

Betraying Wordsworth: the Strategies of Migratory Translation in the Travel Narrative of Lucy by Jamaica Kincaid

Majda R. Atieh

Falls Church, Virginia, USA.

Abstract: This article addresses the challenge of articulating an immediate transnational response to migration as presented in the West Indian travel narrative of Jamaica Kincaid's *Lucy* (1990). In particular, *Lucy* highlights the conflict between the migrant's urgency to project a spontaneous translation of a transnational encounter and the presence of presumptive global knowledge that controls all cultural readings of transnationalism. I argue that *Lucy* interrogates the grand West Indian and North American narratives of migration and deliberately exposes their illusive authority. Thus, *Lucy* presents the protagonist's orchestration of textual, visual, and aesthetic betrayal that effectively exposes the effaced limitation and deficiency in both western and global interpretations of the transnational encounter. My argument follows an interdisciplinary approach as it engages translation studies and post-structuralist, narratological, and cultural critiques of global western textuality. In particular, Homi Bhabha's, Gayatri Spivak's, and Gerard Genette's theories are integrated and redirected in my discussion of agency via disloyalty in *Lucy*.

Keywords— Travel, transnational translation, paratext, betrayal, authenticity, disloyalty, visuality, ekphrasis,

Introduction:

Most travel and migration narratives address the migrants' transcultural encounters that urge their individual readings and construct self-defining experiences. In this regard, the scholarship on travel narratives has illuminated the presence of various challenges and obstacles to the traveller's autonomous articulation of self-definition. One major challenge is related to the presence of global knowledge that enforces regulatory and fixed interpretation, precipitates closure, and undercuts the migrant's spontaneous transnational reading. The dilemma of the clash between global presence and local interpretation is a main theme in Jamaica Kincaid's *Lucy* (1990), a West Indian travel narrative of growing up "on the border cultures." As a fictionalized autobiography, Kincaid's *Lucy* chronicles the coming of age of West Indian Lucy Josephine Potter, who works as an *au pair* for white American employers, and her struggle to realize self-representation upon her migration from Antigua to North America.

Many critics have read Kincaid's *Lucy* as a counter narrative that contests transcultural myths of western supremacy and American-led globalization which cause the migrant's struggle between the disparate worlds of North America and the West Indies. For instance, Florian Sedlmeier explores how western supremacy ascribes ethnic subject positions through textual framing. Sedlmeier exclaims that *Lucy* articulates resistance through self-reflective investment in intertexts and intermedial allusions that create a postethnic literary space (213). On the other hand, the migrant's developing cognizance of disdain for the West Indian homeland has been remarkably observed in the discussion of transcultural struggle as presented in *Lucy*. Such awareness of disdain is precipitated, as Betty Joseph explains, by the deferral between the sign and the transnational traveller's displaced realization of its referent. According to Joseph, such deferral "constitutes the belatedness of postcoloniality" and concerns the "belated or undeveloped nature of local capital in relation to the American (universal) model it must become" (67). Joseph particularly cites *Lucy* as a narrative that extends this problematic of delay and exposes the "temporal fractures" (72) located in the difference between the promises of American-led globalization and the delay in their realization. Joseph's conceptualization is crucial to my investigation of *Lucy* as a narrative of struggle with temporal and aesthetic belatedness. However, Joseph's reading mainly frames the struggle of belatedness in a gender-predicated context. In general, the scholarship on *Lucy* does not address how the local traveller's perception of delay could develop into frustrating awareness that stimulates reconfiguration of what is called American paratextual precedence.

Methodology:

A presentation of the theoretical underpinnings formed by cultural critiques of western textual authority is central to the conceptualization of transcultural encounter that *Lucy* establishes. In "Signs Taken for Wonders," for example, Homi Bhabha notably questions the linguistic authority of the western sign that supposedly communicates "the immediate vision of the thing, freed from the discourse that accompanied it, or even encumbered it" (149). Such proposed immediate vision of western textuality constructs "the ideological correlatives of the western sign" which "sustain a tradition of English 'cultural' authority" (150). Bhabha's

argument implies that western textual authority assumes closure and perceives the “immediate-unmediated-visibility of its rules of recognition as the unmistakable referent of historical necessity” (157). Such presumed immediacy of the western sign ultimately constructs a space of national and cultural difference instigated by the time lag that exists between the sign and referent in colonialist cultural discourse. However, Bhabha contests the immediacy of the western sign by exposing its effaced ambivalence that is “produced within the rules of recognition of dominating discourses as they articulate the signs of cultural difference and re-implicate them within the differential relations of colonial power—hierarchy, normalization, marginalization and so forth” (158). According to Bhabha, such ambivalence could be disclosed via “double articulation” (129) that is based on strategic repetition. Bhabha’s suggestion of “double articulation” is realized in the translation enterprise that is defined by Lisa Lowe as predicated on “double valence” (Lowe 42). According to Lowe, translation conflates both “an apparatus of cultural domination” and “the means by which the dictation is adulterated, resisted” (42). In light of this theoretical underpinning, *Lucy* will be read as a strategic discourse of translation which consciously exposes the belatedness and repetition that comprise the ambivalence of western and colonial presence.

My proposed reading of *Lucy* suggests that Kincaid’s narrative does not negate western sign as cultural difference. Rather, *Lucy* interrogates the transformation of western difference into a policing paradigm that federates detrimental cultural polarities. In this context, many critics have addressed the vital role of translation in reconfiguring the relation between language and power across cultural boundaries and in redefining the meanings of culture and ethnic identity. In particular, Gayatri Spivak theorizes discursive translation as a conflation of betrayal to describe how the “literature of the Third World gets translated into a sort of with-it translates” (182). Spivak contends that “in the act of wholesale translation into English there can be a betrayal of the democratic ideal into the law of the strongest” (182). Spivak’s reference to manipulative betrayal that is endorsed in Western translation is central to my argument that betrayal could be redeployed as counter strategy that constitutes putative disloyalty to activate subversion of repressive authority and mobilize self-repositioning and agency. In this respect, Lowe defines translation as predicated on infidelity to an “original” and hence subsumed under cultural subversion. Lowe argues that this “aesthetic of infidelity” therefore “problematizes the premise of translation as fidelity” and exposes the epistemological inadequacy of originality as a guarantor of linguistic accuracy (Lowe 42). Ultimately, the rhetoric of repetition could overlap with the proposed infidelity of translation and acquire a counter discursive function that involves repudiation of faithful reproduction to defy repressive cultural norms. In light of this theoretical framing of strategic act of counter repetition, Kincaid’s *Lucy* could be read as “unfaithful to the original” text that betrays the regulation of immediacy and closure in the canonical western sign.

The discursive betrayal of the western sign entails disrupting its hegemonic production of knowledge. As critiqued in poststructuralist theories, the global authority of the western sign has always been tied to the retention of territorial control. In this concern, critic Michael Foucault has generally engaged spatiality to posit that space is necessarily related and cannot be separated from power and the generation of knowledge (246). Foucault’s critiques suggest that space is imbricated as rationality of government and a vital part in the battle for control and domination.

Foucault's geopolitics of governing space is particularly central to my argument that Western thought has been federated with the power/knowledge/ space regime to control all cultural readings of transnationalism. In particular, I highlight the historically dominant integration of the so-called "paratext" as a transacting space in hegemonic narratives of transcultural encounters. The discursive function of the paratext has been conceived by Gérard Genette in *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation*. According to Genette, in order to interpret any written or visual text properly, the reader has to go through the paratext that combines prefaces, epigraphs, notes, illustrations, reviews, or critical apparatus. Genette insists that these paratextual registers constitute the author's "undisputed territory" (407) which in reality controls one's whole reception of the text. As such, Genette establishes the textual and political authority of the paratext as it is not only of "transition but also of *transaction*: a privileged place of a pragmatics and a strategy, of an influence on the public" (2). The regulatory role of the paratextual space in further negotiating power relations between cultures has been investigated by scholars working on a variety of periods. For instance, critic Kevin Halliwell (2006) has delineated a historical and textual linkage between the paratext and the "discourse of authentication" associated with "instructional novels" and creative works on emigration by nineteenth-century British visitors to North America. Halliwell particularly cites John Galt's *Lawrie Todd* (1830) and *Bogle Corbet* (1831) as western travel narratives that have been noted for their excessive use of paratexts to sustain "a veneer of authentication" in their cultural renditions. Thus, locating the paratext in western discourses of transcultural encounters exposes its history of quasi-colonial power and spatial intervention that disseminates authoritative knowledge. In light of the historical reception of the western sign as undisputed cultural authority through paratextual transaction, Kincaid's *Lucy* could be addressed as a counter travel narrative. Arguably, *Lucy* posits textual, visual, and aesthetic betrayal that demystifies the heavily co-ordinated campaign of the paratext to frame unprecedented and unquestionable readings in western travel discourses.

Discussion:

The first chapter of *Lucy* establishes the protagonist's dilemma regarding the presence of seemingly unquestioned paratexts that predict the realization of the sign "migration" as homesickness and exile. The opening of the chapter "Visitor" reveals Lucy's struggle with a system of narratives that circumscribe her independent identity for she cannot but identify with the paratext of homesickness. In the books that Lucy has "read—from time to time, when the plot called for it—someone would suffer from homesickness" and would long to go back to the "not very nice situation" that is already left (Kincaid 6). The stories of homesickness start to haunt Lucy who becomes compelled to feel intensely nostalgic: "now I, too, felt that I wanted to be back where I came from. I understood it, I knew where I stood there" (6). Lucy also grapples with the American bourgeois ideals that define her migration as an experience of exile. For instance, Lucy's affluent American employers, Mariah and Lewis, maintain their bourgeois judgments that stigmatize her as an exiled "Poor Visitor": "They said I seemed not to be a part of things, as if I didn't live in their house with them, as if they weren't like a family to me" (13). Also, Lucy feels frustrated with Lewis's stories about his uncle who migrated to Canada and raised monkeys (14). Lewis's stories implicitly point out Lucy's difference and highlight her cultural dispossession.

The anticipation of xenophobia is also another challenge of paratextual intervention in Lucy's travel experience. In particular, Lucy already feels intimidated by her mother who keeps sending cautionary letters regarding gloomy stories of West Indians' migration to North America. In this regard, critics have highlighted the overbearing impact of Lucy's mother, felt through her instructive letters despite her physical absence. All critical readings of the mother's textual role emphasize her support of the colonizer's hegemonic construction of the contingent colonized identity being always shaped by mimicry. For instance, Victoria Burrows suggests that Lucy's mother perpetuates oppression being "a deeply compromised colonized subject who has been seduced into complete acceptance of colonial cultural mores and English ways of being that she then tries to impose on her daughter. [She] is both an agent of empire, and symbolically rendered as the loving and rejecting mother-country" (95). Heather Rellihan also notes that Lucy's mother "enables the victor despite her suffering as the vanquished" (60) and pushes Lucy to passively mimic an imported femininity (61) and into an "appropriate" female field tied to colonial definitions of womanhood (62). More particularly, Kristen Mahlis reads the mother's numerous warnings and attempts to guide Lucy's behavior "as an extension of the power that colonizers exercise over the colonized" (169). However, I argue that the quasi-colonial intervention of the domineering mother's letters lies in their indirect re-enactment of the western xenophobic rhetoric. Lucy's mother warns in one of her numerous letters that she has "read of an immigrant girl, someone [Lucy's] age exactly, who had had her throat cut while she was a passenger on perhaps the very same train [Lucy] was riding" (21). Yet, similar accounts of violence, cited from American newspapers, constantly appear in the mother's other letters (21). So, Lucy's mother constructs a cautionary collection of cited reports on xenophobic violence which exposes the frequency of the seemingly occasional offence that is blatantly circulated in media outlets. However, I contend that realizing the frequency of anti-foreign reactions could be read as a hidden strategy of the media paratexts that manufacture ethnic cultural awareness and have been considered by sociologists as complicit in normalizing xenophobia in western discourse (van Dijk 33). Projecting the frequency of such animosity attacks not only underlies their heightened probability but ultimately suggests their latent social justification. So, Lucy's mother indirectly contributes to the rereading of violent intolerance against migrants as a reflection of authorized social behavior rather than an exceptional episode of law violation. Thus, the mother's letters construct a narrative that ultimately circulates the implicit normalization of intolerance that further stigmatizes West Indian migrants.

The paratextual normalization of xenophobia further limits Lucy's mobility and frustrates her free imagination of the American experience. Though Lucy resentfully reacts and later refuses to open most of her mother's letters, she cannot discard or elude their influence. The letters sustain a repressive past that contains Lucy's freedom. Such restraint is symbolized by the way Lucy carries the unopened letters as a burden: "I walked around with letters from my family and friends scorching my breasts. I had placed these letters inside my brassiere, and carried them around with me wherever I went" (Kincaid 22). Having the letters cover her naked body suggests reading Lucy's body as a blank text whose "nakedness" awaits regulatory inscription by her mother's letters. The act of "scorching" also suggests physical violence that metaphorically extends the letters' discursive repression of Lucy's own interpretation of her travel. Moreover,

Lucy's dream about her being naked, chased by Lewis, and then trapped in a hole "at the bottom of which were some silver and blue snakes" (14) reflects her resentment of the alleged textual blankness correlated with her status as a foreigner. Similar haunting dreams abound in the novel's following chapters to disclose the paratextual trap Lucy apprehends. She is chased "by bunches and bunches of those same daffodils that [she] had vowed to forget" (18) and she "would wake up sure that thousands of people on horseback were following [her], chasing [her], each of them carrying cutlass to cut [her] up into small pieces" (32). All these neurotic dreams project Lucy's anxiety with paratextual hegemony and her urgent need to devise resistance strategies that evade the haunting power of the paratext.

Chapter two "Mariah" reveals Lucy's shocking realization of her both temporal and aesthetic belatedness that frustrates her desire to autonomously communicate her transnational encounter. In this chapter, Lucy's mother is again presented as a domineering figure who constantly denies Lucy's position of insight and narrative authority. Though Lucy maintains a feeling of animosity toward her mother, such hatred is coupled with occasional tenderness. Yet, Lucy's tense relation with her mother violates the natural mother-daughter bond that is generally defined by transcendence of "the verbal or symbolic language" to develop "a wordlessness that is powerful and instructive" (Ty 121). In Lucy's case, such instructive "wordlessness" has developed into voicelessness, projected in silence and "articulation that goes unheard" (Davies & Fido 1), which undercuts Lucy's expressive intentions. So, the mother's claim of prior familiarity with various American adventures represses Lucy's voice: "When [a] revelation was new to me [. . .] I told it to my mother, and when I saw how deeply familiar she was with it I was speechless" (Kincaid 78). The negation of Lucy's self-representation through the mother's authoritarian letters exacerbates her feelings of temporal belatedness and relegates her attempt to establish an individual reading of her migration to a secondary or deferred status. On the other hand, Lucy undergoes aesthetic belatedness, being only exposed to the artistic reproduction not the immediate visual realization of things. For instance, while in Antigua, Lucy has been only introduced to British-ruled schoolbooks that abound with English texts and convey the British identity's perception of things. One major example is William Wordsworth's "Daffodils," a poetic text about beautiful daffodils that communicate beauty and pleasure and ward off solitude and loneliness (18). However, when Lucy first sees a daffodil with Mariah, she perceives the real flower as shockingly and melancholically ugly. Yet, she hesitates to voice out her alternate view of the yellow flower: "Where should I start? Over here or over there? Anywhere would be good enough [...] I tried to talk I stammered and by accident bit my own tongue [...] But nothing could change the fact that where she saw beautiful flowers I saw sorrow and bitterness" (29-30). The discovered ugliness of the daffodils precipitates Lucy's frustration with the realized sign. Lucy's shocking realization has been described by critics as mere dissatisfaction. In particular, Joseph reads Lucy's long wait for "the closing of the gap between the mistaken sign of the daffodil and its referent, [as] a new 'structure of feeling' [that] has opened up—one that is no longer satisfied with what lies at the end of the long wait" (75). However, I construe Lucy's frustration as symptomatic of the constant paratextual effacement of her allegedly belated readings of things. In this concern, Mariah's view of the daffodil as a beautiful flower functions as another paratext that, like Wordsworth's "Daffodils," disavows Lucy's disparate reaction.

Mariah's utterance acquires precedence for she, unlike Lucy, has always encountered the referent or the real daffodil. As such, Mariah's initial act of blindfolding Lucy (28) while taking her to the park to see the flowers suggests Mariah's perception of Lucy as a blank text. Lucy is expected to blindly register and follow Mariah's positive response to the bloom of daffodils. Thus, Lucy's translation is already considered belated and eventually marginalized by prior experiences and ensuing dominant readings.

Lucy, however, explicitly conveys her will to disrupt the authority of the paratexts that repress her autonomous translation. As Kincaid observes, "Lucy is the sort of person who, no matter what happens to her, would never identify with the victor" (Vorda 101). In the narrative, Lucy has always showcased her desire for resistance against control and her ambition for authority and "dominion" (Kincaid 37): "I was not good at taking orders from anyone, not good at waiting on other people. It allowed me to cut quite a figure of authority" (92). It could be argued that Lucy's frustration with the real daffodils initiates her will of liberation that was conceived even before her migration to America. In this concern, Evans Brazier suggests that Kincaid uses daffodils as a way to "reverse colonial 'order'" (113). Brazier's proposition aids my reading of the daffodil experience as a prediction of Lucy's displacement of colonial paratexts. While a student in the West Indies, Lucy has always resentfully recited Wordsworth's poem on the daffodils. Lucy's resentment has been coupled with a determined will to forget the poem: "inside I was making a vow to erase from my mind, line by line, every word of that poem" (Kincaid 18). Lucy's desire to displace the paratextual poem is an initial marker of her rebellious impulse that can be construed in her later feelings of anger and urge to eliminate the referent of the daffodils: "I did not know what these flowers were, and so it was a mystery to me why I wanted to kill them. Just like that. I wanted to kill them" (29). In another incident, Lucy communicates her resentment and determination to be liberated from her mother's textual control: "I had come to feel that my mother's love form was designed solely to make me into an echo of her [...] I would rather be dead than become just an echo of someone" (36). Lucy decides to reclaim her muted voice/tongue and locate an alternative utterance through resistance: "Sometimes there is no escape, but often the effort of trying will do quite nicely for a while" (37). Lucy's refusal of her mother marks her resistance to the colonial supremacy that her mother perpetuates.

To interrogate the regulatory protocols of the paratext and capture possibilities of liberation, Lucy orchestrates spatial treachery. Though Genette correlates the paratext with unquestionable knowledge, he again uses spatial terms to establish the possibility of its transposition and rupture by contending that a "threshold exists to be crossed" (410). Thus, many critical studies have demonstrated how the very repressive space of the paratext could be crossed and transformed into vectors for locating freedom. For instance, Beth McCoy highlights the "fraught" and "contested" aspects of paratextual spaces that "have functioned centrally as a zone transacting ever-changing modes of white domination and of resistance to that domination" (156). McCoy integrates the African American freedom struggle as cultural lens to foreground the African trickster "concepts of space that invest paratext-friendly thresholds, crossholds, and margins with special significance" (159). Recalling the African trickster that possesses spatial freedom with thresholds and crossroads, Lucy also displays flexibility with space and desire for

“unbarricaded entry *and* exit” (Nichols 190). As a traveller, Lucy articulates her desire for constant motion upon arriving to Manhattan: “In a day dream I used to have, all these places were points of happiness to me; all these places were lifeboats to my small drowning soul, for I would imagine myself entering and leaving them, and just that—entering and leaving over and over again—would see me through a bad feeling I did not have a name for” (Kincaid 3). Lucy even uses spatial terms to express her wish for spontaneity and freedom: “How luxurious, I thought, to have an empty room in your house, a room that nobody really needed” (86). The warning letter of Lucy’s mother marks the incident that prompts her spatial manipulation. Lucy starts to carve a symbolic space that liberates her thinking from the influence of her family’s letters. She speculates: “if I could put enough events between me and the events mentioned in the letter, would I not be free to take everything just as it came and not see hundreds of years in every gesture, every word spoken, every face?” (31). Gradually, Lucy realizes her freedom by barring any access to the letters: “This was the day I received the tenth letter from my mother to which I would make no reply; as with the nine others before it, I would not even break the seal on the envelope” (76). So, Lucy disrupts the control of her family’s letters by dislocating them from the “*threshold*” (Genette 2) and disabling their function as the primary access to knowledge. Moreover, Lucy’s strategy of displacing the letters entails reversal in their role. She relegates them to the status of copies. This reversal is realized through treacherous delay in Lucy’s revelation of her family’s preceding readings. For instance, Maude Quick, daughter of the head of jails in Antigua and whom Lucy identifies as her “personal jailer” (111), visits to announce the death of Lucy’s father. Maude hands Lucy a letter from her mother. However, Lucy decides not to open the letter in order to project her freedom from her mother to Maude (Kincaid 123). By deferring the disclosure of the letter’s news, Lucy contains the authoritative document and transforms its contents into a repetition of Lucy’s initial response to the father’s death: “When I did, I prayed hard to be indifferent to whatever it might say. I opened it. It repeated the things I already knew” (126). Lucy later burns all ignored family letters to announce the recovery of her repressed voice and ultimate liberation from her mother’s textual control.

Apart from spatially disrupting the West Indian paratexts represented by the family’s letters, Lucy reverses the imperial gaze to betray the seeming flawlessness of the American paratext through visual reproduction. The link between the *paratext* and visual codes accounts for their investment in postcolonial discourses of mobility and resistance to biased power relations. In particular, tropes of visibility are central to the examination of the dialectical relationship between the western epistemology of the visual element and the strategy of vision-revision and image-making in postcolonial literatures. In this context, critic Mary Lou Emery suggests that colonial and neocolonial power has “coincided so forcibly with the ‘imperial eye’ that constructs commodified images” of the colonized (262). Such relation explains why postcolonial writers use the strategy of visual mobility to construct their narratives of resistance to these colonial images. In this regard, Emery proposes that postcolonial writers are “exposing the constitutive processes of the colonialist imagination and creating resistance to it, [and] renewing vision for subversive and newly creative purposes” (262). Such subversive creativity has been dominant in narratives by postcolonial women writers, including Kincaid, who have been engaged in a discursive revision of the western imagination to overturn its indoctrination in the intersections

of visuality and colonialism. As a product of the Black culture that celebrates repetition as an “immediate” and “original generative instance or act” (Snead 210, 212) of subversion, *Lucy* embraces visual repetition and invests in its power. In particular, Lucy visually transforms the western sign and its paratext into repetitive images to betray their perfection and expose their effaced limitations. The opening chapter of Kincaid’s narrative reveals Lucy’s interest in keen observation of visual tropes, such as nightgowns printed with “beautiful scenes of children playing with Christmas-tree decorations,” maps of oceans, and pictures of Lewis, Mariah and their kids (Kincaid 9, 12). Lucy also recalls the past images she used to closely observe in Antigua, such as the facial features of her mother’s friend, Sylvie. Lucy recalls: “I used to observe Sylvie, and I noticed that whenever she stopped to speak [...] her hand would go up to her face and caress her little rosette [...] I was sure that the mark on her face was a rose she had put there on purpose because she loved the beauty of roses” (25). Lucy has even developed the habit of filling in the gaps to complete these visual images: “One of my pastimes at home, my old home, had been to sit and look through a catalogue [...] I used to wonder what face would fit on the torso I was looking at, how such a face would look at me if suddenly we were introduced” (64). Lucy later manages to transform her fascination with visuality to expose the flaw of the paratext. In this context, critic Edyta Oczkowicz argues that Lucy questions “the ‘space’ between the idea and its reality: ‘why is a picture of something real eventually more exciting than the thing itself?’” (153). However, I contend that Lucy’s interrogation of the privileged space transacted by the western sign becomes an act of betrayal that involves withdrawing the imperial power of scrutinizing the colonized and commodified image. This disempowerment is realized by gazing instead at the western sign with a conscious perception of its reproduction. For instance, Lucy sets local Sylvie’s face as a standard in order to scrutinize and evaluate Mariah’s face, the western model of beauty. Under Lucy’s scrutiny, Mariah’s face appears flawed and missing some of the defining features of Sylvie’s face, such as the rosette mark. So, Mariah is now described as having “no blemish or mark of any kind on her cheek or anywhere else, as if she had never quarrelled with anyone over anything [...] had never had to leave anywhere for any reason other than a feeling that had come over her” (Kincaid 27). Thus, Lucy’s trickery transforms Sylvie’s supposedly facial limitation into an origin to expose the latent imperfection of the Western ideal.

“Tongue” is the chapter that foregrounds Lucy’s recalcitrance of belatedness through a treacherous disclosure of the paratextual untruths by enunciating the subversive rhetoric of *ekphrasis*. Many postcolonial writers have been especially drawn to the classical device of *ekphrasis*—defined as the verbal description of a work of visual art. According to Emery, *ekphrasis* has become a rhetorical strategy for facilitating a revision that subverts specific cultural artefacts circulated by colonialism: those of European “primitive” paintings, contemporary U.S. photographic portraits, and commercially made movies (272). Emery’s reading is relevant to Kincaid’s *Lucy* that invests in such a revision to inscribe western paratextual space with “accident and rupture” the West has been at such pain to renounce. As an *au pair*, Lucy conveys an interest in the visual art and decides to take up photography: “Mariah had given me a book of photographs, because in the museum were some photographs I particularly liked [...] From looking at this book of photographs, I decided to buy myself a

camera” (Kincaid 116). Lucy later develops such interest into a profession as she joins a photography studio. In *Family Frames: Photography, Narrative, and Postmemory*, Marianne Hirsch highlights how photographs are shaped by “postmemory” that generates simultaneous ability to support and *distort* (emphasis added) other forms of remembrance (22). In Kincaid’s narrative, Lucy’s conception of photography arguably maintains a conscious eye of such distortion. For instance, Lucy sustains a realization of the effaced troubles in the seemingly happy life of Mariah’s family. First, she gazes at their pictures that supposedly reflect happiness: “In the pictures, they smiled out at the world, *giving the impression* [emphasis added] that they found everything in it unbearably wonderful” (Kincaid 12). Lucy integrates the element of distortion in photography to ekphrazein Mariah’s and Lewis’s embraces as exaggeration and pretence: “The whole thing had an air of untruth about it [...] I just could tell—that it was a show and not something to be trusted” (47). Lucy even extends her skills as a traveller and photographer to read Lewis’s relation with Dinah as a map and ekphrazein betrayal to Mariah’s love: “But I did notice it, and it seemed important, like a small part of a map, isolated and blown up large in the hope that it might yield a clue” (79). Lucy’s photographic skills at distortion construct an alternative picture that uncovers untruth in Mariah’s documentation of her love relation inside her photo book: “I thought of Mariah and all those books she had filled with photographs that began with when she and Lewis first met. [...] But here was a picture that no one would ever take—a picture that would not end up in one of those books, but a significant picture all the same” (79-80). In the larger picture, Emery argues that *ekphrasis* is associated with travel as it has long been “associated with epic narratives of conquest and empire-building” (262). However, it could be argued that Lucy ironically betrays the classical signification of such trope in her own travel to posit a counter narrative of downfall: “I knew that the end was here, the ruin was in front of me. For a reason that will never be known to me, I said, ‘Say cheese’ and took a picture” (Kincaid 118). Lucy’s treacherous picture replaces Mariah and Lewis’s paratext of happiness and foretells the disintegration of their marriage: “All of them, mother and father and four children, looked healthy, robust—everything about them solid, authentic; but I was looking at ruins, and I knew it right then” (88). Thus, Lucy’s prediction claims the precedence of her translation and suspends its compulsory belatedness.

Lucy betrays the role assigned to her as a passive outsider and belated receiver of paratexts to become an insider and inscriber of knowledge. Such transformation requires her to expose the illusive authority and unavoidability of the paratext. Lucy finds in painting a possibility for projecting unpredictability and “a position for irresponsibility,” as she starts to develop an interest in French painters and visit their exhibits (Kincaid 98). Painting becomes a marker of Lucy’s re-invented and independent identity, as she observes: “I understood that I was inventing myself, and that I was doing this more in the way of a painter than in the way of a scientist” (134). Critic Jennifer Nichols considers Lucy’s visit to a Gauguin exhibit as an onset of perceiving the world “as an unfinished narrative” (195). Such reading is relevant to my proposition that Lucy, as a painter and creator, develops textual betrayal of the hypothetical closure of the paratext. In this concern, Oczkovicz argues that Lucy will not be liberated “unless she appropriates her past in the process of exploring the present” (146). I contend that such appropriation and liberation start when Lucy constructs counter paratexts based on her own

earlier experiences to read the illusion in Mariah's present marriage, as she speculates: "I had thought the untruths in family life belonged exclusively to me and my family, with my mother's unopened letters representing evidence of the most important kind" (Kincaid 77). To this effect, Lucy later transforms her room from a space for *ekphrazeining* the printed prisons of paratexts into a self-referential zone for recreating and replacing these imposed paratexts with ones that convey her autonomous translation of experiences (120). Commenting on Lucy's room, Brooke Lenz observes that "by aligning herself with the artists [. . .] Lucy again works to create a hybrid space, a social location from which her standpoint can be in dialogue"(114). I build on Lucy's description of her room as a "haven" (Kincaid 95) to locate the room's symbolic security realized through its function as a space for creating knowledge. Lucy's studio-room acquires solid precedence that resists the insecurity of Lucy's belatedness transacted by the repressive space of the American and global paratexts.

The sexual freedom that Lucy experiences also becomes a symbol of her inclination toward claiming control over translation and production of knowledge. Lucy's sexual relations in Antigua are reported in terms of authority that projects her aspiration for autonomy and precedence. For instance, she does not give Tanner the satisfaction of gaining supremacy being the first who causes her loss of virginity: "I could not give him such a hold over me" (Kincaid 83). On the other hand, Lucy's relations with her lovers in America are all recounted using visual tropes. For instance, Lucy conveys her admiration for Hugh that is the brother of Dinah, Mariah's best friend (49). Described as "awfully worldly and smart" (65), Hugh uses Lucy's preferred language of visuality on their first encounter. Hugh simulates a geographical probe of maps when he asks Lucy: "Where in the West Indies are you from?" (65). Such visually-motivating question makes Lucy "like him in an important way" (65). Lucy also meets Paul at a painting exhibit (96) and encounters Roland when she buys a camera (116). In general, Lucy's sexuality becomes a metaphor for textuality and her sexual activity is rendered by the title of the chapter "Tongue" that stands for her voice that has been repressed by the paratextual regulation of her identity. Lucy's successive relations showcase her later reclamation of voice. Her relation with Hugh is one example: "As I kissed Hugh, my tongue reaching to caress the roof of his mouth, I thought of all the other tongues I had held in my mouth in this way" (82, 83). Lucy's lovers become representations of all the paratexts she wants to challenge. She even transforms her lovers into images and *ekphrazeins* them to realize her authority. Thus, Paul's eyes are transformed into Lucy's winning marbles: "His eyes reminded me of a marble I used to have, my lucky marble, the one that, when I played a game with it, always won" (99). Lucy's relation with Paul also becomes a compensation for all the stories she could not be privileged to hear and interpret first. For instance, when Myrna confesses to Lucy about her sexual intimacy with Mr. Thomas, Lucy is reminded of her temporal belatedness. Lucy complains: "Oh, the injustice of everything. What words did Mr. Thomas use to make this arrangement with her, and why, again, had I not been worthy of hearing them?" (106). However, Lucy's latent desire for autonomy drives her to *ekphrazein* Paul and link him with Mr. Thomas's hands: "But [Mr. Thomas's] hands—what did they look like? I did not know, and I never would know. And so it was that hands I would come to know very well—Paul's hands" (109). Lucy's sexual adventures also stand for her competition with Mariah's paratexts. Lucy transforms her prior disappointing

daffodil conversation with Mariah into new sex anecdotes that make Mariah remember her past that is full of sexual frustrations and disasters (114). On the other hand, Lucy's reply to her mother's letter becomes an act of overwriting the mother's paratext through using her own sexual terminology that communicates her independent translation: "I reminded her that my whole upbringing had been devoted to preventing me from becoming a slut; I then gave a brief description of my personal life, offering each detail as evidence that my upbringing had been a failure and that, in fact, life as a slut was quite enjoyable" (128). The word "slut" is a metaphor not only for Lucy's free sexual activities but also for her free textual activities that resist the mother's controlling and supposedly righteous judgments.

The last chapter of *Lucy* culminates Lucy's treacherous subversion of the paratext's authority. Throughout the narrative, Lucy struggles with the restraining definition of her identity by the paratextual trapping of naming. Some of these names comprise the paratext of "pseudonymity" (Genette 39) that impose borrowed or invented definitions and identities on Lucy. "Visitor" is the pseudonym that Lewis and Mariah use to alienate Lucy. "Dr. Freud for Visitor" is another pseudonym that Mariah invents to denounce Lucy's dreams. "Lucifer" is the reference Lucy's mother uses to present her daughter as an example of her failure in upbringing (Kincaid 152). Such imposed labels generate Lucy's *anonymity*, another paratextual trapping (Genette 39) that effaces her identity for she never mentions her name, Lucy. However, Lucy's recalcitrance of Mariah's and her mother's interpretations through spatial freedom undermines her anonymity and pseudonymity. Lucy declares: "I was transformed from failure to triumph. It was the moment I knew who I was" (Kincaid 152). The last paratext that Lucy needs to undermine is "onymity" (Genette 39), the antonym of anonymity, or the limited definition of her identity signified by one full name "Lucy Josephine Potter." The last scene foregrounds Lucy's triumph over this paratext. Mariah confers upon Lucy, "whose life stretched out ahead [...] like a book of blank pages" (Kincaid 163), a final paratext to define her womanhood, her own notebook. Lucy feels that this book is another misinterpretation that circumscribes her identity. She observes: "My life could not really be explained by this thick book that made my hands hurt as I tried to keep it open. My life was at once something more simple and more complicated than that" (132). Lucy overwrites Mariah's paratext by using her complete name "Lucy Josephine Potter" and an inscription "I wish I could love someone so much that I would die from it" (164). However, both Lucy's name and her inscription are all extensions of the paratexts that she has been fighting, Mariah's and the mother's love/control. Lucy evades this flaw by artistically blurring her writing: "And then as I looked at this sentence a great wave of shame came over me and I wept and wept so much that the tears fell on the page and caused all the words to become one great big blur"(164). This seemingly submissive weeping is a tactic of treachery as it calculatedly blurs the inscription of her *onymity* and, thus, resists any definite categorization of her identity. Lucy's blurry inscription becomes an indefinite or open-ended text that protects her from any further paratext that may inscribe a new identity on her, such as the photo Paul takes of her half-naked body. So, Lucy converts her strategy of cultural translation into cultural "transliteration," by encoding her cultural experiences with artistic indistinct alphabet. Thus, Lucy has sealed her autobiography by a final act of distortion that accentuates her self-reference or *enunciation*, which is the true locus of reference in autobiography (Lejeune x).

Conclusion:

Lucy's perception of delay is integrated as a tactic of betrayal that would ultimately reconfigure the supremacy of the western paratext as belated in the first place. So, *Lucy* is envisioned as a narrative of betrayal that inscribes a migratory identity on western discourses to disrupt their paratextual domination over the dissemination and reception of transnational readings. Based on such reading, Kincaid's narrative could be envisioned as a counter discourse that challenges the established global ethics of authenticity, authority, and disloyalty. In this regard, Lucy's cultural translation becomes subsumed under liberatory betrayal that contests the social association of her status as a migrant with the "transient other" (Cihodariu & Dumitrescu 62). Such temporary position does not qualify for establishing authorship in translation. Instead, Lucy transposes her migrant's status to intervene in the colonial mobilization of cultural translation into a hegemonic activity. Thus, she engages in a "migratory" activity, the core of translation, as Bhabha had already declared.

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