle from which it is approached, from what is portrayed and what is not. Hence, the frame through which images are shown, or in literature's case the framework of the narration, is equally if not more important than the depiction inside it.

What precisely is it then that contributes to the 'discursive fact' or 'frame' of a literary text on the issue of precarity? Barbara Korte and Frédéric Regard observe that representations mediate between the ones who live precariously and the one who precaritize them. The creators of such representations have the power to redefine roles and redistribute positions, thus they inhabit a space with a huge potential for agency and it is essential to investigate the roots and aims of this agency in all their specifics (cf. Korte and Regard 10). The passage by Foucault cited above has already delivered suitable questions to initiate this investigation: who speaks? From which mindsets and institutions do the speakers operate and via which ways can they be heard? Korte elaborates on these starting questions with specific regard to the field of poverty and precarity studies. She stresses that

> The voice in which a text speaks about poverty is [a] crucial element: Are the poor merely spoken about, or are they given a voice of their own? Simulated and authentic self-presentation at first sight suggests empowerment, but this is no automatism, because first-person narration can also be used to express a victimized position. The decision in favour of a specific voice, and also the kind of language in which this voice speaks,[…] is in any case entangled with the ethics of narration because it implies the agency of representation. (7f.)

In literature, the voice and persona of the narrator determine directly the effect the representation has on the reader. They determine whether people living in precarity – whether due to poverty or due to their sexual orientation or gender identity – are

perceived as victims or as culprits, as heroes, as equal fellow humans or as weaker, inferior creatures. Accordingly, the narrative situation in texts on precarity is a crucial factor of their agency that needs to be considered.

"However, the agency of representation does not only concern the intratextual dimension of voice, but also the extratextual 'circuit' of production, dissemination and reception […] to which each representation is submitted" (Korte 8). Many people living in precarity do not have access to effective means of self-representation – due to the high level of stigmatization LGBTQ people in Jamaica for instance might have difficulties finding news papers or publishing houses willing to accept their stories, not to mention the backlash they might have to face were their names publicly connected to those stories. For this reason, "[i]n order to be represented, precarious and injured lives often depend on the 'favour' of people who do not live precariously themselves" (Korte and Regard 10), which, of course, also shapes the agency of representations. Therefore, other interesting questions to be addressed are the ones of authorship and readership. As has been reported in the introduction, the four authors to be discussed here are all self-identifying as LGBTQ and as Jamaican. Since they have all emigrated from Jamaica and achieved international fame, their lives are in many ways not as precarious as the ones of other Jamaican LGBTQ people, yet, they share enough of their experiences to be counted to the core group. To assess their works' readership is of course much more complicated, as they are published and distributed in Jamaica as well as worldwide, and consumed by both LGBTQ and heteronormative audiences. As already discussed in this subchapter, the texts may have different benefits and effects on readers from different groups, therefore this question will constantly be borne in mind when analysing the literary texts in Chapter 3.

Nonetheless, however powerful literature's agency over a society's attitudes, values and agendas may be, it cannot achieve sexual equality on its own. Representations might function as a pushing factor for change, but ultimately, legal and political actions need to follow in order to ensure the end of LGBTQ people's precarity. Therefore, the next subchapter will give a brief overview of the current situation of LGBTQ people in Jamaica in relation to the law and state institutions.

2.2 Contexts: LGBTQ Life in Jamaica's Past and Present

In order to understand LGBTQ life in Jamaica, it seems best to start by looking into the legislation that frames it. Up to this day, there are three laws criminalizing homosexuality, all of which are articles within the *Offences Against the Person Act*.[18]

18 The full text of the relevant articles reads as follows:
Article 76: Whosoever shall be convicted of the abominable crime of buggery committed either with mankind or with any animal, shall be liable to be imprisoned and kept to hard

Articles 76 and 77 of said Act prohibit the "abominable crime of buggery committed either with mankind or with any animal", which is punishable by a maximum of ten years in prison, as well as the mere attempt to commit 'buggery', which can lead to a maximum of seven years in prison. Section 79 additionally bans "acts of gross indecency with another male person" in public or private at a custodial sentence not exceeding two years. These laws were first constituted in 1864 when Jamaica was under British colonial rule (cf. HRW, "Not Safe" 10), hence they use mostly outdated language that needs to be interpreted for today's use. Whereas the term 'buggery', used in the first two sections, by definition signifies anal sexual intercourse, 'gross indecency', in the third section, has not been specified any further, so that any form of physical intimacy between men might easily be sorted into this category (cf. ibid. 10; "Hated" 22). An extension to these three laws is the *Sexual Offences Act* which was established in 2009 and has been operating since 1 January 2011. It requires any man who has been convicted of the offences in Articles 76, 77 or 79 to register as a sexual offender (cf. *Sexual Offences Act* 29; ILGA 114).[19] Even though female homosexuality is not explicitly forbidden by law, and transgender or transsexual identities are not mentioned either, a differentiation does not usually take place in the public sphere (cf. Williams 386; HRW, "Not Safe" 10f.).

There are further legal disadvantages for LGBTQ people as well, which have the combined result that there is no constitutional or legal protection for them whatsoever. Discrimination "on the ground of being male or female" is explicitly outlawed in Jamaica's constitution; however, discrimination based on sexual orientation is not (*Charter* 4). This clear disparity between the two categories of gender identity and sexual identity may be legally relevant, but it is practically often non-existent, as any gender expression that is not does not conform to the binary classification of male and female tends to be viewed as tantamount with homosexual orientation (cf. HRW, "Not Safe" 10f.; Kempadoo, "Sexuality" 63). Hence, no one who violates LGBTQ people or

---

labour for a term not exceeding ten years.
Article 77: Whosoever shall attempt to commit the said abominable crime, or shall be guilty of any assault with intent to commit the same, or of any indecent assault upon any male person, shall be guilty of a misdemeanour, and being convicted thereof shall be liable to be imprisoned for a term not exceeding seven years, with or without hard labour.
Article 79: Any male person who, in public or private, commits, or is a party to the commission of, or procures or attempts to procure the commission by any male person of, any act of gross indecency with another male person, shall be guilty of a misdemeanor, and being convicted thereof shall be liable at the discretion of the court to be imprisoned for a term not exceeding two years, with or without hard labour.
(*Offences Against the Person Act* 26)

19 This registration cannot be terminated for a minimum of ten years (*Sexual Offences Act* 28) and entails significant limitations of the private life, such as having to report in person at the Sex Offender Registry Registration Centre once a year as well as after any change of residence, even if just going on vacation for longer than two weeks (ibid. 29f.).

discriminates against them due to their sexuality or gender identity really has to fear consequences. The existence of male rape, for instance, is fully repudiated in legislation because rape is clearly defined as the non-consensual "penetration of a vagina with a penis" (*Sexual Offences Act* 6). Accordingly, there is no legal space for filing a complaint or report in such a case, to the contrary: a man who was raped would most often not be considered a victim at all, but would have to register as a sexual offender for having committed 'buggery' (cf. HRW, "Not Safe" 11). On a less physically violent level, the lack of anti-discrimination laws means that people can easily get dismissed from their working places[20] or evicted from their accommodation[21] if their sexuality or gender is perceived as offensive. These discriminatory threats leave a large number of LGBTQ people struggling with homelessness and poverty, often from a young age on.

While discussing the unequal treatment of LGBTQ-people compared with hetero-normative people, it is important to keep in mind that this is one specific aspect within a wider scheme. Poverty and violence are problems throughout all groups of Jamaican society. National crime rates are extremely high – in 2017, there were 1,616 murders recorded, which places Jamaica among the five highest per capita national homicide rates worldwide; furthermore 469 shootings, 411 aggravated assaults, 442 rapes, 242 robberies, and 167 break-ins (cf. OSAC) – therefore the enhanced willingness to attack members of sexual minorities cannot be too surprising. According to Kei Miller,

> a large part of the issue is wrapped up in the way many Jamaicans resort to aggression to solve any number of our problems, and that violence becomes too easy a way for us to register our disapproval of any number of things[.] Might it not occur to me […] that Jamaica is probably no more homophobic than – say – small town America? Yet the expression of our homophobia is extreme. (*Writing Down* 130f.)

Any measurement of homophobia must take more factors into account than violence alone, and while there are surveys that include a greater variety of homophobia's many facets (cf. J-FLAG, "National Survey"; West and Hewstone), they are neither standardised nor exhaustive. Thus, to state that Jamaica is "the most homophobic place on earth" as TIME-magazine author Tim Padgett famously did in 2006 and many others have done since, seems like an oversimplification and international comparisons should only be drawn with caution.

Nonetheless, the buggery laws in combination with a lack of protective laws unquestionably impact the public mind and make life for LGBTQ people in Jamaica more precarious in Butler's sense of the word. The most recent Human Rights Watch Report on the issue dates from 2014 and it presents in which ways the risks are higher

20 There is a staff order for the Public Service which prohibits discrimination based on sexual orientation, but for the private sector no such rules exist (HRW, "Not Safe" 42f.).

21 Mostly due to threats from landlords, neighbours or family members (HRW, "Not Safe" 43ff.).

for LGBTQ people. Even though prosecutions are rarely pursued, the fact that homosexuality is illegal in itself facilitates discrimination and harassment (cf. HRW, "Not Safe" 10; cf. King, *Island Bodies* 67). This can range from a quietly hissed comment from some passer-by on the street – the likes of which are time and again directed towards any member of a minority group worldwide – to the most excessive violence.

One of the most extreme examples of this kind of violence can be found in the story of Dwayne Jones, that, at first, attracted a lot of media attention worldwide:

> On July 21, 2013, 16-year-old Dwayne Jones attended a dance party in Montego Bay, Jamaica, dressed in women's clothing. When partygoers at the bar […] realized she was biologically male, they subjected her to almost every form of physical violence imaginable—beating, stabbing, and shooting her before running her over with a car. No one helped her during the assault. When police arrived, they found her body dumped in bushes along the main road. (HRW, "Not Safe" 1)

Although this certainly is one particularly drastic occurrence, it is not a singular one. Reports published by J-FLAG, the Jamaican Forum for Lesbians, All-Sexuals and Gays, contain long lists of physical and verbal assaults that have been conducted based on actual or perceived gender identity or sexual orientation (cf. J-FLAG, "Universal Periodic Review" 3f.; J-FLAG et al. "Shadow Report 2016" 3ff.; "Shadow Report 2015" 4ff.). In 2015, J-FLAG commissioned an extensive survey questioning more than 300 LGBTQ Jamaicans which shows that 71 per cent of the gay men and 59 per cent of the lesbian women that were interviewed had experienced harassment just in the twelve months preceding the study (cf. McFee and Galbraith 48). A 2014 Human Rights Watch survey, found that 44 of its 71 LGBTQ interviewees had been physically attacked at least once, some even several times.

> These reported acts of violence included rape; being chopped with a machete; being choked; being stabbed with a knife; being shot with a gun; being hit with boards, pipes, sticks, chairs, or brooms; being attacked by groups ranging from 5 to 40 individuals; and being slapped in the face with hands or with guns. (HRW, "Not Safe" 21)

Furthermore, one in six people interviewed in that study "knew of a friend, partner, lover, or associate who had been murdered because of their real or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity" (ibid. 23). These and many more statistics and case reports published in the last years (cf. HRW, "Hated"; IACHR 98ff.) prove that discrimination and harassment of LGBTQ people is a widespread societal problem in Jamaica. And it is not just conducted by individuals, but also common practice in state institutions.

The police, for instance, rarely offer the support and help that LGBTQ people might need in situations such as those described above, but more often take the role of perpetrators[22] themselves (cf. HRW, "Not Safe" 33ff.), or are at best ignorant of

22 The cases of police abuse reported in the aforementioned 2014 Human Rights Watch report "Not Safe at Home" include verbal as well as physical assaults, rape, and extortion.

LGBTQ-related issues. It seems that they frequently refuse to take up reports from victims of homo- or transphobic assaults, or that, if they do, the process is often accompanied by derogatory comments and there are hardly ever any subsequent steps of investigation taken (cf. HRW, "Not Safe" 27). The Jamaican Police Force has acknowledged this problem and launched a Policy on Diversity in 2011 which, together with corresponding staff training sessions, ought to give officers instructions on how to interact with LGBTQ people professionally and supportively (cf. ibid. 2f.; J-FLAG et al., "Shadow Report 2016" 7); however, this newly encouraged sensibility has not yet been implemented nationwide (cf. HRW, "Not Safe" 49). As a consequence, the majority of anti-LGBTQ crimes are not reported to the police at all (cf. McFee and Galbraith 62).

Institutional discrimination also looms large in the health care sector, both public and private. A number of the previously listed studies reported that LGBTQ people seeking medical advice were regularly denied treatment completely, even in severe cases, or received insufficient treatment (cf. HRW, "Not Safe" 39f.). Furthermore, "[d]espite confidentiality rules common to any modern health service provider, there is the well-grounded fear that hospital staff – particularly, paraprofessionals and auxiliary staff [–] are likely to report to the community the HIV status [or sexual orientation] of any individual who presents at a hospital" (White and Carr 355). As the quote suggests, HIV and AIDS patients are especially stigmatised, and since these conditions are falsely perceived as exclusively homosexual diseases in the broader public's view (cf. ibid. 348),[23] this particular stigma is commonly extended to all LGBTQ identified patients. These prejudices present an enormous risk for Jamaica's society as a whole, since "[s]tigma and discrimination are significant drivers of the epidemic, hampering the implementation of services for MSM, and the willingness of MSM to access heath [sic] care services" (HRW, "Not Safe" 19). The LGBTQ community is thus driven underground for fear of hostility, humiliation and even arrest, which makes them particularly vulnerable regarding sexually transmitted diseases.[24]

Albeit no state institutions, the media and religious congregations[25] are two further bodies that need to be considered when speaking of LGBTQ discrimination, since both

23 Even though, factually, "HIV is predominantly transmitted through unprotected heterosexual sex" (HRW, "Hated" 9f.).

24 Consequently, it is alarming but not surprising that "HIV prevalence among MSM remains considerably higher than [sic] general population rates – 32 percent compared to just under 2 percent in the general population" (HRW, "Not Safe" 18; cf. MoH 1, 11).

25 Although some sources tend to speak of 'the Church' as a unitary force in Jamaica (cf. West and Cowell 297), this appears too simplistic. The great majority of Jamaicans consider themselves Christians, but even within the Christian faith there are "no less than 60 major denominations with numbers between 150,000 and 200 members" each (Thompson 42). In addition there are various other, non-Christian groups, such as Hindus, Muslims, Rastafarians, etc.

contribute largely to shaping the image of and the attitudes towards the LGBTQ community in Jamaica. “Christianity has long had a tremendous influence on societal views and the conceptualisation of ‘appropriate’, ‘respectable’ and ‘acceptable’ gender and sexual identities and behaviours” (Lazarus 121), operating not just from the churches’ pulpits and community centres, but also through strong lobbies that represent their interests in politics nationwide[26] and are even actively involved in processes of legislation[27]. “In other words, it appears that Christian teachings and doctrines may not only become laws for churchgoers, but can become a normative scheme across the society” (Lazarus 121). Thus, Jamaican churches, especially the more conservative and fundamental branches of Christianity, can be seen as “both productive of and complicit in homophobia” (Atluri 300). Nonetheless, it is important not to generalise in this regard. Even though “conservative segments appear more visible[,] [this is] not because they are necessarily representative of the majority, but because their voices are the loudest and most frequently publicised” (Lazarus 120).

This disparity in perceptibility mirrors the general ambiguity of the media in regard to non-normative sexualities and genders. On the one hand, “[t]he Jamaican press publishes the names of men charged with ‘consensual’ buggery and gross indecency, shaming them and putting them at risk of physical injury” (HRW, “Hated” 23; cf. IACHR 99) and major newspapers such as the *Jamaica Observer* and the *Jamaica Gleaner* regularly publish articles and cartoons that “reflect and fuel widespread homophobia” (cf. HRW, “Not Safe” 12ff.). On the other hand, they have also published editorials supporting the repeal of the buggery laws (cf. HRW, “Not Safe” 12ff.) as well as other positive or neutral coverage of LGBTQ issues (cf. WE Change 15). The contents featured in radio and television appear similarly indecisive. They occasionally provide neutral stories on LGBTQ-related topics, but they have also been known to censor pro-LGBTQ contents (cf. HRW, “Not Safe” 63f.) and play a great amount of popular but radically homophobic music, an issue that has been widely discussed elsewhere (cf. footnote 2).

After this brief survey of the situation of sexual minorities in Jamaica, it seems safe

26 An example for a religious campaign that attracted attention all over Jamaica took place “[i]n June 2014, [when] an ad-hoc coalition of religious groups, Jamaica CAUSE (Churches Action Uniting Society for Emancipation), organized a mass rally, estimated at 25,000-strong, in Kingston against ‘the homosexuality agenda’ and the repealing of the buggery law” (HRW, “Not Safe” 12; cf. Miller, “Apples”). The rally was repeated with slightly fewer participators in September 2015 (cf. J-FLAG et al., “Shadow Report 2016” 10).

27 In her article “This is a Christian Nation”, Latoya Lazarus retraces a striking example of the legislative powers of Christian organisations by analysing their influence on the forming of the *Charter of Fundamental Rights and Freedoms* (2011) and the *Sexual Offences Act* (2009), both of which eventually disclaimed LGBTQ rights as is described in the first part of this chapter.

to say that all requirements listed as characteristics for the status of precarity in Judith Butler's and Barbara Korte's sense are met. LGBTQ people in Jamaica are at a higher risk of violence and aggression from both the state police force *and* individual citizens, they are more likely to experience poverty, starvation and displacement due to work and housing discrimination, they have an increased risk to fall ill due to their rejection from the health care sector, and they have no legal protection and restricted access to public representation. If a person is confronted with other factors contributing to precarity, for example being born poor, their risks increase exponentially. In the social sphere they are othered and dehumanised to such an extent, it might be argued, that their lives have become ungrievable. But how could it come to this?

In order to understand and counter these widespread anti-LGBTQ sentiments adequately, it might be helpful to retrace the history of their emergence; however, this question proves particularly hard to resolve. The strict aversion to non-reproductive sexual practices seems to have been shaped to a great extent by the region's unique colonial past. Originating from a conglomerate of imported workforce, the Caribbean coalesces most diverse influences from many different West African as well as South Asian cultures. In addition, it has been subjected to European colonial rule for a longer period of time than any other geographic area (cf. Palmié and Scarano, "Introduction" 7). Hence, Jamaican attitudes toward sexuality have been shaped over time by various African traditions on the one hand – though it remains unreconstructable to which degree and in which specific ways due to omissions in the exclusively Eurocentric historiography – and the sexual mores of the Spanish and especially the British on the other hand (cf. Mott 278; LaFont). In Britain, any non-productive and therefore any extramarital sexual activities were morally and theologically condemned in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and these standards were preached in and legally imposed on the colonies as well, even though British colonisers often violated their own doctrine (cf. LaFont) as the introductory chapter of this thesis described. Accordingly, there is hardly any reliable information on the taboos of homosexuality or transgenderism, neither from during the slave era, nor from more recent years (cf. ibid. 7; Sheller 3) – they have never made it into the frame, to use Butler's image. The only secure fact seems to be that the British were responsible for codifying heteronormativity as law in 1864, whereas it remains unknown whether the strict abidance by this rule originated before or after that fix point, in a European or in an African cultural sphere (cf. Atluri 309; McFee and Galbraith 15f.). As has been said in the introduction, only few studies on sexual behaviour have been conducted from the early twentieth century on, and of those one after the other confirmed that the Jamaican society was a hetero-patriarchy in which other sexualities and non-normative

gender identities were not accepted (cf. Kempadoo, "Sexuality" 64ff.).[28] Even nowadays many Jamaicans consider heteronormativity one of their own, most central national values (cf. LaFont; J-FLAG, "National Survey" 18) and fiercely resist the international demands for more rights and tolerance for LGBTQ people (cf. LaFont). Therefore, the immense outside pressure exerted on Jamaica to repeal the buggery laws,[29] has mostly been ignored until now. The church and politics mostly contribute to this mindset, as the previous pages have shown. However, there are promising regional endeavours to abolish the legal and structural disadvantages applying to LGBTQ people in Jamaica.

There is a number of non-governmental organisations that work eagerly to minimize the legal imbalance between the LGBTQ community and the rest of Jamaican society, of which J-FLAG, the Jamaican Forum for Lesbians, All-Sexuals and Gays, is generally considered the most influential one. Since their foundation in 1998, J-FLAG has centred their work around three major objectives: first, to bring a legal reform on its way, second, to offer social support services for LGBTQ people, and third to improve education on LGBTQ matters (cf. Lovell 91ff.). Obviously, a change of legislation has not been achieved yet, in spite of the two proposals J-FLAG has made for the amendments of the *Charter* in 2001 and 2011. Until reapplication is possible they continuously add to the foundation of their claims by collecting data and documenting instances of abuse. Furthermore they have helped to develop the previously mentioned Policy on Diversity for the Jamaican police force, as well as specialised professional trainings for police officers and health carers who work with LGBTQ people (HRW, "Not Safe" 58). A number of social support services for LGBTQ people has been successfully established as well, covering financial assistance, legal support, temporary housing and storage of belongings, a twenty-four hour emergency assistance hotline (cf. Lovell 94), and an educational outreach program towards the broader public. In this branch, J-FLAG produces "advertisements that promote a

28 Considering the lack of information it is understandable that history volumes do not give any information on homosexuality during colonial times, however, it seems surprising that none of the regional history books consulted for this thesis (cf. Blouet; Martin; Hillman and D'Agostino; Palmié and Scarano, *Caribbean*; Potter et al.) mention the issue, even in their accounts of the past 30 years, when there have been numerous homophobic incidents that attracted international attention and the topic has become somewhat of a national point of contention.

29 The UN Human Rights Council has been pressuring Jamaica in this regard regularly in its Universal Periodic Reviews (cf. ILGA 114f.; HRW, "Not Safe" 69f.), the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights is monitoring Jamaica as well (cf. ILGA 115; IACHR; HRW, "Not Safe" 65), as do the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and American Convention of Human Rights (cf. HRW, "Not Safe" 67). Also, the USA and the UK repeatedly voiced concern and threatened Jamaica with economic sanctions (HRW, "Not Safe" 66).

message of tolerance",[30] and organises political and social events[31] as a forum for intergroup exchange as well as for enhancing solidarity within the LGBTQ community (cf. Lovell 94f.).

Undoubtedly, many of their political efforts have so far been insufficient in effect or not fruitful at all. As has been shown above, there is a shocking plurality of public sections in Jamaica in which homophobia and transphobia still seem to prevail, in spite of promising first steps like the policy on diversity or state-supported medical staff trainings. Furthermore, statistics show that the degree of homophobia in these sections is conferable to the Jamaican society as a whole, and is unlikely to improve in the near future. "Not only are Jamaicans generally negative in their views and perceptions of same sex relationships but a significant majority are opposed to changing the laws, giving members of the LGBTQ community various rights" (J-FLAG, "National Survey" 29). According to a J-FLAG survey from 2012, 76.7 per cent of the population want to retain the buggery laws and a mere 21.3 per cent would support an addendum to the *Charter* to outlaw discrimination based on sexual identity (cf. ibid. 19).[32] "That said, "it is interesting that 37% of respondents felt that the Government was not doing enough to promote the rights of the LGBTQ community to ensure freedom from discrimination and violence" (ibid. 30), which suggests that there is at least a more or less common awareness of the disparity. This increasing awareness of LGTBQ issues and the slightly improving knowledge on LGBTQ questions (cf. ibid. 14ff.) can be read as a sign of success for J-FLAG's educational outreach programme.

Besides the successes of political activism, another publicity sector contributing to this longsome development towards higher awareness and tolerance levels are fictional representations of LGBTQ lives. As explained in the previous subchapter, literature in particular may add to the struggle against LGBTQ precarity, which is why the analysis of the works by Jamaican authors Dennis-Benn, Glave, James, and Miller will be in the centre of the rest of this paper.

---

30 An especially prominent example is the 'We Are Jamaicans' Youtube campaign to be found online (cf. HRW, "Not Safe" 4; Lovell 98).

31 Examples of such events are the Jamaica Pride festivities that are held annually in Kingston and Montego Bay since 2015 (cf. Davis; ILGA 115), conferences held at the University of the West Indies centred around LGBTQ issues (cf. ILGA 115), so-called public awareness panels (cf. Lovell 94) and LGBTQ parties at safe clubs or bars (ibid.).

32 Repealing the buggery laws is discussed time and again, as Western governments and NGOs all over the world keep urging Jamaica to do so (cf. footnote 29). Jamaican politicians' reactions to the question are inconsistent. A great number of prominent political figures has promised reassessments of the correspondent legislation and announced LGBTQ-rights initiatives – among them former Prime Minister Miller-Simpson, former Minister of Justice Golding, former Minister of Youth and Culture Hanna, former Minister of Health Ferguson, and former Minister of Education Thwaites – but none of them has consistently followed up on these promises (HRW, "Not Safe" 55ff.).

3 Representing Precarious LGBTQ Lives

3.1 Institutional Discrimination

Robert Carr finds that "institutionalized intolerance is often embedded in religious doctrine, in the school system (primary to tertiary), the justice system including the police, in the workplace and in the family" (77). To discuss all of these public sectors would exceed the scale of this thesis, therefore the first subchapter will focus mostly on how Jamaican literature represents discriminating dynamics within religious institutions. While religion is an omnipresent influence that affects state and society in their entirety and is traceable in most Jamaican literature, its line of anti-LGBTQ argumentation and its immense impact on the public mind become especially clear in Marlon James's *John Crows Devil*; hence, this work will be the main object of analysis in this subchapter. It will be shown how James succeeds to not only mirror the discriminating strategies applied in religious contexts, but also to counterwrite this dominant imperative. In addition, Thomas Glave's short story "He Who Would Have Become 'Joshua', 1791" will be discussed as another example of a strategic counterwriting to current religious condemnations of sexual and gender nonconformity. As a second example for institutionalised discrimination, a brief discussion of the preclusion of LGBTQ people from tertiary education will be added. Both the novel *Here Comes the Sun* and one of Kei Miller's short stories, "Walking on the Tiger Road" tell of cases in which LGBTQ students have been expelled from university when their sexual orientation was made public and will therefore present the subject of analysis in the second subchapter.[33]

3.1.1 Religion as the Root of LGBTQ Precarity

As the previous subchapter showed, there is a number of Jamaican state and societal institutions at the bottom of LGBTQ precarity. The one that is oldest and most influential in that it seems to inform all other official and individual standpoints towards sexuality, is religion. Even though it is hardly verifiable, the assertion that Jamaica has more churches per capita than any other country is widely circulated, among others by Marlon James, and is claimed mostly with an overt exhibition of pride (cf. Paul et al.). This is just one indicator for faith's significance in the public consciousness, regardless

33 Owing to the restricted space of this paper, other aforementioned institutions cannot be considered in the analysis, such as the police force or the media. However, there are some literary works in the canon selected for this thesis that make references to discriminatory practices in these public sectors as well. In Glave's "Out There", for instance, the narrator critically questions why the police and fire brigade did not reach his friend's house in time to save him from burning inside it (cf. 214) and predicts that the fatality will not appear in any newspaper (cf. 237). Similarly, in Glave's "Whose Song?" it is stated that the news will most certainly not mention the potentially fatal rape of a fifteen-year-old lesbian (cf. 240).

of its specific affiliation. Kei Miller observes that “Jamaica is incredibly religious and what almost all of these religions might have in common – the Revivalists, Rastafarians, Obeah believers and of course Christians – is a huge regard and dependence on the Bible” (*Writing Down* 128). It is from this shared foundational text that many common anti-LGBTQ sentiments are produced and disseminated.

“Biblical authority is commonly cited as a primary rationale for homophobic attitudes” (Donnell 209), and the passages that are most often employed for this line of argument are from the Old Testament (cf. Carr 78). Of course, the story of Sodom and Gomorrah is the first that comes to mind, as it is where the term ‘sodomy’ originated (cf. footnote 15). Genesis 18-19 relates how God hears of the bad reputation of the two neighbouring cities Sodom and Gomorrah of which it is said that “their sin is very grievous” (*The King James Bible*, Gen. 18:20). Checking up on these rumours, two angels are sent to spend the night in the cities in question, and while they are hospitably taken in by Lot at first, a mob of men demands Lot to hand them over later that night, so that they “may know them” (Gen. 19:5). To “know” someone in biblical contexts is often interpreted as a synonym for having sexual intercourse with that person (cf. Toensing 62), thus, the request of the men from Sodom and Gomorrah is traditionally read as a threat to sexually violate their male guests, and comes to exemplify their ultimate sinfulness. The appropriate reaction to this sinfulness, according to godly judgement, proves to be complete destruction of both cities and their inhabitants. Consequently, an avid reader of the Bible might see a harsh condemnation of homosexuality as the effectual imperative that is to be inferred from that biblical episode. This thesis is sustained by various instructions in Leviticus, the biblical book of laws, which assert : “Thou shalt not lie with mankind, as with womankind: it is an abomination” (Lev. 18:22) and “If a man also lie with mankind, as he lieth with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination: they shall surely be put to death; their blood shall be upon them” (Lev. 20:13; cf. Gutzmore 127; Skeete 10).

There are several more Bible passages in which God declares homosexuality to be evil (e.g. Ezekiel 16:50, Romans 1:26, 27, Titus 2:12; cf. Gutzmore 127). By the means of accentuating these particular bible verses, as many Jamaican priests and believers do,

> [i]n this discourse, homosexuality is constituted straightforwardly as a sin in the eyes of God and therefore also in the view of self-perceived good and/or godly persons. It is agreed that omniscient Jehovah repeatedly declares homosexuality to be a sin in both the Old and New Testaments and that the Almighty would neither misrecognize nor misname a physical and/or emotional illness as a condition of sin. (Gutzmore 126)

Following this logic that homosexuality is a horrific sin because God says so and is

infallible,

> [t]hose who commit this great sin are thus unequivocally construed within the fundamentalist anti-homosexual ideological imperative as legitimate subjects to be punished by terminal violence, a fate not only dealt out directly by God Himself but, presumably, also by those regarding themselves as His faithful servants and the possible agents of His will. These persons feel a kind of righteous justification for, as it were, acting violently on God's behalf against perceived homosexuals and homosexuality. (Gutzmore 127)

Robert Carr calls such acts of violence, verbal or physical, that are inspired by the Bible 'judgements', and specifies that these attacks are understood by many as "judgements from God being carried out by the community and the police" (85).

The prevalence of these thought structures is confirmed by J-FLAG's 2012 "National Survey of Attitudes and Perceptions of Jamaicans Towards Same Sex Relationships" in which it became apparent that people who regularly participate in religious activities were less likely to take up a positive stance over LGBTQ people (cf. 3, 28). It must be concluded then that there are different levels of homo- and transphobia emanating from a religious body of thought in Jamaica, both overtly and in a more subconscious manner affecting not just active believers but a wider range of people. There are those Jamaicans who support anti-LGBTQ sentiments just by using biblical deploring language such as 'sodomy' or 'sodomite', those who listen and silently agree to sermons against the 'abominable sin' of homosexuality, those who write and preach those sermons, and eventually those who put the values they were taught into practice and attack LGBTQ people verbally or even physically in an attempt to execute God's judgement and will. In recent Jamaican literature there appears to be a trend to not just mirror these positions and their consequences as they are, but to question scriptural parameters and disrupt the social dynamics shaped by them. Time and again,

> Diasporic writers in England, Canada and the United States who have explored the theme of alternative sexuality, realistically portray how homophobic violence in the Caribbean region arises from heterocentric and heterosexist attitudes that are ingrained in institutionalized discourses of Church, home and school. Representations in the literary discourse show how these agents of socialization bear culpability for the ways in which they influence society's silences, adherence to doctrine, masculinist views, patriarchal hegemonies and peer pressure that contribute to the persecution of the male homosexual. (Skeete 1)

In the following, Marlon James's novel *John Crow's Devil* and Thomas Glave's short story "He Who Would Have Become 'Joshua', 1791" will be discussed as examples of literary works broaching these issues.

In a chapter of her monograph *Jamaica's Difficult Subjects*, which delivers the most comprehensive analysis of James's novel available to date, Sheri-Marie Harrison describes how extremely hard she found it to categorise *John Crow's Devil*. Her first impression was that "[i]t uncritically presented bestiality, pedophilia, and incest as

norms of rural Caribbean life" (2) and that, in doing so, it refused to serve "any of the oppositional impetuses that have come to characterize Caribbean writing – anticolonialism, antiracism, antisexism, and antiheterosexism" (3). Indeed, even though it presents a range of sexualities, all of which are "consistently prefigured as perverse and violent" (Harrison, *Difficult Subjects* 162), the novel does not focus on the highly controversial issue of LGBTQ lives or anti-LGBTQ sentiments. Depictions of and commentary on same-sex desire are featured, but often in a marginal, intricate or highly controversial manner. I will argue, however, that laying the focus elsewhere is a particularly effective strategy of countering homo- and transphobia, because this way a binary victim-perpetrator narrative is dismantled and replaced with a scrutiny of the dynamics fuelling the conflicts.

John Crow's Devil evidently cannot be considered a precise mirror image of twenty-first-century Jamaica as it is set in the rural village Gibbeah in the year 1957. However, even though the year is fixedly stated on the back cover of the novel as well as in the text (cf. James 27), dates do not seem relevant at all. In fact, the village appears to be isolated to a high degree: since none of its inhabitants ever seem to travel far and no one even owns a television set, Gibbeah remains untouched by any news or developments from the rest of Jamaica. The absence of any modern-day technology – telephone, internet, in some cases even electricity and running water – evokes an indistinct notion of the past that confers a sense of timelessness to the story. Additionally, there are numerous supernatural elements embedded in the plot that dissolve the idea of a fixed temporal frame even further. After all, magic phenomena are equally plausible or implausible at any given time. The novel may thus be categorized as a hybrid of historic and magic-realist novel. It presents the story of two spiritual leaders, the Pastor Bligh and the Apostle York, fighting over the village and its inhabitants with words, as well as physical and supernatural powers. The events are told from a heterodiegetic perspective with constantly changing focalisation that is sometimes external, but more often internal, alternating mostly between the three characters Pastor Hector Bligh (e.g. 27-29, 36-51, 65-67, 69-71), the Widow Mary Greenfield (e.g. 62, 65, 69, 91-94, 131, 153-158, 168-188), and Lucinda (e.g. 10, 25-27, 54-59, 67-69, 123-130, 159-161), and a communal voice that appears to belong to all villagers at once (e.g. 7-9, 29f., 77-79, 82f., 99-107, 149-151, 164f.).

The timeless, rural village setting, the magic-realist style of writing and the heterodiegetic narrative situation generate a reminiscence of the Bible itself, to which the content level contributes even further. Reports of polytheism (cf. James 10, 96f., 109), murder (cf. ibid. 130), adultery (cf. ibid. 64, 100ff.), bestiality (cf. ibid. 64f.), paedophilia (cf. ibid. 196), incest (cf. ibid. 8, 33), bird omens (cf. ibid. 13, 17, 61, 96,

135, 207) and two-headed rolling calves and goats (cf. James 91, 109, 119f.) give “the storytelling […] an Old Testament resonance” (Akbar). Furthermore, the lead characters, both of them being professional preachers, frequently cite Bible passages (cf. James 76, 78ff., 84ff., 118f., 163) and some of the chapters have biblical titles, such as “Leviticus” (ibid. 149) or “Golgotha […]” (ibid. 195). Even the name of the village is taken from a Bible story, “The Outrage of Gibeah” in Judges 19-21, which bears a remarkably close resemblance to the story of Sodom and Gomorrah (cf. Akbar). The initial situation and conflict in this second biblical episode are precisely the same as in the firt: a foreign guest, a Levite, comes to Gibeah and is welcomed by one of the locals, but in the night the other men from Gibeah demand him to be sent out so that they “may know him” (Judg. 19:22). The host, as in the previous bible story, interprets this request as a threat that his guest is to be raped (cf. Grimm 26). Unlike in Sodom, however, the stranger’s concubine is sent out in his place “and they knew her, and abused her all the night until the morning: and when the day began to spring, they let her go” (Judg. 19:25). She dies on the door step and the Levite is so aggrieved that he takes her home, cuts her corpse into twelve pieces and sends them out to the twelve tribes of Israel as an invitation to join him in warfare against Gibeah. In its course, “the tribe of Benjamin is nearly annihilated by the other tribes of Israel. While six hundred Benjaminite men survive, all of that tribe’s women and children are killed” (Moster 721). Where in the first story, God brought destruction to the guilty cities, the second account reports a punishment sanctioned by God, but carried out by men (cf. Judg. 20:28-48). As the further discussion of the novel will show, both the biblical Gibeah’s similarities with the better known Sodom and Gomorrah and this essential difference between the cities’ demises come to be cardinal points for the tale of James’s Gibbeah (cf. Harrison, *Difficult Subjects* 143).

Having spotlighted the strong affiliation between the novel and the Bible, it may come as a surprise that the priests themselves do not once mention the sin of sodomy during their sermons. Albeit the Apostle in particular holds lengthy speeches on most other sexual transgressions imaginable, such as onanism (cf. James 85), bestiality (cf. ibid. 118) and adultery (cf. ibid. 104ff.), homosexuality is not explicitly spoken of in his homilies. There is only one instance in which York publicly references sodomy which takes place shortly after his arrival: He remarks to the congregation: “I know what has been going on here. Things that would make a sodomite blush” (ibid. 22). This utterance is negligible, however, since it is casually constituted as a simile that complies with the congregation’s frame of reference. It does not present an accusation of anyone in particular, but just wants to express the immensity of shameful conduct happening in the town, and is therefore not perceived as memorable by any of those

who heard it. Outside of church, two or three comments are made by the people of Gibbeah about its founder and greatest landowner, Mr. Aloysius Garvey, who "was a man out of time with neither wife nor peer. […] There was a rumour that he was a sodomite" (James 4), even "a sodomite who was on his way to Hell" (ibid. 15), but the villagers do not seem bothered by him. His presence in the village is a typical example of Rosamond King's 'secreto abierto' concept of black Caribbean queerness introduced in Chapter 2.1.1. The crowd's initial indifference towards him proves that sexual orientation is never a person's only identity marker; to the contrary, Mr. Garvey is largely defined by his wealth and status. They protect him from the community's immediate judgement and leave them content with the prospect of a godly punishment in the afterlife – at least this is the case before York installs himself in Gibbeah.

That Mr. Garvey's sexual orientation is such an open secret makes the absence of the issue from the Apostle's public speeches all the more conspicuous, especially as he does not hesitate to point out any other sin. In his sermons he radically condemns any transgressive behaviour, especially in regard to sexuality, as coming from the devil and preaches to the congregation that not even the smallest lapse can be tolerated. He presents sinfulness as a disease that has befallen Gibbeah and devises a common goal: "to heal the sick we have to exterminate the sickness" (James 85). To achieve that aim, any means available are legitimated by godly authority. The Apostle claims that "God is looking out for people who will carry out His command no matter how Holy, no matter how brutal, no matter how violent they may be" and asks his church: "Who's ready to be violent for the Lord?" (ibid. 86). The great majority, as it turns out, is. As a consequence, a number of gruesome punishments are publicly acted out. When Clarence and Mrs. Johnson's extramarital affair is discovered, they are cruelly whipped in front of the whole community to the point when both are heavily bleeding and unconscious (cf. ibid. 104ff.). At a later point, the farmer Massa Fergie is killed in a violent mob, stomped by the feet of many until he "lay in the dirt, his skull crushed and ribs bashed in as if trampled by a bull" (ibid. 116), because people suspect him to have sexual intercourse with his cows (cf. ibid. 115). Both of these horrific acts of violence are justified as punishments by God, even proof of God's love, "cause God punish who him love" (ibid. 105) in the Apostle's rhetoric (cf. ibid. 117ff., 141, 149ff.). His preaching has set off an avalanche of "violence that escalates into the establishment of a grotesque and victimizing collective" (Harrison, *Difficult Subjects* 179).

During this process of altering the community's collective psyche, the villagers' attitudes towards Mr. Garvey change as well, in spite of the Apostle's silent omission of his person. Even without him ever mentioning Garvey's supposed homosexuality at all, people come to consider his sin as the greatest of all, so that they eventually wish that:

> the biggest judgment that ever goin fall, goin fall on the black house. The house of Sodom where Gibbeah pitch tent. The house of sin where rivers of damnation flow. Is through him that all sin come. From in him and out him, all sin be. The one them call Mr. Garvey. Fire pon him cause him fuck batty. Fire pon him cause him think him better than we. […] The Apostle don't say nothing bout that house yet. But sin must come from it or the house wouldn't be black. […] The John Crow know. Him have six nephews who don't look like him. And them never grow up, what a thing. […] Him sin like Onan and throw way him seed. (James 150f.)

The villagers have internalised York's sermons on sexual transgressions and adapted his imperative for other situations in their range of experience without his immediate instruction. This development illustrates the mechanics described by Keon West as introduced in Chapter 2.2.3, by which structural prejudice, in this case implemented by the York as the head of the church in Gibbeah and the bible as the church's statute, can contribute to forming personal prejudice in every individual member of the community. They all urgently wish for the alleged homosexual to be judged more harshly than anyone else.

This exposed position of homosexuality as the ultimate sin also becomes apparent in the portrayal of the only same-sex relationship featured in the novel, which unfolds between the Apostle and Clarence in the second half of the novel. Although their thoughts and emotions for each other are never presented from their own perspectives, but rather by a distanced external voice, the outline of their relationship is related in enough detail for the reader to get a general idea of it. Their liaison begins when, in a private conversation after the whipping, the Apostle confronts Clarence with knowledge of his struggle with his sexual orientation and insinuates a mutual attraction:

> '[…] Every time you use this, this snake inside your pants, you think you're killing the Devil inside you. You know of which Devil I speak. The Devil you've been trying to kill since you were twelve. The Devil in you that was stealing looks between my legs just now when I was sitting in front of you. You'll never kill it. Not through pain, not through sin. No matter how many times you come inside a woman, you'll never kill your heart's real desire.' The Apostle touched Clarence's crotch again, but this time he did not make a fist. (ibid. 143f.)

The Apostle takes advantage of Clarence's internalised sense of guilt, visualises it in religious terms as a devil figure, and promises to free him from that devil. Presenting his seemingly superior and visionary knowledge of Clarence's most intimate thoughts and feelings, portraying himself as a Christlike figure – "I am the way, Clarence" (ibid. 143) – and miraculously healing Clarence's whiplash wounds seem to all be part of the Apostle's seduction strategy. The first instance of physical intimacy, a gentle touch of his crotch, appears to lead to an ongoing carnal relationship – as may be deduced from the fact that, shortly afterwards, the Apostle is merely "peering from the cracked door" (ibid. 144), preventing Lucinda from looking into the room where he and Clarence are. Furthermore, from then on the two men always seem to be together (cf. ibid. 145, 157), "Clarence and the Apostle, closer than a brother" (ibid. 150). Clarence even sleeps

over at the Apostle's house and opens the door in the Apostle's clothes (cf. James 155, 161). Nonetheless, the entire affair takes place in the background of the novel and evolves unnoticed by any of the other inhabitants of Gibbeah, except for Lucinda, who does the Apostle's housework.

It is when Lucinda eventually does take notice, however, that it becomes evident what an extraordinary position homosexuality takes on the scale of the village's ethics. Towards the end of the book, Lucinda agitatedly tells the Widow of her discovery of the affair between the two men: "'Them doin nastiness, you know, nasty, nasty nastiness! If God did ever see such nastiness him would a be blind!'" (ibid. 177). She then explains to Mary what precisely she means by 'nastiness':

> 'Me catch them, you know. That's why Clarence beat me up and me kick him in him seed and run away. Me catch them.' – 'Catch who?' – 'Them. Apostle and Clarence. Me never see nothing lacka that in me life.' – 'Something evil that you never see? […]' – 'God never show me no man behind man a ram him batty like him is girl him a sex.' – 'What? What you just say?' - 'You hear what me say. Clarence and the Apostle naked and him behind the Apostle and him hold on to the Apostle hip, and Clarence ramming the Apostle like him is the husband and the Apostle is the wife.' – 'You is a lying gal, you know. That is nastiness, even for you. […] Is a lie you tell. Preacher could a never do them things.' (ibid. 180f.)

The Widow's incredulity over this report is a first certification of the gravity of this particular offence. Even the most patient and tolerant character in the entire novel, who just minutes before her encounter with Lucinda had expressed her acceptance of Mr. Garvey's homosexuality with the words "to each his own" (ibid. 173), is firmly convinced that "Preacher could a never do them things" (ibid. 181). Inventing a story like this, the Widow, states, is nasty even for Lucinda's standards, which is a strong judgement in itself taking into account that she considers Lucinda a false and bad person through and through.

In fact, the Widow and Lucinda have disliked each other since their childhood, and in their adult years several incidents increased their animosity (cf. ibid. 92, 123f., 129f.). Therefore, the fact that Lucinda turns to Mary, her nemesis, to discuss her news presents a second strong indicator of how grave the accusation of homosexuality is. It illustrates how extremely shocked she is by what she saw. Catching the Apostle and Clarence red-handed changes her entire world view – it makes her doubt York, even though none of his other actions, however condemnable, have ever marred her idolisation of him. He has rejected her many times, preached hate and fury, and incited the village to cruel violence and even murder, but it is only his homosexuality that prompts her to doubt him. Her horror is so great that even her lifelong enmity with Mary takes a back seat to it, and she seeks her counsel and help against this perceived monstrosity. The conversation between the two women serves to constitute homosexuality between men as a greater enemy, uniting opposite sides in its common

condemnation.

It is later revealed that Lucinda's confession to Mary is a ruse thought out by the Apostle, Clarence and Lucinda together for the purpose of coaxing the Widow and Pastor Bligh out of their hiding. Their plan is to tell their opponents a story so monstrous that they cannot help but confront the Apostle in open battle and they deem a homosexual encounter the right story to fulfil this function, which once again proves the unthinkable scandalousness associated with LGBTQ practices in the story. Accordingly, when speaking to the Widow, Lucinda has really seen no proof of any sexual relationship between the two men and is under the impression that the whole story is made up by the three of them together. Only later does she fully realise that, in fact, she told the truth, when she brings breakfast to the Apostle and stumbles upon the following scene:

> Clarence pulled his pants up and flicked his penis through the fly. Lucinda froze as her own mind attacked her, molested her with information she did not want and could not process. She was a simple woman who concluded simply. *Clarence naked. Clarence pulling up him pants. Clarence cocky dangling like a sausage outside him pants. Clarence pulling up him pants but don't have no brief underneath. Clarence in the Apostle bedroom naked. Clarence pulling up him pants. Clarence cocky dangling like a sausage outside him pants. Clarence in the Apostle room and him … him … him picking up him shirt off the floor.* (James 192, original emphasis)

The insight that the Apostle is really having sex with Clarence is enough to drive Lucinda to madness, and eventually to suicide (cf. ibid. 193, 3, 211). The confirmation of York's same-sex relationship is in Lucinda's eyes the ultimate betrayal, the worst thing he could ever do to her. More than any of his other opinions and characteristics, it proves to her that he is not the person she thought he was and her despair over that realisation makes her kill herself a few weeks later. This outcome of the storyline stresses finally and conclusively how outrageous the affair between York and Clarence is.

The passages analysed up to this point show in how far James's depiction of homosexuality can be regarded as a mirror to Jamaica, aimed at pointing out the hypocrisy in its moral double standards and visualising the enhanced precarity of LGBTQ lives. It traces how non-heteronormative sexualities are continuously watched and condemned excessively in comparison to other transgressions of social rules, for example heterosexual adultery and violence of all kinds. In this sense, the novel may be read as a critique of an unjust, flawed moral codex. In addition to that, however, the novel's ending presents an act of counterwriting in which one of the central institutions that shape and maintain hostility towards LGBTQ people, namely the church, is deconstructed and rejected completely.

Towards the end of *John Crow's Devil*, the Widow makes a shocking discovery

when, feeling threatened by York, she ventures into Mr. Garvey's house to ask for help. She finds that the village's patron was long before murdered in a gruesome way – decapitated and castrated (cf. James 175) – alongside four of his nephews (cf. ibid.). This alone is a disturbing finding, of course, but the Widow is surprisingly collected after leaving the house. In fact, it is only after having seen the multiple murder site that she hears Lucinda's account of the Apostle's alleged affair with Clarence, so with this chronology in mind, the amount of contempt she shows for the priest's homosexuality appears to be even more out of proportion. But even the hard-boiled Widow is appalled to the utmost when she finally contemplates a number of pornographic photographs she has taken from Garvey's house.

> They were all faded to sepia and they all provoked the same response. Boys, some small and featureless, some with more than a few facial and pubic hairs, all in undress. Some had their legs crossed, some were spread wide like cherubs caught in knowledge of their sex. They were no longer boys, but dolls, warped and reshaped into somebody's reflection. […] In all her years of suspecting Mr. Garvey of sodomy and seeing his several nephews, she never married the two. Her mind traveled to places she had not thought thinkable. Such sickness and perversion tormented her, reduced her to a child's fear of darkness. She looked at pictures of boys, spread like women, some in makeup and hats, and she imagined demons raping tiny holes of innocence and experience. There were others that needed no imagining, their buttocks free, but their mouths stuffed with what went beyond her ability to believe. The only way to pull herself out was to imagine them unreal […] That was the only way she knew to make them unremarkable, to take her heart out. She would have succeeded were it not for the third photograph, which she had passed over twice. The picture had blurred into the others before, but now a face slid into focus. (ibid. 196)

The face that stands out to Mary Greenfield is the Apostle's face (cf. ibid.). The Widow's reaction to the hard evidence of child abuse is one of sheer horror, which she can only control by suppressing any thought of what she just witnessed. York himself confirms later on what the photographs suggest, that he has been living with Aloysius Garvey from at least age eleven onwards and been continuously raped by him and the previous priest, Pastor Palmer (cf. ibid. 199f.). Not only has a representative of the church thus taken active part in the sexual abuse of children, but another one is accused of having contributed to it passively: Bligh has only been employed as the village priest by Garvey because he was blind to what was happening due to his own alcoholism and guilt issues (cf. ibid. 200). Thus, "the moral authority of the church [has] becom[e] entangled in the hypocritical protection of the status quo through impotence, secrecy and willful blindness" (Harrison, *Difficult Subjects* 162).

Furthermore, not just the spiritual heads have become complicit in Garvey's crime, but the entire congregation. In retrospect, the reader comes to understand that, like Bligh, who was too self-involved to see the abuse happening, and like the Widow who looks away to protect herself from the horror about it, every person in the village has refused to see Mr. Garvey's paedophile relation to his 'nephews', even though it had

been common knowledge for years (cf. Harrison, *Difficult Subjects* 158; cf. James 14, 15, 66, 150). Their communal ignorance of the issue factually equalled a failure to assist York and the other boys. Hence, in addition to committing their own small and big sins as discussed above, their silence makes them all co-perpetrators in the village's most horrific crime. The Apostle, on the other hand, cannot be solely perceived as a malicious religious fanatic any more after this revelation; he becomes a traumatised abuse victim too. In addition to psychic damage, he has also contracted syphilis from his former tormentor Pastor Palmer (cf. James 200), which slowly destroys his body and mind even further.[34] York's fate is exemplary for an existence precaritized by violence and disease. His scheme to draw the whole of Gibbeah into a vortex of violence and destruction still seems drastic and cruel, but now a logic can be identified behind it – perhaps even a sense of justice. He wants to punish everyone who condoned his and the other boys' sufferings (cf. ibid. 201), and this desire for revenge becomes comprehensible when taking the new information into account. In this manner, "[t]he novel […] complicates and in fact defies any easy assessment of right or wrong by portraying flawed characters […] and foundationally flawed institutions; ultimately it challenges the notions of community, good, and evil" (Harrison, *Difficult Subjects* 179; cf. Akbar; Polk).

In order to take his vengeance, York utilises the precise tool which has helped in his own demise – the church. Instead of turning his back on the institution, "the Apostle decides to occupy it and shake its foundation. Portraying religion in these ways troubles its placement as a mechanism for privileging heteronormativity" (Harrison, *Difficult Subjects* 167). After all, if York can manipulate it and use it as a weapon for his own hateful revenge, who can say whether anything else religion promotes is really more true, relevant or justified? Consequently, the crime of the children's abuse together with "York's violent testing of the community and its people provid[e] an unsettling critique of the ideologies that underlie the construction and functioning of a community – in this case, religion" (ibid. 162). The character of the Apostle demonstrates that religion in this novel presents a problem, a fault in society's foundation, rather than a solution; it is not a reaction to man's sinfulness, but a trigger and guide to it. As Arifa Akbar writes, "the final parable of the book might be seen to be pointing out the dangers of organised religion".

In conclusion, *John Crow's Devil* successfully counters the churches'

34 Sheri-Marie Harrison provides a more extensive analysis of the course of the Apostle's syphilis and reads it as an allegory for his religious influence. She finds that "[t]he image of infection […] renders religion as one of society's ills" (*Difficult Subjects* 161) which brings "corrupting destruction to both physical bodies and the community" (ibid. 159). Hence, this metaphor presents another contribution to James's broader critique of institutionalised religion, as discussed in the following paragraphs.

discrimination of LGBTQ people in two ways: first by revealing lapses in the internal logic of Christian argumentation – why would homosexuality be judged so harshly while other crimes are tolerated? – and second by presenting the entire concept of organised religion as faulty and easily dissolvable. What Harrison initially criticised in the novel – the blurring of good and evil, the seemingly uncritical depictions of violence – eventually made its message even clearer. According to James, the churches' arguments are incoherent and flawed. His novel shows that homosexuality in itself is not dangerous in any way and therefore not the problem – brainwashing religion, moral hypocrisy and an eager willingness to be violent, on the other hand, are. *John Crow's Devil* "calls into question the establishment of community, the elements that organize community, and the ways justice is enacted according to institutionalization of particular elements of communal organization such as religion" (Harrison, *Difficult Subjects* 178f.). Accordingly, what Jamaica ought to rethink and discuss critically is not the 'sin' of same-sex desire, but the paradigms according to which the sinners are judged. This approach counters the stigmatisation of LGBTQ people effectively by making the conscious decision not to position them in the centre of the discussion. LGBTQ characters are neither portrayed as especially guilty nor as especially victimised, instead the focus is on their heteronormative persecutors and the system that allows for their precaritization.

Thomas Glave's short story "He Who Would Have Become 'Joshua', 1791", apart from being a much shorter text of course, is conveniently comparable to James's novel. Firstly, being set on a slave ship forty-seven days into its journey to the Caribbean, in the year 1791 as the title suggests, it may also be classified as historical fiction, while simultaneously being filed into the category of magic realism due to its supernatural content. Secondly, where the narration deals with LGBTQ issues explicitly, it is also a gay male couple that is portrayed. Yet, despite those similarities, the following analysis will show that Glave introduces a method of counterwriting that is very different to James's strategy. Instead of tracing the emergence of existing structures and pointing out their fundamental flaws, Glave tries to find blank spaces in history and religion and fill them in. He utilizes the uncertainties of Jamaican history, in this case going back as far as to pre-colonial Africa and the transatlantic slave trade. As the context chapter established, not a lot is known about most Afro-Caribbean cultural origins due to the oppressive, exclusively Eurocentric historiography of the time. Glave uses that omission to invent one possible myth of origin for the LGBTQ community.

"Joshua", like *John Crow's Devil*, is devised in a narrative style that is reminiscent of biblical or other religious stories. It employs a homodiegetic communal voice, which evokes the notion of community early on – the speakers are a cohesive group of

people who are forcibly bound together in captivity, but who are also unified by sharing a similar heritage and undergoing the same experience. Furthermore, the text repeatedly features admonitions to "remember" for future generations (cf. Glave, "Joshua" 173, 177, 196, 204, 207), which seeks to appoint the story's continuing value for the group. Both of these stylistic devices, the communal voice and the admonitory remarks, hint at a tradition of orality that is not only important to early Christianity of course (cf. "Oral Tradition"), but also characteristic for any other ancient set of religious myths or legends, not least for pre-colonial African cultures. "It was to this popular oral tradition that West Indian intellectuals looked in seeking both to recover fragmented African heritages and to discover a 'nation language' for their region" (Ashcroft et al. 151) in the last century. In this tradition, Glave's style of narration not only seeks to establish historic continuity, but also a feeling of togetherness and common identification. Together with the numerous supernatural plot elements, this narrative situation ascertains that the story has a distinct religious quality.

Said supernaturalness is obvious from the beginning, because the narrative voice reproduces the story just as "the oldest woman on board" has told it to them *after* her death "with her mouth perpetually closed and her form rigid and unbreathing" (Glave, "Joshua" 173). Although speaking without opening their mouths is a skill other characters seem to share (cf. ibid. 173f., 175, 198), that old woman is extraordinary in that she was a prophetess during her life time (cf. ibid. 180) and since her death she even appears to be omniscient (cf. ibid. 175), which makes her a character of great religious authority in the frame of the story. The story she tells centres around two boys, called "the beautiful one" (ibid. 178) and "the laughing one" (ibid. 196), who used to live in the same village as her and were then captured in the ship with the rest of them. The beautiful one is presented as a being that is superhuman, a sort of aquatic demigod, who "was the only one among them [his siblings] capable of breathing water, river water, and of descending into its depths for days at a time" (ibid. 178), because he was born at the riverside and therefore "grew up partly as its child" (ibid. 179). When he hits puberty, he starts a love relationship with another boy who is portrayed as equal and oppositional at the same time, and might be understood as a sort of field or earth deity (cf. ibid. 196). They openly start spending more and more time together, kissing and caressing each other (cf. ibid. 196f.), and eventually even descent into the river together for seven days to have their first sexual intercourse (cf. ibid. 199). The village community accepts their relationship as a matter of fact, as the old woman reports:

> 'We all saw them of course. None of us, not even their parents, were especially surprised. Since the sun had first scorched its way across the earth and birds had discovered the use of their wings, it was hardly the first time such things had been known, whether with men, women, or all those somewhere in between. […]' (ibid. 197)

Remarkably, there is no conflict or problem in this part of the story, no need for a 'coming-out' in the sense of Western queer theory. The account of the boys' childhood, adolescence, their first meetings and the beginning of their relationship is depicted as a harmonious love story about which everyone witnessing it is pleased.

Their happiness is tainted only when the white slave traders arrive and they are captured and brought onto the ship. But even during this time of hardship, the beautiful one and the laughing one stand by each other and keep each other close at all times (cf. Glave, "Joshua" 196).[35] During all the mental and physical horrors of the Middle Passage they support each other and eventually they decide to die together, which is euphemised as "We will fly" (cf. ibid. 204).

> [O]ver the next few days, neither one of them accepted either water or the morsels of filth *they* gave each morning, from their filthy hands, to keep us here. Their mouths remained steadfastly clamped shut, their eyes firmly closed, as, touching fingers whenever they could […], they began to dream of the long journey that would soon take them out over all that spreading water out there and then into it, deeper, farther, until […] their breath stopped completely. (ibid. 204f., original emphasis)

In writing a story that is first and foremost an account of love and loyalty in a gay relationship, Glave provides a myth of origin in which LGBTQ people are an indisputable, natural part of the world. He makes it a specifically Afro-Caribbean myth of origin by situating "Joshua" in part in an African village whose location is not further specified, and in part on a slave ship that is to sail to the Caribbean (cf. ibid. 175). Thus a direct link is established between the community depicted in the story and the lives of contemporary Jamaicans, who are implicitly identified as these characters' descendants. This conceived connection presents a call for acknowledgement of their LGBTQ ancestors and for solidarity and respect with them. The legendary forefathers of Afro-Jamaicans, according to Glave, accepted individuals of all sexual orientations and gender identities as equal. They admired and venerated people according to their specific inherent qualities, e.g. beauty, wisdom or positivity, and judged them based on their actions, for example by acts of loyalty, faithfulness, trust, love, or courage. "Joshua" thus offers an alternative to Christian and other traditions condemning homosexuality and queerness by creating a myth of origin that stresses equality and love instead of judgement and hatred. The community from the first half of the story represents an ideal of equal vulnerability and precariousness for every human being, regardless of their sexual identity or gender orientation.

A status of heightened precariousness is only introduced through the slave trade,

35 These passages of the story seem to be based on existing historical reports to some extent. Natasha O. Tinsley points out: "During the Middle Passage, as colonial chronicles, oral tradition, and anthropological studies tell us, captive African women created erotic bonds with other women in the sex-segregated holds, and captive African men created bonds with other men" ("Black Atlantic" 192). Glave might possibly have been influenced by these bits of information and embellished them.

and in this context precaritization mainly occurs based on ethnicity. The destructive influence of colonisation on lives of blacks in general and of black LGBTQ people in particular is illustrated very conspicuously, of course, through descriptions of the physical cruelties of slavery. Aside from describing the abysmal circumstances on the slave ship, Glave additionally employs a more abstract image to express the horrors of slavery. The motif of names and name-giving pervades the short story throughout. The old woman on whose story the slaves' communal voice reflects explicitly states: "in this accursed space I wish to call none of our true-true names – our most sacred names bestowed on us by our elders, our parents, and by time" (Glave, "Joshua" 196f.). Her concealing of their names is a refusal to give themselves up into the rule of the colonisers. In declining to give up her own and her fellow captives' innermost identities which are encapsulated in their names, the old woman defies their abductors' power. For this reason she chooses to call the protagonists 'the beautiful one' and 'the laughing one'.

Upon their arrival in America, however, every survivor of the Middle Passage will be given a new name, to be chosen by the person who buys them (cf. ibid. 186ff.). The protagonist for example, had he not died, would have become 'Joshua', as the title suggests and the old woman predicted long before the Europeans arrived in her village (cf. ibid. 191). In her vision, all of their future names appear to be biblical names, such as Isaiah, Rebecca and Joshua (cf. ibid. 209). When the beautiful one's mother hears about the possibility of her son being named in this manner one day, she tries the new name out but "her tongue would not embrace it, accept it" and "her face contort[s] into utter bewilderment" (ibid. 191). The entire horror of slavery can thus be seen to manifest itself in the fear of new names.

Forcing people into new biblical names can be seen as an allegory for forcing the Bible and Christianity as a whole onto them and onto their children. When replacing their names, the colonisers simultaneously intend to replace their previous beliefs, values and myths. The white people "will choose to forget" (ibid. 207) and try to make everyone else forget as well. The old woman reminds her companions: "it will be up to you, to each one of you, whether living or dead, breathing or not-breathing, to recall. No matter what name is bestowed, forgetting will be an execration upon the oldest water of your memory and on your children and each of their children still to come" (ibid. 207). On behalf of future generations it is essential to remember their pre-colonial identities, and the values that shaped them. The fact that this exhortation is preceded by the elaborate legend of the adolescent gay couple which takes up the most part of the short story provides a clear focal point for the story's message. It emphasises sexual morals in particular as one set of values that has been changed from the point

of narration until today. Especially the condemnation of LGBTQ sexuality appears to be imposed by the colonisers and their religion. In conclusion, Glave's piece of counterwriting appears to encourage the readers not to comply to their imperative, but to return to his vision of pre-colonial times in which heteronormativity did not exist and diverse sexual identities and genders were a matter of unimportance.

3.1.2 Discrimination within the Educational System

While the previous subchapter has shown religion to be a very prominent issue that can be tackled in multiple constructive ways, other instances of public discrimination are addressed less frequently and creatively. When looking for depictions of how LGBTQ people are treated in institutions of education, for example, the literature to be found tends to be less fantastic. To be discussed here are Nicole Dennis-Benn's novel *Here Comes the Sun*, which narrates the lives of four women – Delores, her daughters Thandi and Margot, and Margot's lover Verdene – and Kei Miller's short story "Walking on the Tiger Road", which tells of gay Jamaican man Mark returning home to his mother Mary for the first time in ten years. Both of the stories feature similar occurrences of exclusion based on sexual orientation.

In *Here Comes the Sun*, one of the main characters and focalisers, Verdene Moore, a woman in her fourties at the time of narration, remembers her first romantic relationship with another woman. At university, her room mate Akua becomes her first love interest.

> Verdene wanted to be around Akua more and more. As an only child, Verdene had no reference for true sisterhood […] But Verdene learned that there was a thin line between sisterhood and something else she had no name for. She and Akua ended up crossing the line numerous times, taking things further than the other girls. Their hugs became kisses and their gentle brushes became direct touches. […] To Verdene, their act was natural, a physical expression of how they felt about each other: the scorching love and cooling hate, the abysmal highs and outrageous lows. But to the university, and to the residence hall director Miss Raynor, who discovered them one late afternoon in the dorm, they were no different from witches warranting public execution. (Dennis-Benn, *Sun* 102f.)

The detection of their sexual relationship by the university's authorities proves to be incisive not only on a psychological level, but also very practically. Their involuntary 'outing' changes Verdene's life dramatically.[36]

> Verdene was disgraced, her poor mother shamed. The news spread like a cane-field fire and made its way to River Bank. It hovered like dark soot for days, months, years. […] After Verdene's expulsion, Ella had to send away her only child. She did it to save her life. Back in River Bank, Verdene could've been raped or killed. If she were a man caught with another man, she would've been arrested, maimed, mutilated, and buried. So she was sent to live with her aunt Gertrude in London, where she finished school. (ibid. 103)

36 The consequences are even more drastic for Akua as she has to endure brutal physical violence, however, this will be discussed at a later point in Chapter 3.4.1.

Verdene is officially expelled from university and thus denied an opportunity for education, which impairs her future professional prospects in itself. On top of that, however, the university's lack of discretion causes her problems that reach even further. Even though sexual intercourse between women is not legally prohibited in Jamaica, Verdene and her mother fear heavy violent retributions like rape or even murder might be carried out by people who know her and hear of the rumours. As later chapters will show, these concerns are not disproportionate at all, so it seems coherent to say that this episode of discrimination at the university forces her to leave Jamaica.

What happens to Mark, Miller's protagonist in "Tiger Road", is very similar. In his home town, there have been rumours concerning his sexuality even when he was still just a child due to his effeminacy, which will be discussed in more detail later on. Anxious over the village gossip, his mother Mary feels the need to take precautions: "I make him do sixth form in Kingston, and then college, just hoping that the distance would do him some good, make him start to behave like a proper man, and get him away from them no-good people round here who just want to destroy him, to take him down!" (Miller, "Tiger Road" 6). But there, at college, a traumatic episode happens to Mark as well. Ten years later, his mother remembers it as follows:

> It break mi heart the night him come home, like him was in a fight, the poor boy bruise up! An' him tell me say, 'Mama, I get caught up in something. And I can't stay in Jamaica,' like him want to cry, 'I have to leave. Dem might even take me to jail.' And him really start cry and me start cry too. Neither of us can even speak. But I finally get the words out of mi heart, 'How you could go a Kingston an' involve youself in drugs, eh Mark? In criminal t'ings! […]' – 'Mama! Is not drugs,' him say, wiping 'way the tears, and for a while is almost like him want to laugh. 'Jus' trus' me. I can't explain, but I have to go, Mama. I need to go away. Them will murder me out here.' So I raise the money quick quick and put him on a plane going to Miami. No, I never understand what was going on. (ibid. 6f.)

The fears that provoke Mark's departure from Jamaica are the same as in *Here Comes the Sun*, even though here they are his own and his mother pretends to be clueless of her son's sexual orientation, presumably out of shame. The passage cited from Dennis-Benn's text above states that a man caught with another man might be "arrested, maimed, mutilated, and buried", and Mark is afraid of the same dangers. He appears to have already been beaten, as he arrives at home "bruise up", but fears to be taken to jail or even murdered before long and leaves the country as fast as possible, before the news may reach his village. And indeed, the indiscretion that Mark apprehends from the university really does occur, just as in Verdene's case, and the already circulating "strong suspicion that Miss Mary's boy was gay" (ibid. 9) comes to be perceived as a certainty. "[O]n the heels of his departure it had become a bona fide fact. Why had he flown out so suddenly? A scandalous story had come out of Kingston and offered an explanation. It said the boy was caught in an act of 'buggery' (many had to look up the

word) and charges were going to be pressed" (Miller, "Tiger Road" 9). So, like Verdene, Mark has been robbed of educational and potential professional opportunities – even more so, because "charges" are pressed against him, which means that he has a criminal record from then on. His reputation, again like Verdene's, has been damaged to a degree that results in physical danger for him. By mentioning that "many had to look up the word" 'buggery', the story ridicules the chorus of outrage that follows Mark's expulsion. People have no understanding whatsoever of the term 'buggery', let alone any further knowledge on the lives and identities of LGBTQ people, but take themselves to be competent judges in the matter nevertheless. Their ignorance largely undermines their moral authority.

As the passages cited above have shown, the principal characters of both stories leave Jamaica as a consequence of institutional discrimination. They are fortunate to be able to escape to the UK (Verdene) and USA (Mark) respectively; however, their worries are not over as soon as they arrive in the supposedly free and tolerant 'global north'. First, the heterosexism that made their journeys necessary exists in their new surroundings as well, as diaspora communities re-enact and uphold the values and imperatives of their homelands. Verdene, for instance, goes to live with an aunt and becomes part of her church community, which again is very dominant. The university incident is known to her new congregation and Verdene's sins are publicly "prayed away" so that she can be "healed" by God (cf. Dennis-Benn, *Sun* 174). Second, when moving outside of these diasporic Caribbean structures, racism is introduced into the equation. Mark, for example, is called a "faggot nigger" by a complete stranger in New York City (cf. Miller, "Tiger Road" 4), so racism is evidently added to heterosexism. A third liability exists in Mark's and Verdene's respective psyches. They are more torn inside than ever before – their homesickness battling with their mortal fear to actually go home, and they have the devastating feeling of neither belonging in Jamaica *nor* in their new places of residence (cf. ibid. 2f.; Dennis-Benn, *Sun* 104). Although their lives might not be threatened to the same degree in their new surroundings as they were in Jamaica, they are not yet tolerated and respected as equal and their precariousness is still heightened in comparison to that of their heteronormative fellow citizens.

Ultimately, simply through telling these stories, both Miller and Dennis-Benn criticise institutional discrimination. Their literary representations paint intimate portraits of the two principal characters which show the hurt and humiliation that they feel after being publicly exposed and expelled, as well as the existential fears that follow. In doing so, they make their characters' position of precarity visible and present the fears and emotions that this precarity entails to a broader audience, thus demanding empathy and understanding for LGBTQ issues. Representations like these might

eventually initiate a process of mediation between the LGBTQ people concerned and the individuals and institutions that are conducive to their precarity. Similar approaches are continuously used in literary works on LGBTQ issues, as the next chapters of analysis will evince.

3.2 Social Exclusion

As the first subchapter of the analysis section has shown, open discrimination and agitation against LGBTQ people still frequently and openly happens inside various institutions of society. The discussion of the literary works laid open how these institutions create structural prejudice and thereby contribute to the emergence of personal prejudice between individual members of society. The first half of this chapter will pursue this issue further and investigate in how far LGBTQ people are excluded from society, i.e. shunned or harassed by their neighbours and acquaintances. As a first example, Miller's short story "The Fear of Stones" will be presented and juxtaposed with his story "Walking on the Tiger Road". After the latter has already been analysed with regard to structural prejudice, it will now be pointed out how both follow up the issue of discrimination in the educational system with an exploration of more personal reasons for which LGBTQ students are commonly excluded by their fellow students. "Fear of Stones" furthermore visualises the primal fears that social exclusion inspires in LGBTQ people. Next, a full-fledged campaign of ostracism presents an important plot line in Dennis-Benn's novel *Here Comes the Sun*, when the notorious lesbian Verdene Moore moves back to her Jamaican home town. As before, not only the depiction of existing mechanisms of persecution will be analysed, but it will also be discussed how the author criticizes and thwarts them. A second approach to counter social ostracism will be examined in connection with Dennis-Benn's "Patsy's Letter: Rainbow People", which debilitates the dominant imperative in a different way.

The second half of this subchapter will consider what happens when this kind of socio-political debate is transferred into more intimate contexts. It will look into the portrayal of family relations in two short stories by Thomas Glave, "The Final Inning" and "Leighton Leigh-Anne Norbrook", and one by Nicole Dennis-Benn, "What's in a Name". They illustrate how familial bonds are strained when opinions about LGBTQ issues diverge or when a cousin, brother or son is identified as gay, bisexual or trans.

3.2.1 Exclusion from the Community

The previous chapter has shown two literary representations of situations in which LGBTQ students were officially expelled from the educational system on grounds of their sexuality. They have shed light on this particular aspect of structural prejudice and

illustrated how such discrimination impacts LGBTQ people's position in society, making their lives more precarious. However, the university's strategy of discrimination is just one part of a reciprocal dynamic in which, on the one hand, personal prejudice is nourished by structural discrimination, as has been seen in Mark's and Verdene's cases, whereas on the other hand, the magnitude of structural discrimination is increased by individual moral outrage and the willingness to be scandalised. In other words, the expulsion itself and the indiscrete circulation of information could not have such devastating consequences for the people concerned, if the broader public weren't so eager to take them up. The short story to be discussed in the following, Kei Miller's "The Fear of Stones", points out how personal prejudice, too, flourishes within educational institutions from a very young age on.

The protagonist, Gavin, has continuous problems in his community and at school. Like Mark in "Walking on the Tiger Road", his neighbours do not consider him to be 'boyish' enough. His grandmother, who raises him in lieu of a parent, is torn when thinking of Gavin's behaviour.

> *he really does have manners more than most. And I teach him to pick up after himself and he do it. And I teach him all these things, like how to move around the kitchen, and I teach him how to hem up clothes, and how to make a simple bread pudding, and you have people would say these is not t'ings you supposed to teach a little boy – is not so you raise boy pickney. But chu! What them know? Man supposed to able to keep house himself* […]. (Miller, "Fear" 109, original emphasis)

On the one hand, she is convinced of her parenting style and regards Gavin's household skills and good manners as positive qualities that a man will certainly profit from in his later life. On the other hand she is aware of the stereotypes that are dominant in their society and seems to know that men who do not conform with the existing ideal might become the subjects of stigmatisation. She wants to shield him from becoming an outsider and therefore tries to teach him the ground rules of 'manly' conduct as well by reproving him for being "too cry cry" (ibid. 109). In short, Gavin's grandmother is in the same position as Mary, Mark's mother in "Tiger Road", who was also quite happy when her little boy was "an angel. Obedient, kind, polite! Everything a mother could want" (Miller, "Tiger Road" 5), but at the same time worried:

> Lord, why him had to walk like that – swinging the hips, him wrist dem flapping like any woman? When him was little I did used to close me eyes and pretend I don't see it, and is the worst t'ing I could do, because it grow into the boy and then everybody a whisper whisper so till even me hear: *Is a girl chile Miss Mary a raise!* And I feel so shame and I sorry […]. (ibid. 6, original emphasis)

In fact, as has been pointed out before, Mary is so worried that she sends Mark away from his home community to "make him start to behave like a proper man" (ibid. 6) and to protect him. However, neither of their strategies succeed. Mark's further prosecution

at university has already been described,[37] and Miller's second protagonist does not show any superior abilities to blend in. "Gavin at school was always different from the other children. […] Gavin would hear *You too cry cry, man! Don't cry.* The children would form a circle around him, would laugh, would tease him" ("Fear" 115f., original emphasis). So what is it precisely that Gavin and Mark lack? How come that a comparatively mundane habit or skill, like doing domestic chores or walking in a certain manner, can have such a devastating effect on a boy's standing in society?

As discussed in Chapter 2.1.1, in queer theory, masculinity or manliness is not simply to be equated with the biological sex, to the contrary,

> [m]asculinity is both a set of practices or behaviors and an ideological position within gender relations. As a set of practices, masculinity refers to the many ways in which society interpellates male subjects as men. Using biology as a point of departure, men come to understand themselves—politically, sociologically and within a system of gender relations—as ideologically different from women. […] It is a phenomenon that is not fixed but is always in the process of being negotiated, contested, even destabilized. (Lewis 95)

As queer theorists see it, these processes of negotiation and contestation hold the potential to broaden the spectre of gender identities beyond a mere binary of masculine and feminine. However, in Jamaica, people tend to hold on to this binary more strongly, perhaps due to the country's history of colonisation as has been argued in Chapter 2.2. As a consequence, there is not a wide range of masculine identities available, but only "two varieties – hegemonic or homosexual" (ibid. 115) – or, in other words, 'proper' and 'defective'. There are very strict parameters concerning "dress, mannerism, speech style and other particularities", which form an imperative of 'proper' masculinity that needs to "be constantly performed, maintained and proven through sexual conquests, physical and verbal contests, and an ability to create a reputation of independence and individuality" (King, *Island Bodies* 71, quoting Murray). Adhering to the dominant narrative, the majority of men "engage in certain gender conventions in an attempt to impose some homogeneity on the category—a homogeneity that is decidedly illusive" (Lewis 95). Those men whose inherent character traits do not coincide with the normative image and who fail to perform them convincingly, are inevitably labelled as 'defective', i.e. homosexual, for lack of any other available categories.

This is the threat that effeminacy entails for boys like Mark and Gavin – to be decried as gay men and treated as social pariahs. And in fact, when Gavin is out with his class mates and proves to be incapable of flipping stones over the water, "[a] new story is recorded. It is Keron […] who finally declares […], 'Gavin! You throw like one little gyal!' […] But it is Dwight who correct Keron, 'No, my yout'. Gavin don't throw like

37 The eventually fatal consequences of his incapability to adapt to the behavioural pattern prescribed for men will be analysed later on in Chapter 4.2.

a little gyal. Him throw like a big battyman!'" (Miller, "Fear" 127). Even at a young age in which the boys have no practical experience of or detailed information on the physical aspects of sexuality, neither heteronormative nor LGBTQ, they have already internalised the available gender identities. A biological male needs to act in accordance with the parameters of masculinity (cf. Miller, "Effeminacy") – in this case that means he needs to be good at flipping stones over the water. If, like Gavin, he fails, he can only be a 'defective' man – a homosexual. This is another eminent example of the reciprocal relation between personal and structural prejudice: in the situation depicted by Miller, a group of boys, i.e. private individuals, are the ones to ostracise Gavin and exclude him from their circle. Nonetheless their individual behaviour is inspired and shaped by institutional and societal structures which are omnipresent in their surrounding and which they have therefore adopted as self-evident (cf. King, *Island Bodies* 71f.).

Miller's story contains two short passages which stand out because they provide its title and serve to question prescribed identity categories in general, and, even more importantly, the people who eagerly accept and maintain these labels. Like the rest of the story, said parts are presented by a homodiegetic, but not otherwise specified first-person-narrator. It is merely known that he is a mathematics professor and tells the story of Gavin and his family in retrospect and from an outside perspective, stressing that he has not witnessed the events in the story first hand, but only met Gavin two years after they happened (cf. Miller, "Fear" 140f.). At the same time he often uses Gavin as the focaliser, giving the impression that he narrates Gavin's thoughts and emotions rather than his own more distanced interpretation of events (cf. ibid. 125f., 136). Furthermore, he admits shaping and changing the frame of the narration – after all, "every story is abridged" (cf. ibid. 91) – and openly debates whether Gavin may really have remembered everything correctly, even things that happened before he was born or win his infancy, or whether he invented parts of the story (cf. ibid. 91, 93f., 97f., 110). Thus, the narrator insinuates that his entire narration is unreliable and somewhat fantastic and allows himself a prominent influence over the story in spite of not taking an active part as a character within the narration.

The two relevant passages that are to be discussed now are primary examples of the narrator's dominance. At first sight, they seem to be his personal comments, unrelated to their immediate context, and therefore they stand out from the text. The first one is parenthesised by the episode of Gavin's stone-flipping failure and appears rather random and out of place. In the middle of a chronological and so far continuous plot line, the reader is suddenly lectured on the subject of fears: "A complete list of phobias would probably be a dictionary of its own. Some of them you would never

imagine really exist – like the fear of teenagers (ephibiphobia), or the fear of lake water (limnophobia), and there is even the fear of stones (lithophobia)" (Miller, "Fear" 127). At first sight, this might be read as a simple comment on Gavin's experience with his class mates – he is afraid of stones, or lithophobic, in that specific situation because he anticipates that he will not be able to flip the pebbles over the water as skilfully as the others can. In this reading, his fear of stones may be understood as a manifestation of a greater fear to be singled out as 'defective'. On second thought, another analogy may be detected in the former part of the paragraph, when Miller first points out that there are enough phobias to fill a dictionary, and then gives two examples that seem particularly uncommon and unimaginable. In mentioning that such unusual forms exist in the realm of phobias, the author directs attention towards the possibility that the same is true for all other aspects of life, and different shades should also be acknowledged and accepted elsewhere, for instance in view of gender identities and sexual orientations.

This notional connection becomes more distinct when the thought is taken up again later on. After a moment of homoerotic tension between the then adult Gavin and Dwight,[38] who in the previous episode denounced him as 'a big battyman', the narrator restarts the phobia-related lecture.

> Here is a flawed bit of logic: for everything that exists, there is a word. If there is not a word for something, then it stands to reason the thing does not exist. But what has Gavin always been afraid of? What is the fear of stones – no, the fear of being stoned? What is it called, this expectancy some men carry in their backs that there are people out there, so righteous and exact in their hatred that they will pick up a stone and fling it after us – an accusation, a punishment, a curse for not fitting in, for not belonging to some tribe they have decided all men must belong to. Is there a name for the premonition lurking in our blood that one day friends will turn their backs and families will disown us? Language is limited. There is no single word for such a thing, but such a thing does exist. (ibid. 136f.)

In this passage, the narrator makes an assertive statement about heteronormativity. In his opinion, the idea that something can only exist if there is a word for it is 'flawed' – if not to say plainly wrong – because "[l]anguage is limited", and Gavin is living proof for that. He does not fit the existing approved categories for masculinity and male sexuality, but of course he exists nonetheless, regardless of there not being a word for his gender identity or sexuality in Jamaica. Likewise, there is no word for his phobia –

38 In the scene mentioned here, a strong sexual tension between the two men is built up. Dwight has to wilfully control his lips so that "they will not be drawn to the mouth they so desperately want to reach right now. And […] if Gavin had responded 'Dwight', the lips across from his would have indeed lost control, and something else would have happened" (Miller, "Fear" 136), at least that is how the narrator assesses the situation. When juxtaposing this with a former passage, in which Gavin proves unable to have sexual intercourse with a girl – he pretends that his lack of arousal is due to the scent of mosquito destroyer, but admits that this was a lie later on (cf. ibid. 129, 136) – there is little doubt left concerning Gavin's sexual orientation. He appears to be not only effeminate, but also gay.

and both conditions are closely intertwined. After all, his 'fear of stones' that was remarked upon earlier turns out to be more precisely a 'fear of being stoned'. He is afraid to be violently killed by people he knows, by friends, family even, in consequence of nothing more than not fitting in, "not belonging to some tribe they have decided all men must belong to". Gavin's apparently unnameable gender identity evokes in him an equally unnameable fear, nonetheless both these phenomena are real to him. Moreover, he is not the only one who feels that way, as the narrator first widens the afflicted group to "some men", and then even speaks of stones being flung after "us", thus including himself in that community of persecuted men. In this manner, the existence of LGBTQ people on the one hand and the ensuing homo- and transphobic reactions on the other hand are being presented from an individual, personally relatable perspective – Gavin's – while simultaneously being identified as relevant for more than one member of society.

The insertion of these two only loosely connected passages on phobias serves to consciously disrupt the plot line and draws special attention to the LGBTQ issues that are commented upon. By this means, Miller's writing once again makes stereotyped thinking visible, particularly with regard to the binary gender normativity. He attacks the unchallenged status of the long-established categories, pointing out that they are formed in a completely arbitrary fashion and that there are more options than have hitherto been identified and named. The strongest deduction to be made from these text passages is that denying the existence of things, circumstances, or people doesn't mean that they really cease to exist. Implicit in that claim is a request to mentally engage with subjects that fall outside the existing parameters instead of aimlessly rejecting them based on futile principles. "The Fear of Stones" thus entails an attempt to stop social exclusion based on gender or sexuality. In telling Gavin's story and rendering such an 'outsider' visible with all his fears and inner turmoil, attention is shifted towards the people concerned and the reader is forced to acknowledge their presence and to reassess their situation.

While Miller's protagonists Gavin and Mark fear and factually encounter social exclusion firstly due to their gender non-conformity, and only later in life due to their sexual orientation, Dennis-Benn's Verdene Moore has not had any problems prior to her involuntary coming-out as homosexual at university, her expulsion and subsequent flight to London. When, years later,[39] she returns, nothing has changed – she remains

39 The exact sequence and duration of Verdene's life events are not specified, yet it seems certain that she has lived in the United Kingdom for more than twenty years. She left Jamaica at age seventeen and was married four years after that, but left her husband later (cf. Dennis-Benn, *Sun* 173f.). At the time of the narration she is forty years old (cf. ibid. 62). She has started dating Margot soon after she returned to Jamaica, and they have been together for more than six months (cf. ibid. 65).

the constant object of speculations and slander as she would have been had she not left at all. Another protagonist, Thandi, summarises her knowledge of Verdene as follows:

> The pink house is owned by Verdene Moore, who is watched closely because the whole community knows what she is capable of. […] The thing about Verdene Moore that Thandi grew up hearing is that she lures little girls to her house with guineps so she can feel them up. Women have caught her in her yard smiling at them as they pass by with watermelons and icicles between their lips on those hot days when their skirts and dresses cling to their bodies like a second skin. It is known and has been known in River Bank's history that Verdene Moore is the Antichrist, the snake every mongoose should have hauled off the island and eaten alive; the witch who practices obscene things too ungodly to even think about. Last August Mr. Joe […] found a dead dog in Verdene Moore's yard with what looked like teeth marks in the animal's bloodied side. […] To this day people believe Verdene Moore killed the dog. […] as a sacrifice in one of her rituals. People stay away from the woman, who keeps to herself anyway. No one even knows what *really* goes on in that pink house. (Dennis-Benn, *Sun* 27f.)

As this paragraph demonstrates, there is an abundance of rumours about Verdene Moore, who is always referenced with her full name as is typical for the language of town gossip. Firstly, the details of her sexual orientation are widely embellished and augmented: she is said to practice "obscene things" of an unspecified nature and to smile at any woman passing her house, a gesture to which onlookers immediately ascribe sexual meaning and then take as proof of an exceeding promiscuity, and she is even suspected to be touching children.[40] Secondly, the speculations about her sexuality expand so far as to give Verdene a supernatural, spiritual quality. She is likened to a serpent – perhaps the most univocal image for depravation available in Christian societies. Like the Apostle Lucas York in *John Crow's Devil* she is named "the Antichrist", and people seem to honestly believe her to kill sacrificial animals – with her teeth nonetheless – and use dark magic in ominous occult rituals. These rumours illustrate once more how essential religious values and thought patterns are within Jamaican communities. Dennis-Benn's novel presents the prevalent attitudes and dynamics of a Christian community in an onset similar to Marlon James's, however, the church as an institution does not rise to as much significance in her work as it does in his. The focus is rather set on the individual community members' behaviour towards Verdene. Even without any authoritative leader and outside of clearly regulated institutional structures, the inhabitants of River Bank close their ranks against Verdene, building an entity to which she has not access point whatsoever. Even though she is a welcome aim for gossip, people have no interest in getting to know her. They "stay away" and Verdene "keeps to herself", as the quote above recapitulates, therefore no

40 This rumour in particular once again proves Cecil Gutzmore's thesis that "popular discourse generally conflates homosexuality and paedophilia" (119). "The foundational assumption of this imperative is that homosexuality […] involves a strong predatory paedophile tendency which is put to practice at every opportunity" (ibid. 132) – a claim which obviously presents an example of systematic defamation.

one *really* knows anything about her. She is an absolute outsider with no means or prospect of contact. Even her girlfriend, Margot, cannot provide an access point. In fact, she does not even admit to be in contact with Verdene for most of the novel, but keeps their relationship secret.

This becomes visible any time Verdene enters a public space. As much as she tries to avoid interaction with the greater public, she is forced to go to the market to get food sometimes. Of course the market place is the centre of gossip and town life. It is the space where Verdene is most exposed and it appears to become more threatening every time she enters it. The novel delivers two accounts of these market visits. In the first, it is said that the vendors and buyers

> watched her, turning to give her their full unfriendly stares. One by one they scrunched their noses as though the smells from the nearby fish market had finally gotten to them after thirty years of selling. Verdene, pretending to be untroubled by this, filled her basket with fruit, handed crisp bills to hesitant hands, and left. (Dennis-Benn, *Sun* 66)

The vendors' dislike is clearly perceptible and makes Verdene feel uncomfortable, but in the end it is still possible for all parties involved to carry out their transactions in a professional manner and at least a pretence of normalcy is upheld. In the later scene the atmosphere becomes gradually more threatening: "They remember the sin she committed. They whisper […]. Some fan her away […], while others pause, their hands on their hips as though waiting for a confrontation. Verdene feels like one of the soldiers that march through the area with long rifles, her presence leaving a trail of silence and apprehensive looks" (ibid. 241). Eventually, the situation escalates when Verdene attempts to start a conversation with Delores, Margot's mother. Delores acts verbally aggressive towards Verdene right away, asking her what she wants and telling her that they are "not on any level" for simply greeting each other casually. When Verdene enquires about Margot's state of being, Delores starts yelling at her: "'G'weh wid yuh nastiness!' […] The woman's screams get louder and louder the farther Verdene runs. The other vendors peer from their stalls to see the commotion. They see Delores screaming, Verdene hurrying away, bumping into things and people" (ibid. 243). When she accidentally knocks over a bystander's box, a conflict ensues which results in physical danger for Verdene:

> The man draws back his fist. Behind him, the vendors chant, 'Do it! Do it! Do it! Punch di sodomite in har face!' […] The Rasta man pulls Verdene's face to his fist or his fist to her face. Verdene […] has perfected a self-defense maneuver that enables her to block the man's fist and twist his arm behind his back. He grits his teeth as she holds his hand in place. […] The Rasta man lets Verdene go, his eyes wide with fear. (ibid. 244)

What seems like a triumph for her at first, turns back around quickly, when she gathers her purchases, seemingly in control of the situation, and prepares to leave.

> When she thinks she's done, someone hands her an apple. […] 'I believe this belongs

> to you,' the woman says; […] Miss Gracie grins with all her rotting teeth. 'Yuh mek Eve bite di apple,' Miss Gracie says, the accusation like the jab of a needle. 'Now tek it back! Tek it back an' go to hell weh yuh come from, yuh serpent!' She flings the apple at Verdene, hitting her in the head. Verdene drops her basket and runs, aware of the crowd stirring again with victory. 'Yes, Mama Gracie, show har who run t'ings! Lick har backside! Buss har head!' […] 'G'long, yuh blasted sodomite! An' nuh come back!' Delores says. Delores's final words hit Verdene like a rock in the back. Verdene picks up her pace and runs. (Dennis-Benn, *Sun* 245)

Once again using the religious image of the satanic serpent that initiated the Fall of Man, Miss Gracie reinstates Verdene in her victimised position as a social pariah who is not entitled to receive sympathy or support from any side. Her attack is composed of a verbal strike first and a physical assault second, and seems especially cruel, because she initially feigns a gesture of kindness in handing Verdene back one of the items she has lost. Miss Gracie appears to consciously build up her spirit only to crush it a moment later, debase her with her words and hurt her physically by hitting her with the apple. This act of malice as well as the previous attempt to punch Verdene are welcomed enthusiastically by the rest of the community and threaten to incite further strikes from the crowd. Their readiness for violence is reminiscent of *John Crow's Devil* once again. To the people of River Bank, Verdene is not a human being, but a 'sodomite'. She is not worthy of pity or peace, let alone friendliness, but a danger to every righteous man and woman. Verdene seems to become finally aware of the irreversibility of her dehumanisation and the extreme danger that lies in people's fear and hatred. When her experience in that situation is likened to "a rock in the back", it is suggested that Verdene feels the same apprehension and fear that Gavin has in Miller's story, a fear of being stoned by the people she knows.

In fact, such an act of violence seems more and more likely the longer Verdene lives in River Bank, her own privateness notwithstanding. No matter whether she goes out to public places or stays inside her house, in an 'out of sight, out of mind' approach, people continue their campaign of hostility against her. They seem sincerely worried about her evil powers and her potential to hurt the community and do everything to protect themselves and "cut her out" as the Apostle York might chant in such a situation. A small scale example of this agenda can be seen on a weekly basis, when people walk past Verdene's house to church, "Bibles clutched in their hands like purses, each pausing to make a sign of the cross as they pass by the house" (ibid. 67). A larger scale example is to be found in the deeds of an unknown person who regularly vandalises her garden. Verdene suspects Miss Gracie to be the culprit because of

> […] that tree limb she wrapped in a bloodied cloth and threw in Verdene's yard last week. '*The blood of Jesus is upon you!'* she had yelled with crazed eyes. […] Verdene remained on her veranda, stunned silent. Before the tree limb it was a beheaded fowl that she left on Verdene's front steps. Verdene didn't see the woman do it, but she knew. Four Sundays ago Verdene found the body of a dead dog on her property. Since Verdene moved back from London there had been a total of four dead mongrel

> dogs found in her yard, their brown decaying bodies infested with flies. The incidents happened in spurts as though the perpetrator were operating on some kind of algorithm. The first time coincided with the first night Margot stayed over. A Saturday night. Verdene had woken up that Sunday morning to the slaughtered animal's blood trailing her walkway to the veranda. The blood was smeared across the doorposts and columns. And on the veranda grill and the gate. *The blood of Jesus be upon you! w*as scrawled on the wall on both sides of the house. (Dennis-Benn, *Sun* 67f., original emphasis)

This episode expresses the concrete factuality of Verdene's social exclusion in an affecting manner. Even without any further context, the repeated atrocity of killing dogs for the sole purpose of sending a message of repulse to Verdene seems sickening and horrific. Together with depictions of the assault victim's reaction, the emotional impact on the reader is even greater.

When, at a later point, the same thing happens again, Verdene feels "rage" and her "tears begin to fall faster than she can catch them. The fact that the culprits could be hiding in the bushes, laughing so hard that their guts pain them, makes Verdene angrier" (ibid. 166). In portraying Verdene's emotions of overwhelming anger and sadness, Dennis-Benn starts to disrupt the process of dehumanisation that the community operates. The cycle of othering is cracked when Verdene decides to take action and confront her neighbour Miss Gracie. On the way to her house, she meets the gardener, Charles, who tells her that Miss Gracie is not home and takes the role of her alternate opponent in this situation. He first counters her accusations by repeating the town gossip – "'[…] from what ah hear, you kill those dogs yuhself'" – to which Verdene replies: "'[…] you don't know me. You know nothing about me. So don't you dare tell me what I do and don't do in my own house. […]'" (ibid.169). In this moment of tension, she then asks him for help, which he does not seem to have expected:

> 'Why should I help you?' - 'Because it's the only way I'll leave. I want this mess out of my yard. I want to live in peace. I want to be treated like a human being. I want –' The tears she had shed earlier are rolling back heavy down to her chin, wetting her collar. The young man relaxes and stoops to lay down his machete. […] The young man raises his hand and rests it on Verdene's shoulder – a gesture Verdene did not expect or even think she needed. But she does. 'All right,' he says. (ibid. 170f.)

At this point, Verdene refuses to be victimised any longer and demands accountability on the spot, even though Charles is not necessarily involved in the vandalism on her property. She confronts him as a tacitly consenting member of society and requests "to be treated like a human being". As a result, she receives a little bit of respect and understanding, conveyed in the simple gesture of a touch on the shoulder. The exchange is positively surprising for both parties involved and leads to further cooperation and communication. The passage thus serves to corroborate West's and Hewstone's thesis that direct contact between the groups can diminish personal prejudice and induce more tolerant views, as introduced in Chapter 2.1.3. The boundary being crossed once, more dialogue becomes possible and the two

characters come to understand each other on an emotional, intimate level in spite of their many differences.[41] They connect via their shared experiences of ostracism and discrimination, when Charles tells Verdene the reason he helped her after their first encounter: "'Cause ah know what it's like to be scorned. To be di talk ah di town. To feel like di whole world turn up dem nose up at you 'cause dem t'ink dem bettah than you.'" (Dennis-Benn, *Sun* 211). This last sequence seems to provide the most relevant point made in regard to Verdene's relation to society, as it promotes intergroup contact as a strategy to overcome social exclusion and replace it with efforts towards mutual tolerance and understanding.

The shortest story to be analysed in this thesis, Dennis-Benn's "Patsy's Letter: Rainbow People", appears to be inspired by a similar sentiment. It seeks to establish connections and point out likenesses between LGBTQ people and other Jamaicans in a rather naïve and innocent fashion. The story, as the title suggests, is written in the form of a letter from the eponymous Patsy, a young Jamaican woman living in New York City, to her mother. It describes her experience walking back home from her babysitting job in Manhattan when she ran into

> […] dis crowd ah people. Rainbow flags everywhere like confetti. All around me, people was jumping an' waving an' gyrating; dem faces not looking like faces at all, but joy. Joy in every sense ah di word. Joy like Johnny get when him belly full up a mango pon s'maddy housetop; joy weh we did get when Trudy pass har Common Entrance to get into dat good, good school up Constant Spring; joy weh Auntie Bridgette feel when di Holy Ghost tek har inna church an' mek she drop dung. Dat kinda joy me talking 'bout, mama. But wha' strike me di most 'bout dese people is how ordinary dem look. Ordinary like Hi-Lo supermarket, Sunday School, stuck in traffic pon Papine ordinary. Like dey coulda be yuh neighbour, teacher, Sunday School teacher, friend, police, superintendent, ecetera, ecetera. (Dennis-Benn, "Patsy")

As in the excerpt from *Here Comes the Sun* discussed above, a distinct focus is set on shared emotions, although in this case they are not feelings of anxiety and suffering, but of happiness. Their pure, heartfelt joy, according to Patsy, is the most remarkable thing about this group of people she coincidentally encounters, and she recognises it as an emotion that is familiar to her. Trying to explain that specific sort of joy to her mother, she employs a list of situations from their family history in Jamaica, such as a family member passing an important exam, the feeling of enjoying a full belly and a good view, or a state of religious ecstasy. All of the examples seem set in a distinctly Jamaican context, which, on the one hand matches the letter-writer and addressee's personal background, and on the other hand makes it easy for a broader Jamaican public to relate to the images used. Considering that the story was published in the *Jamaica Gleaner*, which has a "combined hardcopy sales and online readership of over

41 After all, Charles is male, heterosexual, sixteen years old, has a very basic education only and comes from an economically weak family (cf. Dennis-Benn, *Sun* 127), whereas Verdene is female, homosexual, forty years old, university-educated and far-travelled.

750,000" and is therefore "in a privileged position to influence public opinion" (Thompson xi), using this sort of tailor-made language and imagery seems to be a powerful tool in exposing Jamaican audiences to the often unfamiliar and uncomfortable issue of LGBTQ identities. In addition to describing the sentiment of joy, the same frame of reference is used to reflect on "how ordinary dem look", ordinary like several every-day scenes and places from Jamaica, or every-day acquaintances. Patsy writes, "dey coulda be yuh neighbour, teacher, Sunday School teacher, friend, police, superintendent, […]" and thereby stresses the mundaneness and sameness of these people, seemingly unaware that they would most probably not be considered equal in Jamaica at all.

Interestingly, Patsy is a very naïve narrator, who, unlike most readers, does not know the meaning of the rainbow flag and therefore does not identify the people in front of her as participants of an LGBTQ Pride Parade.[42] Instead, she assumes that they are celebrating their national heritage, as the letter's next paragraph indicates.

> Me neva know seh dis country exist – dis country wid a rainbow flag. Me used to t'ink seh rainbow belongs in di sky, but dese people prove me wrong. Mama, dey love dem country suh till! Same like how we love Jamaica an' fly we flag high when Usain Bolt come first inna track an' field. Same like how Auntie Bridgette did wave di flag even when di Bobsled Team come last fah di umpteenth time. The rainbow people jumping like dey win something. Some of di man dem tek off dem shirt. An' di ooman dem too. (Dennis-Benn, "Patsy")

Again, Patsy unknowingly likens the experience of being part of the LGBTQ community to being part of the Jamaican nation. She describes the love for Jamaica and the love for the supposed rainbow country, which the reader understands to be non-heteronormative love, in the same terms. Through her ingenuousness she successfully assigns these two sentiments that Jamaicans often consider antipodal equal value by implying that they are essentially the same. The dominant opinion – that being LGBTQ means being anti-Jamaican – is thus negated, since the feelings of love, pride and joy are presented as equal for either of the two communities.

Patsy does detect some differences though in how the two groups are constituted and how they behave. In spite of not knowing the symbolism of the rainbow, these observations lead her to draw some connection to her previous encounters with LGBTQ people:

> But mama, dis country wid di rainbow flag have some strange people. Dey have man dress like ooman inna heels an' wig an' make-up! Mama, yuh shoulda see dem! An' people tek nuff picture wid dem. Nobody chase or trace dem like dey did dat man-ooman down ah gully side. Membah him? How dem stone him an' stab him up? Poor man-ooman had to lock himself inside ah Missah Harvey store fi get 'weh from di mob. Here, in dis parade ah rainbow people, dey treat those man-ooman like royalty. Like

42 The date on the letter, 30 June 2014, serves to prove to the attentive reader that the event Patsy describes is most likely the 2014 New York City Pride March, which took place on June 29 that year (cf. Nichols).

> Queen Elizabeth when Grandma Joyce seh she visited Jamaica fah Independence fah di first time. Dese people look like dey jus' got dem independence, mama. Dey look like Jamaicans wid ah different flag. (Dennis-Benn, “Patsy”)

The sight of transvestites, in particular “man dress like ooman unna heels an’ wig an’ make-up” bewilders Patsy a little and reminds her of a trans man she knew back home in Jamaica. By remembering the story of his harassment, she identifies and points out Jamaica’s issue with homo-, and especially transphobia. She is astonished that the rainbow people do not react hostile towards these “man-ooman”, but with respect and esteem. Her interpretation is that in this new community, trans-people are considered ambassadors who induce change – positive change, similar to Queen Elizabeth bringing independence to Jamaica in 1962. Of course, the comparison with “royalty” and Queen Elizabeth is especially humorous in this context, as Patsy is of course describing another kind of queen – drag queens. She presents this appreciative code of conduct towards trans-people without negative judgement, immediately accepting it as an alternative reality. The last image of that paragraph, which refers to LGBTQ people as “Jamaicans wid ah different flag” can easily be understood as an invitation extended towards all Jamaicans to try and recognize similarities between themselves and fellow LGBTQ countrymen and -women. It must be understood as an attempt to bridge the gap and make peace between the two groups.

Lastly, Patsy’s postscript summarises the central aim of this short story in particular and LGBTQ-themed literature in general. She writes: “P.S. Hope me can sen' fah you soon so dat yuh can come an' see fah yuhself” (ibid.). This wish expresses a hope that, after reading her letter, Patsy’s mother will be just as curious about the rainbow people and just as open-minded towards them as she is, and will be willing to meet them herself. That hope is founded on the idea that imagined contact can facilitate direct contact (cf. West et al.), as explicated in Chapter 2.1.3, and forms a key attribute of LGBTQ literature. Patsy’s proposal to “come an’ see fah yuhself” can be transferred to a meta level on which Dennis-Benn extends the same invitation to all readers of her story.

In summary, it can be said that all the works discussed engage differently with the issue of social exclusion of LGBTQ people, but eventually send a similar message. Miller’s story “Fear of Stones” reveals that a lot of homophobia originates in a sort of gender-phobia. He shows that, in contemporary Jamaican society, there is only one generic role to play for men, and that whoever fails to play that role is dehumanised and excluded. In then portraying such an excluded character, Gavin, he forces the reader to acknowledge that people *do* exist outside of strict gender categories and suffer from them. The story promotes a diversification of identity options and pleads for

tolerance. Dennis-Benn's novel depicts a community-wide campaign of ostracism that is conducted by means of meticulously planned, most cruel threats and hate crimes. She brings about an understanding of the consequences for the victim of that campaign, Verdene, and, in a second step, shows her emancipation. Verdene's demands to her community – and in a broader sense to the community of readers – are forcefully presented and a successful incident of intergroup contact is depicted. Lastly, "Patsy's Letter" uses the technique of writing to bring about imagined contact between Jamaican readers and LGBTQ people. In a naïve tone of voice the protagonist innocently points out parallels and likenesses where many see opposition, and thus aims at initiating direct contact and conciliation between the two parties. The intentions of all three texts can thus be identified as achieving more tolerance and willingness for contact and exchange in the outside group, i.e. heteronormative, mostly Jamaican, readers.

3.2.2 Alienation from the Family

The previous subchapter has analysed stories in which the protagonists have been excluded from the communities they lived in; now the circle will be contracted and it will be examined how LGBTQ identity can impact family dynamics. The first story that deals with this topic is Thomas Glave's "The Final Inning", in which a group of four women and one man has just returned home from the funeral of Duane who died of AIDS. The five principal characters – Tamara, Cee-Cee, Nicky, Jacquie, and Jacquie's husband Gregory – are all related to each other and to Duane, although the exact degrees of kinship are not clarified. The story is set in a part of the Bronx in New York City, but it can nevertheless be classified as Jamaican literature in so far as Thomas Glave is an author with Jamaican origins and affiliations who frequently addresses subject matters that are closely connected to Jamaican culture at home and abroad. Moreover, the family in the story is black and presumably from a Caribbean background as well. The plot consists of their thoughts and statements while they discuss the events of the funeral, which for the largest part is presented in dialogue that remains unmediated by the heterodiegetic narrator. Some additional information is given with external focalisation and there are some passages in which Gregory is the internal focaliser.

The story is loosely divided into two parts. In the first, Tamara, Cee-Cee and Jacquie share the most part of the conversation between them. They reveal more and more snippets of information on an incident that happened at the funeral, about which everyone seems shocked and hurt. From their conversation it can be gathered that someone, whose name is already forgotten, stood up during the church service and

made a statement that was insulting to Duane and his family. Little by little, the women unveil that this person was a gay man who came to the funeral uninvited in the company of a whole group of LGBTQ people. Cee-Cee calls these people “faggots and bulldaggers” and “a goddamn freak show” (Glave, “Inning” 160), based on their unconventional fashion styles. It is said that one of them walked up to the front of the church, even though they had purposely been instructed to sit at the very back, and started shouting. While the content of his speech is not known at first, Cee-Cee, Jacquie and Tamara comment that it was a “dissing”, some “disgraceful shit”, a “goddamn disrespecting blasphemy” (ibid 157), and most probably a lie (cf. ibid. 159). They describe the reactions of some members of the congregation. Apparently an uncle “cried like a big old drooping-ass baby” (ibid. 153), Duane’s mother and stepfather were “in a severe state of shock” (ibid. 155), the minister started to shout, Cee-Cee herself wanted to “knock[...] the shit outa him first and put a foot in his ass second” (ibid. 157) and everyone else was “looking at him in had it been disbelief? disgust? hate? or the rage of *We oughta kill that fucking faggot right now. Kill his motherfucking faggot ass. Outside the church or in it. Right here. Anywhere*” (ibid. 170, original emphasis). From these early stages of the conversation it becomes clear that their general attitude towards non-heteronormativity is one of negative judgement and hostility. These sentiments peak in the characters’ feeling towards the unnamed speaker, as their quick readiness for violence against him shows. What he said is built up as unbelievably disrespectful and simply horrible.

It is only about two thirds into the story, that the actual speech of ‘the faggot’ is narrated and a turning point is induced. This scene is made to stand out quite distinctly, because “Glave employs a special narratorial/narrative/typographical technique to indicate the varied psychological, emotional, and spiritual media through which we gain access to Gregory's witnessing of the speech itself” (Jarrett 1251). He formats the account of the speech into two columns, both of which are written in a stream-of-consciousness style with hardly any punctuation. Instead, emphasis is indicated by the means of capitalisations, particularly in the left column which is concerned with the speech act itself, the manner in which it was performed and the immediate verbal reactions to it. The right column describes the more passive reactions throughout the wider audience, including the inner thoughts of several individuals. The positioning of both separate lines of narration alongside each other on the page visualises the simultaneity of the events presented in each one. However, it is important throughout to “[b]ear in mind that the left column does not represent the actual speech but a narrative formed through Gregory's witnessing of the audience's growth in anger and combativeness” (ibid. 1252). He remembers the speaker saying the following:

> [...] my name is JAMES MITCHELL SCROGGINS and no you won't make me SHUT UP cause I'm PROUD to be here today as a GAY friend of DUANE'S and a (shouting over the rage) HUMAN BEING GODDAMNIT just like DUANE WAS TOO and now why won't you SAY IT he died of AIDS of AIDS […] say it AIDS we all KNOW IT because I know some of you know I HAVE THIS DISEASE TOO and I took care of him so I know many of you KNOW ME and what you're doing today is WRONG WRONG Duane wasn't ASHAMED of it either but all of you people YOU'RE KILLING US you won't STOP you keep right on KILLING US like you didn't even want us to come today to SAY GOODBYE to our friend our LOVER and then made us wait out in the COLD RAIN and then SIT WAY IN THE BACK BACK OF THE CHURCH how can you KEEP ON DOING THIS when is it going to STOP now how can you bury him and say you LOVE HIM and not say one word about how HE LOVED OTHER MEN he loved all of us and WE LOVED HIM yes he had AIDS it KILLED HIM we us here now we should SAY IT SAY IT you're trying to IN him I'm bringing him OUT again for God's sake please I'm asking you for once won't you just SAY IT SAY IT […] – I want all of you now who were proud of Duane as a proud out open GAY MAN to stand up WITH ME STAND for a moment of silence STAND
>
> He had said
>
> Stand
>
> (the last inning the inning was over) (Glave, "Inning" 170ff., original emphasis)

Importantly, before anything else happens, the speaker gives his own name, James Mitchell Scroggins. He implicitly rejects the derogatory label 'faggot' and demands being considered a human being who is known and addressed by his Christian name like everyone else. However, as the earlier exchanges between Cee-Cee, Jacquie and Tamara have demonstrated, there remain people who deny him that respect in spite of his clear request and continue to call him 'the faggot'. The passage discloses that the supposedly unspeakable, blasphemous lies that James Scroggins told in church were essentially that Duane was openly and confidently gay and died of AIDS. He furthermore reproved Duane's family for concealing his real identity and disclaiming the life he chose. Scroggins wants to know: "how can you bury him and say you LOVE HIM and not say one word about how HE LOVED OTHER MEN". To him, it seems impossible to love someone and renounce his real self at the same time.

From the other column it becomes clear that his accusations are justified and that his claims are not lies, as the responses of several people in the funeral party reveal their unspoken knowledge of Duane's sexual orientation. Apparently,

> you could see some people thinking […] You speak the truth up there boy […] it's all true all of it: under three hats three ladies in particular nodding Yeah we sure do know how he died but ain't nobody saying nothing cept 'a long illness' and that boy is right rightright […] no it can't keep going on because He the One knows don't He: knows the truth about all of it and if we […] can't even speak the truth now so damn late in the day when are we ever gone speak it and now just think think about it what in the hell kinda going on is that? (ibid. 171f.)

Thus, the truthfulness of James's statement is already confirmed at the same moment that he speaks it. Hence, the text implicitly poses the question of why Duane's parents are lying. The outraged response to Duane being called gay provides an answer: male homosexuality is intolerable for the majority of their social environment. Even if they

knew of his sexuality and accepted it – which is not certain – his parents might fear that revealing Duane's sexuality and the specific nature of his disease even after his death would cause a demise in his and their reputation. It might make people feel disgust and disrespect for him – perhaps it even stirs these feelings in his parents themselves. Furthermore, as AIDS is still often ignorantly considered a specifically homosexual disease, it might lead people to view Duane's death to be caused by his lifestyle, and therefore as his own fault (cf. Glave, "Inning" 166). With these apprehensions in mind, it may seem logical to keep these facts of Duane's identity a secret, because revealing them might make him less human in the eye of the public, perhaps even to the degree of ungrievability in Judith Butler's sense.

Nevertheless, even if this line of thought renders their secrecy more comprehensible, there is more than one person in the audience who considers it wrong to silence Duane's life. The motivation may differ – the three old ladies for instance believe it is wrong to lie because God is all-knowing and cannot be deceived, whereas Nicky and Gregory have other reasons as will shortly be seen – but there are several listeners who silently agree with James Scroggins. But for all that, none of them speak up to support him in church, which indicates the power of the stigma associated with LGBTQ lives. Only in the safety of Tamara's house, hours later, a conversation on the issue can be held. And only after the five protagonists have managed to recapitulate James Scroggins's speech, when his controversial statements have been retold and shared with the reader, it is possible for their discussion to go into a different direction. The main impetus behind this change is Nicky, who eventually dominates the last third of the conversation. She consciously refuses to use derogatory language like 'faggot' or 'homo' (cf. ibid. 161f.) and takes the absent James Scroggins's side in the debate. While the others seem unsure whether the claim that Duane was gay is truthful or a denunciation (cf. ibid. 159), Nicky admits that she knows for sure that it is true because he told her (cf. ibid. 166). She starts a heated argument when she agrees with James – whom she knows personally and calls Jimmy (cf. ibid. 174) – that Duane's parents and the entire family are to blame

> '– because, y'all … – they was gone bury him with – with a *lie*. […] y'all don't know, y'all didn't know Duane the way I knew him. […] the way he used to talk about how hard it was being so – outside the family and everything' […] 'He wasn't outside the family. All them people […] they all loved him,' Cee-Cee would not stop. 'How you gone say he was outside the family when you saw the way everybody was crying and carrying on when they brought him in? […]' (ibid. 167f., original emphasis)

Nicky stands by her statement though and criticises the others' attitudes and behaviour. She accuses them of not having cared for Duane:

> the whole time Duane was sick I ain't never seen not *one* a y'all up in his house. Not to stop by and visit. Not even to call. So now y'all can sit up in here talking about faggot so-and-so but when the shit was down y'all couldn't even *visit* the motherfucker.

I ain't never seen not *one* a y'all. Not one! (Glave, "Inning" 175f., original emphasis)

Neither, she states, have the pastor or his parents (cf. ibid. 177), whereas herself and even more so his lover Jimmy did everything for Duane. She describes to the others how Jimmy was "holding Duane up in his arms like he was a little baby […]. Kissing up on him, even with them purple spots all on his face. Telling him he loved him, he loved him so much and all kindsa shit. Wiping the shit outa his ass –" (ibid. 175). She takes a strong stand in favour of Duane, Jimmy and their friends and tells Jacquie, Cee-Cee and Tamara that they have no right to judge over 'the faggots', firstly because they themselves were the ones who misbehaved towards Duane and secondly because each of them has their immoral dirty secrets hidden away (cf. ibid. 178f.) As a consequence, the others kick her out, but Nicky now refuses to be silenced again.

The theme of exclusion has many facets in this short story. First, James Scroggins is immediately excluded from society based on his outer appearance and attacked violently as soon as he speaks his opinion.[43] Second, Duane has been excluded from his own family due to his sexual orientation and his struggle with AIDS. His core family and most other relatives have shunned him in the last months of his life, instead of looking after him. Furthermore, by trying to keep his true identity out of their minds and realities they continue his exclusion post-mortem. Third, Nicky is excluded by means of association. When she shows tolerance of Duane as a gay man and defends his LGBTQ friends, Tamara, Cee-Cee and Jacquie request her to leave the family circle as well. Lastly, one could argue that Gregory's life is affected by those strict rules of exclusion, too. His "minimal and knee-jerk participation" in the conversation is "curious" from the beginning (Jarrett 1249), and gradually his "momentary fragmented memory reveals that he has kept his homosexual experiences with anonymous men – and thus his bisexuality – a secret from his wife, Jacquie" (ibid. 1250) and everyone else, except Duane. Since now nobody seems to know about Gregory's homo- or bisexuality, however, it cannot really be considered a family issue, but is first and foremost an example of self-denial and will therefore be analysed at a later point of this thesis in Chapter 3.3.

Glave's other story that is relevant to this chapter, "Leighton Leigh Anne Norbrook", also discusses correlations of homosexuality and family in the context of a funeral. In this case, however, the narrator, Leighton, is secretly gay, and the deceased, his sister Leigh-Anne, was the only one who knew about it. At her funeral, Leighton remembers how Leigh-Anne found out about his sexuality and reflects on how this

43 Of course, these events take place within the congregation of Duane's mourners, and do not allow any conclusions about Scroggins's relation to his own family. Considering the irate and desperate nature of his tirade in church, however, it seems unlikely that his experiences in other groups have been better.

incident stood between them. In fact, the distance between Leighton and Leigh Anne is the first thing that becomes obvious in the story, even before they are identified as siblings, first from the title itself, which puts exceedingly large spacing between their names, and second by the story's initial sentence, which reads: "But now the secret, *that* secret – his and the nasty-dutty (but rass *gorgeous*) black bwoy's – is at rest in the corpse" (Glave, "Leighton" 192, original emphasis). Referring to Leigh Anne by the factual and unsentimental descriptor "the corpse" determines early on that Leighton is not as emotionally touched as might be expected at a funeral, let alone the funeral of one's only sibling.

What has priority in his thoughts is "*that* secret". He knows, intellectually, that he ought to mourn his sister and he keeps telling himself the facts of her death as if to artificially get himself in a funeral-appropriate mood: "Leigh Anne Faith Shepherd, your only sister and only sibling, is dead" (ibid. 195); "lovely girl, sweet adorable younger sister, younger by two years" (ibid. 196);

> "some gunmen – possibly two or three […] – had 'surprised' her. […] Surprised at the gate of her driveway the lovely twenty-six-year-old Miss Shepherd, lately of Cherry Gardens, where she and her fiancé Peter, to whom she would have been married at the end of next month, had moved only six weeks ago. 'Surprised' her […] and shot her to death in a 'fusillade' of bullets" (ibid. 195),

to be precise with "*Four shots to the chest and one to the neck*" (ibid. 194, original emphasis). Even though he speaks about his own sister's violent death, the language he uses does not have any personal or intimate tone to it. In fact, he addresses himself in the second person in his own inner monologue – "your only sister" – and the language he uses sounds matter-of-factly and a bit lurid, just like the story would be written out in a tabloid.

He knows that he should be shocked and aggrieved to no end about Leigh Anne's death, but cannot help remembering her mostly as the person who found him out.

> How can he be possibly thinking now […] of what the nasty-dutty black bwoy thought of all this? […] How can he be possibly thinking of him now as he stands here among his family? Standing here feeling what cannot be possible, and must not be now nor ever again: that *obscene* stirring in his – oh, but yes, exactly. There. […] *I'm standing here thinking of him and feeling him on me again because … because she was there. Because on that particular day she saw, and she remembered – or at least never forgot. Saw, yes. She saw, having walked in on them. Four years ago. Him and the nasty-dutty black bwoy, in their parents' house* […]. (ibid. 196f., original emphasis)

He continues to go into a lot of detail over what he and Michael, the gardener, did that night (cf. ibid. 197, 201ff.), and cannot help but think of his sister mainly as "the only one who had ever known. Known about that" (ibid. 195). Her knowledge has left him with ambiguous feelings. On the one hand he seems grateful that "[s]he who, after knowing, for years, had looked at him" (ibid. 195). Presumably, it was reassuring feeling, to some extent, that he did not have to carry his secret alone any more, but that

there was someone else in the world who knew the real him. On the other hand, from that day on he feels like she "[h]ad not looked at him" (Glave, "Leighton" 195). Her discovery seems to have made her see him in a different light, or at least he imagines it to be that way. In his perception, "[*s*]*he had looked at him that way every day she had seen him for the couple of years she'd had left to live. She had looked and not looked at him that way especially in his dreams*" (ibid. 205, original emphasis). Since Leigh Anne's own view on the episode is not presented, it remains unclear whether it is congruent with Leighton's. Consequently, this passage of his narration can be read as either a correct diagnosis of the cause of alienation between the siblings, or as a misperception on Leighton's part where he transfers his deep-rooted feelings of shame and guilt onto his sister.

Regardless of Leigh Anne's true views, the incident definitely changes their relationship in so far as Leighton hates his sister to some extent for having come home too early and "very much wish[es] her dead again" (ibid. 202), because, as he tells himself,

> *if she had kept to her word* [i.e. stayed out until later that night]*, you would then finally, finally have been able to do all the things that you had so longed to do and had never done, never dared to do, even if, especially if, they were things to do with and to a big-hooded nasty-dutty black bwoy who laboured* […] *in your parents' garden. Then, in those most secret times, you can at last be free* […]. (ibid. 197, original emphasis)

He holds Leigh Anne accountable for his missed opportunity and the regrets of his life, for his internalised guilt and shame and for his fear to repeat the experience in real life rather than replaying it over and over in his mind. Interestingly, he seems to be aware of these processes in his psyche, and he actively tries to counter them with clear instructions to his own self:

> you should not be standing […] during your sister's funeral, feeling glad, as you do now, and happy – oh, rass, tell the truth, *relieved* – as you feel now, that she is dead. Though you are sad, devastated […], that she died as she did and that, oh God, you never had a chance to say goodbye or I love you, or a chance to tell her how much how much how *much*… and only you can know what the rest of that sentence would say – you know that you should not feel this most secret feeling of deliverance, yes God, and safety, God, that she who knew about *that* and *him* and all of it […] is now dead. (ibid. 205, original emphasis)

While he will always have to live with his inner shame, his regrets and self-doubts, one weight is lift from him – the fear that someone else might find out about his sexuality. Hence, the feeling of relief at his sister's death, as crass as it may seem at first, is actually understandable. She will never be able to reveal his secret and he feels as if a looming threat has been eliminated.

However, towards the end of the story the narration is changed to a heterodiegetic perspective, and it is suggested that Leighton's secret still hovers over his head like a "great dark bird" whose "wings now completely cover his face and its beak poises as if to take aim where his skull is thinnest, as it now wraps itself entirely, ever so gently, in

the way of a shroud, about his head" (Glave, "Leighton" 207). After all, he cannot know whether Leigh Anne has ever spoken of his homosexuality to anyone else, nor is he entirely safe from accidentally giving himself away. The secret may still hurt him, destroy his life, or even cause his physical death in many ways – through the depravation of material needs and social access, as all other protagonists discussed so far have suffered; through a disease like AIDS, as has happened to Duane; or through psychic self-destruction or hateful violence, examples of which will be presented in the next two chapters. Thus, Leighton is constantly faced with various social and internal threats that render his life precarious. This pressure has strongly influenced Leighton's view on the world, and probably Leigh Anne's as well who, even though not homosexual herself, must have been aware of it. The shared knowledge of Leighton's sexual orientation has therefore exerted additional pressure on both siblings and triggered a process of alienation. They have dissociated from one another to the point where Leighton is actually glad and relieved over his sister's death.

None of them ever speaks about what happened and Leighton's sexuality remains an open, but never-to-be-discussed secret between them. In contrast, in Nicole Dennis-Benn's "What's in a Name", the LGBTQ identity of sixteen-year-old Errol Junior cannot be considered a secret, but is obvious to anyone in and outside the family. From a young age on, he has been identified as non-normative, even though his parents and their friends seem to lack the ability to comprehend as well as the vocabulary to articulate what happens to him.

> Errol Senior, like everyone else, had called the boy peculiar. The church ladies […] felt sorry for Faye and the boy they called "slight". Even strange. 'Somet'ing wrong wid him, Faye,' Errol Senior said, his hatred for his son sharpening every word; the disappointment he felt strangling the virility out of the poor boy. 'Jus' look at him...' And then there were the women with the gift of seeing. Women from the old country […] 'Him haunted,' they told Faye […]. 'The spirit tek ovah dis one...poor chile. […]' (Dennis-Benn, "Name" 2f.)[44]

What seems to worry them all so much is that Errol Junior does not behave like a boy should in their eyes. It has been discussed in the previous chapter how static ideas of gender can cause social problems for some boys, like Kei Miller's characters Mark and Gavin. With regard to Errol Junior's gender-nonconformity, there are not too many details given on how this manifests itself. Just once, his mother Faye mentions in passing "the day the principal called her to school to ask about the women's clothes" (ibid. 18). Furthermore a brief conversation between Errol Junior and his extremely conservative and authoritative father is retold:

---

44 Since "What's in a Name" was published online and does not contain any page numbers, it is difficult to give a precise indication of where in the text a quote can be found. The page numbers given in parentheses depart from a print-out of 21 pages and shall serve as an approximate aid of orientation.

> Errol Junior tried to tell her. She remembered then the conversation between him and his father. She was there in the room, though shrunken in the presence of her husband. 'I'm not a boy,' her son had said in defiance that day. 'So yuh saying you is a man now?' 'I didn't say that.' 'So what yuh saying then?' His father asked. 'I'm not a boy.' […] (Dennis-Benn, "Name" 17)

To most readers these brief, but rather univocal remarks are sufficient to identify Errol Junior as not just slightly effeminate, but as transgender. "But Faye didn't want to hear it. In her culture there was no such thing. A boy wanting to become a girl? What type of nonsense is that? Only in America. Never in a million years would Faye have thought this possible. She did everything right as a mother" (ibid. 18).

Caught up in her cultural heritage, Faye is unable to accept her son's gender orientation, or to react to it in a manner that might be helpful to him. While he has grown with New York City as his cultural frame of reference and might respond best to a Western medicine treatment, such as psychotherapy and physical sex changes via medication and/or surgery, Faye has never even heard of these options, as she is originally from Jamaica where transgender identity remains a social taboo. Following the set of rules she has learned from childhood on, Faye chooses to ignore the issue as long as possible, pretending that Errol Junior is normal. Meanwhile, everyone else wants to tell Faye how to treat her son's 'illness' – the Jamaican women say to "[a]noint him wid frankincense" (ibid. 3); the American doctors and nurses tell her that "[h]e needs psychiatric evaluation" (ibid. 4); the school principal advises her to seek counseling (cf. ibid. 18) – but "Faye had thought he would have grown out of it. Like children do" (ibid. 17) and she does not take any of their advice. Yet, her refusal to accept help is not necessarily a refusal to help Errol per se. She appears to love him very much and her inactivity might therefore be seen as a defence mechanism for his protection, as well as for herself.

Faye's backup plan, if with time something proves to be really wrong with Errol, is to heal him with her own mother's traditional cure. In her experience, this is the ultimate answer to anything. That utmost emergency case occurs when Errol Junior is hospitalised at age sixteen, after a suicide attempt (cf. ibid. 5). The doctors try to explain to Faye what has happened, about transgender identities and how to treat Errol. But even then,

> Faye didn't care what the spirit women, her husband, or the people at church said. She ignored the hum of the congregation's voices […] She then went straight to the hospital, and took her son. […] Faye knew better. She knew all her son needed was the remedy Mama Elise used to give him when he was a young boy in Jamaica. That remedy in her cup of bush teas to fight against all ailments, including this one. (ibid. 3f.)

Her Jamaican background has her trapped in a way. Thus, it is her love for Errol and good intentions that initially render her inactive and then later on bring her to cancel his

clinical treatment and take him to Jamaica. Faye has become alienated from her son, because, instead of listening to him, she feels she knows what he needs without words. In her attempt to help, she might have inflicted additional damage, though. She does not recognize her own mistake until it might be too late.

When the two arrive in Jamaica to get Mama Elise's remedy, Faye is informed that her mother has died. Among her first thoughts after receiving these news is that Errol now cannot be cured any more by her mother's teas (cf. Dennis-Benn, "Name" 15). While she worries over that, Errol locks himself in the bathroom. As soon as Faye notices his absence, she panics, getting afraid he might attempt suicide again. Her feelings and thoughts in that moment might be best expressed in the story's closing sentence: "The only thing she was uncertain of now, in this moment as she banged and banged, was her son's name" (ibid. 19). This statement, though it might seem a random thought at first sight, picks up the short stories title "What's in a Name". The title clearly references a famous Shakespearean quote from Romeo and Juliet II, i, 85-86, which reads: "What's in a name? That which we call a rose / By any other word would smell as sweet" (Wells and Taylor 379). It is most commonly interpreted to mean that names are not really of importance and do not alter the essential character of a person or object. Yet, taking the entire play into consideration, one must conclude that names can in fact have a huge impact. The fact that Romeo is born under the name of Montague whereas Juliet is a Capulet determine the course of their lives to a great extent and eventually cause their untimely deaths, too. Transferred to the short story at hand, the quote may carry two similarly contrary meanings. On the one hand, when Faye is confronted with the possibility of her child's suicide, she realises that "never seeing her son again [would be] unbearable" (Dennis-Benn, "Name" 19), which may cause her to apprehend that his survival and well-being are far more important than the technicalities of male or female Christian names or gender denominators. This reading would be in line with the quote's primary message. On the other hand, Faye may also have realised that a name *does* matter, because if the names and labels appointed to a person are unfitting – like 'male' and 'Errol' are clearly wrong for her child – they can cause enough harm to destroy a life. This reading would reconnect to Romeo and Juliet's overall situation.[45] The story's last sentence therefore expresses her ambivalence and helplessness quite well. She is doubly unsure of her child's name, first because it suddenly does not matter as much to her, and second because it does matter a lot for her child and she fears to get it wrong.

45 Following this line of argumentation, the title might be interpreted as a foreshadowing of Errol Junior's death, but as the story does not provide the answer to what happened in the bathroom, this remains unclear.

In conclusion, the three stories analysed in this subchapter portray a width of social issues that LGBTQ people might encounter in their families. The first one, “The Final Inning”, initially mirrors a prevailing attitude of stigmatisation and violent hostility towards non-heteronormative people in general and HIV/AIDS patients in particular. The structure of the short story is extremely significant, as it demonstrates a movement from presenting negative attitudes to LGBTQ issues to giving LGBTQ people themselves a loud and forceful voice, first through a member of their own group and then through a sympathetic supporter. These two, James Scroggins and Nicky, expose and deplore Duane’s forced social exclusion from his familial environment and demand tolerance and equal rights. Thus, the story also shows instances of acceptance, solidarity and empowerment. The second story, “Leighton Leigh Anne Norbrook” also depicts how the social stigma surrounding homosexuality can destroy a family, more precisely a bond of siblings, even if they don’t expose and strictly exclude the LGBTQ person, but attempt to not make it an issue. Its outlook appears more pessimistic, as Leighton did not experience support from his sister and is more isolated than ever in the end. “Glave thus offer[s] scathing indictments of the family’s complicity in maintaining an alienating and dysfunctional heteronormative status quo” (Harrison, “West Indian Fiction”). The last story, “What’s in a Name”, shows a very loving relationship in which a mother tries to take care of her son’s well-being, but fails due to the incompatibility of their life experiences, world views and understandings of the issue. It illustrates that good intentions alone are not necessarily enough and that, in some cases, ignorance and inactivity may contribute to LGBTQ precarity just as much as violence and hatred. All three make visible how difficult and hurtful it can be for LGBTQ people to navigate in familial waters and invite readers to try and be more open and understanding towards their LGBTQ relatives.

3.3 Self-Alienation

In the last two chapters, it has been illustrated how hard the pressure to conform is on LGBTQ people, how strict the penalties for nonconformity are, and from how many directions these strains are coming. The previous analyses have shown that pressure is exerted, first, by society as a whole and implemented by that society’s institutions, such as the church or the university, and second, by smaller subsections of society, that is by the local residential community or even the family. Naturally, these multifaceted pressures do not leave LGBTQ people unscathed, but have an enormous impact on their psyche. In the following chapter it will be shown how, as a direct consequence, Jamaican LGBTQ people are likely to fall prey to mental illness and its ensuing precarities. Focus will be laid on feelings of self-alienation, a process or status

which will be examined through further glimpses into the already familiar stories “The Fear of Stones” and “The Final Inning” and lastly by the means of a close reading of Miller’s stories “This Dance”.

Gavin, the principal character of “The Fear of Stones” has already been introduced as someone who does not belong to the “tribe they have decided all men must belong to” (Miller, “Fear” 137). This statement, simple as it may seem, leads Gavin to a serious question: to whom does he belong then? Growing up, he feels absolutely isolated and asks himself that same question time and again. The narrator, abiding by his profession as a mathematics professor, tries to explain Gavin’s feeling of loneliness by suggesting:

> Draw a Venn diagram – a box, and inside of that box, a few circles, and within those circles, even smaller circles. This is how we learn about sets and subsets; we learn that every group is inside larger group, and also the converse, that inside every large group, there are smaller groups. […] to use an[…] example – Jamaica: within that you have Kingston, and within that you have Vineyard Town, and within that you have all different kinds of small communities. The community of old women for instance […]. The everchanging community of stray dogs […] a ‘community’ of mad people […] the community of boys (ibid. 121f.),

and so on. In this system, Gavin feels like he does not belong to any community in existence. The correct way to place him in the social space of Jamaica, according to the narrator, would be to

> Draw a Venn diagram – a box, and inside of that box, a few circles, and within those circles, even smaller circles. Now, fill the spheres with letters – write them in: *a, b, c, d…* all except for one. Leave the letter *z* in the box, but outside of any of the circles. This is a person like Gavin, a person who grows up, and while the simple fact of existing must mean that he belongs to the universe, which group within that universe is he anchored to? Where is his tribe? (ibid. 127f.)

This last one presents the ultimate question for Gavin: “Where is his tribe?” (ibid. 128; 133) and the search for it, perhaps subconsciously, becomes the centre of his existence. All of his important life choices are oriented toward that question. For instance, he decides to work as a flight attendant on *Air Jamaica*, because “[h]e was still a young man who didn’t belong, so the plane was for him not so much a sign as a meaning, a place from which he could search the world for the person to whom he had always been a shadow. Search the world for his tribe” (ibid. 133). Before that, in his adolescence, the wish to find a tribe makes him go look for his father at the university he works at (cf. ibid. 129ff.). These are just two examples that indicate that the search has become his life’s purpose. He is continuously wandering and searching, but finding a place where he can feel at home and show all the facets of his identity proves to be complicated. The heteronormative society he lives in forces the tribe of LGBTQ people into hiding, so in consequence, it is difficult even for one of their own to find them.

Gavin’s story ends quite abruptly, and it is not resolved whether he succeeds in

finding his tribe or how the rest of his life without a tribe proceeds.[46] It seems consequential that the answer to that question is not as relevant as the process of showing how formative and vital the issue of non-belonging is to Gavin and how the search is the largest influence on his personality development. In comparison, Gregory in "The Final Inning" is more stable and settled, at least on the face of it. He is part of a loving family with his wife, Jacquie, whom he seems to admire and their son, Gregory Junior. It is only unveiled by and by over the course of the story that he, too, is searching for something.

As mentioned in the earlier analysis of this story, Gregory is a noticeable character in spite of the fact that he hardly participates in the conversation and the events unfolding at all. Any time he does say something out loud, Gregory actually tries to end the discussion on Duane, AIDS and homosexuality (cf. Glave, "Inning" 157, 159, 160, 163, 166). As the narration often uses him as point of focalisation, however, he takes a very prominent space via the comments and assessments he constantly makes in his mind. From this inner monologue it becomes clear that he has more insights into the topic than any of the other characters, since he has frequent sex with other men. Drifting off during the conversation into a stream of consciousness, he remembers

> those places: parks, alleyways, redlit (bloodlit) bars: fuckrooms/darkrooms and those piss-streets he knew had known and: but no. Hadn't been him there. Had never been him among the ghosts and the searchers and the lonelyones, walking: looking, stroking and sliding, taking in; going in *now give it to me tight tighttight*: – never him back there but somebody else one of the ghosts: :a spirit: […] wandering again on those streets with the the the: *Faggots*. He. Who had been unhappy and. Had wanted to wander, kiss manflesh. Find. (ibid. 164, original emphasis)

In the same instant in which he comes to think of these sexual encounters, Gregory immediately distances himself from what happened, by saying that it "[h]adn't been him there. Had never been him […] never him back there". He repeats that same phrase three times in this paragraph alone, so that it seems like a mantra, intended to convince himself. Instead, he says, it is "somebody else" who experienced those tête-à-têtes, a different "He. Who had been unhappy and. Had wanted to wander, kiss manflesh. Find." Thus, on a second view, it is revealed that Gregory shares many of Gavin's sentiments. He, too, feels a need to wander around in order to find something. Like Gavin, he follows an imperative of searching. However, he cannot build his entire character and life around this search, because he already has one steady life with his wife and son to whom he feels committed and obliged and whom he loves. Therefore it

46 Miller leaves the attentive reader with a silver lining though. Firstly, the text predicts that "what will help […] is that one day, many years from now, Gavin will find in one of the boxes stuffed on these shelves a picture" (Miller, "Fear" 139) of his parents and thus seems to successfully discover more information on his lineage and personal background. Perhaps this knowledge enables him to feel rooted in one distinct tribe. Secondly, the narrator says Gavin reminds him of himself (cf. ibid. 141) and that they would eventually become friends (cf. ibid. 140), which hints at the possibility of Gavin finding a second tribe in his company.

seems as if he tries to split his personality in two. Gregory separates himself into the 'real' him who is a heteronormative, responsible family man and an 'other' him who wanders the streets in search of homosexual encounters.

The only one who knew about his alter ego was Duane (cf. Glave, "Inning" 164), however, Gregory is not sure whether he has spoken to anyone else about this matter before his death. For this reason he is nervous at the funeral service when Duane's LGBTQ friends turn up, even "shit-scared cause maybe one of them would have *known* or thought maybe could tell? he Gregory was a little *that way*, was close to them" (ibid. 165, original emphasis). He feels self-conscious all the way through the service, and even before the incident happens, he has a notion that

> it was like the faggot who had been crying with the rest of them [i.e. James Scroggins] had looked dead straight at him Gregory sitting there holding his son on his lap next to that strong-looking serious woman Jacquie his wife; had been as if the faggot had recognized something or maybe Duane had told him something about the men, Duane, about the blackmen and the brownmen and the whitemen who had done him, Gregory, shared fuckheat and wanting-someone-for-whatever-heat in all them dark places […] – has the faggot walking up there to the pulpit seen that in his eyes? the wanting and the searching and the? (ibid. 169)

Gregory fears that James or one of the others might know of his double life or instinctively identify him as one of their own. He worries that the urges of wandering, searching and homoerotic sexual desire that he tries to confine strictly to his secret persona might flash over to his 'real' identity and be recognisable for others.[47]

In this situation, the threat of his family learning of his infidelities is not the only reason why Gregory is afraid to be identified as gay. In addition to feeling remorse for betraying Jacquie and his son, he also has a guilty conscience in the face of the LGBTQ community. Even though he feels

> [c]lose to them, living as he did up there in Co-Op City nearby Sound Hill and Baychester and Gun Hill with a family but who still no goddamnit fuck it all would not couldn't ever stick up for their faggot asses nor get into it when the homies was beating up on them. Would not (couldn't) claim his hidden name among them and the shared desire, anger, simply to be allowed to live and be: […] Not with them. Never. (ibid. 165)

To some degree, he does see himself as a member of their group and inwardly shares their "desire, anger, simply to be allowed to live and let be", but he will never join them publicly in their fight for equality or even make himself known to them. Instead, he keeps hiding in the delusory safety of his family life. He seems to consider this decision cowardly and disloyal and is therefore ridden by guilt, yet he is absolutely certain that he can *never* change.

This inner conflict is carried to extremes with the request at the end of James's

47 Later on, at the house, Nicky reveals how close she and Duane actually were and Gregory correctly suspects that she knows of his sexuality as well. However, she tells him in a roundabout way that "she had promised the dead she wouldn't never tell nobody's secret that shouldn't be told" (Glave, "Inning" 178).

speech to everyone in the church “who were proud of Duane as a proud out open GAY MAN to stand up WITH ME STAND for a moment of silence STAND” (Glave, “Inning” 170ff., original emphasis). Gregory counts himself to this group and wants to support the LGBTQ people with whom he feels a strong proximity. He knows that Duane died of AIDS and was proud to be gay and silently agrees that it is wrong to try to obliterate that part of his life and identity in retrospect, hence he urgently wants to stand up. But he cannot do so without putting his own secret into jeopardy, and therefore he cannot bring himself to really do it. After James’s plea, tension is built up while Gregory feverishly considers what to do which is expressed on the page by wider spacing between the lines and single words, signifying the moments passing in inactivity. At last, Gregory feels the moment that presents “the last inning” and lets it pass – “the inning was over” (ibid. 170ff.). The large tension built up around that moment, as well as the fact that it gives the story its title lends special importance to the scene. The word ‘inning’ can simply mean ‘opportunity’, and so on the one hand the final inning would be literally the last chance to stand up for Duane, show courage and pay him respect. For Gregory, however, it might carry even more significance and represent the last opportunity for other things as well – e.g. his last chance to say the truth about himself or to become part of the LGBTQ community. This reading is supported by the other connotations of the word ‘inning’. First, the word ‘inning’ can also be understood as the opposite of ‘outing’ in the sense of revealing someone’s sexuality. “Duane’s family attempts to ‘in’ him at his funeral – erase all references to his gay life – and Gregory experiences his own ‘final inning’” (Jarrett and Glave 1231), in so far as he ultimately admits that he will never be able to ‘out’ himself. Secondly, in baseball, as an American readership will immediately know, one game is divided into four innings and after the last inning the game is over – the scores are counted and it is decided who has won. With this in mind, that particular phrasing has an additional quality of finiteness and demands retrospective evaluation.

Gregory’s inner monologue during the entire story may well be considered his form of final evaluation and the final judgement is given at the very end, after all other visitors have left, when he is alone with his wife and child. Before, when the dialogue is still being held, the reader only gets momentary glimpses into Gregory’s mind that require interpretation, whereas the last pages are dedicated solely to him. It becomes all the more clear that Gregory is developing a form of schizophrenia in which he compartmentalises his identity into “a smaller version of himself” (Glave, “Inning” 180) who is a loyal family man, and another man within – “the stranger, the he-without-face or name, placeless, loose” (ibid.). However, in the face of the day’s events it becomes increasingly difficult to separate his two personas from each other.

Duane's death, the encounter with James Scroggins and the argument between Nicky and the other three women have confronted Gregory not just with the stigmatisation of LGBTQ people, but also with the fatality of AIDS. "Duane's contraction of AIDS provokes Gregory to reconsider whether he, too, has at some time, somewhere, contracted the disease, and whether he has infected Jacquie" (Jarrett 1253) and, naturally, the thought really scares him (cf. Glave, "Inning" 180ff.). He promises himself

> I'ma keep y'all [his family] safe from that [AIDS], he thought. As sure as he knew his name and who he was. (He had always known his name, he thought, who he was.) Keep them very safe from ghosts and secrets and redrooms filled with: – *it wasn't safe*, some other ghost had once hissed into his innermost parts: *notsafe notsafe*. *Wasn't safe that time*, another had said, *who wants to be safe?* – keep them secure from all that and much more, he thought […]. (ibid. 181)

In the quoted passage, Gregory intends to calm himself down and reassure himself of his ability to control the situation, but eventually his thoughts seem to have the contrary effect. Even though he says he knows his name and who he is, he conveys the opposite impression when he constantly divides himself into two identities and hears the voices of ghosts hissing comments in his ear. These ghosts keep reminding him that there were homosexual encounters when he has not safely protected himself, and thus they make his promise of keeping his family safe even less believable. The story's last sentence presents Gregory's concluding resolution – he will keep his family "[s]afe from the truth". In other words, he will not change anything but continue to fight his battles inside his own mind instead of admitting his LGBTQ identity. In doing so, he may be able to decrease his own level of precarity, but at the same time, he inevitably makes Jacquie's and Gregory Junior's lives much more precarious by exposing them to the threat of AIDS. In short, his situation presents an impossible, unsolvable quandary and the pressure slowly drives him into schizophrenia and insanity.[48]

The final story to be discussed in this chapter can be read as a sort of comment or summary of all the other stories about LGBTQ people in general and gay men in particular who are trapped in secrecy, self-loathing and fear and have to endure mental suffering because of it. Kei Miller's "This Dance" is told by a heterodiegetic narrator with internal focalisation on the protagonist Jeremy Howell, who, for the entire the time of the narration sits in a car, looks at a house and thinks. In the beginning he states that if he went into the house, he could dance there, but he is not quite ready yet – almost, "[b]ut it is not so easy" (Miller, "Dance" 151) – which is why he stays seated and thinks things through.

48 In Thomas Glave's short story "Out There", which will be discussed in the next chapter, the protagonist Aston is in a very similar position and even considers suicide as a way out of his dilemma (cf. 259f.). His character would serve well for a comparison with Gregory, however, this would exceed the scale of the paper.

> Him thinking 'bout the law. The law which just two semesters ago him start to study. And him start thinking about long time heroes like Quashie. Him have a drawing of Quashie in his bedroom, 'cause he been studying that hero from when he was young. Quashie stand up to Buckra and break the law. And Jeremy thinking, tonight more than any night, him need to summon that kind of courage. But things is not so easy. (Miller, "Dance" 151)

Quashie, as Jamaican readers will know immediately, is a folk hero who, according to Miller's retelling of the story, was kept as a slave for 17 years in which he received a total of 3498 strikes from the whip, 16 dog bites and 300 days in a room without a window. When he ran away for the first time, he was flogged, when he ran away again, four of his toes were forcefully amputated, and only when he ran away for the third time he really reached the mountains and escaped. Later on he started a rebellion against the white colonisers (cf. ibid. 157f.). Evidently, Jeremy considers Quashie his role model. He admires him for breaking the law and wants to do the same, if only he could find the courage. At the same time, however, he is a law student, presumably in order to become a lawyer or judge and make sure that the law is upheld. Of course these ambitions are contradictory and place Jeremy in a considerable moral conflict.

Next in his train of thoughts, he summons a second courageous role model to the mental debate that he is already running: his aunt Patsy. She was sent to the USA as a child, and later got married and had a child there. Years later, when she came back home for her father's funeral, she realized during a spontaneous dance performance that Jamaica was her true home, so she sent her daughter back to her husband and stayed. Many others condemn her for leaving her family, but Patsy stands by her actions despite of all the criticism (cf. ibid. 153ff.). Her certainty seems to be the reason Jeremy draws on her in his decision-making process. It is repeated that

> Jeremy is almost ready, but it not so easy. Him thinking about the law. Him thinking about Quashie. Him thinking about this thing his Aunt Patsy keep on telling him, 'I not afraid to dance…' But then him also think about his mother. What would his mother say if she knew he was at a place like this? She would hold her head and say 'JesasSaviourPilotMe! Is what happen to you bwoy?' (ibid. 152)

Patsy lives as her full Jamaican self with a confidence that Jeremy admires and longs to develop for himself. When speaking about her past, she employs the image of dancing to express her philosophy – not just in the literal meaning of the word to retrace how she came to her own decision, but also as a metaphor to describe a state of really being oneself and being true to one's own character and ideology. Jeremy could therefore easily apply her advice in his situation and go inside to dance. However, he is absolutely sure that his mother, another significant guiding influence in his life, would condemn whatever it is Jeremy intends to do, which places him again in a dilemma. Who should he listen to?

And – perhaps more importantly – why is it such a big decision for him whether to

go to a party or not? The answer to that lies in the nature of the house, as is soon revealed. Jeremy remembers that his friend Kevin showed him the house for the first time a year before. Back then,

> Jeremy [was] looking on the house with these big eyes. Him so frighten to see that what he always take as make-up story – rumour, propaganda – was really so. That there was a place in Jamaica where other kinds of people gathered. People he would call nasty. Sodomites. Abomination. Jeremy spit out on the floor and ask, 'This is really where them come?' The question hurt Kevin who had only been trying to help. To show him that a space existed where him could dance his own dance. The question hurt, so Kevin answered bitterly, 'Yes. This is where we meet.' Only then, Jeremy get to thinking about the word, 'Them'. They. Those. Over There. Trying to separate himself. But tonight, a year later, he was here, at the house. (Miller, "Dance" 156)

The house is a secret meeting place for the LGBTQ community and it is their party he considers going to. Up to that day with Kevin, Jeremy appears to have embarked on the same strategy as Gregory before, disconnecting himself mentally from any non-heteronormative people or behaviour and blocking his own homosexual desires out as far as possible. He appears to have internalised such a deep-seated disregard for LGBTQ people that he involuntarily spits out in disrespect when speaking about them, even though he himself *and* his companion are actually part of that group. Kevin, who seems to be open about his sexuality, at least towards Jeremy, is hurt by the gesture and the question and it is his reaction that sets a process in motion in which Jeremy comes to doubt his own position. This reconsideration appears to have taken a full year of time, in which Jeremy has overcome the urge to distance himself from that part of his identity and has arrived at the conclusion that he wants to belong to the LGBTQ community.

Still, it is not easy for him to go inside. As urgent as his wish to belong to their group and stand in for his own needs and personality may be, taking this step would also mean enhancing his precarity significantly. Jeremy does not only decide whether to go to a party or not, but he chooses between leading a comparatively safe, but lonely and restricted life on the one hand and a more liberated life in a community that is under constant attack on the other hand. Trying to make that choice, Jeremy once again "remembered the history lessons he had done in school. His mind run up on every slave, every Nanny and every Quashie who ran up into the mountains […] So they could lose themselves. So they could find themselves." (ibid. 156) and he tries to apply their rules of action to his own situation. In this frame of reference, "[h]e saw the mountains as a place where rebellions happened, where they were hatched, fought and won. Though, what kind of a rebellion is it when people only fighting to be themselves? But there him is in the mountains, outside the gate of a house. To go inside is rebellion, and to go inside is to be himself" (ibid. 157). The maroons' rebellions and Jeremy's own potential rebellion are constantly compared and the descriptor "only

fighting to be themselves" is not clearly attributed to either the one or the other. Of course the causes and aims of the fight against slavery differ largely from those of the fight for LGBTQ rights in many respects – yet, it might be justified to say that in both cases oppressed groups attempt to reverse the process of their own dehumanisation by a dominant group and defend their basic rights to life and self-determination. By constructing such a parallelism between the maroons during slavery and LGBTQ people today, Kei Miller's writing

> metaphorically links contemporary sexual dissidence to a history of rebellion. It also subversively appropriates figures who have served as an important part of nationalist imaginings and anti-colonial constructions of identity, and redeploys them to challenge the heterosexist and homophobic dimensions of nationalist discourses in Jamaica and the wider Caribbean. (Cummings 329)

He points out a contemporary system of oppression and discrimination by establishing a mental link to the former, ultimate system of oppression and discrimination – slavery. In this way, the gravity of Jeremy's situation and the scope of his decision become more comprehensible.

Inevitably, the story moves towards the point of decision, building up the tension until Jeremy finally takes action, although not into the anticipated direction:

> This is the house. This is really the house. And inside the house, is his people. Inside is a place where him can dance the dance him did always want to dance. With the kind of people, the kind of man he has always wanted to dance with. A true true dance this time. From the inside out. It take bravery to do that. Strength. And right then, even before he was done making his mind up fully, Jeremy's eyes start to water. Even before he turned on the engine and turned the car around, he had to hold his face tight so as not to make the eye-water spill. Because he knew he wasn't yet a man like Quashie. Not tonight. Him wasn't ready. […] He couldn't do it. He would drive home instead. Maybe he would go over to Tia, his girlfriend, and rest his head in her lap. And when she asked, 'What happened to you?' he would tell her, 'Nothing.' […] some men in this island will never dance the way they want to dance. So even as him driving down the hill, away from the house, away from defiance and rebellion, he had to swallow hard, him face still tight from holding the tears. (Miller, "Dance" 158)

In spite of visualising his heroes and gathering all of his courage, Jeremy is not able to take that last step toward self-determination. The fear and the threats are looming too large, even though his shame, dishonesty, cowardice and loneliness afflict his mental health enormously. He will instead hide behind the façade of a heterosexual relationship, like Gregory, and desire to be part of a tribe from afar, like Gavin. Jeremy's inner conflict exemplifies many similar stories. By stating that "some men in this island will never dance the way they want to dance", Miller makes Jeremy representative of a plurality of gay men in Jamaica. His inner struggle is not a singular occurrence, but a mental affliction shared by many.

In this sense, "This Dance" is not just paradigmatic for the other two stories discussed above, but representative for almost every LGBTQ life in Jamaica. Putting under scrutiny all the stories and novels discussed here it is hard to find openly gay

characters. In their internal brokenness, Gavin, Gregory and Jeremy can close ranks with the other gay men, Mark, Leighton, the Apostle, and Clarence, the lesbian women Verdene and Margot, the trans youth Errol Junior, and some other characters still to be discussed. All of them attempt to conceal their sexuality and thus parts of their identity in order to protect themselves from the judgement of a heteronormative society. Some are found out and sanctioned accordingly, others have been successful in hiding. However, in seeking to minimize the precarity society entails on them they take upon themselves an enormous psychological pressure. They have to balance truth and precaution, be constantly on alert and never once lapse. The sheer number of characters who are presented as struggling with these conditions of their existence serves to illustrate how central this issue is to the collective consciousness of the Jamaican LGBTQ community.[49] Errol Junior's story seems to epitomise the experience and follow it through to its most extreme – suicide. As has been referenced in the previous chapter, Errol feels so wrong in his body, in his mind, in his family and in generally his life, that he tries to kill himself (cf. Dennis-Benn, "Name" 5). Even though this is a crass way out, it does not occur as rarely as one might wish, as "[r]ates of suicide and self-harm among LGBTI persons are reported to be high" (IACHR 102) in Jamaica. With this in mind, it becomes evident that the mental pressure transforms all too frequently into a physical threat to life and thus adds significantly to the precarity of LGBTQ people (cf. Glave, *Bloodpeople* 79).

3.4 Physical Danger

Albeit grave enough, self-harm is not the only physical danger to which Jamaican LGBTQ people are exposed. The fourth and ultimate chapter of the analysis will finally portray in more depth the most clearly visible aspects of LGBTQ precarity in Jamaica that regularly bring the issue to the front pages of newspapers worldwide. Violent attacks on LGBTQ people, like the one on Dwayne Jones mentioned in the chapter "Contexts", are the most immediate threat to the lives of people who are perceived as homosexual or gender nonconforming. The text analyses in this chapter will examine representations of different violent acts and discuss both the intentions of the perpetrators and the effects on the victims. The first part of the section will engage with instances of a 'prophylactic' kind of violence, meaning deeds committed with the intention to prevent or cure non-normative sexualities or gender orientations. One

49 There are hardly any counterexamples to oppose the long list of internally torn and tormented LGBTQ protagonists in literature given above. The only characters in this paper's canon of texts who are voluntarily and more or less comfortably 'out' are the beautiful and the laughing one – who are accepted because their story is set in fairytale-like context – and Carlton from Glave's story "Out There", an elderly gay man living in rural Jamaica. However, the latter part of the next chapter will show the violent aftermath of his openness.

example that will be discussed in detail is the phenomenon of 'corrective' rape, which is directed specifically against lesbian women and is depicted in *Here Comes the Sun* and Thomas Glave's story "Whose Song?". The second subchapter will deal with acts of punitive violence, by which people found guilty of 'sodomy' are to be punished. A comparison will be drawn between two representations of mob violence against gay men that feature in Kei Miller's "Walking on the Tiger Road" and Thomas Glave's "Out There" respectively. Throughout the discussion it will be questioned in how far the three previously discussed issues – institutional discrimination, social exclusion and self-alienation – augment the physical dangers threatening LGBTQ people.

3.4.1 'Corrective' Violence

The general ignorance about LGBTQ issues that prevails in Jamaica in combination with the churches' condemnation lead many people to believe that homo- or transsexuality can be reversed (cf. J-FLAG, "National Survey" 18). As a consequence, attempts to 'cure' or 'fix' LGBTQ people, especially at a young age, are quite frequent and may often involve physical force as well as traditional medicines or rituals. Nicole Dennis-Benn depicts the endeavours of Delores to prevent her older daughter Margot from becoming a lesbian. The 'treatment' begins when Margot is ten years old and one day, beaming with joy, tells her mother that the girl next door, Verdene, who is about ten years older than Margot, has called her pretty (cf. Dennis-Benn, *Sun* 247). Delores has looked onto Margot's friendship with Verdene suspiciously for a while and this open display of Margot's adoration of the older girl, prompted by Verdene's kind remark, convinces her that she needs to take action.

> When she saw Margot smiling that day, Delores wanted to crush the thing she saw in her daughter's eyes […]. She clenched her fists. '*Tek off yuh dirty clothe*s,' she told the little girl. Delores watched the light disappear from her daughter's face; but not even that eased the pain inside Delores. '*Me say tek off yuh clothes, gyal!*' The little girl did as she was told. Her little arms moved slowly as she undressed. She stood naked in the backyard as Delores filled a basin with water. '*Get in*,' she said. […] What Delores did next made the girl scream. She wanted to teach her a lesson. Delores held Margot down in the water and pinched and pinched. The little girl wailed under Delores's thumb and index fingers all over her body. Delores made sure to warn her. '*Neva tek compliments from anyone else, yuh hear?*' Delores said. '*Especially not from another 'ooman! That's sodomite ways!*' '*Yes Mamaaa!*' The little girl's screams egged Delores on. […] Later that year when the news broke about Verdene messing with some girl at the university, Delores wondered if Verdene had indeed taken advantage of Margot. '*Don't let me see yuh going over there again!*' Delores said to Margot. This time she put Margot inside a basin to wash the evil out of her. Miss Gracie had suggested using Guinea bush to cure the girl, but it didn't help. […] Delores washed Margot every day. '*Yuh is neva going to be like her, yuh hear?*' Delores said. But still, when Verdene was sent away, most days Margot curled up like a fetus and wept for her. She fell mute for a while. […] Delores tried everything to make her normal. (ibid. 247ff., original emphasis)

Margot is subjected to a long procession of 'treatments' intended to "make her normal", including comparatively harmless methods like local herbs recommended by

neighbours – with whom the topic has obviously been discussed – but also a corporally painful kind of aversion therapy that might easily be considered a sort of water-torture. Years later, in the course of an intimate conversation with her younger sister Thandi, Margot decides to tell her about her homosexuality and these events of her childhood. She wistfully recalls her feelings of love and admiration for Verdene, but in retrospect calls those feelings a sickness.

> 'I was sick […]. Over a girl who told me I was pretty.' Margot chuckles at this. '[…] Ah couldn't explain what was happening to me. Nothing Delores did could get me back to myself. […] Delores thought the baths would heal the sickness. She thought all sorta thing. Even took me to ah obeah woman to get rub down wid oil an' black magic concoction. Di woman gave me goat blood to drink in a soup an' I ran. But there was nothing that coulda get my mind off her.' (Dennis-Benn, *Sun* 293)

When Margot calls herself "sick" she does not agree with Delores that her sexual orientation is a sickness, but merely refers to the common expression of being lovesick. She intends to make herself relatable to Thandi, who herself is lovesick for Charles, and it is for this reason that she speaks of her own tantamount experiences. Thus, her narration does not contain a derogatory descriptor of herself, but she rather puts her own first love on one level with heterosexual sentiments. Above all, she says: "I neva thought of myself as di devil […] I mean, I was a child. What did I know?" (ibid. 294). By insisting on having been an innocent child Margot implicitly marks any accusations of sinful behaviour or sexual perversion as absurd and invalid.

The last quote also shows that the methods that are tried out on Margot become more and more traumatic for the little girl, including black magic and goat blood, up to the point where she even runs away to avoid them. However, Delores has no qualms to try everything that might 'heal' her. Eventually Margot speaks of the final and most drastic 'remedy' her mother tried.

> Delores made sure I came to my senses.' […] 'She put me in a situation where I …' Margot's voice trails off as though the words are stuck in her throat. 'I met new people – men – who offered me a lot more. Delores introduced me an' they liked me.' 'But you were – ' 'Young. The cure. That's what Delores said. Di first one was a man who gave her six hundred dollars an' in return she gave me to him. It only made me sicker. But dis sickness was different than the first – the first had to do wid losing someone I cared for and who cared for me. The second one had to do wid losing myself. But it worked. Because I couldn't hurt no more. I could no longer feel. It's been easier that way.' (ibid. 294)

In other words, Delores prostituted her own daughter, who was fourteen years old at most at that point (cf. ibid. 201ff.; Senior), not just once, but regularly from then on. Delores herself states that she did not just do it for the money, but for Margot's own good. When a stranger came to her and "offered […] money, she not only saw her redemption, but her daughter's too" (Dennis-Benn, *Sun* 249). The conviction behind that notion is that sexual intercourse with a man, even if it is procured by force, will make lesbians heterosexual (cf. J-FLAG et al., "Shadow Report 2016" 2; IACHR 102).

The organisation WE Change reports that parents often "encourage older males to have unwanted sexual intercourse with their daughters" (18), so Delores is not alone in her shocking approach.

Furthermore, she does not admit to any wrong-doing on her part when Margot broaches the issue in a confrontation:

> '[…] dat woman brainwash you …' Delores says [...] 'That was why I had to fix yuh.' […] 'You did more harm to me than anyone else,' she says to her mother. But Delores is defiant, her mouth drawn like a zealot's, convinced of the good of her actions. 'It was the only way,' Delores says. 'The only way dat ah could save yuh from yuh ways.' Margot's rage finally breaks and she bounds toward her mother like a wildcat. She grabs Delores by the neck […]. (Dennis-Benn, *Sun* 260f.)

And when Thandi asks her about the matter, Delores summarises her line of defence in a nutshell: "'Yuh sistah was sick. Possessed. […] Dat Verdene did something to dat chile. Put di devil in har. […]' 'Yuh sistah needed straightening out. She did need fixing. So I fix har'" (ibid. 302). Outwardly, it appears to be that simple to her – there was a problem that needed fixing and she tried everything until it was properly fixed. In a moment of the narration when Delores serves as the focaliser, it is revealed that there once was a moment of epiphany in which she inwardly "almost collapsed […] for the loss of her daughter's innocence, which, she realized too late, was worth more than the money she lost and all the money she would ever gain" (ibid. 203). However, if she remembers this realisation later on she is incapable of admitting her regret to anyone else.

Margot is clearly traumatised by these experiences. She admits to her sister in the paragraph quoted further above that she considers herself emotionally crippled as a consequence of being repeatedly raped at that young age. She can neither feel nor hurt any more, she says, and she claims that it made her further life easier. Her violent outburst in which she almost strangles Delores raises doubts over this claim of deadheartedness, however. Furthermore, whenever Margot serves as the focaliser, she conveys the impression that she cares sincerely about both her sister and Verdene and wants the best for either, even though her methods might not always be the most considerate or gentle ones, thus she does still harbour both negative and positive feelings. Notwithstanding the state of her emotional capabilities, her trauma might explain her unscrupulous conduct in many parts of her life – e.g. her troubled relationship with Verdene (cf. ibid. 262ff., 338), her own sexual promiscuity (cf. ibid. 10f., 15, 59ff., 111f., 156ff.) and her participation in prostituting other very young and impoverished girls (cf. ibid. 146ff., 177ff., 215). She utilises all of these people as well as her own body for her advancement, regardless of the consequences, and thus reaches her goals to manage an entire hotel by herself (cf. ibid. 321) and to live in a big villa (cf. ibid. 341ff.). Eventually, though, she is all alone without her family, friends or

her true love Verdene, thus it remains highly questionable whether her mother's treatment has really improved her or scarred her for life.

Verdene, whose compliment initiated Delores campaign of healing attempts, appears to have had a more tolerant and empathetic mother, who did not trouble her about her sexual preferences during her childhood and adolescence. Only after the university scandal discussed in chapter 3.1.2, "Ella had to send away her only child. She did it to save her life. Back in River Bank, Verdene could've been raped or killed" (Dennis-Benn, *Sun* 103). Thanks to her mother's kinder upbringing and her presence of mind in the aforementioned crisis, Verdene does not experience physical violence on account of her sexuality. Her college girlfriend Akua, however, is not so lucky.

> When Akua went home to Forrester, a town five miles from the university, she was beaten and gang-raped. Her body was found in the bushes, mauled and naked. She was barely breathing, but because of the shame she endured, she begged the Good Samaritan to leave her there and let her die. He refused and rushed her to the hospital. In a letter to Verdene many years later, Akua included photographs of her four beautiful children and the policeman she married in the same church where she was an honorable member […]. (ibid. 104)

Akua's fate is not decided by her parents or guardians, but she is judged and convicted by several unknown men who all rape her – whether as a punishment or with a 'corrective' intention or both is unsaid. Her story once more illustrates the point that "Women who are or are perceived to be lesbians are at an even greater risk of rape, as they may be targeted for sexual violence based on both their gender and sexual orientation." (HRW "Hated" 17). In the aftermath, her life does proceed on the normative route of marriage and children and she seems to have discarded any sexual attraction to women, at least for outer pretence. Living her fantasies once has caused her unimaginable physical and psychological hurt and brought her to the edge of death, hence, for her own protection it is safer to abandon any thought of them and fall in line.

A very similar story is portrayed in more detail by Thomas Glave in "Whose Song?" which opens with the character of "Cassandra, fifteen, […] Hasn't known a man yet. Hasn't wanted to. […] She prefers Tanya's lips, the skin-touch of silk. Tanya, girlfriend, sixteen and fine" (Glave, "Song" 235). Cassandra and Tanya are in a mutually loving relationship, exploring their sexualities rather freely, as no one suspects them of being more than friends. Their mothers let them have sleep-overs frequently and it is from one of those that Cassandra is returning home in the beginning of the story. However, albeit their parents remain ignorant, there are three young men who "have been watching them" and want "more of Cassandra" (ibid. 236). When they see her walking on her own, they pull her into their car where all three of them rape her. Éva Tettenborn summarises the story as follows:

> at first glance, it claims to portray three heterosexual rapists who assault a black

> lesbian because she is sexually inaccessible to men and, hence, deemed highly desirable. The story depicts in painful and unflinching detail how the three underprivileged black men, Robbie, Bernard, and Dee, rape the fifteen-year-old black lesbian Cassandra. They frame their crime with aggressive sexist discussions […]. (855)

Their sexist comments and conversation attest to the homophobic nature of their violence and seeks to reinstate the men's authority as hetero-patriarchs that has been challenged by Cassandra's advance outside the norms of heterosexuality (cf. Jarrett 1254). Before she is even in the car they tell her: "You need some dick" (Glave, "Song" 237), and when they have undressed and begun to violate Cassandra one of the men seeks indications for their speculations concerning her sexuality. To this purpose he

> [s]niffs and sniffs. At the bitch's asshole. At her cunt. – Cause yeah, yo, he says, y'all know what's up with this shit. They be saying this bitch done got into some bulldagger shit. Likes to suck pussy, bulldagger shit. […] The phattest bitch around, yo, he says. Bulldagger shit (ibid. 245),

and, considering whatever it is that he smells proof for his thesis, he resolves that it is "[t]ime to bang the bulldagger out of her, he sings" (ibid. 246). They take the right to her own body and sexuality away from her and justify this by accusing her of perversity and quoting as their own intention the noble aim to uphold norms and morality. [50]

All of these stories, Margot's and Akua's as well as Cassandra's, make the common occurrence of 'corrective' violence, especially against young girls and women, visible and break the taboos surrounding the issue. They demand empathy and question the methodology of 'corrective' violence by portraying the devastating consequences for the bodies and spirits of the concerned. In doing so, it is essential to grant the victims a voice and give them power over their own stories, yet Dennis-Benn and Glave attempt to present the issue not just from the view of the recipients of violence. Instead, they provide a space for the thoughts and motivations of the people inflicting the violence as well. Delores and the three rapists are given complicated backgrounds in which their personal traumata and potentially good intentions are acknowledged. While this might be a contentious approach given that victims of violence are silenced too often as it is, in a Jamaican context it may be beneficial to examine the motivation behind the assaults as well, since many are born out of ignorance. To address the false information that triggers violence is an active step towards the prevention of violent acts themselves, thus, the method behind Dennis-

50 Interestingly, their real motive is much more multidimensional. Glave's story presents the three perpetrators as being secretly homosexual as well or at least having participated in sex with men or boys in the past. Accordingly, part of their motivation for the rape is to shake off the stigma that is attached to male homosexuality and disguise themselves as heteronormative members of their community. "Not only does the rape 'de-lesbianize' the victim, it also 'de-homosexualizes' the perpetrator" (Tettenborn 861). In this sense, the story of Cassandra's rape does not only depict female lesbian victimisation, but also male gay victimisation, For a more detailed discussion of the men's stories, please see Éva Tettenborn's article "'Will the Big Boys Finally Love You'".

Benn's and Glave's writing appears well adapted for a Jamaican audience. It is essential though, to set a strong focus on the victims' experiences as well.

To establish a balance between these voices is especially hard, and Glave in particular addresses the issue in his narration. The question "Whose Song?" presents itself as the title as well as a guideline on the content level – throughout the story the image of singing is used time and again. Every character sings their own songs (cf. Glave, "Song" 239f., 243, 244, 246), or sometimes just listens to a song that seems to be sung irrespective of their own actions (cf. ibid. 235, 236f.). On the final two pages, it is repeatedly asked "whose song, finally, shall this be? Of four dark girls, or four hundred […]? Of a broken-backed woman, legs bent? Her tune? […] Of four brothers rapping, chugging? […] But whose song is it? Is it yours? Or mine? Hers? Or theirs?" (ibid. 248f.). In other words, who has the right to tell and the right to judge? Or, to use Butler's terminology, how and by whom should the frame be set? Both Dennis-Benn and Glave manage to make their readers look through more than just one frame, and thus give an extensive account of 'corrective' violence, including the victims' traumas as well as raising awareness for the misconceptions that perpetrators draw upon.

3.4.2 Punitive Violence

The question of voice is also relevant in accounts of punitive violence, especially in the most extreme attacks when the victim is indeed killed an cannot speak for him- or herself any more, as is the case in the two short stories to be discussed in this chapter, Kei Miller's "Walking on the Tiger Road" and Thomas Glave's "Out There". The former one, which has already been addressed in previous chapters, features two principal characters: Mark, a gay man of approximately thirty years of age who at the beginning of the story lives in New York, and his mother Mary who still lives in their home town in Jamaica. The heterodiegetic narrator changes focalisation alternately between both protagonists during the time leading up to the violent assault on Mark, and thus gives voice to the victim as well as a close relative. Glave's story is set in the days following a fatal attack on Carlton and told from the perspective of his closest friend and fellow gay man Aston.

Chapter 3.2.1 has established that Mark was a quiet, obedient, polite and creative child, to such an extent that the community around him soon started to talk about him, saying first that he was a too effeminate boy, and later labelling him as a "batty man" (cf. Miller, "Tiger Road" 5f.). His exclusion from university and subsequent flight to the USA confirmed the rumours going round, hence, Mark stays abroad for about ten years because he is afraid of being arrested or even murdered in his home town (cf. ibid. 7, 9). However, his position in the United States is not ideal either: as Chapter 3.1.2 has

shown he is subject to both racism and heterosexism there and permanently misses his home country and his mother (cf. Miller, “Tiger Road” 4, 2f.), which is why, one night after ten years have passed, he very spontaneously decides to go back. He imagines his return to play out like a prodigal-son story and is full of happy anticipation of his reunion with Mary. Portraying Mark as a character whose most prominent feelings are family affiliation and homesickness for Jamaica makes him approachable from the beginning, so that he is likely to be the recipient of sympathy from the reader. Mark’s emotional life conveys his vulnerability as a fellow human, just like Miller’s other gay protagonists Gavin and Jeremy do. The author counteracts the hegemonic image of homosexual men as perverted and sinful, possessed by a constant lust, or luring to seduce innocent boys, by constructing these complex characters who share the same thoughts and emotions that any other person might have in similar situations.

And indeed, momentarily there seems to be a chance for Mark to be restored as a fully human member of his home village, since “the strong suspicion that Miss Mary’s boy was gay had almost been forgotten” (ibid. 9) after ten years. It is bad luck that during the first moments back in his village, Mark meets Idle Bwoy of all people. This teenager remembers the stories when he hears Mark’s name and asks him “So is you dem say a battyman?”, to which Mark, being shocked and horrified that this rumour has stuck for so long, fails to react in a cool, indignant manner (cf. ibid. 10). From childhood on he has always had difficulties with following the rules of hyper-masculine behaviour and in this situation he is completely taken by surprise. “He didn’t know, had never felt comfortable with the kind of language of macho Jamaican men, with their gesticulation or their mannerisms. Mark was being asked to perform, and suddenly he had stage fright” (ibid.). Unable to come up with casual indifference or a fitting retort, “Mark walked over […] and awkwardly rested his hand on Idle Bwoy’s thigh and asked, ‘What kinda question that?’” (ibid. 10). As a consequence, Idle Bwoy “lifted his knee and slammed his foot into Mark’s chest, who screamed in pain and fell back to the ground” (ibid. 11), thus attracting a crowd, and yells:

> ‘Battyman! We nuh want you here.’ Trembling, Mark finally stood up, took one look at the small crowd and knew that it wouldn’t make any sense trying to argue his case. He turned around […] and continued to walk towards his mother’s house. […] Idle Bwoy picked up another stone and flung it hard at the centre of Mark’s back. ‘Nasty man!’ Mark flinched in pain. The other men picked up stones and soon they were following him home. They pelted him, searched for bigger stones along the road side, then pelted him some more, bruising him as much as they could. […] A well-aimed stone finally opened up his skull and blood dripped into his eyes. He staggered, trying to stand up again. His clothes were torn, his shirt hanging like shreds around him. He was bleeding in many places, and there was still no intermission to the stones being thrown. They opened his cuts wider. Wider. (ibid. 12)

The fact that a large group of onlookers gathers quite quickly when a physical conflict unfolds in a town centre is not unusual. The immediate readiness to become

violent themselves when one of the two quarrelling men is accused of being gay, however, is. Idle Bwoy initiates some kind of mob dynamic in which people follow his example without hesitation, as if they had been hypnotised, until “Mark was not standing any more” (ibid. 14). He collapses a short distance from his mother’s house, and it is only when his persecutors see his mother outside, waiting for him, that they “shamefacedly drop their missiles” (ibid. 13) and turn “desperate in their silence, looking at their guilty Cain-hands then to the road beneath their feet” (ibid. 14). The description of the mob does not end on its climax, when everyone is fired up with their righteous fury, but goes on to show how it dissolves in shame. Thus the transformation of individuals into a violent mob is reversed, and the responsibility is ascribed to every single one of them, rather than a faceless collective. The participants surely seem to perceive it that way. They all appear to take on a piece of the guilt and to realise their own error in judgement to a certain extent after the rush is over. The reference to the biblical character Cain stresses this point, as it identifies all attackers as Mark’s brothers and establishes an inherent connection between the two former enemies. It stresses equality, rather than otherness.

Although the men in the village appear to take responsibility upon them in the aftermath of the events, Miller is careful in appointing blame. Like in “Whose Song?”, it is stressed that the scenario is more complicated than a binary opposition between the society as the culprit and the gay man as the victim (cf. King, *Island Bodies* 76). The initiator of the whole attack, Idle Bwoy, is given a layered background story as well, just as Robert, Dee and Bernard in “Whose Song?”, and it is made clear that his assault on Mark is in fact a part of his own performance. His loud accusations are a partly subconscious act he puts on in order to hide his own homoerotic fantasies that make him feel confused and furious. Any time the young man gives in to a violent impulse,

> Idle Bwoy was really beating up himself. Sometimes when he wasn’t careful he would have some wicked thoughts; he would imagine himself and Hortence doing things that made him feel ashamed and dirty. Idle Bwoy tried hard not to think those thoughts, but one night he woke up, his heart racing, because he was having a nasty dream, and it was all about him and Hortence. […] When Idle Bwoy shouted at Mark, ‘Is you dem say a battyman?’ he was trying to be separate from something he knew was a part of him; he was trying to distance himself from himself. And when Mark’s hand rested on his thigh, Idle Bwoy thought he had been identified; thought that in this action, a complete stranger had seen through him, and said, ‘Yes, we both are.’ Idle Bwoy panicked (Miller, “Tiger Road” 11),

and attacks Mark as a means of defence. It is to hide and protect his own fragmented self that he diverts the public attention away from himself to the newcomer. In the end, Miller’s story even transfers this notion of an injured identity, an innate, self-inflicted hatred to the male part of society as a whole. When the mob stones Mark, “[i]t was as if each man was doing the same as Idle Bwoy, looking for his own sin, his own private

world of frustration and throwing it at this scapegoat, at Miss Mary's only child" (Miller, "Tiger Road" 12). Thus, the homophobia is not just any form of fear or hatred, but is transformed into a national trauma feeding on itself (cf. Harrison "West Indian Fiction").

It is not revealed whether Mark survives the attack, but it seems more likely that he does not. The story's end does not give any hope for resurrection, but it closes in what may well be the moment of Mark's death. After all, referring to the crowd by the name of Cain implicitly assigns Mark the role of the murdered brother Abel. Furthermore his death is foreshadowed by more than one symbolic vision, namely his mother Mary's encounter with a woodpecker and Mark's own dream of a tiger. The first of these fable-like subplots narrates at length how Mary watches a woodpecker on the morning of Mark's return, which is supposed to be a surprise and of which she has therefore not been informed beforehand. However, she "knew how to read signs" (Miller, "Tiger Road" 1) and when the bird finally bores through the pole it has been pecking at for weeks, she takes this as a prediction that her long time of waiting is over as well – "she was going to see her son after ten long years!" (ibid. 2). She grows irritated however, when the woodpecker does not stop squawking after its success. It annoys her all day long, driving her insane with a warning – "*Look out, mother! Danger!*" (ibid. 7) – that she does not understand, until "suddenly she made up her mind. She was going to kill the bird. She […] walked outside picking up a stone on the way" (ibid. 13) and keeps pelting it and yelling insults at it until Mark arrives, followed by the mob, and breaks down in her road (cf. ibid. 14). Mary's behaviour thus mirrors the one of the crowd to a certain extent – after all, she decides to stone at her source of irritation and disturbance, just like the villagers stone theirs. In this reading, the function of Mary's storyline might be to illustrate and criticise the overall readiness for violence in Jamaican society and thus to point out a larger problem and national responsibility.[51]

Another premonition is presented in the dream Mark has in his first night back in Jamaica. In hindsight, this parenthetical episode functions not only as a foreshadowing of the main plot, but also as a vivid metaphor for LGBTQ life in Jamaica:

> He had fallen asleep as soon as he entered the room, as if the dream had been there all along, waiting to possess him. It reminded him of the ones he had in which he was just falling; there was that same hollow sense of danger and that complete inability to do anything about it except wake up. He had been walking on a road and more felt than saw the large tiger stalking behind him. He turned around once and watched the cat lick her lips. Trembling, he started walking faster. The cat didn't growl, she didn't bare her sharp teeth. Her yellow eyes didn't glare. She simply whipped her tail and started bounding towards him. He started to run, or at least attempted to; for some

51 Kei Miller points out in an interview that he believes that homophobic attacks presuppose the wider issue of violence, and that both must therefore be addressed at times. He does "not believe that by acknowledging the broader problem of violence that affects everyone, that we have minimized the particular case of homosexuals who are certainly victimized" (*Writing Down the Vision* 131).

> reason he couldn't go very fast. He tried to scream but the sound locked itself in his throat. He ran in slow motion, his muscles aching at their ineffectiveness. The tiger pounced on him, knocked him to the floor and rested her heavy paws on his chest. Finally she growled, low and terrifying. Hot saliva dribbled down on Mark's face. The cat lifted her head to the sky and roared, the full length of each tooth making its own private threat. She lowered her face, going in for the kill; Mark struggled and somehow managed to get his fingers up around his neck in protection. *Don't kill me!* he pleaded, *please don't kill me*. (Miller, "Tiger Road" 4f., original emphasis)

On the one hand, this dream obviously serves as a prediction of Mark's inescapable death on the way back home. He even makes this mental connection himself when he walks into the village and sees "this effect – the coconut trees, the light, the shadows – the road as if it were striped – orange and black, orange and black", reminding him of the tiger and causing suffocating terror (cf. ibid. 9). On the other hand, Mark's nightmare of the tiger can easily be read as an allegory of how it feels to be a gay man in Jamaica: to feel always watched, always in danger, like one might be attacked any moment, even when everything has seemed silent and calm beforehand. There is no possibility to run or hide or scream for help. The only chance to protect oneself is to put one's own hands around one's neck, choking oneself, denying oneself something that is essential to life. In the literal dream scenario the vital something that is denied is air, but in the figurative sense it may be read as love or even as living out one's own true self. Hence, "Walking on the Tiger Road" appears to be an adequate caption for the experience of being LGBTQ in Jamaica as a whole. The story shows the damaging effect on society that the impenetrable gender binary and other outcomes of the interplay between structural and personal prejudice have. It portrays self-alienation as a result of these prejudices and as a problem that affects not just LGBTQ people, but all men. Thus, it demonstrates how this national psychological trauma can foster violence to the point of explosion and render LGBTQ lives highly precarious.

The plot of the second short story, "Out There", departs from a situation similar to the final scenes of "Walking on the Tiger Road". Carlton, a gay man in his fifties, has been killed by a mob before the plot of the story begins, thus his voice is silenced from the outset. Instead, Aston, a platonic but also gay friend of Carlton's, narrates what happened to him. At the beginning of the story he has just arrived in the town where Carlton lived, intending to visit him, and found out that his friend was killed only hours before. What has happened, as Aston reports in horrific detail, is that a mob of people had gathered around Carlton's house the night before and set fire to it while Carlton was in it. The spectators report that "*[h]im did cry out and bawl and try fi escape, but every time him did try to get out the front door de man dem standing up there, five of dem, did chop him back with dem machete. So him could never leave de house*" (Glave, "Out There" 214, original emphasis; cf. 235). Although it seems cruel enough to

first built such a death trap and then prevent him from escaping it, the villagers are so intent on killing Carlton, that "[s]ome of the crowd had, of course, brought containers of acid with them to dash upon his flesh if he managed to gain even as much as five inches out of the house; […] about twelve men, maybe thirteen, maybe more, had stood guard around the house's few remaining windows that had not exploded" (Glave, "Out There" 236). Under these circumstances, Carlton had no chance whatsoever, and was burned alive. When Aston arrives the day after, there is nothing left of him but "the stink of incinerated flesh" (ibid. 211). This incident is most obviously not, as in Miller's story, a spontaneous eruption of hatred, but a meticulously planned execution of the town's 'batty man', an exorcism of the devil in the honest citizens' midst, as Aston comes to think of it (cf. ibid. 212, 214, 216). He cannot help but imagine the scenes of his death over and over again, what he must have smelt, seen, heard and felt, and how he must have screamed (cf. ibid. 212f., 214, 217f., 252). Imagining Carlton's last moments in this extensive and repeated manner is likely to evoke horror, disgust and pity in the reader, so that the reality of homophobic violence is really felt and acknowledged.

The community's motive for Carlton's execution is presented to be the following: "Carlton [was] sentenced after a few years of living in the town as an undeclared but obvious to everyone battyman: an execration ultimately not to be borne indefinitely by the town's most righteous and vindictive" (ibid. 214). In Aston's understanding, Carlton's lack of discretion was the factor that caused the town to turn against him. He was an "undeclared but obvious" gay man and thus seems to be exemplary of Rosamond King's 'open secret' model (cf. *Island Bodies* 64), yet, there appear to be implicit rules that determine how much effort must be put into the feint so that neighbours and acquaintances can still pretend to be clueless in a believable fashion. Carlton seems to have bent these rules for years, until they snapped and sparked a violent act of retribution. Importantly, the town where the story is set is not special in any way, but "a small, unremarkable enough country town like many others in Jamaica" (Glave, "Out There" 211);

> like everyplace else on this island, this behind-God's-back place had its share of whisperers and rumormongers, malingerers, hategatherers, and fundamentalist Christian fanatics, the Jehovah's Witnesses and the Adventists being the most intolerable and intolerant – the 'narrowest of the narrow' […]; those who remained committed to the thundering, apocalytically draconian pronouncements of their mostly unforgiving god. (ibid. 216)

The community is similar to James's Gibbeah, to Dennis-Benn's River Bank and many more – in other words, a fatal attack like the one on Carlton could just as easily have happened anywhere else. Jamaican society as a whole is homophobic and readily violent, and therefore highly precarious for LGBTQ people. Being gay *and* Jamaican

means living under a constant threat, which is why Aston for example lives a double life to disguise his sexual preferences and is most careful never to attract attention when visiting Carlton (cf. Glave, “Out There” 213, 217, 219). Yet, Carlton cannot bring himself to maintain such precautions, which raises the question – why?

One reason might be found in Carlton’s social class. Aston tells us, in accordance with the precarity concepts of Butler, Korte and Rubin introduced in Chapter 2.1.2, that the gravity of the homophobic threat is in direct correlation to the social position of a gay man. He explains this thesis by comparing the backgrounds of several gay characters: Aston himself belongs to Kingston’s upper middle-class and is comparably well-off (cf. ibid. 224, 240f.); Carlton has inherited his house from an aunt and seems to be financially settled as well (cf. ibid. 221); Desmond, Carlton’s young boyfriend, however, comes from the ghetto. Thus, even though Aston himself is afraid in numerous situations, his and Carlton’s lives are relatively easy, because

> to be a beautiful, effeminate, young sexually suspect male in Jamaica, but a *well-off* one, was one thing; the *well-off* part the principal saving grace […] To be beautiful (as opposed to handsome) *and* poor *and* girlish and ultimately suspected of being that way... but no. The green-mountained island would not, without the eventual warning swipe of a machete’s kiss, put up with all *that*, especially in the case of someone like Desmond: someone assuredly not to the manor born and unable to protect himself with their money and education, their frequent enough trips to Miami, Fort Lauderdale, Atlanta and New York, their tinted-window SUVs […], their (usually) high professional jobs, and their well-barred, gated, substantial homes in Mandeville and in the suburbs of upper St. Andrew and Montego Bay. (ibid. 240, original emphasis)

For someone like Desmond, the threat is so big that it seems most sensible to leave Jamaica. With Carlton’s help, he emigrates to the USA, even though he continues to miss his home and his boyfriend (cf. ibid. 239).

For Carlton himself, this is exactly the main reason why he does not leave, even though his risk is higher than Aston’s, as he is living less anonymously in a smaller town. His love for his home, Jamaica, outweighs the dangers, accordingly he

> had decided to stay – to remain in Jamaica because he had finally always loved it and perhaps because he was in the end, a bit of a fool. […] Yes, Carlton had wanted to stay in Jamaica, in complete denial yet fully aware of what might happen to him and especially what might happen living as such an obvious battyman in a back-of-the-beyond backwater town like that one that had not produced him as its own. (ibid. 241)

In non-chronological order, Aston’s remembers anecdotes from his own and Carlton’s lives, such as Carlton’s love for his garden (cf. ibid. 220, 234), for condensed milk from the tin and other sugary things (cf. ibid. 220, 222), and for Jamaica (cf. ibid. 241-243). He reminisces about Carlton’s incapability to follow the doctor’s advice, even when he was slowly getting older and fatter and it might have been reasonable to do so (cf. ibid. 220, 230), about how he took care of his old aunt for years (cf. ibid. 221), and about his positive, often laughing character (cf. ibid. 220, 222). He revisits many moments of their platonic, but loving friendship and confesses to miss Carlton greatly, who, “while never

a lover […], had been truly a friend" (Glave, "Out There" 224), the only confidant with whom Aston was able to share that gay part of his identity (cf. ibid. 250, 259).

Their little rituals, their loveable as well as their annoying habits, their likes and dislikes in food, drinks, pastimes, men, and so on make them relatable and approachable. Many readers, particularly those from Jamaica, will find themselves in those characteristics and identify with them. Furthermore, the details Aston tells about their love relationships[52] suggest that they are rooted in romantic love and friendship and overlook superficialities like age, looks, and social status (cf. ibid. 225ff., 229, 231, 238f., 246). Contrary to commonly phrased stereotypes, Glave shows the relationships between his gay characters as not just based sexual attraction – even though this does play a part in some. Like any classical heterosexual stories of love and friendship, they involve "so much more than that" (cf. ibid. 229). Thus, the content of Aston's memories on the one hand and his surrounding display of horror, shock, desperation and grief on the other hand contribute to familiarising both himself and Carlton. The men are shown to be flawed, vulnerable and sensitive like everyone else.

Getting this kind of 'insider information' on homosexuality in general and on homosexual individuals is the key to recognition and humanisation. Glave reflects on this effect himself within the story, when he says that one reason why Carlton can be murdered so cruelly is that he lives in a town where nobody knows him. Aston muses:

> It would have been more difficult to incinerate unto ashes one who had grown up among them […] It would have been much harder, if not impossible, for the men who had blocked his egress as the fire had roared; more difficult for them to threaten him with machetes if he dared to step even one foot outside the inferno in which they all had condemned themselves to watch and listen to him die […]: harder to do all that to one who would have grown up beside them day by day as *their* battyman, one whose face they would have known […] even against their silent disgust at imaginings of what he and his kind *did*, massa God, behind closed doors, some of them would have felt they had to care for him somehow, *their* battyman, even if often at arm's length; cared for him, the developing nastyman, even if, as children and later teen-agers, they all stoned him with large rocks for his girl-ish ways, his mama-man womanishness … *that* battyman, whose face and hands they would have had to grapple with deep in their deepest souls before killing him (for the horror in his eyes, facing their ultimate betrayal and cruelty, would have reminded them of too much in their own eyes), would have been much, much harder to obliterate in fire as a heinous demon, as opposed to the brown big-belly battyman arrived among them only a few years ago. (ibid. 214f., original emphasis)

In short – had Carlton been better known, he might not have been killed. This describes the hoped-for effect of representations quite neatly. The longer, the better, the more intimately one knows a person, the more difficult is it to hate and kill them (cf.

52 Carlton's protective and loving relationship with Desmond, who "had so clearly been the universe's center, alpha and omega" (Glave, "Out There" 238), is studied to some extent in the previous paragraphs. Aston himself is secretly in love with a man named Brattie from whom he frequently buys fish, but who is most probably heterosexual. Although Aston's feelings for Brattie are certainly interesting, it would exceed the scale of the paper to analyse their relationship more thoroughly.

Glave, *Bloodpeople* 54; Campbell 44) – hence we need stories like Glave's, Miller's, James's and Dennis-Benn's in order to make LGBTQ protagonists familiar. In doing so, the precariousness of LGBTQ lives in Jamaica might be reduced slowly, but steadily.

4 Conclusion – How Can Writing Change the World?

The previous pages have introduced and analysed the literary works of four Jamaican writers who have all accepted the challenge of representing precarious LGBTQ lives. One of them, Nicole Dennis-Benn, stated in an interview last year she believes

> that writing can change the world. The world will be a better one when we can come to the table without judging each other or dismissing each other based on perceived differences. We are inclined to think that if someone doesn't look like us or is of another culture and religion, then they're different from us. At the end of the day, we all desire to be seen, heard, and loved as human beings. My job as a writer is to humanize people on the page – to challenge readers to transcend their own understanding of the world and of groups of people to empathize with them. […] as artists we have a responsibility to dispel ignorance by spreading empathy. ("The Pen Ten")

This thesis has critically examined the ways in which each of them has taken on this responsibility. To challenge and educate readers, as Dennis-Benn suggests, is certainly one of the central tasks of any writer, and the intent to provoke empathy and tolerance is a particularly powerful motivator when writing on issues of precarity. It has been demonstrated in the analysis that the texts discussed above have advanced those goals by various strategies.

One of the main achievements of the novels and short stories discussed here is that they make the precarity of LGBTQ people's lives visible. Firstly, they draw attention to the facts and events that contribute to the precaritization of LGBTQ people, such as exclusion from state institutions, 'corrective' and punitive violence, destruction of their properties, higher health risks, etc. Secondly, and perhaps more importantly, they portray complex LGBTQ characters and show their inner thoughts and emotions in great detail. In doing so, they force their readers to really acknowledge the mental and physical suffering that these characters endure, not just as a clinical fact, but as personal life stories. Some of the texts, for instance, provide insights into the psychological struggles of gay and transgender men who have to fight with their true selves, their fears, shame and guilt and who often fall into such despair that suicide seems the only way out. Some depict the trauma of lesbian women who were physically and sexually abused with the aim to 'cure' them of their homosexuality. Others look into the stigmatised and isolated existence of patients with sexually transmitted diseases. Or into the fear of death from the hands of one's own community, and into the grief of those who experienced the loss of a friend in this manner. These stories are told in the LGBTQ community's own voices and are informed by their own

experiences which makes them beneficial for any audience, regardless of whether they are positioned inside or outside the group concerned. For the outside group, i.e. the heteronormative majority, reading these voices conveys factual knowledge of as well as perceived familiarity with the circumstances of LGBTQ lives. In this regard, the stories function as imagined contact and can help to decrease personal prejudice. For the insider group, i.e. members of sexual minorities, on the other hand, they convey a sense of connectivity and alliance with each other. Thus, they serve to diminish the feeling of isolation and strengthen the individual and communal identities of LGBTQ people. Hence, each of the literary pieces discussed here presents an example of LGBTQ empowerment.

Another major concern of the literature analysed above is to mirror the greater problems that prevail in Jamaican society and contribute to LGBTQ precarity, such as its general readiness for violence that positions people on a higher level of precariousness from the beginning in comparison to other regions of the world. A second highly relevant issue in Jamaica has been presented as the strict adherence to binary gender identities and the common conflation of gender and sexuality that amplify the status of precarity to not just LGBTQ people, but also above-average effeminate men and masculine women. Furthermore, the writers acknowledge that all of these problems are connected to each other and cannot be considered individually. Sexuality is never an isolated characteristic, and other identity markers like gender or economic class contribute essentially to any person's relative safety or precarity, as some of the stories have successfully pointed out.

While clearly criticising these issues in the Jamaican society and demanding an end to LGTBQ precarity, the texts are careful not to vilify and affront the heteronormative majority at the same time. They thoroughly examine where anti-LGBTQ thinking comes from and take it seriously. *John Crow's Devil*, for instance, looks thoroughly into religious beliefs and lines of argumentation; "The Final Inning" discusses the public image of HIV/AIDS and retraces the assumptions that give birth to its victims' ungrievability; *Here Comes the Sun* acknowledges common misconceptions about the possibility of reversing sexuality and the often good intentions at the basis of 'corrective' violent acts. Thus, Marlon James, Thomas Glave, Nicole Dennis-Benn and also Kei Miller succeed in criticising and destabilising the institutions and imperatives that precaritize LGBTQ lives, and effectively counter structural prejudice, but they do so in a manner that is adequate and conducive in their specific cultural context, without adopting pre-existing unfitting Western parameters.

A further practical step towards the end of precarity is to normalise LGBTQ lives. It

is necessary to paint a complete picture of homo- and transsexual relationships – i.e. their romantic and sexual aspects, the partners' mutual responsibilities and every-day-life interactions, as well as their problems and conflicts – in the same extent in which heterosexual relationships have been portrayed for centuries. This aspect of Jamaican literature has not been discussed at length in this thesis, even though many of the works included contribute greatly to the normalisation of LGBTQ sexualities. Thomas Glave's works, for instance, feature extensive and very explicit descriptions of homoerotic fantasies and sex scenes, and Nicole Dennis-Benn writes an elaborate account of the and rise and demise of Margot's and Verdene's long and intense love relationship. The reason that these kinds of scenes have been pushed to the margins of this thesis is that the core issue at hand is LGBTQ precarity, and that the normalcy of every-day-life is less suitable to explore the facets, origins and consequences of that particular precarity.

Eventually, however, harmonious and untroubled LGBTQ relationships are occasionally presented as part of a utopic futuristic vision, aside of amicable intergroup friendships. It is a final achievement of the literature discussed, that alternative modes of coexistence are presented in a number of stories. Some seem to envision a rather distanced ideal toward which society might ultimately strife, for example "He Who Would Have Become 'Joshua', 1791" with its fully accepted, even admired adolescent gay couple, or "Patsy's Letter", in which LGBTQ people are met with natural curiosity and without reservation. Others present visions that appear more easily realisable and might well constitute intermediate goals on the way to full equality, for instance "The Final Inning", in which Nicky confidently supports LGBTQ matters even though she herself is not personally concerned. All of these, whether closer to or further from today's status quo, might be seen as a sort of guideline for Jamaican society.

In conclusion, it can be said that Dennis-Benn, Miller, Glave and James successfully push the issue of LGBTQ precarity into the frame of public perception. They raise awareness for the precarity that characterises LGBTQ lives, point out and criticise its causes and effects, and they envision an ultimate goal of full equality and promote strategies that may lead towards its realisation. In doing so, they embody the image from this thesis's title – they become "Jamaicans wid ah different flag". The phrase is obviously taken from the short story "Patsy's Letter", where it describes the rainbow people in New York City and compares them to all Jamaicans. When applied to the four authors presented here, but also to Jamaican LGBTQ people in general, the description seems extremely well fitting, as it stresses their equality as well as their difference. They are Jamaicans, inherently equal to all their fellow countrymen and -women, but at the same time they use a different flag instead of or in addition to their

national one. They need to wave that flag, in order to draw attention to their issues and fight their cause, precisely because they are not treated as equal yet. Dennis-Benn, Miller, Glave and James wave both their flags, the Jamaican as well as the rainbow one, loudly and proudly.

Recent events that took place while this thesis was written have raised hope that the public flag-waving of the authors and political activists will prove successful in the end and changes of the public mind and eventually the Jamaican legislation might be achieved. For one, in late January 2018,

> Jamaica has banned a Holocaust-denying pastor from Arizona who has called for gay people to be stoned death [sic], after [an] outcry from activists on the island. […] activists hoped that the ban could represent a shift in attitudes in a country well-known for its homophobic attitudes. […] More than 39,000 people have signed the petition [to ban the pastor] (Chappell).

Furthermore, another Caribbean state that has long been notorious for its hostility towards LGBTQ people, Trinidad and Tobago, has seen an even larger step towards LGBTQ equality. Its "High Court of Justice […] ruled on April 12, 2018, that the country's laws criminalizing same-sex intimacy between consenting adults are unconstitutional" ("Trinidad"), as they violate the dignity of the person and impinge on basic human rights such as the rights to privacy and family life or the rights to freedom of thought and expression (cf. ibid.). In September, the High Judge will give his final ruling on whether the buggery laws are to be abolished altogether (cf. Loutoo). As a consequence, LGBTQ activists hope that other states in the region, not least Jamaica, will follow Trinidad and Tobago's example. Perhaps the next years will endorse Nicole Dennis-Benn's belief that writing can contribute to changing the world, starting with her home country.

5 Bibliography

5.1 Primary Sources

Dennis-Benn, Nicole. *Here Comes the Sun*. Oneworld, 2016.

---. “Patsy’s Letter: Rainbow People.” *Jamaica Gleaner*. 3 Aug. 2014, jamaica-gleaner.com/gleaner/20140803/arts/arts4.html. Accessed 21 Nov. 2017.

---. “What’s in a Name.” *Kweli Journal*. 8 Mar. 2015, kwelijournal.org/fiction/2015/3/7/whats-in-a-name-by-nicole-y-dennis-benn. Accessed 18 Oct. 2017.

Glave, Thomas. “He Who Would Have Become ‘Joshua’, 1791.” *The Torturer’s Wife*. City Lights, 2008, pp. 171-208.

---. “Leighton Leigh Anne Norbrook.” *Kingston Noir*, edited by Colin Channer, Akashic Books, 2012, pp. 192-207.

---. “Out There.” *The Torturer’s Wife*, City Lights, 2008, pp. 209-262.

---. “The Final Inning.” *Whose Song? And Other Stories*, City Lights, 2000, pp. 151-182.

---. “Whose Song?” *Whose Song? And Other Stories*, City Lights, 2000, pp. 233-249.

James, Marlon. *John Crow’s Devil*. 2005. Oneworld, 2015.

Miller, Kei. “Walking on the Tiger Road.” *The Fear of Stones and Other Stories*, Macmillan Caribbean, 2006, pp. 1-14.

---. “The Fear of Stones.” *The Fear of Stones and Other Stories*, Macmillan Caribbean, 2006, pp. 91-141.

---. “This Dance.” *The Fear of Stones and Other Stories*, Macmillan Caribbean, 2006, pp. 151-158.

5.2 Secondary Sources

Akbar, Arifa. “John Crow’s Devil by Marlon James, Book Review: An Apostle’s Rise to Power.” *The Independent*, 29. Oct. 2015, independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/books/reviews/john-crows-devil-by-marlon-james-book-review-an-apostles-rise-to-power-a6713666.html. Accessed 4 June 2018.

Alexander, M. Jacqui. “Not Just (Any) Body Can Be a Citizen: The Politics of Law, Sexuality and Postcoloniality in Trinidad and Tobago and the Bahamas.” *Feminist Review*, no. 48, 1994. pp. 5-23. *JSTOR*, jstor.org/stable/1395166. Accessed 12 Oct. 2017.

André-Simonet, Mathieu. “Discrimination.” Tin, pp. 143-146.

Ashcroft, Bill et al. *Post-Colonial Studies: The Key Concepts.* Routledge, 2007.

Atluri, Tara. “When the Closet Is a Region: Homophobia, Heterosexism and Nationalism in the Commonwealth Caribbean.” *Caribbean Review of Gender Studies*, vol. 9, 2015, pp. 287-326. *UWI*, sta.uwi.edu/crgs/september2015/journals/CRGS_9_Pgs287-326_WhentheClosetisa Region_Tatluri.pdf. Accessed 17 Nov. 2017.

Banning-Lover, Rachel. “Where Are the Most Difficult Places in the World to Be Gay or Transgender?” *The Guardian*, 1 Mar. 2017, theguardian.com/global-development-professionals-network/2017/mar/01/where-are-the-most-difficult-places-in-the-world-to-be-gay-or-transgender-lgbt. Accessed 20 Mar 2018.

Blouet, Olwyn M. *The Contemporary Caribbean: History, Life and Culture since 1945*. Reaktion Books, 2007.

Brown, Mark. “Marlon James Wins the Man Booker Prize 2015.” *The Guardian*, 13 Oct. 2015, theguardian.com/books/2015/oct/13/marlon-james-wins-the-man-booker-prize-2015. Accessed 9 May 2018.

Bucknor, Michael A. and Alison Donnell, editors. *The Routledge Companion to Anglophone Caribbean Literature*. Routledge, 2011.

Butler, Judith. *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of ‘Sex’*. 1993. Routledge, 2011.

---. *Frames of War: When Is Life Grievable?* 2009. Verso, 2016.

---. *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. 1990. Routledge, 2006.

---. “Imitation and Gender Subordination.” Fuss, pp. 13-31.

---. “Performativity, Precarity and Sexual Politics.” *Revista de Antropología Iberoamericana*, vol. 4, no. 3, 2009, pp. i-xiii. *AIBR*, aibr.org/antropologia/04v03/criticos/040301b.pdf. Accessed 20 June 2017.

---. *Precarious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence.* 2004. Verso, 2006.

---. “Remarks on ‘Queer Bonds’.” *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies*, vol. 17, no. 2-3, 2011, pp. 381-387. *Project MUSE*, muse.jhu.edu/article/437421. Accessed 16 Apr. 2018.

Calixte, Shana L. “Things Which Aren’t to Be Given Names: Afro-Caribbean and Diasporic Negotiations of Same Gender Desire and Sexual Relations.” *Canadian Woman Studies*, vol. 24, no. 2-3, 2005, pp. 128-137. *CWS*, cws.journals.yorku.ca/index.php/cws/article/view/6130. Accessed 17 Nov. 2017.

Campbell, Kofi Omoniyi Sylvanus. *The Queer Caribbean Speaks: Interviews with Writers, Artists, and Activists*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2014.

Carr, Robert. “On ‘Judgements’: Poverty, Sexuality-Based Violence and Human Rights in 21st Century Jamaica.” *Caribbean Journal of Social Work*, vol. 2, 2003, pp.71-87.

Chan, Sewell. “Russia’s ‘Gay Propaganda’ Laws Are Illegal, European Court Rules.” *New York Times*, 20 June 2017, nytimes.com/2017/06/20/world/europe/russia-gay-propaganda.html. Accessed 20 Mar. 2018.

Chappell, Kate. “Jamaica bans anti-gay Arizona pastor from visiting country.” *The Guardian*, 29 Jan. 2018, theguardian.com/world/2018/jan/29/jamaica-bans-anti-gay-arizona-pastor-from-visiting-country. Accessed 30 Jan. 2018.

Charter of Fundamental Rights and Freedoms (Consitutional Amendment) Act. *Houses of Parliament*, 2011, japarliament.gov.jm/attachments/341_The%20Charter%20of%20Fundamental%20Rights%20and%20Freedoms%20(Constitutional%20Amendment)%20Act,%202011.pdf. Accessed 7 Feb. 2018.

Chin, Timothy S. “‘Bullers’ and ‘Battymen’: Contesting Homophobia in Black Popular Culture and Contemporary Caribbean Literature.” Glave, *Our Caribbean*, pp. 78-96.

Cohen, Cathy J. “Punks, Bulldaggers, and Welfare Queens: The Radical Potential of Queer Politics?” Johnson and Henderson, pp. 21-51.

Crichlow, Wesley E. A. “History, (Re)Memory, Testimony, and Biomythography: Charting a Buller Man’s Trinidadian Past.” Glave, *Our Caribbean*, pp. 101-131.

Crisp, R. J. and R. N. Turner. “Can Imagined Interactions Produce Positive Perceptions? Reducing Prejudice through Simulated Social Contact.” *American Psychologist*, vol. 64, no. 4, 2009, pp. 231-240.

Cummings, Ronald. “Queer Theory and Caribbean Writing.” Bucknor and Donnell, pp. 323-331.

Davis, Nick. “Jamaica's first public gay pride event a symbol of change: 'It felt liberating'.” *The Guardian*, 10 Aug. 2015, theguardian.com/world/2015/aug/10/jamaica-first-gay-pride-celebration-symbol-change. Accessed 9 May 2018.

Deschamps, Catherine. “Abnormal.” Tin, pp. 27-28.

Donnell, Alison. *Twentieth-Century Caribbean Literature: Critical Moments in Anglophone Literary History*. Routledge, 2006.

Foucault, Michel. *The History of Sexuality, Volume I: An Introduction*. 1976. Vintage, 1990.

Fuss, Diana. “Inside/Out.” Fuss, pp. 1-10.

---, editor. *Inside/Out: Lesbian Theories, Gay Theories.* Routledge, 1991.

Glave, Thomas. *Words to Our Now: Imagination and Dissent*. U of Minnesota P, 2005.

---. *Among the Bloodpeople: Politics and Flesh*. Akashic Books, 2013.

---, editor. *Our Caribbean: A Gathering of Lesbian and Gay Writing from the Antilles*. Duke UP, 2008.

Gopinath, Gayatri. *Impossible Desires: Queer Diasporas and South Asian Public Cultures*. Duke UP, 2005.

Grimm, Bethany Louise. “‘Nasty Nastiness’: The Critical Body in Marlon James’s *John Crow’s Devil*.” Thesis, Dalarna University, 2006. *Academia*, academia.edu/26799267/_Nasty_Nastiness_The_Critical_Body_in_Marlon_James_John_Crows_Devil. Accessed 4 June 2018.

Gutzmore, Cecil. “Casting the First Stone: Policing of Homosexuality in Jamaican Popular Culture.” *Interventions*, vol. 6, no. 1, 2004, pp. 118-134. *Taylor and Francis Online*, tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/1369801042000185697. Accessed 17 Nov. 2017.

Harrison, Sheri-Marie. *Jamaica's Difficult Subjects: Negotiating Sovereignty in Anglophone Caribbean Literature and Criticism*. Ohio State UP, 2014.

---. “Twenty-First-Century West Indian Fiction.” *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Literature*, 29 Mar. 2017, no pageination. *Oxford Research Encyclopedias*, doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190201098.013.195. Accessed 4 June 2018.

Hillman, Richard S. and Thomas J. D’Agostino, editors. *Understanding the Contemporary Caribbean*. Lynn Rienner, 2009.

Hope, Donna P. “Of ‘Chi-Chi’ Men: The Threat of Male Homosexuality to Afro-Jamaican Masculine Identity.” *Caribbean Studies Association*, May 2001, pp. 1-16. *U of Florida Digital Collections*, ufdc.ufl.edu/CA00400251/00001. Accessed 6 Feb. 2018.

Human Rights Watch (HRW). “Hated to Death: Homophobia, Violence and Jamaica’s HIV/AIDS Epidemic.” *Human Rights Watch*, 15 Nov. 2004, hrw.org/report/2004/11/15/hated-death/homophobia-violence-and-jamaicas-hiv/aids-epidemic. Accessed 23 Nov. 2017.

---. “Not Safe at Home: Violence and Discrimination against LGBT People in Jamaica.” *Human Rights Watch*, 21 Oct. 2014, hrw.org/report/2014/10/21/not-safe-home/violence-and-discrimination-against-lgbt-people-jamaica. Accessed 23 Nov. 2017.

Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR). “Report on the Situation of Human Rights in Jamaica.” *Organization of American States (OAS)*, 12 Aug. 2012, oas.org/en/iachr/docs/pdf/Jamaica2012eng.pdf. Accessed 8 Feb. 2018.

International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association (ILGA). *“State Sponsored Homophobia 2017 – A World Survey of Sexual Orientation Laws: Criminalisation, Protection and Recognition”*, edited by Aengus Carroll and Lucas Ramón Mendos, *ILGA*, May 2017, ilga.org/downloads/2017/ILGA_State_Sponsored_Homophobia_2017_WEB.pdf. Accessed 22 Dec. 2017.

Intersex Society of North America (ISNA). “How Common Is Intersex?” *Intersex Society of North America*, isna.org/faq/frequency. Accessed 7 May 2018.

Jackson, Shona. “Sexual Sovereignty in the Caribbean and its Diasporas.” *Theory & Event*, vol. 19, no. 4, 2016, no pageination. *Project MUSE*, muse.jhu.edu/article/633274. Accessed 20 Nov. 2017.

Jarrett, Gene. “‘Couldn’t Find Them Anywhere’: Thomas Glave’s *Whose Song?* Postmodernist Literary Queerings, and the Trauma of Witnessing, Memory and Testimony.” *Callaloo*, vol 23, no. 4, pp. 1241-1258. *JSTOR*, jstor.org/stable/3300057. Accessed 4 June 2018.

Jarrett, Gene and Thomas Glave. “A Song to Pass on: An Interview with Thomas Glave.” *Callaloo*, vol. 23, no. 4, 2000, pp. 1227-1240. *JSTOR*, jstor.org/stable/3300056. Accessed 4 June 2018.

J-FLAG. “National Survey of Attitudes and Perceptions of Jamaicans Towards Same Sex Relationships.” *J-FLAG*, July 2012, jflag.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/2012-ATTITUDES-AND-PERCEPTIONS-OF-JAMAICANS-TOWARDS-SAME-SEX-RELATIONSHIPS.pdf. Accessed 29 Jan. 2018.

---. “Universal Periodic Review of Jamaica” *ILGA*, May 2015, ilga.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/Shadow-report-17.pdf. Accessed 22 Dec. 2017.

J-FLAG et al. “Human Rights Violations Against Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) People in Jamaica: A Shadow Report.” *United Nations Human Rights*, Dec. 2015, tbinternet.ohchr.org/Treaties/CCPR/Shared Documents/JAM/INT _CCPR_ICO_JAM_22756_E.pdf. Accessed 29 Jan. 2018.

---. “Human Rights Violations Against Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) People in Jamaica: A Shadow Report.” *United Nations Human Rights*, Sept. 2016, tbinternet.ohchr.org/Treaties/CCPR/Shared%20Documents/JAM/INT_CCPR_CSS_JAM_25269_E.pdf. Accessed 29 Jan. 2018.

Johnson, E. Patrick. “‘Quare’ Studies, or (Almost) Everything I Know about Queer Studies I Learnt from My Grandmother.” Johnson and Henderson, pp. 124-157.

Johnson, E. Patrick and Mae G. Henderson. “Introduction: Queering Black Studies/ ‘Quaring’ Queer Studies.” Johnson and Henderson, pp. 1-17.

---, editors. *Black Queer Studies*. 2005. Duke UP, 2007.

Kamali Dehghan, Saeed. “Iran executes three men on homosexuality charges.” *The Guardian*, 7 Sep. 2011, theguardian.com/world/2011/sep/07/iran-executes-men-homosexuality-charges. Accessed 20 Jan. 2018.

Katz, Jonathan Ned. *The Invention of Heterosexuality*. U of Chicago P, 2007.

“Kei Miller.” *British Council: Literature*, literature.britishcouncil.org/writer/kei-miller. Accessed 3 Aug. 2018.

Kempadoo, Kamala. *Sexing the Caribbean: Gender, Race, and Sexual Labor*. Routledge, 2004.

---. “Sexuality in the Caribbean: Theory and Research (with an Emphasis on the Anglophone Caribbean).” *Social and Economic Studies*, vol. 52, no. 3, 2003, pp. 59-88. *JSTOR*, jstor.org/stable/27865341. Accessed 18 Oct. 2017.

King, Rosamond S. *Island Bodies: Transgressive Sexualities in the Caribbean Imagination.* UP of Florida, 2014.

---. “One Sustained Moment: The Constant Re-creation of Caribbean Sexualities.” *Small Axe*, vol. 21, no. 1, 2017, pp. 250-259. *Project MUSE*, muse.jhu.edu/article/651773. Accessed 25 Oct. 2017.

---. “Sex and Sexuality in English Caribbean Novels: A Survey from 1950.” *Journal of West Indian Literature*, vol. 11, no. 1, 2002, pp. 24-38. *JSTOR*, jstor.org/stable/23019802. Accessed 4 Feb. 2018.

Korte, Barbara. “Narrating Poverty and Precarity in Britain: An Introduction.” *Narrating Poverty and Precarity in Britain*, edited by Barbara and Frédéric Regard, De Gruyter, 2014, pp. 1-17.

Korte, Barbara and Frédéric Regard. “Narrating ‘Precariousness’: Modes, Media, and Ethics.” *Narrating ‘Precariousness’: Modes, Media, and Ethics*, edited by Barbara Korte and Frédéric Regard, Universitätsverlag Winter, 2014, pp. 7-15.

Kosofsky Sedgwick, Eve. *The Epistemology of the Closet.* U of California P, 1990.

Krantz, Susan E. “Reconsidering the Etymology of Bulldike.” *American Speech*, vol. 70, no. 2, 1995, pp. 217–221. *JSTOR*, jstor.org/stable/455819. Accessed 7 May 2018.

LaFont, Suzanne. “Very Straight Sex: The Development of Sexual Mores in Jamaica.” *Journal of Colonialism and Colonial History*, vol. 2, no. 3, 2001, no pageination. *Project MUSE*, muse.jhu.edu/article/7405. Accessed 17 Nov. 2017.

Lazarus, Latoya. “This is a Christian Nation: Gender and Sexuality in Processes of Constitutional and Legal Reform in Jamaica.” *Social and Economic Studies*, vol. 61, no. 3, 2012, pp. 117-143. *JSTOR*, jstor.org/stable/41803770. Accessed 18 Oct. 2017.

Lewis, Linden. “Caribbean Masculinity: Unpacking the Narrative.” *The Culture of Gender and Sexuality in the Caribbean*, edited by Linden Lewis, UP of Florida, 2003, pp. 94-125.

Loutoo, Jada. “Final ruling in gay-rights case Sept 20.” *Trinidad and Tobago Newsday*, 9 July 2018, newsday.co.tt/2018/07/09/final-ruling-in-gay-rights-case-sept-20. Accessed 7 Aug. 2018.

Lovell, Jarret S. “‘We are Jamaicans:’ Living with and Challenging the Criminalization of Homosexuality in Jamaica.” *Contemporary Justice Review*, vol. 19, no. 1, 2016, pp. 86-102, *Taylor and Francis Online*, tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/10282580.2015.1101687. Accessed 6 Feb. 2018.

Madore, Joél. “Jamaican Signatures: An Archetypal Analysis of Marlon James’ *John Crow’s Devil*.” *Journal of Caribbean Literatures*, vol. 7, no. 1, 2011, pp. 69-75.

Mangeot, Philippe. “Closet, the.” Tin, pp. 107-110.

Marinucci, Mimi. *Feminism Is Queer: The Intimate Connection Between Queer and Feminist Theory*. ZedBooks, 2010.

Martin, Tony. *Caribbean History: From Pre-colonial Origins to the Present*. 2012. Routledge, 2016.

McFee, Rochelle and Elroy Galbraith. “The Developmental Cost of Homophobia: The Case of Jamaica.” *Washington Blade*, Jan. 2016, washingtonblade.com/content/files/2016/01/The-Developmental-Cost-of-Homophobia-The-Case-of-Jamaica_2016-1.pdf. Accessed 07 Jan. 2018.

Miller, Kei. “Apples versus Oranges; Hitler versus Jamaica CAUSE.” *Under the Saltire Flag*, 19 July 2014, underthesaltireflag.com/2014/07/19/apples-versus-oranges-hitler-versus-jamaica-cause. Accessed 10 May 2018.

---. “Homophobia: Towards a Definition.” *Under the Saltire Flag*, 1 July 2014, underthesaltireflag.com/2014/07/01/homophobia-towards-a-definition. Accessed 10 May 2018.

---. “If a Gay Man Screams in the Caribbean, and a White Man Isn’t There to Hear Him, Has He Still Made a Sound?” *Under the Saltire Flag*, 13 July 2015, underthesaltireflag.com/2015/07/13/if-a-gay-man-screams-in-the-caribbean-and-a-white-man-isnt-there-to-hear-him-has-he-still-made-a-sound. Accessed 10 May 2018.

---. “On Effeminacy.” *Under the Saltire Flag*, 11 Aug. 2011, underthesaltireflag.com/2011/08/11/on-effeminacy. Accessed 10 May 2018.

---. *Under the Saltire Flag.* underthesaltireflag.com. Accessed 9 May 2018.

---. *Writing Down the Vision: Essays and Prophecies*. Peepal Tree, 2013.

Miller, Kei et al. “Jamaican Letters: Past, Present, Future.” *PREE*, no. 1, Apr. 2018, preelit.com/2018/04/09/jamaican-letters-past-present-future. Accessed 24. Apr. 2018.

Ministry of Health (MoH). “HIV Epidemiological Profile 2015: Facts and Figures.” *Ministry of Health*, 30 Nov. 2016, moh.gov.jm/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/2015-Epi-Update-Revised-Final.pdf. Accessed 13 Feb. 2018.

Moore, Darnell L. “Authors Marlon James and Nicole Dennis-Benn on Being Queer and Jamaican.” *OUT*, 12 May 2016, out.com/art-books/2016/5/12/authors-marlon-james-and-nicole-dennis-benn-being-queer-and-jamaican. Accessed 22 Mar. 2018.

---. “Structurelessness, Structure and Queer Movements.” *Women’s Studies Quarterly*, vol. 41, no. 3/4, 2013, pp. 257-260. *JSTOR*, jstor.org/stable/23611522. Accessed 25 Oct 2017.

Moster, David Z. “The Levite of Judges 19-21.” *Journal of Biblical Literature*, vol. 134, no. 4, 2015, pp. 721-730. *Project MUSE*, muse.jhu.edu/article/607604. Accessed 15 June 2018.

Mott, Luiz. “Latin America.” Tin, pp. 277-281.

Mountz, Alison. “The Other.” *Key Concepts in Political Geography*, edited by Carolyn Gallaher et al., SAGE, 2009, pp. 328-338.

Murray, David A. B. *Opacity: Gender, Sexuality, Race, and the ‘Problem’ of Identity in Martinique*. Peter Lang, 2002.

Nichols, James. “Laverne Cox, Jonathan Groff And Rea Carey Named 2014 NYC Pride Grand Marshals.” *Huffington Post*, 22 Apr. 2014, huffingtonpost.com/2014/04/22/2014-nyc-pride-grand-marshals_n_5191386.html. Accessed 5 Aug. 2018.

Oakes, Guy. “Straight Thinking about Queer Theory.” *International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society*, vol. 8, no. 3, 1995, pp. 379-388. *JSTOR*, jstor.org/stable/20007198. Accessed 25 Oct. 2017.

Offences Against the Person Act. *Ministry of Justice*, 1 Jan. 1864, moj.gov.jm/laws/offences-against-person-act. Accessed 7 Feb. 2018.

“Oral Tradition.” *A Dictionary of the Bible*, edited by W. R. F. Browning. *Oxford Biblical Studies Online*, oxfordbiblicalstudies.com/article/opr/t94/e1382. Accessed 5 July 2018.

“Orlando Night Club Shooting.” *BBC News*, 15 June 2016, bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-36511778. Accessed 20 Mar. 2018.

Overseas Security Advisory Council (OSAC). “Jamaica 2018 Crime and Safety Report.” *OSAC*, 26 Jan. 2018, osac.gov/pages/ContentReportDetails.aspx?cid=23208. Accessed 9 May 2018.

Padgett, Tim. “The Most Homophobic Place on Earth?” *TIME*, 12 Apr. 2006, content.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,1182991,00.html. Accessed 16 Feb 2018.

Palmié, Stephan and Francisco A. Scarano. “Introduction: Caribbean Counterpoints”. Palmié and Scarano, pp. 1-21.

---, editors. *The Caribbean: A History of the Region and Its Peoples*. U of Chicago P, 2011.

Paul, Annie et al. “Reading, Writing, Religion: Mark McWatt and Marlon James Talk with Annie Paul.” *The Caribbean Review of Books*, no. 10, 2006. *CBR,* caribbeanreviewofbooks.com/crb-archive/10-november-2006/reading-writing -religion. Accessed 4 June 2018.

Polk, James. “‘John Crow’s Devil’: Spiritual Combat.” *The New York Times*, 13 Nov. 2005, www.nytimes.com/2005/11/13/books/review/john-crows-devil-spiritual-combat.html. Accessed 4 June 2018.

Potter, Robert B. et al. *The Contemporary Caribbean*. Pearson, 2004.

Puar, Jasbir. “Precarity Talk: A Virtual Roundtable with Lauren Berlant, Judith Butler, Bojana Cvejić, Isabell Lorey, Jasbir Puar, and Ana Vujanović.” *TDR*, vol. 56, no. 4, 2012, pp. 163-177. *JSTOR*, jstor.org/stable/23362779. Accessed 16 April 2018.

Revol, Thierry. “Sodom and Gomorrah.” Tin, pp. 423-424.

Revoyr, Nina. “Me Too, I Say, Me Too: Nicole Dennis-Benn on ‘Here Comes the Sun’.” *Los Angeles Review of Books*, 7 Aug. 2016, lareviewofbooks.org/article/say-nicole-dennis-benn-comes-sun. Accessed 22 Mar. 2018.

Ross, Marlon B. “Beyond the Closet as Raceless Paradigm.” Johnson and Henderson, pp. 161-189.

Rubin, Gayle S. “Thinking Sex: Notes for a Radical Theory of the Politics of Sexuality.” *The Lesbian and Gay Studies Reader*, edited by Henry Abelove et al., Routledge, 1993, pp. 3-44.

Senior, Jennifer. “Review: In ‘Here Comes the Sun,’ a Hustle to Thrive in Jamaica.” *The New York Times*, 29 June 2016, nytimes.com/2016/06/30/books/review-here-comes-the-sun-by-nicole-dennis-benn.html. Accessed 4 June 2018.

Sexual Offences Act. *Ministry of Justice*, 30 June 2011, moj.gov.jm/laws/sexual-offences-act. Accessed 7 Feb. 2018.

Sharpe, Jenny and Samantha Pinto. “The Sweetest Taboo: Studies of Caribbean Sexualities – A Review Essay.” *Signs*, vol. 32, no. 1, 2006, pp. 247-274. *JSTOR*, jstor.org/stable/10.1086/505541. Accessed 17 Feb. 2018.

Sheller, Mimi. *Citizenship from Below: Erotic Agency and Caribbean Freedom*. Duke UP, 2012.

Silvera, Makeda. “Man Royals and Sodomites: Some Thoughts on the Invisibility of Afro-Caribbean Lesbians.” Glave, *Our Caribbean*, pp. 344-354.

Skeete, Geraldine. “Representations of Homophobic Violence in Anglophone Caribbean Literature.” *Caribbean Review of Gender Studies*, vol. 4, 2010, pp. 1-20. *UWI*, uwispace.sta.uwi.edu/dspace/handle/2139/16036. Accessed 25 Jan. 2018.

Smith, Faith. “Caribbean Literature and Sexuality.” Bucknor and Donnell, pp. 403-411.

---. “Introduction: Sexing the Citizen.” *Sex and the Citizen: Interrogating the Caribbean*, edited by Faith Smith, U of Virginia P, 2011, pp. 1-17.

Smith, Ian. “Critics in the Dark.” *Journal of West Indian Literature*, vol. 8, no. 2, 1999, pp. 2–9. *JSTOR*, jstor.org/stable/23019787. Accessed 7 May 2018.

“sodomy, n.” *OED Online*, Oxford UP, March 2018, oed.com/view/Entry/183887. Accessed 11 Apr. 2018.

Tettenborn, Éva. “‘Will the Big Boys Finally Love You’: The Impossibility of Black Male Homoerotic Desire and the Taboo of Black Homosexual Solidarity in Thomas Glave’s ‘Whose Song?’.” *Callaloo*, vol. 26, no. 3, 2003, pp. 855-866. *JSTOR*, jstor.org/stable/3300730. Accessed 4 June 2018.

The King James Bible. Project Gutenberg, 2 Mar. 2011, gutenberg.org/files/10/10-h/10-h.htm. Accessed 7 Aug. 2018.

“The Pen Ten with Nicole Dennis-Benn.” *Pen America*, 26 June 2017, pen.org/pen-ten-nicole-dennis-benn. Accessed 22 Mar. 2018.

Thompson, Livingstone. *Jamaica in the 21st Century: Revisiting the First Decade*. UP of America, 2017.

Tin, Louis-Georges, editor. *The Dictionary of Homophobia: A Global History of Gay and Lesbian Experience.* Arsenal Pulp Press, 2003.

Tinsley, Omise'eke Natasha. "Black Atlantic, Queer Atlantic: Queer Imaginings of the Middle Passage." *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies*, vol. 14, no. 2-3, 2008, pp. 191-215. *Project MUSE*, muse.jhu.edu/article/241316. Accessed 25 Jan. 2018.

---. *Thiefing Sugar: Eroticism Between Women in Caribbean Literature*. Duke UP, 2010.

Toensing, Holly Joan. "Women of Sodom and Gomorrah: Collateral Damage in the War against Homosexuality?" *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion*, vol. 21, no. 2, 2005, pp. 61-74. *JSTOR*, jstor.org/stable/25002533. Accessed 15 June 2018.

"Trinidad and Tobago: Court Overturns Same-Sex Intimacy Ban." *Human Rights Watch*, 13 Apr. 2018, hrw.org/news/2018/04/13/trinidad-and-tobago-court-overturns-same-sex-intimacy-ban. Accessed 7 Aug. 2018.

Turner, Victor. *The Anthropology of Performance*. Performing Arts Journal, 1986.

Valens, Keja L. *Desire between Women in Caribbean Literature*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2013.

Warner, Michael. "Introduction." *Fear of a Queer Planet: Queer Politics and Social Theory*, edited by Michael Warner, U of Minnesota P, 1993, pp. vii-xxxi.

WE Change. "Media Content Analysis Report on Jamaican LBT Women." *J-FLAG*, Sept. 2015, jflag.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/WE-Change-Media-Content-Analysis_September-2015.pdf. Accessed 29 Jan. 2018.

Wells, Stanley and Gary Taylor, editors. *The Oxford Shakespeare: The Complete Works*. 2nd ed., Oxford UP, 2005.

Wekker, Gloria. "*Mati*-ism and Black Lesbianism: Two Idealtypical Expressions of Female Homosexuality in Black Communities of the Diaspora." Glave, *Our Caribbean*, pp. 368-381.

West, Keon. "Jamaica, Three Years Later: Effects of Intensified Pro-Gay Activism on Severe Prejudice Against Lesbians and Gay Men." *The Journal of Sex Research*, vol. 53, no. 9, 2016, pp. 1107-1117. *Taylor and Francis Online*, tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/00224499.2016.1221028. Accessed 6 Feb. 2018.

West, Keon and Noel M. Cowell. "Predictors of Prejudice Against Lesbians and Gay Men in Jamaica." *The Journal of Sex Research*, vol. 52, no. 3, 2015, pp. 296-305. *Taylor and Francis Online*, tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/00224499.2013.853725. Accessed 6 Feb. 2018.

West, Keon and Miles Hewstone. “Culture and Contact in the Promotion and Reduction of Anti-Gay Prejudice: Evidence from Jamaica and Britain.” *Journal of Homosexuality*, vol 59, no. 1, 2012, pp. 44-66. *Taylor and Francis Online*, tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/00918369.2011.614907. Accessed 6 Feb. 2018.

West, Keon et al. “Imagined Contact Works in High-Prejudice Contexts: Investigating Imagined Contact’s Effects on Anti-Gay Prejudice in Cyprus and Jamaica.” *Sexuality Research and Social Policy*, vol. 11, no. 3, 2014, no pageination. *Researchgate*, researchgate.net/publication/273328416. Accessed 17 Feb 2018.

White, Ruth C. and Robert Carr. “Homosexuality and HIV/AIDS Stigma in Jamaica.” *Culture, Health & Sexuality*, vol. 7, no. 4, 2005, pp. 347-359. *JSTOR*, jstor.org/stable/4005418. Accessed 29 Jan. 2018.

Williams, Lawson. “On Homophobia and Gay Rights Activism in Jamaica.” Glave, *Our Caribbean*, pp. 382-387.

Eidesstattliche Erklärung

Ich versichere hiermit, dass die Masterarbeit mit dem Titel „‘Jamaicans wid ah different flag‘: Representations of Precarious LGBTQ Lives in Jamaican Fiction of the New Millennium“ von mir selbst und ohne jede unerlaubte Hilfe angefertigt wurde, dass sie noch an keiner anderen Hochschule zur Prüfung vorgelegen hat und dass sie weder ganz noch in Auszügen veröffentlicht worden ist. Die Stellen der Arbeit – einschließlich Tabellen, Karten, Abbildungen usw. –, die anderen Werken dem Wortlaut oder dem Sinn nach entnommen sind, habe ich in jedem einzelnen Fall kenntlich gemacht.

Bonn, den 20. August 2018