‘Trespassers will be persecuted’: Reading Migratory Subjectivities in Maryse Condé’s *Heremakhonon* and Perambulatory Chain Emails.

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The concepts of trespassing and transgression have become key signifiers of the ways in which post/transnational and postmodern subjects disrupt psychic, socio-cultural and geopolitical boundaries imposed by institutions and nation states. Indeed, this effect of difference and its signifiers constitutes the orthodoxies of current discourse, and Caribbean praxis and identity are generally represented as prototypical of such crossings. But these terms exist in the Caribbean imaginary in highly contradictory ways. In the historical relation between the plot (‘people’ space, personal yard, ‘ground’ and family land) and the plantation (Busha’s territory) the divide appears as a merely oppositional one in which trespassing/transgressing the plantation is the sacred rite of politico-economic necessity, while in the sacrosanct space of the plot one never moved the boundary stones. Complication appears however in the simultaneous veneration of Busha’s (right to) territory, and in the postcolonial transformation of the plantation into public, communally owned territory. Communal space exists at the nexus between enemy and friendly territory, stranger and family land, praedial larceny and foray. This in-betweenity complicates the grammars of morality and places transgression/trespass in the arena of the taboo. Literary representations from the diaspora celebrate migration as the foray into imperial territory, ignoring the ways in which migration can also figure as the removal of boundary stones. In such celebratory representations, the Caribbean migrant is presented in a positive light as the underdog subject who must find ways of redrawing the boundaries of nation territory. In this
paper I examine two texts that go against the grain of this discourse: Maryse Condé’s

*Heremakhonon*, which depicts a Caribbean violation of African space (‘family’ land), and
‘Puncy’, an anonymous chain email circulating on the internet, which depicts the violation of the body as personal space in the crossed boundary between the dead and the living.