LOCATION &
CARIBBEANNESS

The concept of *Caribbean InTransit* is to provide a creative 'meeting place' for Caribbean artists to share their thought provoking ideas and works within a community of cultural producers, students, scholars, activists, and entrepreneurs. The word 'InTransit' signifies the historical and contemporary global movement of Caribbean peoples and the opportunities for becoming that this movement offers. *Caribbean InTransit* is an open access journal focused on Caribbean arts and culture. As Caribbean InTransit is an academic journal, our blind peer review process is rigorous. We welcome submissions of artworks, essays, poetry and other artforms in English, French and Spanish.

Cover Image: Jason Metcalf

"Planet Earth Screening"

A Haitian neighbourhood watching 'Planet Earth', a BBC wildlife programme translated into Kreyol by Arcade Fire. The inflatable screen was donated to the Ghetto Biennale by Open Air Cinema

CARIBBEAN INTRANIST

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Annalee Davis supports Caribbean InTransit by way of curating covers for the Arts Journal, connecting the work of contemporary practitioners with scholars and critical thinkers concerned with the Caribbean. The link between the image and the text may expand the lens through which we view the region and contribute to a richer understanding of the space.

ABOUT THE GUEST EDITOR

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CONTENTS

FOREWORD: LOCATION & CARIBBEANNESS

While Caribbean artistic forms reflect the specificities of each author and their region of origin, they also reflect a shared experience often ignored as it is divided by the fault-lines of colonialism and contemporary geo-politics. Many Caribbean scholars and artists reflect upon a shared inheritance born of a common locale and a contemporary globalization. The location of Caribbeanness however has long been "a space rather than a place" according to Trinidadian contemporary artist Christopher Cozier (Personal Interview). It is a space of ebbing and flowing, of flux reflected in the waters that have surpassed "the bounds of that perforated perimeter that geographically delineates Caribbean" John Beadle, Bahamian painter, submits (Personal interview) Caribbeanness is concerned with relationship and context, constructions that can be transitioned and transposed in some form or shape to new places, maintaining a shared space. Dancer Makeda Thomas contends that Caribbeanness is a "rhythm, a sense of humour, a way of thought" that morphs in size and shape as she moves through the world. Painter and scholar Marsha Pearce identifies myriad hermeneutic possibilities of Caribbean location: "Gender is a locus. Race is a locus. Sexuality is a locus. Religion is a locus. Nationality is a locus. Class is a locus…"

The aim of this issue is to create a space for dialogue about the potential of alternative, contested and/or shared visions of the Caribbean(s) in the current global context. We invited critical dialogues that address questions of place, space, location and located-ness through the arts, and cultural production and among Caribbean peoples, not only as abstract ideas, but with reference to, and in support of, our enhanced survival, well-being and ongoing negotiations of identity. Submissions were welcomed in relation to but not restricted to several themes, among them

Caribbean spaces in digital media; memory, history and possibility; place based art and visual culture; transitions and transpositions; performance, place and space; the role of social and place based location in Caribbeanness; distortions and resurrections; navigating the personal and the political; methods and iconographies; aboriginal and African-Aboriginal cultures of the Caribbean; humor and comedy. We only begin to explore the diverse possibilities of Caribbeanness as we relate to real and imagined temporalities and spatiality in continually recreating place.

Caribbean InTransit is a network of young scholars united through a common focus on the Caribbean arts. We invite a range of voices from community scholars to policy makers, to find common ground through this publication and the activities supporting it.

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INTRODUCTION

HONOR FORD SMITH, GUEST EDITOR, ISSUE 2

Caribbean/Carry Beyond

Recently ideas about place, space and location have emerged as highly generative of artistic and cultural work across a range of locations. Speaking from within a variety of intellectual transitions from Critical Geography to Performance Studies, scholars and artists have debated the effects of time-space compression brought about by the internet and digital media. How, they ask, does this call into question ideas about belonging, community, nation and social difference and how do we factor into our reflections the persistence and deepening of human inequalities across the globe. What does all this mean for a contemporary and progressive politics of mobility? They also raise questions about the ways in which space is created and given meaning through unequal human inter-relationships stretched across the globe. For the Caribbean these issues are complicated given its size, diversity and its uneven struggle with the spatial legacies of (de)colonization. This issue of Caribbean InTransit addresses the question of place and space from a specifically Caribbean location.

An example of how questions of space and time affect different social groups may make more concrete some of the issues at stake. I am writing this on a farm in a tiny village called El Noviciado near Santiago in Chile where I am attending a workshop. The participants are mainly Canadian writers who have travelled here for our meeting. While I write, Chilean farm workers ride out to do their chores on horses and mules. Children and women travel on busses and cars into Santiago and the surrounding areas to school and work. As soon as I am finished I will walk down the gravel road through the ash filled landscape to the small shop in the middle of the fields of cactus and grapes, I will send this introduction to the publishers of Caribbean InTransit scattered between Barbados, Trinidad and the US. The slowest part of the exercise will be the time it takes for me to walk to the village shop and wait my turn on the communal computer. Assuming there is no power cut, once I log on my words will fly thru cyberspace faster than it takes anyone in El Noviciado to get to a nearby Santiago suburb to buy supplies at the mall. Afterwards I will walk back to the farmhouse with bits of volcanic ash clinging to my feet and the scent of the eucalyptus in my clothes, arriving long after my work has been downloaded, but about the same time that the men on horseback head home from the fields to eat the food cooked by the women and girls.

This somewhat crude example demonstrates how inherited concepts of space, time and place have been challenged in different ways for different social groups in continuously shifting ways in the last decades. As geographer Doreen Massey reminds us, relationships to mobility, time and space are never equal. She reminds us that any discussion of space and mobility must include awareness of complicated social differences.

There are differences in the degree of movement and communication, but also in the degree of control and initiation. The ways in which people are placed within 'time-space compression' are highly complicated and extremely varied (Massey 260).

This issue of Caribbean InTransit addresses these debates in relation to the Caribbean. How might we think about place and space in ways that enable us to revisit ideas of Caribbeanness and Caribbean community in a context that is both critically hostile to the fixed boundaries associated with nation building and aggressively altering ideas of belonging and mobility? How can we think about a politics of mobility in the face of the enormous pressure on Caribbean populations to move and to remain in one place? How might we begin to think about both local and global vision and critique given historical conflicts and regional survival strategies created over time?

This issue takes up responses to these questions mainly through the language of the arts. Sometimes ambivalent, sometimes opaque, but always provocative the work offered debates place, space and belonging by cutting through the absences and cracks in the tried language of global and national governance. The writers and artists covertly and overtly name old and new themes and issues in ways that invoke the shock of the possible, reminding us of difficult truths we have forgotten, while stubbornly requiring folks to move beyond habitual limits of thought. They do this in ways that contrast sharply with the discourses of globalized development in the region. Here the languages that reference global regulation increasingly seem to benefit only a select few. Macro and micro economic indicators, capital transfers, GNP, GDP, margin of debt, participation and the increasingly problematic question of global democracy are all terms which come into popular consciousness in the region in ways that they do not in North America and Europe. The language of global financial institutions directly regulates the habitats and habits of the region's peoples, masquerading as objective truths to which all are accountable but from which only a few ever seem to gain. It masks the relationship between language, the desires it produces and increasing inequality. On the other hand words such as "debt" and "democracy" or "participation" have meanings that are to be cherished but the way these languages are deployed conceal the emergence of a banal symbolic system which accomplishes the re-organization of the world into categories that make it easier for a global elite to govern. The few cannot govern the many without linguistic domination and so the dominant discourse of developmental regulation shuts down debates about how to spatialize justice.

The cultural and artistic practices reflected here insistently offer other languages and symbolic systems for re-imagining regional possibilities. Perhaps because of the poverty of material resources available to many artists, these essays assert a continued search for a place from which to speak while remaining apart from standardizing languages.

The power of the work included here lies in its ability to turn away from the habitual and the banal to reflect on immediate everyday relationships with the human and non-human environment. These environments are always changing but they are also always interdependent, demanding continual attentiveness, invention and transformation of the taken for granted. They demand that we make the effort NOT to use words, images and icons as forms of shorthand for standard categories through which people and their environments can be made more easily controllable and exploitable.

The work collected here asks us to think about cultural work as relational, generative and reflexive, and not always as immediately utilitarian: it asks us to use language as a means of defense against consent to social control and habitual imaginative atrophy which only further victimize us . (1)

The cover image from the Haitian Ghetto Biennial depicts a group of people gathered together watching a projected image in an improvised cinema in a yard. The image pushes the boundaries of what we consider "the proper forum for art" and raises issues of cultural access, material poverty and citizenship. It also demonstrates how communities create out of the conditions available to them, putting images to unexpected and improvised uses. The image moves us away from an inward looking emphasis on subjective identity and invites us to think about class, race, age and difference and how we might negotiate identity in relation to all of these. The community is African and inclusive, it is both inward and outward looking – actively receiving and transforming the content of the cinematic images.

Marsha Pearce's essay about the musical work of 3canal explores multiple interconnected ideas of space and place as a key aspect of Caribbean culture. She demonstrates how Rapso brings about the dialogical movement between the local and global through the music and the relations of production that give rise to it. She proposes that we think about Caribbeanness not as a rigidly bounded phenomenon but as a set of moving embodied and rhythmic cultural practices and energies that enable a variety of ways of being and acting across physical borders. Her reading of the work of 3canal within the practice of J'Ouvert encourages us to imagine how the legacies of anti-colonial actions might be translated into the contemporary moment as part of a search for a new practice of non-exploitative social interconnection in an increasingly relational world. This recreation of a sense of place reaches both backward and forward in the historical and natural environment. It involves the active remembering and recreating of the legacies of violence that structured the colonial world. It calls attention to the respectful tension between the urban cultural experience of carnival and the natural environmental ecology from which the J'Ouvert emerges.

Nan Peacocke offers a narrative of interior space in her creative memoir on loss brought about by a father's drift into Alzheimers . If we read her contribution through the literary device of synecdoche, it allows us to see that the dilemma of the father's forgetfulness is connected to the broader question of the productive power of social amnesia in the region. Through her story of intergenerational gendered caring relationships Peacocke offers a narrative of love and grief which asks us to consider what it means to try to live in the midst of forgetfulness that seems to span generations. The old man, once a land surveyor, cannot remember the scenarios that gave rise to his life and so he becomes locked into himself in a world from which he cannot act in relation to his community. The memoir dramatizes the ways in which memory loss works as a living social principle in the Caribbean – one which structures the repetitive pattern of a reach for rootedness followed by dispossession and marginalization across generations. Set in St. Vincent and the Grenadines the narrative ponders the relationship of memory and forgetfulness to action and paralysis in the present. It tells the story of how a family is literally evicted from the home that they have carefully built as a result of the father's disease of forgetfulness. Only when he sees himself momentarily in the title of a book by another surveyor, Wilson Harris' The Palace of the Peacock, is the subject able to move beyond himself toward a momentary recognition of the Other. Harris is of course the Caribbean novelist of space and memory and so the reference to the novel gestures to a tentative moment of recognition across time, and culture.

Kimberly Palmer's article on the work of the Garifuna Heritage Foundation in St Vincent or Yurumein takes up the questions of remembering and forgetting in relation to issues of power, space and identity. She addresses the contradictory narratives of the Afro-indigenous group that has undergone repeated evictions within diverse imperial and national projects. She explores the implications of re-claiming Yurumein as a Garifuna nation. Foregrounding the voices of a transnational community typically treated opportunistically in relation to the agendas of modernizing and separate nation states, Palmer's discussion raises questions about nationalist ideas of place as a bounded geographical entity and encourages us to think about what politics might be at stake in the competing ideas of racial essence and entitlement, national belonging and power. She teases out some of the ways in which Afro Indigenous identity has been reformulated over time and asks us to approach the

concept of identity critically. Who deploys these shifting narratives of meaning and essence? Who benefits from these shifting narratives and with what consequences for the fair distribution wealth and resources and notions of alternative "development"?

From very different locations, both Lawrence Waldron and Camille Turner also take up the idea of nation and the ways in which resistance to social/racial exclusion can transform built environments. Waldron explores the ways in which a genealogy of the Gingerbread house of Trinidad reveals both a practical environmental response to the natural world of the Caribbean and enacts an architectural manifestation of cultural struggle against colonial hegemony and privilege in urban space. In the final paragraphs of his piece, he asks us to consider how contemporary technologies might conceal and normalize imperial agendas in destructive ways and draws attention to the way they naturalize the unnatural and normalize environmental abuse. Turner, speaking from African Caribbean diaspora, explores ways of interrupting the spatialized dominance of white settlers in Toronto, Canada's major city. Her playful performances hinge on the ways in which inhabiting the hegemonic idea of the beauty queen troubles racist stereotypes of blackness and beauty as well as ideas of gender and nation. Turner's work turns space into place in the city by undoing the amnesia that surrounds the presence of black bodies in the narratives of the Canadian nation. Her walking performances place the living memories of African diasporic subjects in the urban space from which they have been erased by liberal discourse. By un-silencing the past in the present, she demonstrates how the invisibility of global histories of colonial struggle in space leads to the marginalization of black subjectivity in the present. Excavating and enacting the work of ordinary black folks who have lived in Toronto over the last 200 or so years enables us to think of environmental performance as an act of re-membering that restructures past and present in a world where the global and national movements of black bodies remain tightly controlled. Walking is, for Turner, more than a just a physical act. It is an act of imaginative archaeology of the built histories encoded in the city. Citing Joanne Tompkins she writes:

"The act of walking connects people to each other to confront memory and forgetting. Together, we experience what is hidden, present, gone, marked and unmarked. This "geography of experience" makes the relationship with the city tangible and physical (Tompkins, p.229)."

Christian Campbell's work speaks to the space of place, memory and poetry. His reading of Marion Bethel's collection *Guanahani, mi amor* extends the geographic Caribbean beyond its northern borders and crucially reminds of us that contesting the dominance of narratives of Eurocentric discovery involves creating a complex literary space in which humans dwell together with each other and other forms of life in connected ways that span apparently disparate locations.

All the writers and visual artists here are in differing ways from both the physical and cultural space of the Caribbean. In this usage the term Caribbean reminds of us its multiple and sometimes even conflicting meanings from aboriginal space to African diaspora, from genocide in colonial formation and slavery to indenture, modernization and migration, from colony of exploitation to more recent reconfigurations as a site for the commodification of pleasure alongside enormous human suffering, endurance and displacement as in the visual essay by Tirzo Martha. All the submissions address various permutations of these themes in diverse national, geographic, racial, gendered and generational voices and languages of artistic genre. L' Antoinette Stines explores the body as place taking up the question of how memories of embodied African Diasporic experience in dance can lead to an artistic methodology through which the boundaries of epistemological space can be crossed at the level of self, region and cosmos.

While this series of articles and images does not pretend to address or represent the entire region in its complexity, it does attempt to be inclusive of voices and visions from across a broad range of social, national and racial locations. It attempts to do so without reinstalling an empty notion of unity that is visibly undercut by social, racial and cultural differences within the region and its Diaspora. In so doing the work raises the question of

how fair access to the multiple modes of representation in art might affect the contemporary meanings. It places forms and genres of contemporary art such as the moving image of Yao Ramesar and the performance art of Olivia Mc Gilchrist and Camille Turner in dialogue with African diasporic sacred and secular iconography. In so doing these pieces open a space for debate about what critical strategies of being and doing might emerge as we consider the relationship between place and space, globally, regionally and locally across all our differences.

Taken together the (mainly) young writers, scholars and artists represented here seem to imagine regional culture in ways that might be described as polycentric - that is as having many centres that sometimes overlap and sometimes don't and which are always connected even where they are sometimes conflicted. The many cadences of all the contributions are the reason why our title recalls and reworks that seminal old album Grounation by Count Ossie and the Mystic Revelations of Rastafari from the 1960s. There Count Ossie and the Mystics play with double meaning of the word Caribbean as a place in which African people were carried beyond their borders. The work here reclaims this idea of Caribbean/Carried Beyond as a highly productive contradiction evoking the rhythmic interplay between being grounded in one location while simultaneously moving beyond closed borders.

Notes

1. I am indebted to the poet Don McKay for the idea that poetic language can be a defense against language that controls rather than listens and pays attention to the natural world.

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ESSAYS

KIMBERLY PALMER

(Re)Imagining Garifuna identity in Yurumein: Revisiting The Garifuna Heritage Foundation's 2009 Performance workshops

Abstract:

Until recently, St. Vincent, or Yurumein (as it is called in the Garifuna language), was largely imagined as the ancestral homeland of the Garifuna peoples – the historical place where the Garifuna culture was born, but not necessarily the place where it resides in the present day. In recent years, the island is being actively imagined as a Garifuna space once more. What does it means to "be Garifuna" in St. Vincent today, and how does this process engage, contest and/or collude with nationalist narratives in the colonial and postcolonial Caribbean? This essay seeks to chronicle and explore what I term a "(re)imagination" of Garifuna identity in rural St. Vincent by analyzing and theorizing several arts-based workshops on identity held in St. Vincent in 2009 and the tensions that were revealed within them. A central idea in this paper is that identity is a mutable construct strategically deployed in the contemporary colonial context, and is thus highly linked to ongoing projects of decolonization and the (re)visioning of St. Vincent's future.

"It is crucial to ask who wants whom to remember what and why?" (Hua 200).

"Indigenousness is an identity constructed, shaped and lived in the politicized context of contemporary colonialism" (Alfred and Corntassel 597).

Framing (Introduction)

Garifuna culture and identity in Central American and US contexts have been described and analyzed by non-Garifuna and Garifuna scholars alike, but there is very little written about Garifuna identity in the homeland of St. Vincent or Yurumein. The diasporic Garifuna communities outside of St. Vincent, despite their inevitable heterogeneity, generally highlight the Garifuna language as a strong marker of identity, as well as a sense of "common ancestry" on the island of St. Vincent (Gonzalez 8). The Garifuna's common origin can be traced to early encounters between Indigenous Kalinago and Africans on what was then the last "available" land in the West Indies, St. Vincent. According to historians Kirby and Martin, a strong Garifuna political state and culture had emerged in St. Vincent by the mid-seventeenth century, and soon dominated the Kalinago population of the island. The British attempted genocide in an effort to release this tentative agricultural location from the Garifuna's formidable control and to integrate the island into their sugar plantation system. After

Arts In Action's *Theatre of the Oppressed* Workshop -
Photo by Max Williams.

TGHF 2009 Gathering -
Photo by Max Williams

years of unsuccessfully trying to decimate the Garifuna population on St. Vincent, the British dealt a crippling blow to Garifuna resistance when their forces killed Paramount Chief and military leader Joseph Chatoyer in 1797 during the Second Carib War. The British seized control of the island and exiled a large number of the Garifuna leaders, soldiers and community members to Roatan (Kirby and Martin 47). This complex history has meant that, until recently, Garifuna culture was largely depicted as having a homeland in St. Vincent, but the island itself was not seen as being home to a significant Garifuna population post-1797. Simultaneously it seems, St. Vincent is central to the Garifuna diaspora, but also reads as a peripheral space: St. Vincent has been largely interpreted in the diaspora as the homeland, but until recently, perhaps not as Garifuna space. In the past ten years, in many spheres, in the academic world as well as among Garifuna residents of St. Vincent, the island is being actively imagined as Garifuna space once more.

This paper seeks to chronicle and explore what I term a "(re)imagination" of Garifuna identity in rural St. Vincent by analyzing and theorizing several arts-based workshops on identity held in St. Vincent in 2009 and the tensions that were revealed within them. I argue that the process of "becoming Garifuna" is not a transparent process of uncovering and incorporating an essential, unchanging and homogenous Garifuna cultural identity. Rather, I propose that (re)imagining and recuperating the Garifuna community in St. Vincent is an active process

revealing the hidden trajectories of power within the politics of identity. As revealed in The Garifuna Heritage Foundation (TGHF) workshops, the Garifuna movement of St. Vincent allows us to map the ways in which the process of developing narratives of identity in the context of a social movement is tied to a process of actively creating and recreating narratives of decolonization. This process is highly productive, exciting and energizing, but must be considered in the context of older colonial, creole and African nationalist narratives. Major questions raised by this research are thus: What does it mean to "be Garifuna" in St. Vincent today – what do Vincentian artists, cultural workers, and rural community members envision Garifuna culture to entail and to symbolize? And, how do these notions engage and intersect with, contest and/or collude with, nationalist narratives in the colonial and post-colonial Caribbean, including the current official narrative of the Government of St. Vincent and the Grenadines?

The Garifuna Heritage Foundation Fall 2009 workshops: Introducing key organizations, ideas and artists/facilitators.

The Garifuna Heritage Foundation (TGHF) is a non-governmental organization that has been a key player in spearheading, directing and chronicling the process of reclaiming Garifuna identity on a community level in St. Vincent, and increasingly acts as a liaison between community and national interests and programs. As Zoila Ellis-Browne recounts, TGHF was formed in 2001 in St.

Vincent and the Grenadines with the explicit purpose of promoting the culture and heritage of the Garifuna people. TGHF President David "Darkie" Williams is a widely respected community artist and dramatist from the Garifuna stronghold of Greiggs, and immediate past-President Zoila Ellis-Browne is a Belizean Garifuna who now lives and works in St. Vincent. Over the past decade, this group has been at the forefront of activities involving the broader Garifuna diaspora, forging links between the Vincentian Garifuna movement and the Garifuna communities and cultural organizations in Central American and the United States, and ultimately influencing the way "Garifuna" is received and understood on the ground in St. Vincent. TGHF is thus a major player in the island's and the Garifuna diaspora (re)imagining of St. Vincent as being a current Garifuna space and as a facet of the larger, transnational Garifuna community.

TGHF was the primary sponsor and organizer of a series of performance-based gatherings, workshops and a roundtable plenary that took place on November 7, 8 and 9, 2009. These activities roughly coordinated with the thirtieth anniversary of St. Vincent's independence from British colonial powers. What was at first scheduled to be a ground-breaking meeting of seven historical Garifuna communities—people from these seven locales would be organizing and congregating together in one place, for the first time since perhaps the British expulsion of 1797— began to morph into a week-long series of events that were heavily arts-based and actively centered on promoting and provoking social change. The TGHF 2009 Gathering and the Workshop and Plenary series grew out of a collaborative effort between TGHF and its community committees in rural St. Vincent; Diane Roberts and Danielle Smith, developers and practitioners of the Personal Legacy Workshop series, and Brendon LaCaille of the Arts-in-Action program based in the University of the West Indies (UWI) St. Augustine in Trinidad.

At first glance, both the Personal Legacy and Arts-In-Action methodologies may be read as being somewhat similar —both enlist performance as methodology and engage 'alternative' epistemologies— but further inspection reveals that there is a significant deviation in the core ideas underpinning each practice. I will return to this point later, but for now, it is enough to say that this meant

that the Personal Legacy and Arts-in-Action workshops revealed different sets of tensions and themes in the social movement concerned with Garifuna identity in St. Vincent. Brendon LaCaille of Arts-in-Action Trinidad facilitated a Theatre of the Oppressed workshop at the main gathering in Rose Hall on Saturday November 7, 2009, working primarily with rural community members. The next day, Sunday November 8, 2009 at the University of the West Indies Centre for Continuing Learning in Kingstown (the capital city of St. Vincent), Diane and Danielle held a very different workshop with a very different set of participants – this time mainly cultural workers, artists and educators from the more urbanized south of the island, many of whom worked with rural youth (though not exclusively). What follows is a brief outline of the core tenets of the practitioners' work, which lends itself to a discussion of the tensions unveiled within the workshops and themes .

Theatre of the Oppressed is a form of activist theatre developed in the 1960s by Augusto Boal, a Brazilian artist, activist and popular educator who believed that theatre is "necessarily political" and has intensely popular origins (Boal ix). Despite its popular roots, theatre was eventually employed by the bourgeoisie as a weapon in class-based ideological warfare, and in an effort to enforce a particular and oppressive social hierarchy. It has since harkened back to its origins and is being popularly re-employed as a counteractive weapon in this same ideological struggle. According to Boal, Theatre of the Oppressed has the potential to dismantle many of the boundaries that the elite erected around theatre when the art-form was primarily under bourgeoisie control – boundaries that are both tangible and intangible. This is communicated symbolically and in practice vis-à-vis the incorporation of the "spect-actor" – here, the line between spectators and actors is erased to highlight the democratic and popular origins of the theatrical art form (Boal xx - xxi) Theatre of the Oppressed thus has great potential as an invigorating force in the context of anti-oppression work, social movements and broadly speaking, the above-mentioned ideological struggles. It is successfully utilized as an anti-oppressive methodology by Arts-in-Action practitioners and was successfully incorporated into the TGHF workshops in St. Vincent in 2009.

Building on its core foundation in Boal's Theatre

of the Oppressed, Arts-in-Action believes that the "arts have an indispensible role to play in the process of social and attitudinal change and development," At the TGHF Gathering in Rose Hall, Brendon led participants in an exercise to identify and theatrically "model" community issues and possible solutions and alternatives, with Garifuna identity being a core theme and touchstone. There were ideas and questions underpinning this particular process, which had been identified in earlier brainstorming sessions with the TGHF community outreach groups located in the seven traditional communities. Community members had come prepared with thoughts and notes on what Garifuna meant to them, and how this identity could be deployed for social betterment in St. Vincent's rural north. These ideas were then shared with everyone and were honed, crafted and re-modelled in the theatrical exercise that Brendon presented and designed, along with discussions of how arts/performance methodology as practiced by Arts-in-Action could play a role in promoting these issues, alternatives and possibilities in the traditional Garifuna communities of St. Vincent.

As Diane Roberts explains, the Personal Legacy work is "an embodied process exploring ancestry" that has grown out of Roberts' own exploration of Central/West African and African diasporic dance and story-telling traditions (Roberts 4). The Personal Legacy series was developed out of a need to "address the intersection between art and social movements from specific and culturally rooted perspectives" in an effort to foster an understanding of self, past-to-present continuity and mutual and cross-cultural understanding (Roberts 3). The Personal Legacy work propels participants on an inward journey toward the histories, stories and legacies stored within each of us. Participants are mentored through an extended process of researching an ancestor at least two generations removed, learning the "physical skills necessary to work in the cultural memories that are stored in their bodies" (Roberts 4) and then moving outwards to group discussion and presentation. Although elements of the process are based on ancestral recovery traditions held by many indigenous cultures around the world –expressed here in the recovery of of embodied and cultural memories- there is also a highly personal aspect to the process involving

participants' own "definition of root culture" (Roberts 4). This makes the work accessible and personalized, yet deeply connected to community, ancestry and ancestors – "a vitally important self-discovery/recovery tool" (Ibid). Becoming deeply acquainted with an ancestor through research and through embodiment allows artists, community members and others engaged in the work to ground themselves in community and offers a way to overcome the "profound disconnect" (Roberts 3) that many racialized artists experience in a diasporic context rife with forced loss – the context of the "colonized body" (Roberts 4).

Usually an extended process spanning several days, a condensed version of the Personal Legacy workshop held on Sunday was aimed at artists, cultural workers and educators from rural and urban St. Vincent, but was primarily attended by the latter due to infrequent Sunday public transportation routes from rural areas. A wide variety of artists and educators were represented in the group of participants – from Mas Camp and Calypso tent directors to drummers, writers and theatre artists/dramatists. TGHF President David Williams suggested that the workshop was a way for attending artists and educators to become active with TGHF's mission – to assist the process of revitalizing Garifuna culture in St. Vincent, and of re-introducing core elements of Garifuna culture to our island. Attendees were encouraged to take the conversations and ideas emanating out of the Sunday session to their respective institutions, classes and artist groups for further discussion and engagement.

Finally, on Monday, November 9,2009, TGHF held a plenary in Kingstown as a way to integrate the Vincentian intellectual community into the recent work of TGHF, and to formulate connections and make plans for an international conference on Garifuna culture and identity in St. Vincent and the Grenadines in 2012. Opening remarks by the TGHF President and a popular Government Minister pivoted around observations that many Vincentians have been grappling with questions of what Garifuna culture is, what it means to St. Vincent and to Vincentians, and the process by which the culture was "lost" on the island. They both pointed to several local scholars and cultural workers in the audience who had made it their life's work to research Garifuna history

in St. Vincent, and to learn about Garifuna cultural practices in the diaspora. Both spoke of TGHF's mission to support these nascent social currents and interests: TGHF was identified as playing an integral role in taking these movements onto the next stage; the stage of re-invigorating, recapturing and "exposing" the Garifuna culture in St. Vincent. The Minister noted that the social climate was not always a nurturing one – despite the ULP government's integration of Garifuna history and pride in the Independence celebrations, much of the mainstream Vincentian public is uncomfortable with Garifuna culture, relating it to the still-illegal practice of Obeah.

A keynote address by Leilani Stewart further set the tone of the Monday session by asking us to re-imagine Caribbean history from an Indigenous perspective. Soon after, a noted cultural worker in the crowd voiced her opinion that self-reliance, self-determination and a connection to the land were historically the key components of indigenous identity in St. Vincent, as well as a unified sense of nationhood, and a sense of inter-connectedness – which she painted as being in stark contrast to the ethos of individualism and consumerism that pervades St. Vincent today. The participants pointed to the complex relationship that we have with global capital, arguing that Vincentians and the Garifuna revival movement are on one hand forced to collude with this economic context, yet on the other, desire to resist the conventional ways that this particular economic system is meted out. Is there a way for Vincentian youth to re-capture Garifuna culture in a way that would avoid the appropriation of the movement by the global economy? Can the Garifuna cultural movement in St. Vincent "de-colonize" our minds and bodies so that we can vision alternatives to development or explore how our collective future might play out in terms of an alternative relationship to the global economy? Can reclaiming Garifuna culture in St. Vincent be a starting point in reclaiming self-reliance and a connection to the land that goes beyond market-driven crop production?

Themes evident in the Workshops and Plenary Series

President of TGHF, David Williams, made a telling statement as he welcomed us and described what would take place on the Sunday afternoon workshop in Kingstown. He envisioned the process as a place for artists, educators and activists to garner skills and techniques to assist in the "re-education" of the general public about the history of the Garifuna people: "We have been educated about the Garifuna the WRONG way – and TGHF aims to turn that around and propel it forward." Various participants echoed this idea that, as Vincentians, we have been mis-educated about Indigenous culture/Garifuna culture – we have been told that this culture no longer exists on our island, that identifying as Indigenous holds a social stigma and that our history and past is inconsequential or unimportant. This proved to be one of the most dominant and identifiable themes that emerged in the workshops and the research: the idea that claiming a Garifuna identity carried with it an impetus to revise and re-vision historical events that had affected St. Vincent, and to imagine ourselves and our possibilities within this newly identified trajectory.

This general theme was continued in the Government Minister's opening remarks at the Monday plenary – participants and attendees were urged to assist in the "recapture" or "exposure" of Garifuna culture, and to fight for recognition of Garifuna culture as something positive, as something related to our continued decolonization. The lexicon here indicates the belief that Garifuna culture is something that never really fully left the island, that it was something we could actively "recover" as a nation. A similar subtext had been evident the day before in the Personal Legacy workshop. The idea that participants could tap into embodied memory was presented by Diane and Danielle in their Sunday session, and the participants then began a series of theatre-based and physically engaging floor exercises aimed at recovering bodily memory (again it must be noted that this process was mostly demonstrative of technique, as we had time constraints which did not allow a full, several-day-long Personal Legacy workshop). As the work concluded, our group became heavily involved in a conversation around the impact of colonialism on the island and how, post-

1797, people had begun to reformulate their identities based on this extremely oppressive and racist social reality – whether by NOT identifying as Garifuna, not speaking the language for fear of retribution, or internalizing colonial ideals. The theme of a covert and somehow "authentic" Garifuna identity being preserved in spite of the colonial violence was one that became apparent, this specific yet elusive indigenous identity being conveyed as somehow ripe for the taking if we remodeled our Vincentian consciousness (and/or bodies) to recognize it as something we have always had and have managed to hold on to.

The Arts-in-Action workshop on Saturday at Rose Hall, and indeed some comments made by a cultural worker in the Monday Plenary, took an inherently different approach to understanding Garifuna identity and what it means today in St. Vincent. However, there is similarity in the sense that the findings can be extrapolated to the themes I have begun to uncover in the few paragraphs above. As I noted earlier in this paper, Brendon's incorporation of Theatre of the Oppressed made for a much more extroverted, community-devised projection of Garifuna identity as opposed to a more introverted, personal excavation of one in the Personal Legacy workshops. It was possible to witness that same departure in the comments and ways the participants picked up various ideas and worked with them. In Brendon's workshop, as well as in the comments made on Monday, it is possible to note the emerging theme of a version of Garifuna identity being revised and devised, based on what is seen as historical "fact" (information about Garifuna culture and cultural values for instance) but taking the form of what was most socially necessary and beneficial in our current context (alternative ways/systems of living and relating to the land).

It is here that Loren Kruger's concept of "retraditionalization" becomes a useful tool: "Retraditionalization implies not so much a return to premodern rural life as a reappropriation of [clan] custom as the means to a tangible if limited autonomy in the present ... " (Kruger 27). Kruger also theorizes the process of retraditionalization as being "not so much a rejection of modernity as an attempt to appropriate certain aspects of modernity ... the refashioning of the remnants of precolonial society into a unifying national heritage" (Kruger 27). In the Vincentian case – in addition to what I have discussed in terms of the 2009 workshops - we have witnessed the declaration of Joseph Chatoyer, Paramount Chief of the Garifuna, as our First National Hero, and an ongoing nationalist memorialisation of Garifuna resistance to foreign occupation being invoked in the discourse surrounding continued decolonization and the recent constitutional referendum. Community initiatives of the past decade have been picked up and incorporated into the national project: In other words, the emergence of a grassroots Garifuna identity in St. Vincent (the focus of the 2009 workshops) is being mobilised for specific national and political goals and in efforts to redefine the nation in the post-colonial era.

The TGHF events of Fall 2009 actively engaged in re-memorializing post-1797 St. Vincent Garifuna society, and the attempts to re-vision the meaning attached to being a member of the North Windward and North Leeward communities may be read as action on the part of TGHF and its North Windward and North Leeward community members to manifest the tangible autonomy that Kruger speaks of, a project that involves resisting the marginalization and stigmatization that has been associated with these communities, in conjunction with the reclamation of an identity and the re-imagination of space based on the historical presence of indigenous or Afro-indigenous communities. In recent years, the ways in which post-1797 Garifuna presence in St. Vincent has been remembered have changed dramatically – there are specific social groups and communities that are actively re-visioning Garifuna culture as a source of pride, independence, and a way to re-affirm the agricultural or subsistence livelihood practiced by rural community members, and these themes were prominent in the TGHF events and workshops of Fall 2009.

Locating the movement in a broader historical context

Broadly speaking, my discussion here is hinged on the idea that identity is a mutable and highly political construct that is both institutionally enforced and enlisted,

as well as subjectively adapted and contested. In the Caribbean, numerous regional scholars have addressed the general forms and subtleties of Caribbean identity politics – and here I wish to enlist the notion that the fluidity of identity is a defining characteristic not just of identity itself, but of a Caribbean identity specifically: Maximilian Forte's (2010) article in the "Indigenous Cosmopolitanisms" collection explores these intersections between the concepts of "indigenous" and "cosmopolitan" in the Caribbean archipelago – an exploration that illustrates how, in the Caribbean realm, lived experiences actively contest stereotypical notions of indigenous identity. Notions of indigeneity as being static, authentic and rooted to the land are shattered in the Caribbean, as Forte notes Caribbean indigenous identity as deeply fluid in nature. He reminds us that the Caribbean has long been imagined as a place defined by the sea, by the fluid movements and currents that surround, nurture and simultaneously disconnect and connect us as island peoples and as Benitez-Rojo put it, "peoples of the sea" (qtd. in Forte 18). Understanding indigenous identity as fluid and linked to movement is a theoretical lens that could frame a discussion of Garifuna identity in general, but it is also one that provides insight into the re-arrival of Garifuna identity on the shores of St. Vincent that this paper discusses.

In his article, Forte (2010) demonstrates how globalization may work to reformulate the Caribbean and the Caribbean lived experience in ways that are more similar to a pre-colonial past – a past before the imposition of the modern nation-state and related "fragmentation". Caribbean indigeneity then has long been a cosmopolitan phenomenon: In other words, indigeneity is not "a matter of introversion and seclusion, of being remote and isolated, scorning and shunning outside influences, avoiding exchange, or not looking for new ways of becoming indigenous" (Forte 21). Indeed, this identity is historically tied to transnational exchanges, connections and movements – and this was likely the case for centuries, if not millennia, before colonialism. Forte posits the idea that in the twenty-first century Caribbean, "Indigeneity arises from processes and practices that make use of globalized cultural influences, that can take the foreign and render it indigenous, while building ongoing indigenous identification through transnational

routes"(Forte 33). Ultimately, he argues that this "Indigenous cosmopolitanism" is a "translocal process with translocal content" (Forte 31) that reformulates the homogenizing effects of globalization in ways that can be specifically anti-colonial. His analysis of the process of re-formulating and re-imagining indigenous identity in the Caribbean context not only illustrates how indigeneity in the Caribbean today troubles traditional definitions of that term, but also highlights the mutability and constructed nature of terms like "indigenous," and indeed, of identity itself, and points to how identity becomes a political space from which to operate – and how this space is often related to projects of continued decolonization.

Historically, descriptions and discussions of the Caribbean being a strictly diasporic space and/or as something of an "indigenous cosmopolitan" space were frequently linked to projects connected to the movement of global capital, as a way to create an 'empty' (de-indigenized) space ripe for sugar cultivation based on African slave labour (Ingram 68-69). Can we see the re-imagination of the St. Vincent nation as a Garifuna nation as being part and parcel of a pan-Caribbean indigenous resurgence that has its basis in a -seated and regional denial of African heritage? How does this movement in St. Vincent fit into the literature on race, identity and indigeneity in the Caribbean? Arlene Davila (2001) speaks to Taino identity resurgence in Puerto Rico in the twenty-first century. She argues that "being Taino" is a symbol adopted by various stakeholders for political purposes in an effort to transform the dominant colonial model (for various reasons), Davila's model highlights the way in which memory is constructed and deployed in this process of strategic Caribbean identity formulation (36). Interpreting the resurgence as a facet of anti-American and anti-Colonial struggles in Borinken, Jorge Duany also draws attention to the ways the discourse of the Taino movement serves to further entrench the institutionalized denial of African heritage in Puerto Rico (Duany 57). Worldwide, the nationalist search for "indigenous roots" is well documented (Duany 55), and equally well documented is the way in which any identity formation occurs at the expense of, or at the very least the necessary inclusion of, an "Other" (Duany 55). In the Caribbean context, identity processes and formulations/

re-formulations typically involve the denigration of African heritage (Duany 76).

In the strategic memorialization and imagination of the Taino community, culture and heritage in present-day Puerto Rico, Haslip-Viera and other scholars similarly point to this trend. Nationalist intellectuals, in their memorialization, construction and imagination of Taino identity, have selectively referenced the island's history to exclude any celebration of African roots. Puerto Ricans have been alternatively imagined as Spanish or as "indio"/indígena or as both – but never as African. There are, however, very specific critiques of Haslip-Viera's and Duany's works in the article "Taino-African Intersections: Elite Constructs and Resurgent Identities" by Jose Barreiro. Barreiro maintains that Taino identity resurgence in Puerto Rico (and to some extent in Dominican Republic) is ultimately a challenge to the "thesis of extinction" (Barreiro 35) as opposed to being a strict denial of African heritage. Suggesting that historically, Taino/indigenous identity has been "acutely denied" (Barreiro 36), the author stresses the importance of addressing the myth of extinction, and in a series of interviews with self-identified Taino community members and leaders from Puerto Rico, brings to the forefront the idea that "Taino" is ultimately a cultural expression, one that does not deny any racial plurality or particularity, but rather, a reclamation of one facet of Caribbean identity that has been the most oppressed. (He argues that African roots are accepted in "criollo" discourse, but rarely have there been discussions that highlight the survival of any part of indigenous identity and culture in nationalist movements).

A review of Caribbean scholarly literature reveals that certain archetypes in the debate surrounding Taino identity resurgence in Puerto Rico have an intrinsic connection to Caribbean nationalist movements current and past. Bolland's work in the discourse of creolization provides a firm example: Broadly speaking, in the Caribbean context, the term "creole" "refers to locally-born persons of non-native origins" (Bolland 16). The ideological erasure of difference -implicit in the definition of "creole" is the idea that all locally-born non-natives are unified by this fact– has been closely tied to the projects of decolonization and nation-building. With the seeming potential for the majority of Caribbean peoples to be unified under the banner "creole," various Caribbean politicians and intellectuals have espoused the role of this discourse in creating and fostering a sense of social unity and national integration in the region (Bolland 29). Bolland proposes that this may instead be read as a hegemonic device, whereby the ruling class devises or employs an attractive myth of unity and equality to obscure and perpetuate the deep social divides in post-colonial and post-plantocracy societies such as the Caribbean.

The discourse of creolization is also closely tied to the obscuration of African and Amerindian contributions and presence in the region. Although I discussed earlier the ways in which Puerto Rican Taino nationalist movements could be read as denigrations of African heritage on the island in some ways, both African and indigenous contributions have been marginalized by the criollo/creole discourse. Amelia K. Ingram focuses on the Santa Rosa Carib community and reviews historical data to show how the re-formulation of ethnic categories in Trinidad restructured the ways people could officially identify their ethnic or cultural backgrounds. Ultimately, the indigenous revival taking place today in Santa Rosa –and the questions of authenticity that are frequently aimed at such movements across the Caribbean- hinge on the nation's ideological formulation and reformulation of categories of identity. Ingram reviews historical data to relay the ways the dominant national narrative of creolization became fractured in the mid-twentieth century, resulting in "ethnicized" sub-categories of "Creole" (Ingram 70-72). This process of highlighting ethnicity in creolization discourses was tied to the Caribbean intelligentsia's critique of the hegemonic role of a seemingly-unified creole identity in the era of burgeoning independence (Bolland 38-39).

Ingram also points to the ways in which the fracturing of the notion of creole sought to indigenize the Afro-descended population of Trinidad: in the early 1970s, Eric Williams and the PNP sought to "rearticulate 'indigenous' discourse as the domain of an Afro-Creole majority" (Ingram 69). The idea of a romantic and illustrious indigenous past is frequently mobilized in nationalist discourse as a basis for imagined community, and this case in 1970s Trinidad was no different. Despite the focus on indigenizing blackness, the nationalist

movements of the Independence era still articulated the land's Amerindian heritage. However, the shared Amerindian past was depicted as just that – a shared past based on a former, decimated aboriginal presence on lands which were now called Trinidad and Tobago. At the same time, the particular denomination of "mixed" Creole served to obscure Amerindian presence on the island by absorbing and re-modeling ethnic categories and previous modes of identity – persons who were formerly identified as "Carib" or "Amerindian" were now forced into the official bracket of "mixed" Creole. The evolution of the Creole nationalist discourse and its reliance on ethnic essentialism in the mid-twentieth century served to obscure Carib presence on the island vis-à-vis the "mixed" Creole category. Together with post-independence nation-building discourse, this served to solidify Amerindian identity as something belonging strictly to the past, further erasing Carib identity at the

macro-level and official realms (Ingram 68).

Social movements such as the ongoing Garifuna revival in St. Vincent challenge stereotypical notions of indigeneity, as well as provide an example of the malleability and political nature of identity. The idea that Garifuna identity in the diaspora is highly tied to place (with a firm sense of cultural origins being in Yurumein/St. Vincent) and to movement (from St. Vincent to Central America to the US and now back to St. Vincent), and the way that the movement is now revitalizing Garifuna space on St. Vincent resonates with some of Forte's (2010) key points concerning Indigenous Cosmopolitanism. Ingram's (2008) piece documents the institutional social reformulations that took place during the colonial era (and later, the nationalist movements in the Caribbean) which obscured, erased or at the very least reformulated indigenity and forced populations to re-imagine themselves within new criteria and official

La Soufriere Volcano as seen from Rose Hall Village - Image by Kimberly Palmer

groups. Reviewing what historical information we can garner on the pre-1797 Garifuna nation in Yurumein, and even during colonial occupation, also shows fissures in the myth of an "authentic" recoverable indigenous/Garifuna identity: depicted on a 1773 French map (courtesy Alliance Francaise St. Vincent), the entire Northern section of the island around La Soufriere is denoted simply as "Terre de Caraibes." At the TGHF Rose Hall Gathering, lifelong residents of the North Leeward vicinity spoke of remnants of villages in the interior of the Northern section of St. Vincent that would have straddled the Barre de l'Isle – the supposedly European-enforced boundary drawn to separate the "Yellow" and "Black" Caribs that protected the former from the latter (Kirby and Martin 12). Without noting its possible significance, Kirby and Martin reference historical documents that describe the Leeward (western) settlement of Duvalle, named for the brother of Garifuna Paramount Chief Chatoyer. This was a small plantation on lands that would, by colonial historical account, have been "Yellow Carib" or Kalinago territory (Kirby and Martin 17). Kirby and Martin also highlight archival evidence that lists Paramount Chief Joseph Chatoyer's home and base as being Morne Ronde, an area of land in the same vicinity (Kirby and Martin 43). This underscores the complicated nature of defining Garifuna and Kalinago territories and identity, and compels us to question the dominant idea that these were two starkly differentiated peoples engaged in constant political conflict. Rather, it suggests that they were engaged in trade and other mutually beneficial relationships, or that the two indigenous peoples of St. Vincent (described as two specific groups in colonial record) did not see themselves as separately defined in the manner of European descriptions. This in turn leads to a complete questioning and re-visitation of what "being Garifuna" in pre-1797 St. Vincent meant, and inspection of what Garifuna is thus "becoming" or being (re)imagined as today. As illustrated in my earlier analysis of the 2009 TGHF workshops, the (re)imagination of a Garifuna past and a recoverable or reformulated Garifuna identity is linked to projects of decolonization today. As Alfred and Corntassel point out, indigenous identity is highly politicized and lived in the context of (contemporary) colonialism (597). Re-visioning our future in Yurumein/ St. Vincent is directly tied to (re)envsioning, (re)inventing and (re)imagining our past, a past in which these same processes might have occurred; an indigenous identity always in flux, continuously re-modeled in relation to projects of domination and freedom.

Conclusions

As I have illustrated, identity is much more fluid of a concept than espoused and supposedly "authentic" markers may lead us to believe. Although much of the literature points to Garifuna diasporic identity revolving around language and common ancestry (as discussed in the beginning of this paper), Garifuna communities in the diaspora have also, at different times and in different situations, strategically located their "Garifuna-ness" in broader social and identity-based movements. As Anderson (2007, 2009) illustrates, Garifuna activists in Honduras variously identify themselves with indigenous peoples and movements, and with Afro-Honduran identity and issues. Referring to the Native American movement, Grande states that: "Insofar as postmodern theories have stripped away the "epistemological scaffolding: used to prop up essentialist claims to authenticity ... postmodernism has had an emancipatory effect ... mapping instead the hidden trajectories of power within the politics of identity" (107).

How Garifuna communities and organizations in the diaspora navigate identity politics and for what reasons is one issue, how the pre- and post-colonial Vincentian Garifuna movements have navigated "being Garifuna" and the identity politics surrounding the movements are another, and how they inform each other (especially given that TGHF is highly involved in the diasporic community and issues) is yet another angle to query. However, the common thread that unites these various facets (including pre-1797 Garifuna communities on Yurumein) is a strategic deployment of various memorialized and imagined versions of "Garifuna" that address community needs on various levels, and which exist in politicized relation to their colonial and post-colonial context. As we witnessed in the workshops and in Prime Minister Gonsalves Thirtieth Anniversary of Independence speech, Garifuna identity in St. Vincent is being constructed as deeply tied to social issues such as unemployment, drug cultivation and gun violence, as well as national and community goals, from autonomy and

self-direction, to economic integration or rejection of the capitalist system, to survival, success and opportunity. Thus, Garifuna identity today in St. Vincent is based on the popular, historical and diasporic representation of "the Garifuna" as well as understanding of how "Garifuna-ness" can be invoked in North Windward and North Leeward's fight for national inclusion; and/or as a form of opposition to, as well as collusion with, global capital and related enterprise.

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MARSHA PEARCE

Rooted in J'Ouvert, Conscious of the World:
Music, Location and Caribbeanness in the Rapso Art of 3canal

Abstract:

This paper draws on an interview with the members of the Caribbean music group called 3canal. It utilises their discussion about Rapso – their style of music – as a pivotal point for critical engagements with notions of space and place in relation to the Caribbean. It locates Rapso music in the local Carnival ritual known as J'Ouvert while insisting that Rapso has a global positioning. The paper asserts the idea of "Caribbean" as a space that is constructed through practices of interconnectedness – practices that link local with global, past with present and "here" with "there". It proposes this as an alternative to ideas of the Caribbean as a fixed place located within rigid physical boundaries. It argues that Rapso is one such practice of interconnectedness.

This is history making
This is history taking

Ever since the dawn of the story
Is he who does write down the story
Does turn around and call it history
Then they fill yuh head with all kind ah story
Till de truth becomes a mystery
Now is time to boom up history

I come to boom boom boom up history
Boom boom boom boom up history
Rapso man come to boom boom boom up history
Boom boom boom boom up history

Rapso man come to cut and clear the air
Rapso man want the people to prepare
Rapso man come to make or break
It have some history we cannot face
Rapso man come to right the wrong

Rapso man bring Babylon down
Rapso man stand firm and hold the faith

– From "Boom up History" by 3canal

In "Boom up History," recording artists 3canal of the twin-island Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, propose that their musical form, known as Rapso, creates a rhythmic space, within which to "clear the air" or shed light on a colonial past fraught with silences, concealment and fictions. For 3canal, Rapso is a space for history taking and making, for seizing history from "he" so that it is no longer his-story. It is a musical space for taking ownership of the past and rearticulating it in order to shape the present and future. Confronting "the history we cannot face" is dependent on the creation of a sonic space that unmuffles or booms up the past – a sonic space from which individuals "can represent the possibility of what this world can be" (Roger Roberts of 3canal in interview, 2011). The name "3canal" itself

3canal. Photograph by Alex Smailes

encapsulates what they suggest their Rapso music works to achieve, for in the Trinbagonian vernacular a 3canal is a cutlass or machete with three grooves or canals used to cut and clear the ground for planting. Rapso music then, for 3canal, is a means of cutting and clearing, of making a space for planting the seeds for self-growth. In August 2011, I interviewed two members of 3canal, Roger Roberts and Wendell Manwarren, about what such a rhythmic space might look like. (1) We began a reasoning about place, space and the Caribbean that is the basis of this article. In what follows, I present some of the highlights of our discussion in the form of an engagement that interweaves 3canal's personal insights with concepts arising from academic discourses on space and place. I argue that what came out of our discussion is the idea of the Caribbean as a space that is recreated through practices of interconnectedness rather than as a fixed place that is located within rigid and immoveable physical boundaries. These practices of interconnection operate in ways that are both archipelagic and diasporic and are simultaneously connected to local and global ways of being. Their musical work enacts this idea. I insist that Rapso is one such practice of interconnection. Rapso draws on practices, which have gone before it, and it also generates new spaces and interconnectivities.

I use the word "space" here in the sense described by Michel de Certeau, who sees space as "practiced place". According to de Certeau the place of "the street […] is transformed into space by walkers. In the same way, an act of reading is the space produced by the practice of a particular place: a written text" (117). Adapting de Certeau's ideas, I draw on the text of our discussion to describe the cultural space from which the work of 3canal emerges, to talk about Rapso music and to consider some of the implications of the group's ideas about music, space and place for Caribbean identity and presence.

Carnival as a Space of Rapso

Rapso can be traced to the context of the1970s Black Power Movement but the musical form has a manifest locatedness in Carnival which, I propose, is a space because it is a signature practice of the place of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago. Carnival is understood as having evolved from two festivals: the European elite, colorful masquerade balls of the early nineteenth century – events from which enslaved Africans were largely excluded – and the late nineteenth-century Canboulay (cannes brûlées or cane burning) emancipation ritual practiced by freed Africans (2). Canboulay was a festival of resistance and a celebration of freedom from enslavement, which involved the burning of sugar cane, drumming, singing and revelry in the streets. This was considered the jamette or "diametre" (a French word meaning "boundary line" which also refers to the lower class) Carnival. The jamette Carnival was a space to assert self. The chantwell (or chantrelle) who, in essence, delivered rhapsodies or articulated feelings and views through a poetic mastery of words, was a key figure in the jamette carnival. The chantwell – a Caribbean incarnation of the West African griot, storyteller/poet/oral historian – was a lead singer who used a kind of rhythmic talking, that is, a kind of rap music, to voice issues of the day. The chantwell would become the precursor of the present-day calypsonian (3) and serve as an influence for the birth of the musical form of Rapso.

As an art form, Rapso is a rhythmic word form that reverberates with the Storytelling musical style of the chantwell and resonates with the oratory prowess of Carnival characters like the Midnight Robber and the Pierrot Grenade who use speech as part of their performances. Lancelot Layne is credited with the first Rapso recording entitled "Blow Away", a 1971 song that draws on the style of the chantwell and other Carnival characters. Layne used the power and rhythm of words to speak to and on behalf of a people trying to define themselves in a nascent postcolonial society. In "Blow Away" he calls for mental liberation and self-upliftment. He declares:

Don't believe what foreigners do
is better than you because that ain't true
It's a mental block that's hard to unlock
It hard like a rock
And with it yuh doh wuk
Yuh go live a illusion
Trying to be another man
Blow 'way

Layne and later Rapso trailblazers like Lutalo

Masimba (also known as Brother Resistance) would establish a musical form – popularly understood as a combination of the music of rap and calypso – a musical practice which later artists like 3canal would take up. 3canal talk about the evolution of their musical form as a powerful mode of storytelling in rhythmic music:

ROGER ROBERTS: Our music, 3canal's music, Rapso music is something that really evolved in the 1970s, which was a continuation of, or I should say, another version of calypso in terms of the empowerment of people because calypso was always an art form that represented what was taking place specifically in Trinidad and Tobago and it also had a global outlook. Rapso music is just putting that in another vein where the emphasis is more on poetry and word and rhythm as opposed to strictly melody. When we came on the scene in 1997 our music had a distinctly different sound and feel to it. The storytelling was, I guess, a different kind of storytelling and that may have been because of our beginnings as artists in the arts, in drama, in theatre, in mas' [or masquerade] and dance so that when we came on the scene the music sounded and felt different.

WENDELL MANWARREN: Yes, the style of 3canal's music is Rapso, which we define as the power of the word in the rhythm of the word. That's a definition that was given by Brother Resistance who, for many years, was the foremost exponent of Rapso music. Stanton Kewley – who is unfortunately unable to be part of the discussion – likes to say that for him, Rapso is an acronym for: Representing A Positive Social Outlook. So therefore for me, it is a consciousness rather than a sound. It's much more of a philosophy or a positioning than to say Rapso is a beat that sounds like this or goes like that. Rapso is an umbrella under which we operate and is really about seeking knowledge of self, towards empowerment of self.

ROGER ROBERTS: Rapso is inherently conscious music as opposed to what one would call the celebratory party music of Trinidad, a.k.a. Soca. Rapso's philosophy is about empowering people, bringing consciousness and bringing a sense of enlightenment and also fun and enjoyment. You can't live in one way just being completely serious all the time. Fun is part of living too and enjoyment.

3canal's musical career in Rapso began in 1997 but the members all have backgrounds in the creative arts.

Wendell Manwarren's mother played steelpan and both of his parents were avid participants in Carnival street masquerade. Manwarren is an award-winning actor who has worked with Derek Walcott and the Trinidad Theatre Workshop. Both he and Roger Roberts have spent years producing costumes for renowned carnival artist Peter Minshall and they have brought Minshall's designs to life through street and stage performances. Stanton Kewley too, has worked in design and theatre. It was – and remains – customary for Manwarren, Roberts and Kewley to spend their time reading the newspapers, contemplating the artist's role in revolution, and reflecting on artistic interventions in the politics of the day.

According to Roger Roberts, "Rapso is about bringing a consciousness to your surroundings." To be conscious is to be aware of and responsive to one's surroundings – in a sense, to be responsive to a place or space in which we are situated. I therefore asked them how they locate their music and if their music is conscious of a Caribbean place. I wanted to find out if consciousness in their music incorporates nation and goes beyond island boundaries to an awareness of and response to a broader archipelagic place and perhaps Caribbean diaspora. Their response, which I quote at length in the following pages, stresses the relationship between place and the act of musical practice as a means of creating space. Significantly – along with considerations of nation, region, diaspora and the wider world – they highlight the relationship between Rapso and J'Ouvert and link the act of making music to the symbolic space of J'Ouvert and its many meanings.

Rapso Located in Space and Place: J'Ouvert, Island, Nation, Region and Beyond

3canal see Rapso as being rooted in J'Ouvert. The word J'Ouvert comes from the French "Jour Ouvert" meaning "day open," or "daybreak." J'Ouvert is that pre-dawn Caribbean Carnival ritual of revelers where masquerade takes the form of mud, paint and oil. Between approximately 2 a.m. and sunrise the J'Ouvert ritual obfuscates earthly and spirit realms as blue devils, bats and jab molassies (a carnival devil character traditionally costumed in molasses and now mud or tar) storm the streets. J'Ouvert revelers command the roadways cloaked in darkness, long before those masqueraders clad in

colourful beads, sequins and feathers take to the streets when the sun is high in the sky. J'Ouvert, with its use of tar, grease, mud and oil for costuming is the practice of "dutty mas'" or dirty masquerade – a practice of a Caribbean place within the larger sequined "pretty masquerade" practice of Carnival. J'Ouvert then, is a space within the Carnival space. 3canal speak of their music as grounded in this space of J'Ouvert. In doing so they highlight Rapso as not only located in a space within a space but also Rapso's complex simultaneous positioning in various places: 1) specifically in the island of Trinidad (because the Carnival with its melding of European masquerade and Canboulay ritual first evolved in Trinidad and its form was later exported to Tobago), 2) in the island-nation state of Trinidad and Tobago, 3) in the Caribbean region and; 4) in New York, London, Miami, Canada and beyond.

WENDELL MANWARREN: Our music is very firmly located on the ground as Trinidadians. The origin of our music is the J'Ouvert vibration.

ROGER ROBERTS: The J'Ouvert being the elemental ritual of Trinidad's carnival, which in a sense is the beginning of life, the beginning of breath, the beginning of energy and J'Ouvert is a metaphor for life. Out of the darkness comes light. It is the beginning of the whole [Carnival] celebration. It's a bit dark, well it's very dark, but it also has a highly sensual aspect to it. So our music in a sense starts from that POV and we incorporate the politics of the day in that celebration and in that recognition of who we are and where we come from. So that's where the music starts from – from the J'Ouvert and we spread out from there.

WENDELL MANWARREN: We started life as a J'Ouvert entity in 1994 and in 1997 we got the opportunity to record a song for the first time. It wasn't even an ambition we were harboring. It was something we were inveigled into and we rose to the challenge and the rest is literally history. We wrote a song called "Blue", which is an homage to the blue devil, which is one of the iconic characters of the J'Ouvert madness and in that song we made several statements, one of which was that 3canal was "making a statement" and the other was, "turn the whole world upside down." We say: "3canal come down with a brand new sound to turn the whole world upside down," and in retrospect that's what happened to us. We literally turned our whole world upside down and we went

from being mas' men, theatricians, to being Rapso men full time (see fig. 1).

So, in terms of its location, [3canal's music is] very much created in the carnival of Trinidad and Tobago and then by extension, over the years, in the whole consciousness and ethos of what it means to be a Trinidadian and Tobagonian operating in the world today and the challenges of that. And, beyond that too, what it means to be "a Caribbean" – to use the words of my friend [Carnival masquerade designer/ street theatre artist] Peter Minshall, who likes to say: "I am a Caribbean." That is something we are very mindful of as well, that we are part of a region. We are part of something bigger and we can't operate in the world on our own.

ROGER ROBERTS: Yes, Rapso music is very conscious of a Caribbean sense of locale because that is where we are from and as a Caribbean people we are a combination of the people from all over the globe.

WENDELL MANWARREN: We are firm believers in the idea and the notion of this bigger umbrella that we are a part of [….] The consciousness, as I said before, started out in the J'Ouvert and then rippled out from there into a Trini consciousness, into a regional consciousness. One of the first things that happened to us in recording "Blue" is we got the opportunity to perform in the diaspora, to perform in New York, to perform in London, to perform in Canada and in Miami, all the places where they have Caribbean carnivals. It was phenomenal to see that out of this little island of 1.3 million and out of this region of 6.something million or whatever that, for instance, when we went to New York the overwhelming thing for me was the bandanas on display and the flags on display and the sense of a Caribbean nation on the ground in the belly of New York. I mean in Brooklyn, being on the truck that day and coming down and right behind us there is Alison Hinds and the Bajan contingent and behind them was a Haitian truck and then the Dancehall men had a truck and for me that was the thing that made it so enriching, so positive, the sense that we were part of something much bigger and that our music was encompassing a consciousness that was much bigger than just the confines of Trinidad and Tobago.

I think primarily our music seeks to be aware of self, of who we are and what we want for ourselves, what we don't want

fig. 1. Blue Devils and 3canal's Rapso sound turn the whole world upside down in the music video for the song entitled Blue. Images courtesy Rituals Music 1997. Directed by Danielle Dieffenthaller, Darren Cheewah and Walt Lovelace for Earth TV.

for ourselves, what we like for ourselves, the things we choose to celebrate and make sacred, i.e. the J'Ouvert we recognize as a ritual, the carnival we recognize as something that has a depth and a breadth to it that is more than just fun and frivolity and losing yourself and that kind of wildness. It is really concerned with knowledge of self. As we say in one of our songs, "Boom up History", you know, knowledge of self is a powerful, dangerous thing and it really speaks to a condition where many of us are ignorant of our history and our story. Many of us don't have the opportunity to tell our story and even when we do get the opportunity to tell our story we tell it in an apologetic, distorted way. That is one of the things that our music is very aware of. A strong stance, a strong position, a strong sense of who I am and starting from that position, asking questions. We say the question is the statement. So many of our songs, rather than give prescriptions, simply ask a question. "What's going on?" is how we start [the song] "Good Morning Neighbor" commenting on the decline in basic manners in the broader society. It's really a question for all of us. What's going on? We used to take the time to say "good morning neighbor" and now it seems we don't have time for that because it has too much traffic or it has too much this and it has too much that.

In speaking to "the broader society" these artists are aware that Rapso music as practice can exist within while also transcending boundaries. Rapso is situated in spaces and places. If space is practiced place, then what is place? The word boundary is important to a conceptualization of place because place is tied to boundaries. Place is that which is definite and bounded. Place "resonates with particularity and qualitative density" (Mitchell ix). With this understanding of place, J'Ouvert becomes both space and place. J'Ouvert as space is the practice of a Caribbean island-nation place but J'Ouvert also operates at the specific boundary or place of pre-dawn/dawn. Rapso is therefore located in the space of J'Ouvert but this means that Rapso is also located at the precise place or boundary between darkness and daylight – at that 2a.m. to sunrise boundary. Yet that boundary is not a confinement or limit. Philosopher Martin Heidegger tells us that, "a boundary is not that at which something stops but, as the Greeks recognised, the boundary is that, from which something begins its presencing" (Heidegger 154). Here, the word "presencing" is understood as "being." Rapso then, does not stop at the precise pre-dawn/dawn location of J'Ouvert. Rapso begins its

presencing at that specific place of J'Ouvert bordered by darkness and light. In other words, Rapso "is" in J'Ouvert, yet, Rapso music continues "to be," beyond the bounds of the J'Ouvert ritual. Roger Roberts of 3canal observes: "our music starts from the J'Ouvert and we spread out from there." Likewise, Wendell Manwarren echoes Roberts' sentiments when he declares: "the consciousness […] started out in the J'Ouvert and then rippled out from there." Rapso spreads or ripples out from the dual space and place of J'Ouvert.

Rapso therefore finds itself living, moving and having its being within a broad context. Rapso's ontology is both local and global. Rapso is located within a Caribbean milieu while being conscious – sensorily and politically aware – of a larger context or setting: the world. 3Canal's Wendell Manwarren shares:

…we try to deal with issues from a universal level so if we're dealing with the issue of politicians trying to get your vote and not delivering or being what we call a 'mocking pretender,' we create a song that fits the fact that nine times out of ten in the whole matrix you're going to have a mocking pretender so the shoe will fit, so the song itself has a life way beyond that one [incident]. It could be sparked from one specific person and one specific incident but we're mindful not to lock [the song] down in time and space so it can transcend that individual and that specific incident and be applied across the board.

The musical art form of Rapso has a nested situatedness with its "presence," existence or being established within J'Ouvert, which is located within the space of Carnival, which is located within the island place of Trinidad as well as the nation place of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, which is located within a Caribbean archipelagic region and a Caribbean diaspora, which is located within the world. This kind of situatedness, and indeed embeddedness, reflects Caribbeanness. "Caribbeanness is a spatial logic of connection," writes Peter Hitchcock, "Caribbeanness is a conscience of a space." Western logic concerns itself with what Hitchcock sees as locating margins or limits but he insists that Caribbeanness is about crossing borders (Hitchcock 31). Roger Roberts dismisses limitations and articulates a consciousness of space. It is a consciousness of space as geometry; a consciousness of the relations of points. For

Roberts Rapso is an expression that can cross borders and connect, or as he puts it, "touch" the world. He declares:

Rapso music is aware of the fact that, being from a small island in the context of a large planet, we are not necessarily small in terms of what we have to say and that our expression goes way beyond the relative size of our nation. So our music really is something that is from a small place but with a big heart and a big soul and with the ability to touch… the world – a way of living that eludes a lot of people.

There but also Here

The meaning of Caribbeanness then is intrinsically linked to the musical practice of Rapso. Rapso is tied to a Caribbean identity that transcends spaces and places but which also operates from the loci of indigeneity and interrogation as 3canal remind us:

ROGER ROBERTS: Indigenous music is very important for us having a sense of ourselves. In this world where there is so much distraction, where there is so much virtual reality we tend to forget that who we are and what our make up is, relies on our indigenous beginnings, which is very easy to forget in a time when technology is there to distract you from yourself so easily. So Rapso music attempts to also connect to the indigenous, tribal aspect of who we are as a people and just bring that powerfully forward and try to help people reconnect to that sense of self.

ROGER ROBERTS: Without that sense of self we're really just aimlessly drifting on the seas of time.

WENDELL MANWARREN: [The notion of] indigenous is paramount to that sense of what makes you unique and special and definitive and distinctive in the broader world. As we globalize, so we kind of start tribalizing a bit more because you can't globalize in abstraction, you have to start from somewhere so many people aren't prepared to just give up what is special and specific to them in an attempt to fit in and assimilate on a global level. So the irony for me is that the more the world is globalizing, the more we are aware of all the different people that make up the world and all the different elements in that mix and then we can all choose to have a global perspective but it is informed by a very strong sense of the indigenous and we see music as one of the strong vehicles in reinforcing that.

This notion of indigeneity is one of self-expression through homegrown sounds but it is not a fixed thing. It involves embracing a stance of always questioning and examining ourselves. This quote from their song "Talk yuh Talk" helps to illustrate this stance of critical indigeneity because it demonstrates the way in which questioning and confronting power is one way of making it accountable and renewing its authenticity. They chant:

Talk yuh talk
Yuh mocking pretender
Talk yuh talk
Yuh bloody deceiver
Talk yuh talk
Yuh serpent master
Talk yuh talk
Yuh frigging oppressor
A stuttering talk
Is a stumbling walk
So yuh better make sure
That yuh walking yuh talk

Far too long yuh running the session
Yuh feeding yuh ego creating impression
Well judgment come
We dropping de bomb boy
Run yuh run now is Armageddon
The power of the word in the conscious styling
Paving the way for a brand new morning
I say the power of the word in the Rapso styling
Rocking the roots of the Vampire system

Paving the Way for Old and Brand New Mornings

Rapso as a practice of interconnected places, is itself a space. For some, the particular music of 3canal since 1997, has arguably created a new sonic space within Carnival. For 3canal it has revived or reclaimed a rhythmic space within Carnival. The two musicians speak about the position their music has created/is creating in Carnival as something that is simultaneously old and new.

WENDELL MANWARREN: Our music as a revival or a reclamation of space within Carnival is a much better reading [of what we are doing] because we didn't create it; we didn't invent it out of nothing. It was based on the fact that something was already there before. It already had sweet music. I remember as a youth, going into town and participating in J'Ouvert and one of the things I used to look forward to was the bomb, the bomb songs, which was the [steel] pan sides playing popular songs in a calypso strum, in a particular rhythm, in a particular groove going down the road and in that early morning light and everybody nasty and hug up and sweetness and chipping down the road together. It was pure, pure niceness. So, it always was there. The lavwé[1] was always there. (4) One of the first elements that we brought with us in the J'Ouvert was working with drums and understanding the rhythm and the pacing of the drum and understanding that most of the J'Ouvert songs happen within a heartbeat zone. So it's really just about reinforcing and connecting people heart to heart, taking them down the road together doom doom, ka doom doom, ka doom doom [Wendell mimics a heartbeat here], and you just go for hours and hours on that rhythm, on that vibration. So it's nothing new we're doing. We're just putting our new spin to it.

J'Ouvert was always popular but I think it has now become a popular form among the young people, even the young people who won't consider the rest of Carnival as interesting to them, J'Ouvert is a space they tend to flock to. I don't know if it is because it is in the dark or the slight element of the risqué or the danger or what have you, or there is just a sweetness in J'Ouvert that appeals to them. So for me, I think that's the space we've created and continue to create and hold down with pride.

Another area we have innovated is putting on a Carnival show using our repertoire over the years to challenge the sort of disposable nature of the Trinidad festival music market, which is, you make a song for one year [that is, a song created specifically for the Carnival context of a particular year] and you throw it away the next year [when another Carnival comes around]. Calypso and Soca are specific to Carnival. They are festival music and in many ways that is one of the limitations of Calypso and Soca in that, in terms of scenes and in terms of the vibrations they tend to evoke, they are very specific and tied into a festival, a folk festival, a

very specific on-the-ground folk festival. One of the things we sought to do [with our style of music] was to actually create a show called "The 3canal Show," where we use our music as a sort of spine of the thing – that's the thing that we always have to call on. We have a wide repertoire of over 150 songs we've recorded over the years and coupled with every year we record at least five or six new songs. So in order to make a show happen, rather than have to record twenty-something songs to make a soundtrack we can mix up those five or six new songs with songs that we already have in our repertoire that might be speaking to the same thing.

ROGER ROBERTS: When we created that video for "Blue" in 1997 and it hit the television, people started to visualize music and carnival in a whole new way and I guess at that point in time J'Ouvert took a jump to the forefront in terms of how people saw carnival (see fig. 2)

We weren't the only ones at that time that represented a difference in terms of the sound of music. It's something that was happening across the board in 1997 with the Soca music and also a lot of Rapso was on the horizon making big tunes and big statements at the time so I guess we were part of a stream that was flowing and we were fortunate in a sense to be at the forefront of it from the very beginning of our career.

WENDELL MANWARREN: By no means can we claim credit for innovating the whole phenomenon of the J'Ouvert song. In that regard. I remember there were two big J'Ouvert songs that were major influences in our decision to make a J'Ouvert song. One of them was Third Base's "J'Ouvert Morning, blow yuh whistle, blow yuh whistle," simple, sweet, hypnotic, repetitive, just a groove going down the road and then these guys: "J'Ouvert morning going down de road, jamming with ah woman down de road," and we just happen to come along at a time when that was an emerging trend: a specific song dedicated to the sweetness of J'Ouvert, and we just actually brought it home with "Blue, a colour or pigment, 3canal making a statement." And, for many people we then became branded as J'Ouvert song singers and we have no problem with that because we are J'Ouvert band bringers. For years, for eighteen years now we've been bringing [creating and executing] a J'Ouvert [masquerade] band with thousands of people. Yeah, we have no problem with that strong identification as J'Ouvert song bringers and I think that was something that was new at the time, so yeah, we don't mind holding down that space.

Holding Down a Space of Power

Holding down space does not refer to the restricting of space. Instead, "holding down space" signifies the sustaining or nurturing of space. The sonic space of Rapso that 3canal, the "J'Ouvert song bringers," hold down is one that is linked to the power of the word – a power that is tied to freedom, memory, knowledge and identity. These, according to 3canal, are all present in their music.

WENDELL MANWARREN: Location, freedom and memory. All three are present in our music. We talk about who we are; where we come from; where we making this statement from. Space: Carnival is a space of contestation for space. Claim a space; make a statement – that is at the core of what we do. Freedom is at the core of it too. J'Ouvert is a celebration of freedom. J'Ouvert literally is the commemoration of our emancipation. [J'Ouvert evolved from Canboulay] the Canboulay riots that gave us the rights to process the streets at that hour of the morning and beat our drums and sing our songs of freedom.

It was actually an attempt by the British colonial authorities at the time to suppress a certain element of the carnival being expressed by a certain sector of the society – they [that sector of the society] were called the Jamettes or Diametres [those people considered] "below the line" – and those people fought. They fought back the police and the governor was forced to grant them freedom of passage and to ensure that from there on nobody was going to interfere with their carnival. So that's something we claim with pride and something we seek to recreate and celebrate every J'Ouvert morning.

Freedom is critical to the whole discussion. Memory has become paramount as well. The whole idea of Boom Up History, talking about knowledge of self and correcting that abject, willful, spiteful even, ignorance of self that so many of us are plagued with.

We don't see ourselves reflected enough with any kind of breadth or depth, in the media. So much of what we read about in the news, is just that: the news of us but no behind-the-scenes, no profiles, no in-depth investigation.

ROGER ROBERTS: We represent the possibility of what this world could be because what we have to say as a people and

fig. 2. Screen shots from the music video for 3canal's song Blue. Images courtesy Rituals Music 1997. Directed by Danielle Dieffenthaller, Darren Cheewah and Walt Lovelace for Earth TV.

what we have been able to accomplish as small islands, small nations, is quite disproportionate to our size. The power of that is undeniable. Caribbeanness is about power, it's about beauty, it's about grace, the good comes with the bad, the fact that we're flawed is part of the beauty of it, it's not perfect and therefore it means it can still grow.

Conclusion

Through their practice of Rapso, 3canal cuts and clears a space – indeed like a cutlass or machete – for a Caribbean space to grow. Their musical work as space is a practice of several bounded places. Yet, it is a space that resonates at once with particularity and transcendence, existing within and across boundaries. It is a space of geometry, that is, a space of related points. While the musical work of 3canal draws on practices which have gone before it, it also generates new spaces and interconnectivities that are simultaneously past and present, and simultaneously located here and there. 3canal is an embodiment of

the idea that Caribbeanness is a space constructed by practices of interconnection. Rapso is one such practice, operating in ways that are at once archipelagic and diasporic, reflecting both local and global ways of being.

Notes

1. The third member of the group Stanton Kewley was unable to be present for the interview.
2. I am making specific historical reference here to Carnival in relation to the island of Trinidad in particular (and not Trinidad and Tobago, although the two islands are a twin-island republic and share one government) because, as Richard Schechner notes, the Trinidad Carnival, which evolved in the nineteenth century, was not exported to Tobago until the twentieth century. Schechner observes that the Carnival of these twin-islands remain in form and substance: Trinidad Carnival. See Schechner 11.
3. The calypsonian is a singer in the popular music

tradition of calypso, which is native to the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago. Calypso probably comes from the Hausa "caiso" a singer of West Africa but in the New World, Caribbean context the word – through its translation into English – has become "calypso." Calypso has an African musical structure and its content focuses heavily on social commentary. Calypso is a key music of present-day Carnival along with what is called Soca music, which has less of a focus on social commentary and more of an emphasis on partying. See Cozart Riggio, 285.

4. Lavwé is a call-and-response form.

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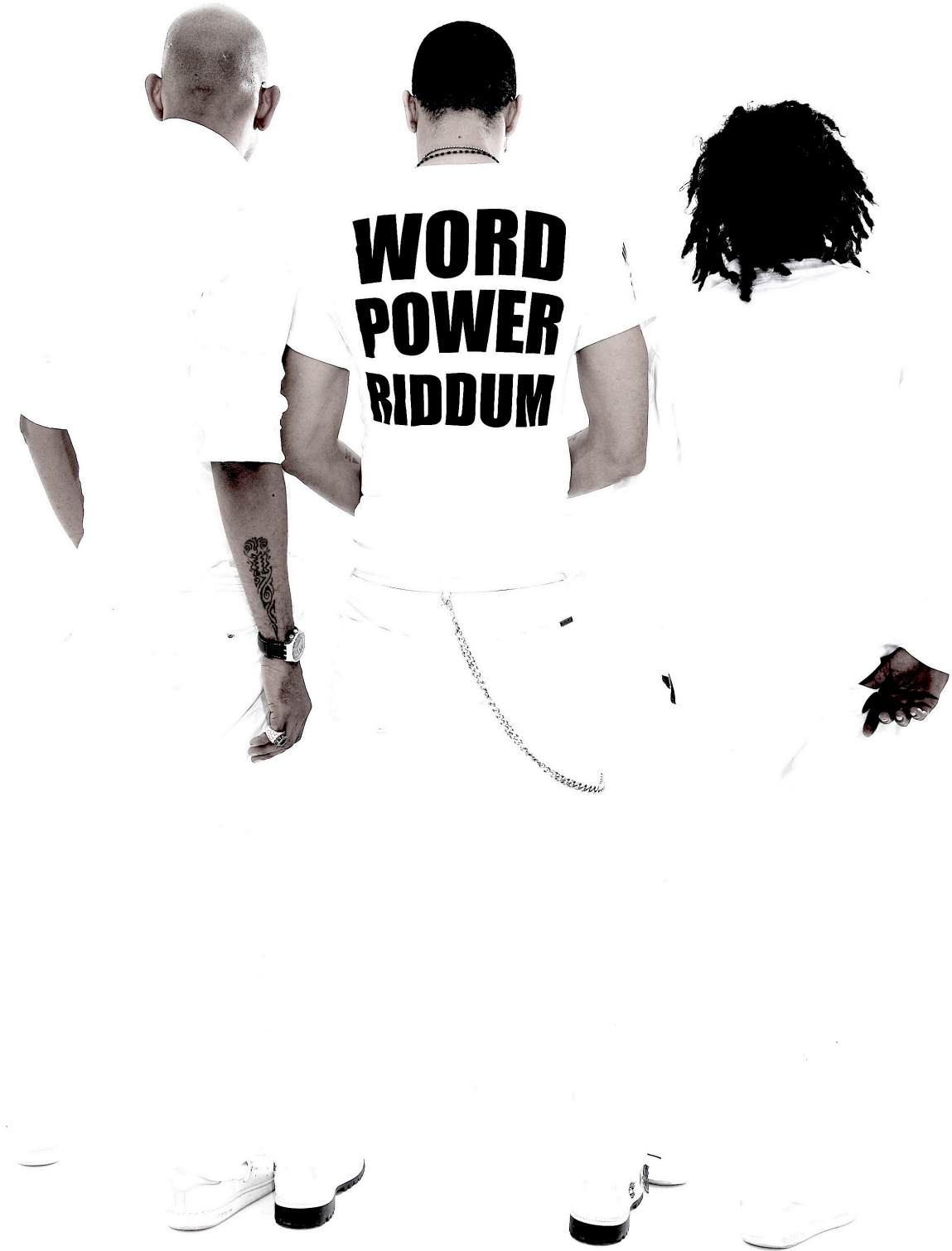
WORD
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3canal. Photograph by Alex Smailes

L'ANTOINETTE OSUNIDE STINES

Claiming Naming: Redefining naming in Caribbean dance through the paradigm of L'Antech

Abstract:

Caribbean culture is heavily informed by plantocracy and enslavement. Naming is an integral tool towards documentation and cultural definition in this yaad (yard) where there are many forged identities devoid of their own ancestral cultural heritage. In colonization, Caribbean people lost not only the means to find their own identity but also the zest to find the data on their past. In this paper I offer the dance technique L'Antech as a means for this process of reclaiming memory and naming it systematically in the present. L'Antech is a method of Anglophone Caribbean dance training that simultaneously embodies, recreates and names cultural memory through a repertoire of embodied movement that draws on African Caribbean sacred and secular movement. The technique permits the dancing body to reflect and perform in the present the national historical data documented on the body.

There is a ritual called Missa in the Cuban religion Santeria. The Missa is held to listen to, connect or communicate with ancestors through a person who is born with the ability to be a Spiritista, that is a person who is able to house the spirit so that he/she can speak. At one such Missa, the ancestor who introduced herself as Miss Ida, communicated her displeasure at our naming of various African retentions. She pointed out that the names given for many things were incorrect and even referred to the English naming system as "stupid". She proceeded to inform the participants in the Missa, usually a minimum of four persons, of the original names and since then she has come many times to inform us of many things.

Ms. Ida brought me to the realization that claiming naming is imperative for us who have lost so much information about ourselves. I focus on naming a specific methodology and technique for claiming cultural identity though dance. L'Antech is the first Anglophone-Caribbean Carimod, (Caribbean Modern), dance technique created to present and secure Jamaica's cultural dance data on the body with a naming system which is meaningful, significant and appropriate. Claiming naming is especially significant for persons of African descent whose past was consciously and deliberately obliterated.

Caribbean culture is heavily informed by plantocracy and enslavement. Naming is an integral tool towards documentation and cultural definition in this yaad (5) where there are many forged identities devoid of their own ancestral cultural heritage and names. Caribbean people lost not only the means to find their own identity but also the zest to find the data on their past. In what follows I propose that the dance technique L'Antech can be a means for this process of reclaiming memory and naming it systematically in the present. L'Antech is a method of Anglophone Caribbean dance training that simultaneously embodies, recreates and names cultural memory through a repertoire of embodied movement

that draws on African Caribbean sacred and secular movement. The technique permits the dancing body to recreate and perform memory in the present and to document national historical experience on the body.

Our ancestors fought and negotiated the abolition of slavery and emancipation, and in many instances the dancing bodies partaking in the rituals along with the drumming and the chanting communicated with the heavens, and became the central instruments of revolution and resistance. Seeing that the blood of our ancestors was shed as offerings to negotiate for freedom, this places a responsibility on us to document ourselves for future reference and documenting includes naming.

European colonization resulted in the imposition Euro-centric consciousness in government and educational institutional structures. European classical dance training dominated the formal training of dancers in the Western world. I recommend in the L'Antech technique, that this hegemonic method of training be replaced by contemporary dance processes that include, in a position of dominance, the cultural language of movement that historically and politically characterizes the particular nation. Such a shift does not require the rejection of the formerly dominant pattern. It does, however, require a substantive reversal in the positioning of the hegemonic versus the local on the totem pole of dance training. L'Antech offers a perspective on dance training that is original to the Anglophone Caribbean. Simultaneously, it permits the dancing body to reflect the national historical data and to become, per se, a tool through which the culture of the particular peoples may be studied and documented on the body with a system that reclaims naming.

This project began when I observed how the bodies in the theatrical dance arena transitioned from untrained talent to skilled performers for the local stage. I noted with interest, and more than a little surprise, that Caribbean bodies screamed a plethora of ancestral data that occupied no part of the formal training, although ancestral cultural memory resounded loudly in indigenous, traditional, and popular Jamaican movement. They were deeply ingrained in the cultural fabric of the island's religious, social and communal exercises so their omission

from the training for modern contemporary work seemed a serious lacuna.

Keen observation of the bodies of numerous Caribbean dancers brought me to an appreciation of the historical and cultural data imprinted upon and within them. I concluded, therefore, that, in order to redefine how a performer should move in Caribbean modern dance, the challenge would be to develop and codify training procedures that included and gave value to ancestral memories and heritage. Judith Lynne Hanna, using the formal language of the academy, vividly expresses my own ideas on dance:

> Dance is culturally patterned and meaningful. It is not universal, identical behaviour, a proven innate, instinctive response, although the raw capacities, material or tools are […] An individual learns dance on the basis of innate capabilities, plus social interaction […] Dance as a system of ordering movement, a cumulative set of rules or range of permissible movement patterns, is one of the elements comprising culture. It reflects the other cultural manifestations and is a vehicle through which culture is learned (To Dance is Human 30-31).

In an effort to determine how the Caribbean contemporary dancer could become a tool of documentation and a vehicle through which culture is learned, I hypothesized that this cultural data should be entrenched in the dance training process, which would involve naming the movements within the local cultural framework.

Nettleford, in Dance Jamaica, expresses the dilemma faced by both theorists and practitioners of Caribbean dance in any attempt to articulate their culturally distinctive ideas via movement:

> Dance, then, is subject to the challenge of preserving its texture without giving in to the myth that Caribbean creative experience has no structure or order and, worse, does not even exist. This dilemma is central to the cultural dynamics of Caribbean life (36).

That very dilemma drove me to conduct an experiment, which lasted some two decades. Its objective was the development of an original dance vocabulary as the basis of an original dance technique. In developing this vocabulary, I developed the term *nation dance language* to express the idea that dance movement is culturally patterned and, therefore, subject to validation in an identifiable dance technique. While nation dance is not a new concept and nation language is Brathwaite's labeling of indigenized language, such as Jamaica's patois, I arrived at nation dance language by combining both constructs for use as the basis of a technique that is examinable and replicable.

I aim to push the concepts of dance techniques, idioms, styles, and vocabulary further to address the specific languages of dance. If we can agree that languages differ as one moves across geographical boundaries, then it seems reasonable to suggest that the cultures within the different geographical boundaries engender a variety of dance idioms. By extension, the different ways in which those idioms are expressed constitute a set of discrete dance languages and requires naming so as to distinguish each one from the other.

L'Antech is an indigenized technique, developed over an 18-year period as a tool for underscoring identity through a homegrown, contemporary dance language specific to Jamaica. The L'Antech technique, borrowing from the African taproots of dancing, is designed to function as a tool that enables, synthesizes (synerbridge), and releases spirit, mind, and body via contemporary dance.

Under the advice of Ms. Ida, I realized that naming was essential to documentation. I also came to overstand (Rastafari practitioners' word for fully comprehending), that the Caribbean with its rich heritage has developed and engaged in new methods of nation building which have also influenced the development of contemporary dance. L'Antech was developed as a form of nation dance language, in the category I name, CARIMOD or Caribbean modern dance. It evolved through the process of synerbridging , that is through the application of synergies that bridge cultures within the entirety of Caribbean dance vocabulary.

L'Antech technique blends indigenous and traditional data into its barre and centre exercises, and into its progressions and enchainments. Note, however, that it seemed unnecessary at this stage, to change such terms as barre, enchainment, etc., which have been in use for centuries. What needed to be changed, as a matter of urgency, was what barre work involved, that is, content or the cultural data represented by barre and enchainement. L'Antech introduces, as a staple, movement grounded in the blueprint of Jamaica's heritage that is preserved mainly in the lower echelons of society where African retentions persist. The use of the head, arms, hips, torso, pelvis, as well as the spatial arrangements, whether outdoors (in the round) or for stylized areas such as the proscenium stage, are distinctly different from that which obtained under Europe's influence. The blending of indigenous or traditional data as a method of developing a technique provides a coherent template for global dance training that would represent the very being of a people. Naming facilitates codification, which also results in techniques, which become examinable both practically and theoretically.

To reclaim naming, I sought to identify parallels that could be drawn with another key cultural ingredient, namely the language or dialect spoken in the island. In Jamaica, social status is measured by the use of "good" or "acceptable" English, and is expected of professionals and leaders in the society. Conversely, the speaker of Jamaican Patois is considered to be of a lower social status. However, all Jamaicans are able to understand the Jamaican Patois or Jamaica Talk (a la Cassidy et al.). What is more, the earlier negative attitudes to Patois usage are softening significantly. A patois version of the Bible (the New testament) has already been produced and the Jamaica's radio station IRIE FM promotes the use of patois in their programes.. In Jamaica, to be trained in a technique that is entrenched with embodied memories is to "dance in Patois". Dancing in Patois is therefore dancing in a nation dance language that parallels this literary shift from spoken to written language forms.

The concept of a nation dance language was explored, in order to ensure that Jamaican traditional and ancestral memories are accurately engaged in the L'Antech technique, and that the dominating dance language of the

external "Other" (classical ballet) is significantly reduced in dance training.

Before proceeding, let me state that I stand on the shoulders of the pioneers of Caribbean dance who paved the way and provided the inspiration for L'Antech. These include Katherine Dunham, renowned African-American dancer, choreographer, songwriter, author, educator, activist, anthropologist. She was founder and artistic director of The Katherine Dunham Dance Company and creator of the Katherine Dunham technique. Germaine Acogny, Senegalese dancer/choreographer, referred to as "Mother of African Dance" who was choreographer and artistic director of Mudra Afrique in Senegal, and also of Studio Ecole Ballet Theatre in France. In 1997 she established the International Centre for Traditional & Contemporary African Dance in Senegal. There was also Ramiro Guerra, artistic director and founder of the National Modern Dance Company of Cuba who worked with Elaina Noriega to develop the Cuban Moderna Técnica. Eduardo Rivera, artistic director of Teatro Danza del Caribe—officially launched in 1988 in Santiago de Cuba— created the Eduardo Rivera technique. Finally, African-American Kariamu Welsh, is creator of the contemporary technique Umfundalai. Welsh is artistic director of Kariamu and Company-Traditions and Chair of the Dance Department at Temple University. These dancers/choreographers acknowledged the need for the inclusion of traditional data in the contemporary movement structures of their respective countries, as well as the need for naming these procedures. Having either viewed or participated in their workshops and classes, I realised that their indigenized techniques were subtle, counter-hegemonic tools of resistance and revolution in the modern dance genre. My resolve to create a contemporary dance technique in the language that accurately represents my yaad, or homeland Jamaica, was thereby strengthened. I was also impressed by their naming systems for the new dance techniques they had developed.

Philosopher, Antonio Gramsci observes:

> The starting point of critical elaboration is the consciousness of what one really is, and is "knowing thyself" as a product of the

historical process to date, which has deposited in you an infinity of traces, without leaving an inventory […] Philosophy cannot be separated from the history of philosophy, nor can culture from the history of culture (324).

In order to create and name, it was vital to "compile an inventory" of Jamaican indigenous and traditional dance forms that are important to the island's history. I chose four of the many traditional forms to develop the core of the L'Antech technique. Such an inventory is not merely to establish a record for reconstructing the selected dances, but to have available information with which to design any other new or more appropriate methods of training as time passes and the society develops further. In so doing it became clear that our indigenous and traditional dances all have naming that is specific to each one. This naming system was to guide the naming system for L'Antech. Source data, the data from the authentic practitioners, became the foundation for a naming system as instructed by Ms. Ida and out of fear that the names would be referred to in the future as "stupid".

My dance experiences in New York, United Kingdom and other countries opened my eyes to the fact that the global dance community needed to be offered a gaze through the eyes of a Caribbean practitioner in order to better clarify Caribbean dance. I decided that the canon system that dictates the global gaze on Caribbean dance needed to be adjusted. Documentation on the dances of the Caribbean is limited. The primary text is the dancing body. The knowledge in most instances has been transferred through institutionalized dance classes and the observation of choreography. However, that could pose a problem if either of those conduits is infested with Eurocentric hegemony or inaccurate research information. As such in order for the naming to be understood it became clear that as a Caribbean dance practitioner with over 30 years experience and as a Caribbean practitioner who has spent countless hours with the source practitioners I considered myself qualified to propose a Caribbean canon for clarification of Caribbean dance.

Through the eyes of dance one is brought to the

realization that Caribbean dance has been misunderstood for a variety of reasons, which include the following:

1) A canon that has no relationship to Caribbean cultural and historical information is used to judge and classify Caribbean dance.

2) Eurocentric methods of validating were not eliminated or purged from the consciousness of those liminally or subliminally drafting the existing canon system.

3) Drafters of the existing canon fell victim to 'reverse hegemony', which classified all Caribbean retentions as African, thereby disregarding or devaluing other influences or presences.

4) Conversely, the drafters fell victim to the hegemony that decided that European constructs were those through which the artistic and cultural components should be hierarchically positioned.

Those factors have resulted in the following:

1) Incorrect naming systems or creation of names for existing retentions with no regard for the names already designated by the source practitioners (the organic scholars).

2) Practitioners or artistic directors of African dance sequences/schools have made uninformed decisions on Caribbean dance continuities, assigning them to arbitrarily selected categories.

3) The use of the philosophical constructs of classical ballet became the given standard used to validate the Caribbean dancing body as well as Caribbean movement structures.

Eurocentric canons cannot clarify or validate the African and other presences in Jamaica, neither can American or African-American ones. The canons of the "Other" can only guide Caribbean dance researchers to achieve the following:

1) Establish comparative cultural values i.e. use the values of the "Other" to make comparisons.

2) Accept and utilize the different values when applicable

3) Identify instances where values have been borrowed or copied

4) Experience the 'tidalectic' (1) trading over time

Within the perspectives of Caribbean dance I, therefore, propose the following as the nucleus of a rational canon that could move positively towards an epistemology of ontological dance.

Proposed Canon System for Caribbean Dance

The six-canon system that I am proposing for Caribbean dance is as follows:

1) Although Christianity, as the dominant theology throughout the Caribbean, must be included in the canon system, marginalised religions that commemorate and venerate ancestral presences are found throughout the Caribbean, for example Kumina and Revival in Jamaica; Trinidad's Kabbalah and Orisha; Cuba's Santeria, Lucumi, and Palo Monte; Haiti's Voudun; and Guyana's Comfa should be included in the dance training to enhance a better understanding of the cosmology in which they are embedded.

2) Source persons interviewed or in any other way consulted by dance researchers must have their contributions acknowledged. Failure to do so would amount to plagiarism as obtains with the written word. The shared knowledge can be regarded as textual. Erna Brodber makes a claim for acknowledging the authority of oral traditions and body language:

> One of the consequences of scholarship's function as the matrix, which joins the sectors of Caribbean societies together, is the disvaluing of any other source of knowledge but book learning. Thus, contrary to what happened in other non-literate societies, a vigorous oral tradition in which a group's history was handed down, did not develop here. There were

personalities, however, who were very particular that certain events and their involvement in them be passed on to posterity. We are suggesting that the Caribbean historian makes himself into a griot and set about to collect these accounts (45).

3)   Research teams should always include the representation of the "organic intelligentsia" i.e the grass-roots griots who are the knowledgeable practitioners or as I title them "the source data" in their specific area of expertise. The field workers/researchers/theorists are the persons who come from outside the source space to 'dig up' information, manipulate the information and hypothesise. They must interact and hypothesise with an understanding of the Caribbean canon system, accepting that Eurocentric canons are not the ultimate validation systems.

4)   A valid naming system should be compiled. Naming here applies to all or any variations of cultural or geographical modalities. It is not necessary for the theorist to create names for the organic practitioner but should instead document the name given them by the grass-roots griots.

5)   Categorising Caribbean contemporary dance within a Caribbean framework as it relates to body types and uses of the body in the indigenous and traditional dance are the guidelines to be included in the contemporary dance. To support this proposal I offer two examples to illustrate the confusion faced by the global dance community when interpreting Caribbean dance, dance terminology and intention, and even the appearance of the dancers themselves.

First example: In an interview the NDTC's artistic director, Rex Nettleford shared comments made by English reviewers of an NDTC performance that showed the degree to which they misunderstood the physiognomy of black bodies that generally (not always) show a full behind (backside, bungie, batty, bumper, rear-end, bam-bam, call it what you will). It was obvious that their dance canons did not accommodate the 'Black' body type in modern contemporary styles. They, therefore, expressed the view that the celebrated, world-acclaimed NDTC should be "concentrating on traditional dance".

Second example: This refers to an incident that occurred at the National Conference of Blacks in Dance in Washington D.C. (2003) in which the L'Acadco Jamaican modern-contemporary dance company presented a dance titled Hounfor of the Drums. Programme notes described it as a dance "paying homage and respect to the trees, the animals, and the spiritual essence of the oldest 'musical' instrument of man, the drum".

The organisers scheduled the dance for presentation on the night for traditional dances. They committed this faux pas after not only pre-viewing the item in rehearsal, but also after receiving clearly stated information that the piece was a modern-contemporary work for presentation where similar types of dances had been positioned in their programme.

For many "outsiders" the first assumption is that the Caribbean cannot or does not produce modern contemporary dance or dancers and, secondly, if they say they do it could not be of the quality and standard of the developed world. To illustrate further the difficulty of attempting to validate actions when the validating canon differs enormously from yours, I recall how they disapproved of the costumes for Hounfor of the Drums. The design reflected the skins and ropes wrapping the djembe drums that accompanied the movement. The dancers wore no tights. 'Hounfor of the Drums' was an indige-formalized work in L'Antech vocabulary. The movement structure and the dancers' technical proficiency were complemented by the reviewers as being very advanced, specifically Caribbean, and innovative. Nevertheless, the show's producer, an African- American dance Professor who had visited Jamaica on a few occasions and had apparently assumed an authoritative position on Caribbean dance, had decided that 'Hounfor of the Drums' should be presented on the traditional night and worse -- that the company should change the costume to facilitate their programming, simply because she had decided that Caribbean dance must be "traditional ".

6)   A research methodology in which the researcher is standing on the periphery, dislocated from the experience does not allow for a holistic modality of learning. Instead, one views the event without experiencing it and may then form opinions that result in invalid reports only vaguely related to the cultural item.

Then, again, researchers sometimes pose questions, loaded with the researcher's baggage of bias and more perhaps. While it is necessary to come to an assignment armed with a degree of informational "baggage", excess baggage placed in the wrong compartment and used out of context is counter-productive. Ideal results are not achieved by uninvolved, clinical researchers who maintain the status quo that sees the world as a kind of universal cosmology of learning and may even (deliberately or not) reinforce certain hegemonies that, in their view, legitimize the art form of the dance. Whether by omission or commission this can be a real danger. Researchers of ontological dance, in order to understand the dance fully and become competent to make decisions about it, should dance the dances and get the actual 'feel' of the movements for themselves. Observation alone will not result in full competence to assess or critique. I anticipate that this recommendation will attract protest, and none stronger than the words of Derek Bickerton in his chapter titled "Creole" in Roots of Language:

The view that the theorists are mere grandstanding prima donnas, while the real work of the trade is done by the modest empirical plodder, is a widespread misconception in Creole Studies that merely underlines the immaturity of the field. In the real world, unglamorous drudges never arrive at the moment of revelation, which is always, like the rainbow, just beyond the next bend. For them it's always "a little too early to judge," the data are "not yet all in" […] The task of the theorist is to tell the field worker where to look and what to look for, and if the latter chooses to reject such aid, he has about as much brain as the man who throws away his metal detector and proceeds to dig by hand the three acre field where he thinks treasure lies buried (45).

While I take Bickerton's point on the value of theory as a kind of road map to discovery, I disagree on this matter as it may concern dance and propose that specific to Caribbean Cultural Studies and the discipline of dance, the totality of the synergy of the spirit, mind, and body must be the axis on which the conclusions of academic theorists as well as field workers, guided by the advice of the organic scholars/practitioners, turn into authoritative, documented "findings". It has well been said that in the discipline of dance it is the body

that remembers. A new canon reminds the researcher to allow the body, as well as the pen, to remember.

Researchers will argue that they are always actively involved. I agree, but to what extent? For the dance, the body is the tool of memory, retention and continuities. The phenomenological participant/observer approach runs counter to Bickerton's suggestion, but is fundamental to indigenous and traditional dance research. One must dance the dance, feel the warm blood of the goat on one's forehead, "trump" with the revivalists, experience the presence of the ancestors, and at a Missa listen to messages from the Orisha, sit on the Kumina drums and beat the Nyahbingi bass drum. The participant/observer eats with the Maroons, holds the waists of the bruckins dancers and feels the point of initiation of the "break" in the back; learns Kwale Kwale, rivets one's bare foot into the earth, and knows the difference between a "duty", a "session" and a "groundation" in order to be able to identify the retentions that have become continuities. The dance data can and should be experienced before one can truly validate it in writing or employ it in further

> The Caribbean identity needs the support of its own validating canon, duly documented, to which both local and foreign dance administrators may refer for accurate information about Caribbean dance and dancers, inter alia. According to Chevannes: "Being and defining Jamaican, being and defining Canadian, being and defining anything is a necessary and urgent task" (Patrick Taylor 129).

I named the process of developing the technique a Synerbridge. The term Synerbridge came out of a discussion with a colleague, who questioned the

fig. 2-5 L'Antech Circle

function of the technique and advised me that my coined word synerbridge might be a process within the paradigms of creolization. The Caribbean, however, is built on creolisation, hybridity, synthesis and synerbridging of many life views through a history of plantocracy, enslavement, emancipation and

independence. These processes therefore impact upon cultural practices mixing nd blending to become modern creations.

Patrick Taylor posits that:

> To dance the nation is to find oneself immersed in a liminal world where tradition informs contemporary experience and ritual takes on new meaning […] Nation dance is an ancestral redemption of the present for the salvation of the future […] one very noteworthy aspect of Nation dance is its multi-ethnic complexity (1, 2).

He uses dance as a metaphor to describe socio-political paradigms using the terms syncretism and symbiosis for his theories. For example, he discusses the 'mingling' of Caribbean systems or syncretism in terms of how it indicates "the extent to which difference has been transposed into unity or synthesis" (Taylor 3). He refers also to symbiosis, which is the evolution of thought in that it "accommodates the dance of difference." Here, Taylor seems to reproduce the idea that creolization is a process of unification, of the coming together of a variety of expressive forms to create something new and common to all.

This is a view that has been problematized by those scholars who insist that processes of creolization do not occur in a power vacuum[2] (6). In other words, there is a reason particular modes of expression are valued over others, even as they have influenced each other and have emerged on common ground. Shalini Puri has extended these arguments to the realm of artistic production, pointing out the dangers of celebrating creolization qua identity by noting that for many artists "whose own work embodies a hybrid creole aesthetic, […] aesthetic unity is achieved before social unity and is offered as a bridge towards that unity" (62). This could have the effect of drawing our attention away from the persistence of structural inequalities within societies.

In L'Antech, synerbridging produces a training procedure, which can fall easily into Puri's definition of creolisation that might validate an elite perspective on "mixing." Nevertheless, L'Antech is also a revolutionary strategy through its inclusion of marginalised social and racial cultural artefacts. This synerbridged aesthetic is focused on deconstruction to reconstruct identities within the realities which exist in the Caribbean. My choice of the term synerbridge was not meant to erase this emphasis on the colonial contexts – often violent – in which creolization occurs, but instead to highlight them, while also accentuating a contemporary bridging of cultures that at the same time maintains the grammar of each culture intact. It differs, however, from Kamau Brathwaite's understanding of "acculturation" and "interculturation" (Development of Creole Society 6) as I understand the process of bridging to be a deliberate and planned procedure of choice. Synerbridge, therefore, represents an extension of Brathwaite and Taylor as it proposes that the dancing body traverses cultures fluidly.

fig. 7 L'Antech 4th Position

fig. 6 L'Antech 2nd Position

fig. 8 L'Antech
5th Position (above)

fig. 7 L'Antech 3rd Position

fig. 9 L'Antech
6th Position

fig. 10 Satta walks

fig. 11 L'Antech Reverance Arm Position 1 which represents woman

fig. 13 Back and Front View of a L'Antech Exercise at the Barre.

fig. 12 Hounfour Walk

L'Antech is a combination of two or more movement types, whether similar or opposing, bridging cultures. Synerbridging, facilitates cross-cultural sharing, blending, mixing, even mutating with the specific purpose of combining cultures in a movement that simultaneously represents the many cultures.

Synerbridge does not refer to a consecutive arrangement of modern and traditional steps but to a synergism where modern and traditional forms are collapsed into a symbiotic and simultaneous relationship, where cross-cultural bridges blend with Jamaican or wider Caribbean continuities.

If, for example, in executing a grand plie of the classical school, one simultaneously disrupts the rigid line, and uses instead circular rotations of the hips as done in a dancehall bubble, those two contrasting styles and movements have been synerbridged, i.e. melted or blended to create a crossing of cultures. Note that one movement does not follow the other but are combined, thus synerbridged.

Another example: if the pulsating hip thrust of the traditional Jamaican folk form is continued while a developpe of the European Classical School is being executed, those two movements are synerbridged. There is no hiatus or break between them and a successful synerbridge enables an ethnological understanding of the cultures included in the synerbridge.

Some will argue that to synerbridge or fuse movement styles is extreme and, therefore, taxing for the performer. It may be true that synerbridging results in complex movement combinations and, hence, may make greater demands on the dancers' bodies, particularly in terms of balance and control, but it can be executed, and, when mastered demonstrates the kinetic energy and daring of the new world of the Caribbean. Many individuals over the past 18 years have performed synerbridged movements with ease. What made it possible for them was the vigorous, structured training procedure to which they were exposed prior to their debut as performers of the synerbridged technique of L'Antech.

In a true synerbridge, the movements of Europe, Africa and the East can be interwoven. Simultaneity is the

key, and my research shows that, in Jamaica, the process has not so far been, intentionally, either attempted or achieved as a technique for a training procedure.

Caribbean historian Verene Shepherd defines creolization as follows:

> Creolization is the process by which the cultures of Europeans and Africans became intertwined (including through inter-racial sex) so what resulted was cultural mutation, a Creole culture made of locally produced food, customs, habits, etc. (Literary Cultural and Historical Perspectives 8)

What is crucial is that in Jamaica, as elsewhere in the Caribbean, there were centuries of mixing and blending. To go a step further, synerbridging is not merely mixing or blending but a process in which aesthetically juxtaposing unlike elements is made not just easy but possible.

The successful combining of hybridized or synerbridged movements are already found in the Moderna Técnica and the Eduardo Rivera combinations in Cuba. Both these processes are, however, rooted in domination of spiritual ancestral groundation, located at the core of all the African and Asian cultural retentions while accepting the presence of Europe. L'Antech the first Anglo-Caribbean technique follows in their footstep and offers to the global community the process synerbridge.

I place Caribbean dance synerbridges into modern contemporary in the category CARIMOD. CARIMOD is a term I have coined to designate a modern dance perspective that is dominated by indigenous, traditional and popular Caribbean movements. An offshoot of modern dance paradigms which "reflect [classical ballet's] structural formality and sometimes thematic frivolity […] in favour of freer movement style favouring bare feet and pointe shoes, for example" (Stines 238). In this instance favouring the spirituality, aesthetics and body language of the Caribbean indigenous, traditional and popular dances while simultaneously executing some of the form of classical ballet which is pageantry residing in the Caribbean. This category of dance, Carimod, favours the word spelling Daaance as opposed to dance (pronounced daunce). Daaance is the term I have coined for Spirit

dance. Spirit dances are those that engage the spirit and which includes, indigenous, traditional, popular dance as well as any contemporary dances that incorporate such genre of movement. Also, using the pronunciation of the grassroots people, who for example may say " Me a go a one daaance", also resembles the long "a" spelling of works offered in Maureen Warner Lewis's Central Africa in the Caribbean of Kikongo words which is one of the strongest retentions in Jamaica.

I use daunce to designate those dances dominated by the European constructs of classical ballet. I find the dynamism of culture reflected in language and often hear persons when referring to classical ballet express it as dauncing. The elitist aesthetic is present in the attitude and pronunciation of the word

In L'Antech I not only name the processes and product but also the movement structures in the technique as it occurs in classical ballet. Every dancer knows what a plie or a tendue is, this is the result of codification, structured examinations and marketing strategies.

I end by listing some of the names of L'Antech movements and sharing the purpose of the movements. I do not want the names to be in cross-reference to the purpose of the movements and their ancestral lineage but rather to be harmoius with the movements.

1)   Spirit Daaance – initiating the movements with the spirit and allowing the spirit to dance you.

2)   Gherre Yanvalou enchaintment. A chain of steps in which the traditional folk forms of Gherre , a Jamaican creolized folk form and Yanvalou a Haitian dance for the God Dambala is executed

3)   Hounfor Prances---Prances like a horse using the spinal column and arms to undulate and accentuate the breaks in the traditional folk form Yanvalou (Haitian) and Bruckins (Jamaican).

4)   Binghi Spirit Walks—Rastafari Movements form the Nyabinghi groundation emulating the natural gait of the Rastaman using the spirit to lead and to walk

5)   Bubble Shuffles—Taking the dancehall bubble in

the bottom and executing the feet into a series of shuffles that moves us making this a progression step.

6)   Butterfly leaps---A movement in the knees resembling the wings of a butterfly called butterfly in dancehall with an added leap

7)   Satta Reggae walks—Created to the Reggae music Satta –meaning "Give thanks and Praise to The Most High" the movement shuffles with Royal elegance using the arms to give thanks and praise

8)   Bruckins breaks and extensions   ----using the breaks in the back specific to the indigenous folk form Bruckins created by the enslaved to celebrate emancipation with progressive extensions added.

Naming claims the dynamics and energy of the thing it represents. A name carves or etches your being and crystallizes that name which captures the essence of the being. It is like the word water that names an entity that is everywhere. You might call it water, or ocean or sea or rain yet each name claims different attributes of the water. Oshun is the Diety of the river and Jemunja is the deitiy of the ocean, both are water. However, river is sweet water and the ocean is salt water—two different attributes. Then there is the rain, water, which feeds the rivers and ocean but having different attributes. Whenever the rain falls and touches the sea or the river the attributes of the rain changes and can no longer be named rain. Naming charts your destiny and should be in harmony with your purpose.

In this modern world of technology claiming naming is regarded as an everyday path towards copyright and codification. It enables memory and documentation both theoretically and practically and allows for cultural memories to be preserved for centuries. Why then would we allow others to name us with, usually, as Miss Ida pointed out, "Stupid names"?. One such stupid name according to Miss Ida is the word Pocomania. The name given for a sprititual ancestral method of chanting, singing, dancing and in which Myal normally occurs. This Myal for the unschooled in ancestral rituals would, for some, look like "a little madness" as the word Pocomania translates. However, having viewed and experienced Myal, I know Ms. Ida is perfectly correct, yet we continue to accept

these "stupid names" without question. We have allowed others to name our cultural manifestation and so we are given Pocomania. The people who practice the retentions refer to themselves as Revival or Zion practitioners, why then the denigrating name Pocomania. Other examples of denigrating names are Third World and Low Art as opposed to High Art.

The name by which I am commonly known is L'Antoinette. It is not the name given to me by my parents. It is, however, the name I thought I gave myself. My legal name is Lenora Antoinette. My mother says she was reading a book about a dancer named Antoinette Sibley now Dame Antoinette Sibley, a prima ballerina, and choose to give me that name. I attached the initial letter of my first name to Antoinette and named myself L'Antoinette. At the Missa held for my initiation ceremony into the Yoruba religion thirty years ago, L'Antoinette, a spirit, came and danced. She told me that I called myself L'Antoinette because that is her name. She explained that I am her horse/Spiritista and any time she wishes to taste things of this world, and that is often, she comes through me. My names are in harmony with my life purpose that of a dancer, choreographer and Spiritismo.

I am therefore claiming naming in and through L'Antech.

Maferefun Modupe Miss Ida, translated from Yoruba to mean "I give my blessings", and I am grateful to Miss Ida.

Notes

Tidalectic is the phrase developed by poet and historian Kamau Brathwaite to describe the influence of global historical tides and submarine interconnections that create the complex cultural meetings and mixings that make up the Caribbean culture and lay out challenges for artists and cultural workers . See for example Stewart Brown's Introduction in Brathwaite,Kamau, Words Need Love Too, Cambridge: Salt Publishing. 2004.

"Yaad" is Jamaican patois and translates to yard

[2]   Scholars such as Bolland 1992, Khan 2001, Puri 2004

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CAMILLE TURNER

Miss Canadiana Confronts the Mythologies of Nationhood and the im/possibility of African diasporic memory in Toronto

Abstract:

As the walking tour begins, expectant faces turn toward me. I am in performance mode. I have transformed into Miss Canadiana. Although the audience is looking right at me, they see Miss Canadiana. They smile. She smiles back. Some, have come to hear the familiar Black Canadian history story, the one that maps the land as a safe haven for fugitive slaves who migrated across the border fleeing the evils they endured in America. I'm about to unleash a different geographic story. Blackness in Canada has a long and tumultuous history. It is erased, despatialized and concealed (McKittrick, p.93). Miss Canadiana is a persona I created and have performed since 2002 to reconcile fragments of my Black Caribbean heritage with my Canadian context in order to locate myself. By walking between worlds, I find ways to connect them
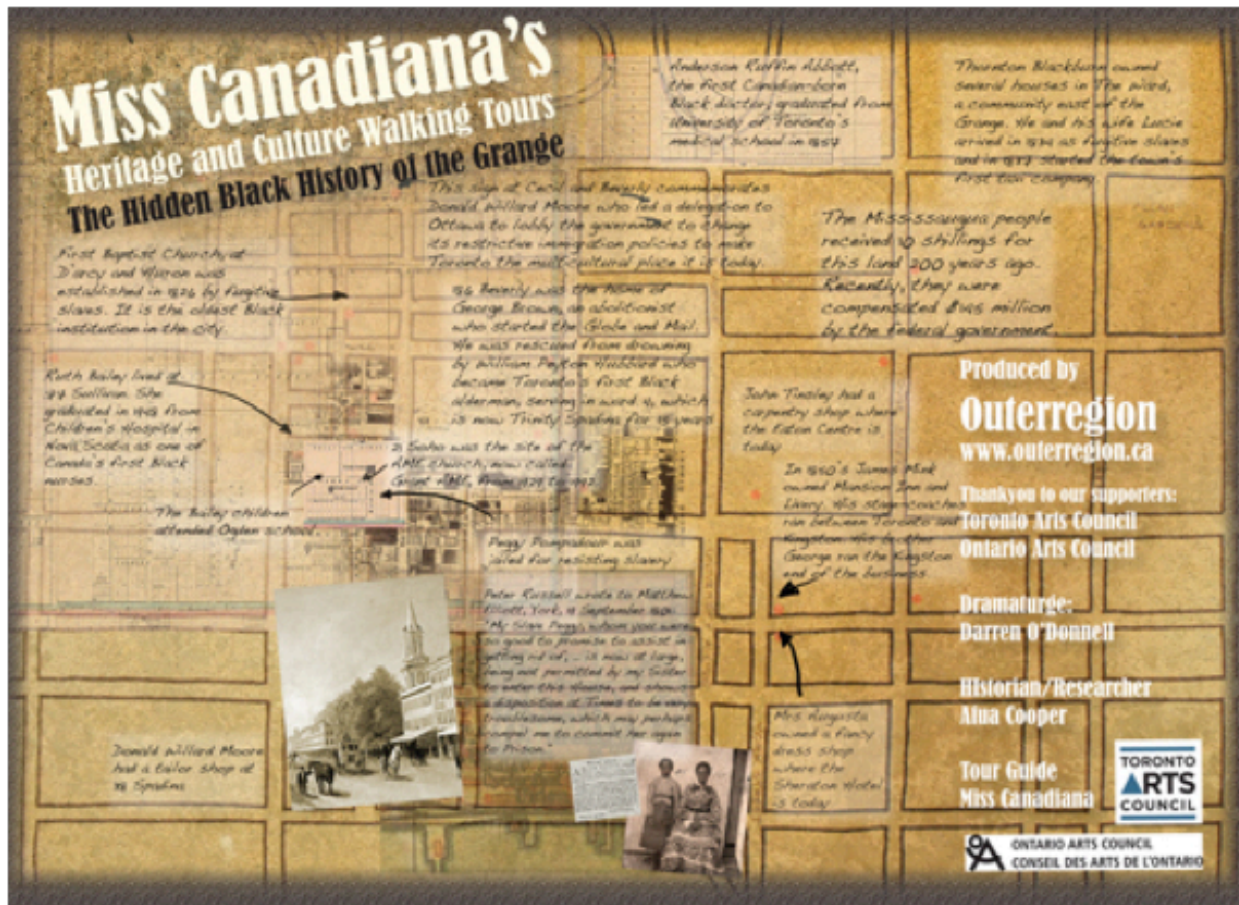
It is May 8, 2011. A crowd, assembled in downtown Toronto at Peter and Adelaide Streets, has come to participate in Miss Canadiana's Heritage and Culture Walking Tour. They hold maps their hands illustrating some of the pertinent stories of the Black communities that have lived in the area since the founding of the town in 1793. Dressed in a red gown, tiara and sash, I address the audience. "Hi everyone, I'm Miss Canadiana. Thank you so much for coming." I am a media/performance artist. Miss Canadiana is a persona I created and have performed since 2002. My presence as Miss Canadiana is usually met by surprise and curiosity; Black skin and dreadlocks isn't what is expected as the embodiment of the Canadian Nation. My family left Jamaica, where I was born, for Canada when I was 9 years old. They were part of a hopeful wave of folks lured by opportunities promised by a nation that professed to welcome everyone. By the time we went back to Jamaica for a visit, I was in my early 20's. I had always felt like an outsider in Canada but when I went 'back home' I realized I had become foreign there too. The Jamaica of my childhood had changed and so had I. Dionne Brand (2001) identifies a "rupture in geography", as a realization that "we were not from the place where we lived and we could not remember where we were from or who we were" (p.5). Rupture was the beginning of my life-long exploration of home and belonging, a journey that has led me to create Miss Canadiana and the walking tour I am presenting here. My experience of Diaspora is a sense of restless landlessness, offering no possibility of return. Without place as an anchor point, the idea of belonging becomes a poetic metaphor. Brand, in (No) Land to Light On (1997), rejects the concept of belonging to a nation (p.58). In A Map to the Door of No Return: notes to belonging she says, "to live in the Black Diaspora is I think to live as a fiction." (Brand,, p.18). Katherine McKittrick (2006) articulates a similar idea when she describes the way Black people are seen in Canada "they are 'not here' and 'here' simultaneously. They are, like blackness, unexpected, shocking, concealed in a landscape of systemic blacklessness." (p.93). This sense of unbelonging extends across generations. "Black children entering the schools nave no sense of Blacks being here for generations, and, hence, that

there is a 400-year presence and contribution of African Canadians in this country. These children naturally feel invisible and marginalized". (Bristow et al., p.3) I believe we, as humans, are hard wired for home and have a need to belong. If to live in a Black body in the Canadian nation is to be non-existent, it is through my body that I construct and assert my identity within the experience of Diaspora. Rinaldo Walcott (1997) says:

> The struggle of diasporic blacks for space in Canada has a long geneology, and a trajectory that will continue to cause reverberations across all aspects of the national body. I invoke the body, or rather, bodies, here because what is ultimately at stake is the space and place that bodies, both actual and symbolic, occupy in the nation's imagination. (p.54).

I am attempting here to tell the story of how I use embodied performance to address geographic rupture. By walking between worlds, I find ways to connect them. Miss Canadiana's Heritage and Culture Walking Tour was created to reconcile fragments of my Black Caribbean heritage with my Canadian context in order to locate myself. It is my hope that this work will add to the growing scholarship of mapping Blackness in Canada as part of a transnational network of Caribbean and Black settlement and migration.

As the walking tour begins, expectant faces turn toward me. I am in performance mode now; I have transformed into Miss Canadiana. The warm public response to this persona never ceases to amaze me.

Michelle Jacques (2010), describes it this way: "whether she is an official invitee or an unexpected guest, Miss Canadiana is greeted with a certain awe and veneration." (p.168). Although the audience is looking right at me, they see only Miss Canadiana. They smile. She smiles back. Some have come to hear the familiar Black Canadian history story, the one that maps the land as a safe haven for fugitive slaves who migrated across the border fleeing the evils they endured in America. I'm about to unleash a different geographic story. This story of Canada begins, as Sherene Razack (2002) points out, by acknowledging how the occupation of the land was justified through rendering Aboriginal bodies invisible based on the concept of terra nullius (empty land), forcing them to prove their existence through courts. (p.3). My story is about a land, where according to McKittrick (2006), "Blackness and Black people are altogether deniable" (p.93). Blackness has a long and tumultuous history in Canada. It is erased, despatialized and concealed (p.93). In her argument, despatialization refers to the construction of Blackness as a foreign entity that doesn't exist within Canada's geographic boundaries. "By carefully landscaping blackness out of the nation," it is concealed and contained within a

White settler mythology. (McKittrick, 2006, p.96). This results in cemeteries that have been ploughed over and streets that have been renamed. Marie Angelique, a slave woman who allegedly burned down Montreal in 1734 isn't even mentioned in most history books. Through this walking tour, I refer to McKittrick's ideas to evoke a Black cartography, in which Black histories and Black bodies, hidden within geographies of domination, are visible and mapped to the land. (McKittrick, 2006, p.xiv). I invite the audience to come with me on on a journey to remap Canada and to question the mechanisms that hide and suppress histories that do not fit the Canadian mythology. On July 21, 1988, Canada enshrined multiculturalism as official state policy through the Canadian Multiculturalism Act. This groundbreaking document recognizes the historic contribution of various cultures in the shaping of Canada as fundamental to Canada's identity (Department of Justice, 2011). Despite this lofty ideal, many incidents throughout my life demonstrated that Blackness clearly did not 'belong' within popular notions of Canadianness. One such incident occurred in 1998 in North Bay, Ontario, a small town several hours north of Toronto. As I walked through a shopping mall, my presence elicited open stares.

At first, I experienced the all too familiar discomfort of feeling out of place.   A sea of eyes surrounded me. I felt like I was walking in slow motion through one of those dreams I couldn't control. I wanted to disappear. At that moment, the idea of Canada as a proudly multicultural nation, felt like a farce. Suddenly an ironic image of myself as a representative of 'all that is Canadian' flashed in my mind. I smiled mischievously and Miss Canadiana was born.

Sherene Razack (2002) argues that a nation's mythologies define who belongs and who is constructed as foreign. (p.2). Despite Canada's apparent commitment to the idea of cultural plurality, it has held on to its national mythology of "two founding races" that singlehandedly built this nation. The persistence of this idea sustains Whiteness as central and normative and renders the presence and contribution by everyone else, marginal, and recent or absent altogether. Rupert Lewis (1998) notes the impact of the contribution made by Historian Walter Rodney when he ruptured hegemonic notions of history by "rewriting the history of the regions affected by the Atlantic slave trade from the standpoint of those whose voices have been muted in the historical record." (p.47).   Similarly, there is much work to be done in the field of recovering and reconstructing Canada's Black histories as well as confronting the mechanisms through which they are absented and displaced. Naomi Norquay (2011) gives evidence that, as she and others work to uncover Black histories, they are doing so in a "climate and context that still works hard to suppress that history." (p.18) McKittrick (2006) notes that, "What you cannot see, and cannot remember, is a part of a broader geographic project that thrives on forgetting and displacing blackness." (p.33).   I join the efforts of those who are writing Black Canada onto the Canadian landscape. My performance evokes the 'Woman as Nation' trope, referred to by Sarah Banet Weiser (1998) and draws from the potent political arena of the beauty pageant, in which women's bodies are sites where nationalist agendas are played out (p. 168). Banet-Weiser notes, that pageants are a space that provides the conditions for women to challenge hegemonic representations of femininity and define themselves and their own identities in relation to the State (p.169). Through my performance of Miss Canadiana, I am claiming that space. Miss Canadiana, on one hand, appears to conform to hegemonic ideas of the place of women and the mythology of Canadian multiculturalism. Her image interrupts the national myth. By embodying the contradictions of the Canadian nation, she at once centralizes Blackness, and points to its absence within constructions of Canadian national identity. Bypassing the rationality of written communication to bring out visceral responses beyond words, my Black female body representing the

Canadian nation is an instrument of confrontation that makes viewers stop to think about their responses and assumptions. Michelle Jacques (2010) observes, "It is perhaps ironic that the place from which Turner examines Canada's failures to be multicultural and inclusive is one that, on the surface, seems to celebrate it." (p.168). I am confronting Canada's institutionalized multiculturalism and its declaration of equality by claiming the title, Miss Canadiana instead of Miss Black Canada or Miss Afro-Caribbean Canada. I am resisting the hyphen, the unstated but expected signifier that categorizes and sorts who is a Real Canadian and who is a Diverse Other. Miss Canadiana's image disrupts what and who is expected to occupy the space of Real Canadian to insert a new mythology into normative constructions of the Canadian nation. My body, the foreign Black body occupying the space of Real Canadian creates an "embodied transgression of territorial boundaries" to borrow from Alissa Trotz (2011) who uses the term to describe "the complexity of transnational practices that connect people not just with the place they left but also across sites of migration.

The Black woman's body has endured a history of caricaturization and has been constructed as object to justify Black servitude and slavery. Natasha Barnes (1994) shows how the Miss Jamaica Beauty Pageant held in a colonial country where 90% of its citizens are Black was used to construct and perpetuate Whiteness as the ideal of femininity. She notes that even amidst growing anti-colonial debates, White women continued to be crowned Miss Jamaica until 1959 when Sheila Chong, a mixed race woman with Chinese and Black ancestry became the first non-White woman to wear the national crown. (p.482). Rochelle Rowe (2009) explored the Jamaica 300, a national festival created in 1955 to celebrate 300 years of British rule in Jamaica. It was the brainchild of the colonialist regime faced with the challenge of appeasing the growing threat as Black Jamaica asserted its identity. She examines how the organizers commoditized beauty to create a myth of a racially harmonious, modern nation that would mask the maintenance of colonial power. The resulting, "Ten Types—One People" Beauty Contest was an important part of the festival. It featured ten crowned winners, each representing ten different complexions and phenotypes of Jamaican women

from Ebony to Satinwood and Apple Blossom. (p.36). Miss Ebony symbolized Black Jamaica's aspirations for acknowlegment and respectability. The 10 Types Beauty Contest was embraced by Black Nationalists as a tool to uplift the race. Rowe notes that the bodies of light-skinned brown women dominated the contest and became the overwhelming pick as Miss Jamaica pageant winners. This could be read, as Rowe suggests, that despite the status gained by the Black female body which gained entry to the traditionally White space of the beauty pageant, there was an unease with Black women as the representatives of femininity, modernity and the nation. (p.52). My body, as Miss Canadiana becomes a catalyst initiating a communal event that through walking respatializes Blackness and bears witness to the Black Bodies that are missing from the Canadian landscape. The act of walking, as Michel De Certeau (1984) asserts, is the means through which we define what is familiar and what is foreign. (p.130). In the case of this walking tour, it also provides the means through which the familiar city can be experienced in unfamiliar ways. The tour becomes "a site of memory", a concept McKittrick (2006) attributes to Toni Morrison who uses it to rehumanize, reimage and reconstruct Black lives that have been erased and map them back to the land. (p.32). The act of walking connects people to each other to confront memory and forgetting. Together, we experience what is hidden, present, gone, marked and unmarked. This "geography of experience" makes the relationship with the city tangible and physical (Tompkins, 2011, p.229). Miss Canadiana's Heritage and Culture Walking Tour was first presented as part of an annual event founded in 2007, called Jane's Walk. Named after the well-known author and city advocate, the late Jane Jacobs, Jane's Walk, started in Toronto and has spread to cities across Canada as well as several other countries. Jacobs' vision was the collaborative creation of "walkable cities", in which people interact with their neighbours. This event provides an opportunity for ordinary citizens to lead public walking tours of their neighbourhoods and share knowledge about their communities. Jane's Walk provided a perfect opportunity to engage the public to tell the stories I wanted to tell. The format of the walking tour, through its engagement with the body creates new ways of experiencing and reflecting critically on the city. (Tompkins, p.226)

I chose to create my first tour in the Grange neighbourhood, where I live, which happens to be a place where Blacks settled since the founding of the town. Here I present a brief synopsis of the tour and a few of the stories of the history of the neighbourhood.

A History of the Caribbean in Canada

People from the Caribbean have crisscrossed Canada for generations since 1804 when Jamaican Maroons were brought to Nova Scotia en route to Sierra Leone (Winks, p.16). As the tour meandered through the Grange neighbourhood, Miss Canadiana told the story of settlers who migrated from the Caribbean a century ago, illuminating the roles they played in the making of the Canadian nation. Sarah-Jane Mathieu, in her 2001 article, North of the Colour Line: Sleeping Car Porters and the Battle Against Jim Crow on Canadian Rails, 1880-1920, uncovers early Caribbean migration in the late 1800's when Black men were actively recruited as a source of cheap labour during the Canadian railroad boom. Ironically, around the same time, when over a thousand Black pioneers migrated to Alberta from the Southern States, White Albertans alarmed at their arrival, signed petitions to try to stop more Blacks from crossing the border (Edmonton Capital). According to Jared Toney (2010), by 1921 there were 42,700 West Indians in Canada (p.76). He paints a picture of Toronto's early Caribbean settlement in the Grange, the centre of Black social life. On Cecil Street near Beverly, a small plaque commemorating Donald Willard Moore, a man who arrived in Toronto from Barbados in 1913, is where this project began for me. My friend Tim Dunn grew up in this neighbourhood in the 40's and 50's. When I moved here a few years ago, I tried to find evidence of the vibrant Black community he described. To my surprise, there was very little material evidence left to mark this history. This plaque was one of the few signs that testified to the existence and civic contribution of the Black community. I embarked on this project to recover these stories and reanimate this neighbourhood. Donald Willard Moore was known affectionately as Uncle Don. His tailor shop at 318 Spadina, in the heart of Toronto's garment district became a hub where men from the Caribbean gathered on Sunday evenings

to discuss politics. This group grew into The West Indian Progressive Association in 1922. In 1954, he led a delegation to Ottawa to protest Canada's immigration practices, which gradually became restrictive, closing the door to non-Whites from Commonwealth countries. Moore became an important advocate for West Indians who would later arrive in Canada thanks to voices like his. He was one of the founders of The Negro Citizenship Association, which bought a 12-room house on Cecil and transformed it into a community and recreation facility that housed newly arrived immigrants. (Brown, 2006). Harry Gairey hailed from Cuba. In 1914, as a 16 year-old boy, he arrived in Toronto. In those days the Caribbean community was comprised of a small sprinkling of folks throughout the downtown core who seemed to be tightly networked. He boarded with Mr. and Mrs. Renwick, a young Jamaican couple who lived at 108 Grange Avenue. In his 1981 book, A Black man's Toronto, 1914-1980: the reminiscences of Harry Gairey, he tells the tale of searching for a job. He tried various places including a cigar shop, a profession in which he had experience in Cuba, only to be told he wasn't wanted because they didn't hire Blacks. He pointed out that, "you're in a strange land, you have to keep going." (p.8). He eventually found work at Grand Trunk Railway, which, in the early 1900's, was one of the few employers who would hire Black men. Starting as a dishwasher, he eventually became a sleeping car porter working on a Toronto-Winnipeg-Montreal run 7 days per week. Porters, because they worked all over the country, were connected Black communities throughout Canada. Fast-forward to 1945. Gairey's son Harry Jr. and a Jewish friend, decided to go to the fancy Icelandia Rink at Yonge North of St. Clair. Young Harry was refused entry and told they don't serve Blacks. The next day Harry Sr. made an appointment to address City Council and the Mayor. He gave the following impassioned speech, which made the landscape of legalized racism in Toronto visible:

Now, it would be all right if the powers that be refused my son admission to the Icelandia, I would accept it, if when the next war comes, you're going to say, 'Harry Gairey, you're Black, you stay here, don't go to war.' But, your Worship and Gentlemen of the Council, it's not going to be that way, you're going to say he's a Canadian and you'll conscript him. And if so, I would like my son

to have everything that a Canadian citizen is entitled to providing he's worthy of it. (Gairey & Hill, p.27).

University of Toronto students protested at the Icelandia rink; it later closed down. In 1947 an ordinance was passed at City Hall making discrimination based on race illegal. A skating rink at 275 Bathurst Street has been named after Gairey.

Josiah Bailey (JM) was born in Jamaica in 1887 and migrated to Canada in 1914. Along with a group of people that included Donald Moore and Harry Gairey, JM Bailey was a founding member of the Toronto chapter of Marcus Garvey's United Negro Improvement Association (UNIA). Their location on 355 College Street at Augusta became an important venue on Toronto's Black social scene, profiling musicians and presenting lectures. In 1938, leaders from African and Caribbean States converged on Toronto for the last in a series of 10 International Conventions of the Negro Peoples of the World. According to Tim, Garvey visited the Bailey home at 77 Sullivan Street when he attended this conference in Toronto. Miss Canadiana points out that this was just one of the important pieces of history connected to this family. Ruth Bailey, the youngest of the Bailey children, dreamed of becoming a nurse, which in the 1940's was considered a White woman's profession, so her applications to nursing schools in Ontario were turned down. After Black churches, unions and other organizations pressured the schools, the Children's Hospital in Halifax, Nova Scotia accepted two Black students. Ruth and her friend Gwennyth Barton made history by becoming the first Black nursing students to graduate from a school in Canada. (College of Registered Nurses of Nova Scotia). The crowd follows Miss Canadiana to Peter and Queen Streets. She gestures north. In 1793, the lot we are overlooking was a 10-acre farm called Petersfield that stretched from Queen Street, which was then known as Lot Street, to Bloor Street. The farm belonged to Peter Russell, after whom Peter Street was named. Russell was the administrator of Upper Canada, and second in command to John Graves Simcoe. What most versions of his biographies omit, however, is that Russell was a slave owner. Peggy Pompadour was one of his slaves, by law, a slave for life.
According to letters Russell and his sister wrote,

Peggy was "troublesome". Her acts of resistance to slavery, which included speaking back to the Russells and leaving without their permission, landed her in jail. She was so reviled, she was banned from Russell's sister's home. (Shadd, Cooper, & Smardz Frost). Peggy would have known the story of Chloe Cooley, a slave from Queenston, Ontario. Cooley was forced into a boat and taken by Vrooman, her owner, across the Niagara River to be sold on the American side. Like Peggy, she may have had a husband and children. As she was brutally wrenched away, her screams attracted attention. When word of this incident reached Simcoe, he wanted to do something about it but couldn't because slavery was legal. He tried to pass a bill to abolish slavery but faced opposition from the founders of Upper Canada, many of whom were slave owners. Referred to as the Family Compact, they were a powerful elite with a vested interest in maintaining their power, privilege and property. Simcoe's anti-slavery bill was defeated but a compromise was reached. Importing new slaves became illegal and children of slaves were automatically free when they reached 25. The institution of slavery was practiced in Canada until 1833 when Britain abolished the slave trade across their empire. Peggy would have experienced the irony of living in a country that professed to be a land of freedom and welcomed fugitive slaves who gained their freedom the moment they crossed the Canadian border while she remained enslaved. Many people on the tour were surprised to learn that there had been slavery in Canada. A woman in the audience, who was clearly traumatized by this news, asked for confirmation that surely, even though there had been slaves, they weren't actually sold. I (Miss Canadiana) offered her a copy of a 'slave for sale' ad from the Upper Canada Gazette in 1806. Since the late 1600's Blacks arrived as slaves of wealthy French and British settlers. They were sold, according to Robin Winks (1971), "often side by side with lifestock, since no public market was set apart expressly for their sale." (p.15). This is not common knowledge, neither is it found in history books. Cooper (2006) points out that "scholars have painted a pristine picture of Canada's past. It is difficult to find a scholarly or popular publication on the country's past in which images, stories and analyses of slave life are depicted." (p.6).

During the tour, Miss Canadiana signs were produced to mark the histories of Black pioneers like Ruth

Bailey and Peggy Pompadour on the land. As the stakes for the signs were pounded into the ground, the crowd,

Ruth Bailey: Pioneer
One of Canada's first Black nurses

Ruth Bailey, who lived at 77 Sullivan, dreamed of becoming a nurse, but nursing schools, through their admissions practices, maintained nursing as a white, middle classed woman's profession. Black churches and other organizations pressured nursing schools to accept Black students. In 1944, Ruth and her friend Gwennyth Barton were the first Black students accepted at the Children's Hospital in Nova Scotia. They graduated in 1948. Ruth's example forged the path for the many Black nurses that followed.

Miss Canadiana's Heritage and Culture Walking Tours The Hidden Black History of the Grange

a multicultural group from a variety of origins, cheered. They wondered out loud, "Why aren't these sites marked? And why hadn't they read about these people and events in their history books?" Miss Canadiana's presence as the teller of these stories creates for them a new geography in which glaring absences are made visible and Black bodies and layers of histories are revealed.

I was privileged to benefit from the consultation of noted Canadian historian, Afua Cooper who introduced me to many of the stories and Darren O'Donnell who helped shape the format of the tour. Thank you Outerregion, my crew, who produced the tour and Jane's Walk for hosting us. Thanks also to Tim Dunn and folks who lived in my neighbourhood that made Toronto's history come alive through their stories. I wish to thank Honor Ford-Smith for her guidance, faith and patience throughout the writing of this piece I wish also to acknowledge the generosity of the Toronto Arts Council, Ontario Arts Council and Canada Council for the Arts for their support.

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About the Author:

Camille Turner is a Toronto-based artist, educator and curator who uses media and performance to build bridges across cultures and differences. Her ongoing projects include: Miss Canadiana's Heritage and Culture Walking Tours and The Final Frontier. She is currently a Masters Candidate in the Environmental Studies Department at York University, Toronto.

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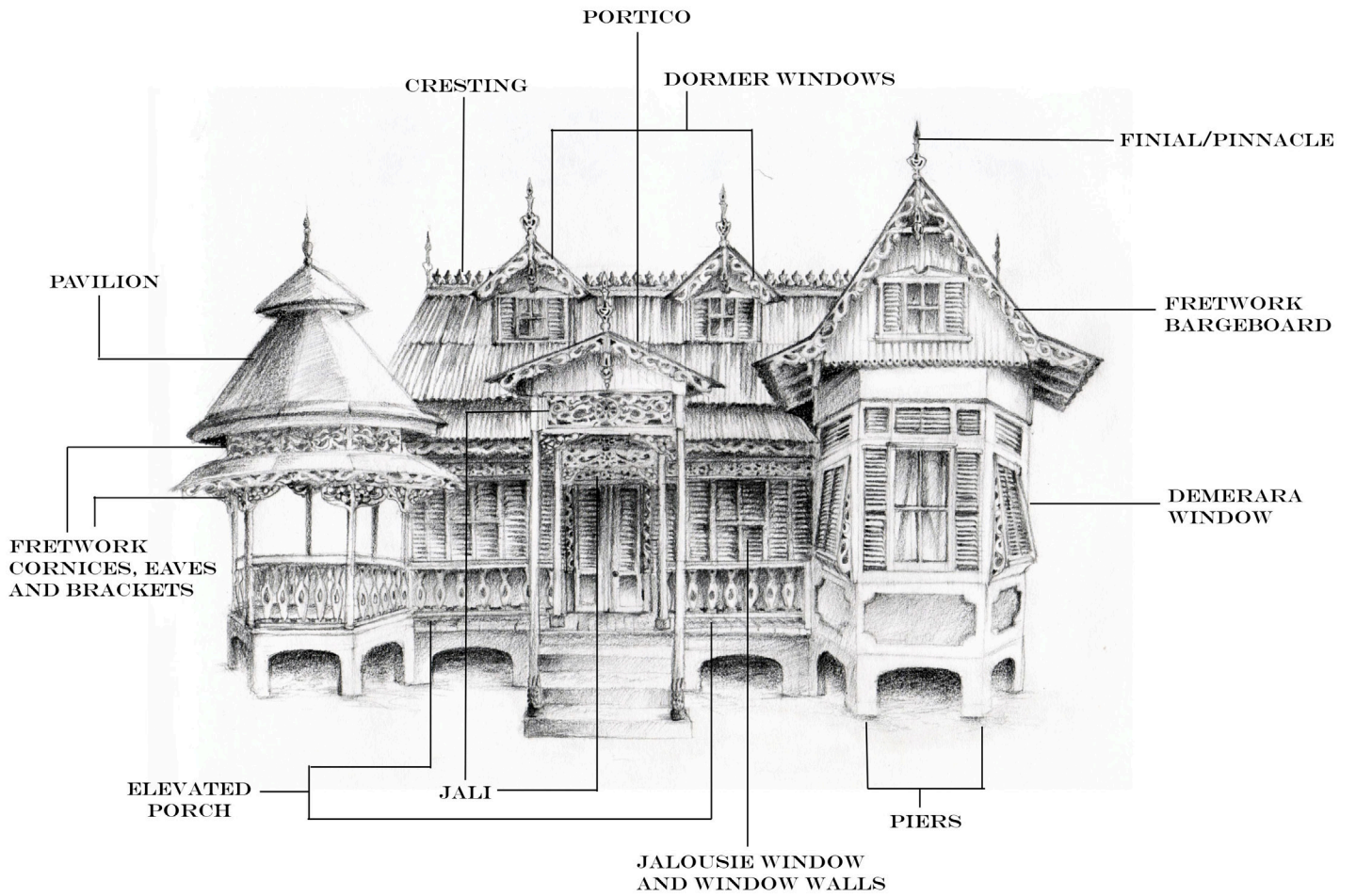## The Trinidadian Gingerbread House: the Evolution of a Caribbean Classic

Abstract:

Tracing both the myriad origins and uniquely Caribbean emergence of the fretwork house, or "gingerbread house", this essay approaches the master-less masterpiece of residential architecture as simultaneously cultural product and democratic process, as synthesis and genesis. The gingerbread house is considered here as the elegant result of countless negotiations among the building traditions of no less than twenty countries, indigenous and foreign. The only single place where all the fretwork house's antecedents were ever present at the same time, was the Caribbean of the 19th century, especially cosmopolitan Trinidad. This new architectural form has evaded easy categorization but this has never detracted from its equipoise between form and function. And despite its unworried embrace of tropical temporality it offers ageless wisdom to future generations of Caribbean builders, if they would listen.

Most Caribbean countries have a few monumental buildings in town designed in a continental European style. Some of these were built in colonial times by powers that ruled these territories but others were erected after independence by new governments paradoxically eager to prove that they were founded on the values of modernity espoused by the West. Scholarship on the architectural history of the Caribbean often focuses on public edifices and references to them in smaller-scale architecture. Large buildings are described as taking European models as their inspiration, with occasional 'influences' from Asia or Africa passing into the building as a result of the seemingly unconscious actions of local craftsmen of those ancestries. Thus, the rational underpinning of Caribbean architecture is treated as if it is from Europe and the more emotional or intuitive elements are imagined to be from India, Africa and elsewhere. Colonial public architecture certainly reveals a direct link to the Renaissance, Baroque, Rococo, Neo-Classical, Gothic Revival, Victorian and other trends sweeping European nations engaged in the Caribbean colonial venture at the time of construction. Always at least one trans-Atlantic voyage behind 'continental' styles, Caribbean colonies often had occasion to devise their own solutions or otherwise wait for updates from the 'mother country.' In the interim they excelled at devising local 'vernacular' variants on continental models. Local variations did not always meet with the approval of European visitors (Lewis 9), and in their debt to imported morphologies, even the most revered monumental edifices of the colonial Caribbean were relegated to Europe's cultural periphery.

Colonial churches, cabildo halls, courthouses, prisons, governors' residences, halls of records and parliament buildings gave stone and timber testimony to the accommodations made between regional climate, local procedural needs and imported European prototypes. But residential buildings in the Caribbean were often quite another matter. There the choices made by common people of varying ethnic extractions about their sleeping, cooking and social spaces, drew

THE TRINIDAD FRETWORK HOUSE

PORTICO

CRESTING

DORMER WINDOWS

FINIAL/PINNACLE

PAVILION

FRETWORK
BARGEBOARD

FRETWORK
CORNICES, EAVES
AND BRACKETS

DEMERARA
WINDOW

ELEVATED
PORCH

JALI

PIERS

JALOUSIE WINDOW
AND WINDOW WALLS

on a much wider variety of forms. Such buildings often reflected not only their builders' countries of origin but also a far more complex series of cultural interactions than their civic, monumental counterparts. Looking to public buildings as exemplars certainly gives Europe architectural primacy in the Caribbean but the demonstrated concern with urbanity, monumentality and 'greatness' minimizes the architecture in which the majority of the region's population spends most of its time - more time than in church or court - and it misinforms the discourse on the Caribbean's astoundingly rich architectural patrimony. Ignoring thousands of residential units of architecture and the evolution of their technology, function and style reinforces notions of the cultural supremacy of those who have built a few fine edifices in town and a few plantation 'big houses' dotting the countryside. By considering residential architecture, we approach more closely an architectural history of the nation, rather than just of certain privileged nationals. In Caribbean residential architecture, the technological, stylistic and symbolic conventions of over twenty countries of origin modulated the considerations of function and aesthetics. Answerable to far fewer colonial orthodoxies than public buildings the humble homes of indigenes, settlers, slaves, peasants and poor freeman commenced a liquid exchange of architectural proposals: Amerindian, European, African and Asian. As we walk the country roads and city streets of the Antilles today, we recognize the ornate yet supremely practical result of this unique cross-fertilization: a timber house with shuttered windows from whose eaves hang openwork trim like so much delicate embroidery. But we call this classic Caribbean form by a decidedly 'vernacular' name: the 'gingerbread house.' The diverse cultural heritage of the southernmost Lesser Antilles makes this area one of the best places to track all the origins of openwork townhouses. Here diverse Amerindian groups encountered a varied stream of European conquerors and settlers starting in the 1490s, accompanied by African slaves then followed by various Asian immigrants. Some of these islands changed hands some twenty times or more as multiple European powers sought to seize them from each other (Connors 17; Crain 5), adding to the region's cultural, artistic and architectural complexity. Few of the Lesser Antilles so exemplify this aesthetic complexity as late

colonial-period Trinidad. Between the late eighteenth and late nineteenth century, the seminal period in the evolution of the gingerbread house, Trinidad became home to dozens of ethnicities (Besson 3-30). After the initial Spanish conquest of Amerindian Trinidad in 1498, the island languished as an undeveloped colony. As disease and migration caused its Amerindian population to dwindle, Trinidad's Spanish residents often ran off to South America to seek gold fortunes. Ships flying various flags used the island's bays and ports to replenish their supplies before moving on (Besson 8). The island seemed a mere stopover on the way to somewhere else. By the time Spaniards finally got serious about developing coffee, cocoa, cotton and sugar cultivation in Trinidad, two centuries had already passed, and by then other European powers had jealously spied the island as a potential colony (Crain 1994, 25; Williams 42, 41-50). From the late eighteenth century to 1900, a progression of Spanish, French, African, English, Chinese and Indian settlement took place, with small numbers of Portuguese, Sephardic Jews, Italians and Arabs settling in the more urbanized areas later (Besson 3-30). Trinidad's architectural heritage is as varied as its population and in the colonial period it manifested architectural features of each of its major constituent ethnicities in increasingly unique and intelligent mélanges. Thus the evolution of Trinidadian dwellings, from thatched Amerindian structures to colonial-era fretwork townhouses is one of the more complex trajectories in all of Caribbean architecture, and far from a merely linear progression.

From Ajoupas to Haciendas: Amerindian and Spanish Collisions

When Spanish first encountered the native Caribbean dwelling in the Bahamas and Greater Antilles, they did not consider it any kind of proper home. Amerindian houses were rectangular or circular thatched structures (bohio and caney respectively) sometimes providing shade from the sun and rain but little in the way of privacy (Bercht 30, 39; Myers 195-6). One could see right through some of these un-fenced houses. Their walls were made of poles driven into the ground not always flush with each other, creating only a porous barrier against the outside world through which light and air passed easily (Crain 11).

fig. 1. Traditional Carib structure, used as a meetinghouse, with vertical and diagonal picket walls, Carib Territory, Dominica. Photograph by author.

Carib houses were similarly permeable (e.g. see fig. 1).

The Eastern Caribbean and South American ajoupa was essentially an elevated bohio standing several centimetres off the ground on poles at each corner (e.g. see fig 2). While the practical consideration of an elevated house would have immediately made sense to Spaniards, as this would keep the floor dry in torrential Caribbean rains, another advantage of this elevation would be revealed later. The stilted house allowed the circulation of air beneath the structure, cooling it from below as its porous walls and thatched roof did from above. Amerindian hammocks functioned in much the same way, suspending and thereby cooling the sleeper in mid-air within a porous membrane. Thus the ajoupa and hammock were part of a tropical Amerindian architectural aesthetic that allowed interiors to 'breathe' naturally. The thatched roofing of Amerindian houses, while

fig. 2. Traditional ajoupa construction with floors elevated on wooden posts, Pakuri Arawak Territory, Guyana. Photographs by Damon G. Corrie.

certainly familiar, must have seemed intolerably rustic to Spaniards. Conquistadores, after all, had left Iberia to make their fortunes as lords of a 'new' land, not to live like peasants in thatched houses. Their idea of a house was one with a pitched (i.e., triangular), tiled roof, arched doors, windows and arcades and with sturdy walls of stone or brick like the ones in Spain. Balconies in the front and a cloistered garden, as in, say, majestic Andalusia, would have also been welcome additions. The Amerindian thatched roof was not appreciated at first for its ability to foil every wind short of a hurricane. The lashed 'mabulu' (Arundo saccharoides) fibres muffled hard wind but allowed air to pass through slowly and could be easily and cheaply replenished when damaged. As a harmonization of Caribbean environment, technology and culture, thatched roofing was grudgingly adopted for the very first Spanish houses in the region (Lewis 43-45). Still, Spaniards could not abide the bohio's and the ajoupa's rude appearance and they quickly proceeded to import clay bricks and tiles as ballast in the bottoms of their ships. Local ceramic workshops were also set up on some islands to fill the demand for more permanent roofing (Gravette 12; Slesin et al 126). While thatch was replaced on many colonists' houses, the ajoupa's elevated floor was often retained. Its porous walls would return later as a

ubiquitous element of Caribbean architecture, but in forms Europeans would have considered to be all their own. Eventually the colonial Caribbean under Spain, France and England would abound in buildings, both residential and civic, where the walls were aerated by large numbers of windows and doors. Composed mostly of wooden jalousie (louver) shutters for ventilation, the sides of colonial houses eventually employed entire walls of these louvers (e.g. see fig. 3). Jalousie windows were usually hinged at their sides in a single or double casement style but by the nineteenth century a variety of louver windows had evolved in the Caribbean, including the top-hinged Demerara window from Guyana (e.g. see fig. 4), which spread to most British West Indian colonies thereafter (Gravette 66). In these jalousie-walled houses, solid timber, brick and stone construction were used primarily in the framing, infrastructure and flooring. Light and air passed straight through a house with its louvers tilted open. There was no stylistic exemplar of this 'see through' living space in Europe. Rather, the porous, louvered house was a Caribbean adaptation of several architectural solutions born of the collision between the Spaniards and Amerindians and adopted by subsequent generations. The jalousie shutters that made this aerated Caribbean house possible had medieval origins. Louvers were

fig. 3. Elevated house with jalousie window walls, and French doors, Port-of-Spain, Trinidad. Photograph by author.

fig. 4. Demerara windows aerated through jalousies, side lattices, and underside
slats of tilted window box, "Ajoupa " (home of Rory and Bunty O'Connor),
Freeport, Trinidad. Photograph by author.

likely introduced to Spain during the first millennium by the "Moors" or predominantly Islamic populations who conquered the Iberian peninsula. In the Middle East, North Africa and Islamic Spain, jalousie windows became widespread because they could be used both to aerate houses in the hot summer months and to allow sequestered noblewomen to see out through downcast louvers without being seen themselves (Akeel ; Gravette 2000, 21, 61). Nearly eight centuries of Moorish rule in Spain had seen the louvered shutter adapted to different architectural styles there. And so when Europeans in the Caribbean finally embraced the Amerindian idea of the house with porous walls, they made one last adaptation of the Moorish jalousie shutter. Thus, the membranous house that is little more than a roof on posts represents the collision of western Asia, North Africa, Mediterranean Europe and the indigenous Caribbean. The resulting jalousied house re-asserted horizontally what Amerindian houses had devised as vertical slats millennia earlier. We might argue that comparing the elegant shutters of colonial houses to the walls of 'primitive' indigenous dwelling strains credibility, and that the Amerindian bohio and ajoupa were neither clever nor aesthetic adaptations to climate but simply the only technology Stone Age

people could muster. But before their first millennium BCE expansion into the Caribbean tropical lowland people probably built similar aerated ajoupas on the Amazon and Orinoco drainages, and there they traded with people from the cooler, dryer Andes who built houses and monuments with solid walls, comparable to those of Europeans (Renard-Casevitz 124-136; Stone-Miller 190-206). Tropical lowland Amerindians could have learnt to build stone walls from visits to their highland neighbours but there was little practical need for them. An enclosed, stone space in the pre-electric tropics would be a breeding ground for slippery moss, dangerous creatures and disease-causing bacteria, proving more harmful than good. Additionally, lighting such a dark, dank structure would require the uneconomic building of indoor fires in a climate where natural heat and sunlight abounds. Thus, the lowland tropical and Antillean ajoupa with spaces between the wall slats was a product of choice, not relative ability. By the end of the nineteenth century, jalousie shutters aerated more and more country homes and townhouses in this thorough Antillean manner. Such houses could be found from the Bahamas to Guyana and the jalousie solution was adopted for cooling and lighting many public buildings as well.

fig. 5. Ajoupa-type elevation of floor, half-hipped roof (i.e., pitched roof with modified angle adjusting steepness), and dormer window. Wattle-and-daub construction visible on side wall, Compte de Lopinot House, Lopinot, Trinidad. Photograph by author.

The View from French Windows

While forced Amerindian labour was directly followed by African slavery in most Caribbean colonies, African slavery was almost non-existent in Trinidad until the late eighteenth century (Besson 9). Thus no other event in Trinidad history had so profound an effect on the country's demographics and its architecture as the Cedula de Población issued in 1783. By this action, the Spanish Crown welcomed Catholics to under-colonized Trinidad where their professed faith would afford them discounted prices on land (Williams 40-41). White and free-coloured planters and merchants from the French West Indies responded especially well to the Spanish invitation to set up in Trinidad. They came with their African slaves from Martinique, Guadeloupe and Haiti (Besson 8-11). The impact of the Francophone arrival on the rudimentary planning grid of Puerto de España and other towns, and on residential architecture throughout the country would be profound (Lewis 56-76). Up to this point, stubborn interactions between the pre-existing Amerindian and Iberian forms resulted in a kind of wattle-and-daub or tapia ajoupa, for increased solidity. The experiment with jalousie shutters had begun timidly in these mud and fibre structures. Spanish ajoupas were often attached to corrals for the few cattle and horses a Spaniard might own. Country houses and 'town' houses were much the same in the first centuries of colonial Trinidad. Towns sometimes could only be distinguished by a slightly higher density of structures and/or the occasional cabildo hall (Lewis 51-60). To the elevated, wattle-and-daub Ibero-Trinidadian house,

the French added dormer windows protruding from the slope of pitched roofs (e.g see fig. 5). Spaniards had already adjusted the slope of the pitched roof to two or more different angles for the swift disposal of rainwater away from the house foundations (Gravette 10-11). The Francophone colonists adapted this adjustment, placing their dormer windows high up on the steepest pitch of the roof, enhancing the circulation of air through the house. Dormer windows were often fitted with louvered shutters. With an attitude quite unlike that of the Spanish, who sometimes cherished notions of returning home rich on South American gold, the French were prepared to settle in and make themselves truly at home (Slesin et al. 1). That difference transformed the haphazardly aligned, ramshackle Spanish ajoupas into permanent residences on the regularized streets of growing towns. The Spanish had used a variety of building materials in often hastily constructed houses including lumber, the ubiquitous wattle-and-daub, brick, stone, or some combination of these. From the Spanish to French and British periods in Trinidad, louvered shutters opened up the walls of houses more and more. 'French doors', invented in France sometime in the seventeenth century, were increasingly fitted with louvers instead of their original wood panels or glass panes. Thus French doors with downcast jalousies took their place alongside the other louvered shutters of the Caribbean, replacing the solid wooden doors that had been typical of Trinidad residential architecture under the Spanish (Gravette 61, 64). A comparison of the early nineteenth century Lopinot House with the late nineteenth/early twentieth century houses of Woodbrook and Belmont illustrates this transition (compare figures 3 and 5). In some ways, the 'great Port of Spain fire' of 1808 cleared the ground for the building of a more typically French Antillean city, at least in terms of residential architecture. Country homes also renovated to reflect the increasingly hybrid combinations that characterized the period following the Francophone arrival, incorporating French and African elements. These interactions continued well into the period after the British seized the island, which brought western European and South Asian elements to the on-going mélange.

About African Entrances

It was only after the 1783 Cedula de Población that African slavery in Trinidad began in earnest, only to be abolished in turn in 1834 (Williams 86-88);so the entire history of intensive slavery in the island spanned just a half-century. The French had arrived in droves with unprecedented numbers of African slaves in tow. Within twenty years of the Cedula, the slave population jumped from perhaps dozens to 10,000. Free-coloureds with their own slaves also came to Trinidad from the French colonies and, as Catholics, they were accorded many liberties they may not have enjoyed in other countries (Besson 9-11). With the importation of Africans from the regions spanning the Congo to Senegal (Besson 9), a variety of building customs were brought in the memories of these enslaved peoples. Yet the sculpted and painted adornments of the West African domestic structure and meeting house tended to remain largely suppressed. The non-Christian iconography of most African adornments ensured that colonial custom and law would restrict them and slave dwellings, whether built entirely by plantation authorities or by the slaves themselves, were minimal, unadorned structures. In spite of this these dwellings exhibited the overall shape and construction of houses in the African homeland because African builders simply adapted traditional training to local architectural needs, restrictions and materials (Lewis 81-83). The plantation dwellings of Afro-Caribbean slaves and the first emancipated blacks and coloureds, especially in French colonies and post-Cedula Trinidad, bore strong resemblances to domestic architecture in regions such as Yorubaland and the Igbo and Calabar territories of Nigeria (e.g. see fig. 6). In their long, rectangular shape and thatched roofs these Afro-Caribbean houses could look like replicas of those in West Africa. However, a feature that distinguished them from West African dwellings was that they were elevated off the ground on corner posts so they did not have the tamped earth floors of many West African houses. Like Amerindians, Africans cooked and socialized outside their dwellings and in so doing contributed a crucial feature to the Caribbean house. Architectural historian Edward Crain states that the idea of the "front porch can probably be attributed to African influence, as no antecedent is found in England

fig. 6. (Left) traditional thatched adobe house, Calabar, Nigeria; (right) Afro-Caribbean thatched lumber house of plantation laborers, early twentieth century. Drawings by author from photographic sources.

or elsewhere in northern Europe" (Crain 58). In fact, the porch does have southern European antecedents as far back as ancient Greece and Rome where the entrances to temples were sheltered by a portico, which sometimes ran along a significant length of the building's façade. But these were not residential buildings. And Crain's assertion is supported by the fact that as early as the fifteenth century Europeans encountered West African residential architecture with outdoor spaces under their shady eaves, enclosed by pickets. West African traditions of congregating around the entrance to a house would have forced the development of these un-elevated porches. The colonial-era porch is essentially an enclosed platform, not on the ground or an earthen plinth as in West Africa or a stone plinth as in Mediterranean public buildings but elevated on ajoupa posts with lumber floors (e.g. see fig. 5). It is an informal reception area, especially for people who may not yet be in the full confidence of the house's residents. In West African architecture the liminal space between the potentially perilous (i.e., wild) exterior and ancestrally sanctioned (i.e., cultural) interior of the house was often marked by a solid entrance door (Visonà et al 140, 149, 242). African slave dwellings in the Caribbean were hermetically sealed once closed, typically employing

solid wooden doors, which blocked out the sights and sounds of the plantation (Crain 59). In this way the porch extended the liminal zone from the doorway outward to mediate between the exterior world and spaces perceived as private, first by Africans, and then by those who adapted the porch in the colonial context. The porch as we know it today was a Caribbean invention, the product of African-European-Amerindian syncretism: an airy, semi-private social zone between strangers and affines. From the Antilles house porches spread to North America where they enjoyed great popularity from the late colonial period onwards, especially in the balmy south.

The English in Town

The British seized Trinidad from the Spaniards in 1797 (Williams 49). They inherited a still-newly 'Francofied' architectural environment, at least from their perspective, which their residential architecture morphologies did not replace. The four-sided hipped roof, seen more often in the islands from Grenada to Antigua than in Trinidad, was a British introduction (Gravette 65). But this style of roof is not conducive to the distinctive, decorative eaves and gables of what would become the gingerbread

house. So-called 'Dutch doors' (or barn doors) were British introductions as well and lent themselves nicely to the kitchen annexes of residential structures where heat, smoke and steam could be let out through the top of the door while leaving the bottom half closed against animals. Otherwise, direct British contributions to residential architecture in Trinidad, especially in the decades right after 1797, are difficult to gauge. Following the 1808 Port-of-Spain fire, English resources seemed to have been directed towards making Great Britain's presence felt in the administrative and religious architecture of that and other urban centres of the island. French, Spanish, African and indigenous elements remained more strongly felt in the elements of residential architecture. Gothic Revival, Victorian and Edwardian styles are all evident in Port-of-Spain's grand edifices such as the Catholic Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception and the Anglican Church of the Holy Trinity but also the famed Red House or Parliament Building. Yet British contributions are not absent in the residential sphere. It was the British who provided the stage on which the gingerbread phenomenon would take place. In the Victorian era, late in the nineteenth century, the highly decorative impulse that synthesized the gingerbread house from myriad disparate elements would flourish.

Direct and Indirect Passages from India

Slavery was abolished in Trinidad in 1834. Following a brief and exploitive period of Apprenticeship thereafter, most slaves simply walked away from plantations never to return (Augier 185-186; Williams 95). Populations swelled in the towns. Many plantation plots lay fallow until such time as a new source of cheap labour could be discovered. In 1848, after a brief experiment with the importation of Chinese workers, a new plantation workforce began to arrive in Trinidad and other British West Indian colonies from India. The new arrivals hailed mostly from the northern states of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar but occasionally from other territories in the far south of India (Besson 18; Mahabir vii). Indians brought a lexicon of folk architecture, not wholly unlike that of the previous colonial workforces, but with some unprecedented elements of its own. Most South Asians were not bearers of elite building traditions and were not allowed by Christian authorities to retain traditional painted and sculpted clan and ritual markings on their dwellings. Many of these labourers were disenfranchised or unattached individuals though a few were exiles and adventurers (Augier 199), so there would be little in the design of their domiciles that was clearly Mughal or British Raj. Yet Indian forms would expand the vocabulary of rural Caribbean architecture and some important Indian elements would transform the look of towns and cities in the last decades of the nineteenth century. Houses from different parts of a single state in India could vary considerably in their shape and construction (Cooper and Dawson 98). This variety survived the trip to the West Indies so that from Indian arrival to the beginning of the twentieth century mud brick, wattle or wattle-and-daub houses having conical, pitched or hipped roofs, with a variety of floor plans could be observed on plantations (e.g. see fig. 7). Roof styles were thatched so that fibre roofing made a brief comeback in rural areas before being phased out by the end of the colonial period in the following century. Since most of the building techniques brought by indentured labourers were already familiar in the Caribbean, Indian contributions to Antillean architecture might be expected to be subtle. However India made a conspicuous and crucial contribution to Caribbean architecture in the form of openwork ventilation devices in the walls of houses. Most importantly of these was the jali, an ornate transom above the doorway (e.g. see figs.8 and12 to 14). Yet it is uncertain whether the Indian migrants themselves introduced this carved openwork screen to late colonial Caribbean architecture. British administrators would have encountered the jali and other openwork in the early nineteenth century as they moved into Mughal palaces after consolidating control of India. They may have been the ones to transport this elite Indian element to the West Indies. Whichever vector brought jali, this Indo-Islamic openwork transom would inspire the entire decorative scheme of the gingerbread house. By the end of the nineteenth century, jali-type openwork appeared as trim along eaves and porticos, and webbed the lintels of porches (e.g see figs 8 to 11, and 13). This vine-like proliferation of openwork just under the roofs of houses was uniquely Caribbean.

fig. 7. Varieties of Indo-Caribbean laborer dwellings from early twentieth century: (left) mud brick house with square plan and rounded corners, and conical thatched roof; (center) mud brick house with rectangular plan and hipped thatched roof; (right) wattle-and-daub house with single wattle wall visible, and hipped thatched roof. Drawings by author from early twentieth century postcards.

The Fretwork Townhouse at Last

By the mid nineteenth century, the diversity of Trinidad's architecture (and national culture) was becoming greater than the sum of its parts. The typical country house was evolving from the thatched ajoupa into a single-storey, elevated house with a Franco-Iberian-type pitched roof or English-type hipped roof, covered either in shingles or tiles with French-type dormer windows bearing Moro-Iberian-type jalousie shutters, sometimes in the top-hinged Demerara style. With the increased availability of industrially produced or quarried materials, some of these houses stood on stone or concrete piers instead of wooden ones. By this time, local carpenters had begun to carve distinctive jali-type openwork designs into the boards that edged the eaves of new houses. This style would become known as 'gingerbread', perhaps referencing the elaborate, curlicue decorations on German confections and pastries (Gravette 60). From 1865, the newly invented mechanical fretsaw was disseminated from North America (Slesin et al 58). With the ability to prefabricate fretwork, Trinidad, the French Antilles and much of the Eastern Caribbean put down their handheld fretsaws and embarked on an intensive program of 'gingerbreading', This explosion of sculptural ornamentation was often gaily painted in contrasting colours that offset the openwork from surrounding exterior walls, seeming to give expression to pent up impulses towards modelled and polychrome elements retained from places like Nigeria and Uttar Pradesh. Though the British were the most socio-religiously repressive of Trinidad's colonial powers (Besson 187-188), their Victorian penchant for elaborate decoration tacitly indulged these now-secularized decorative impulses. The late nineteenth century gingerbread revolution coincided with the evolution of the townhouse as a distinct creature from the small country dwelling. The townhouse developed a varying floor plan, often with a distinctive pedimented portico or even larger porte cochère projecting from the front entrance or porch out over the front steps and walkway as a shelter from sun and rain (e.g. see figs 8 to 10, and 13). The essentially lumber house remained elevated like its flood-hardy country cousin, though sometimes on perforated walls that effectively constituted a hollow, aerated plinth (e.g see fig. 9 right). Protruding alcoves with bay windows and even attached Chinese-inspired pavilions were added to the front of the increasingly complex floor plan (e.g see figs. 8, 9 and 13 right). The bay windows, as well as the dormer windows upstairs, could be fitted with Demerara shutters tilted outwards at the bottoms (e.g. see fig. 11). Typically openwork decorated the bargeboards of the main house but also the extended portico and attached pavilions (e.g. see figs 8, 9 and 13). Fretwork webbed the

fig. 8. Jalis on portico (center left) and along tops of porch and Chinese pavilion (left); other fretwork webs lintel of portico (center left); pinnacles (i.e., finials) at ridge ends, Gingerbread House bed and breakfast, Port-of-Spain, Trinidad. Photograph by author.

tops of the posts where they met lintels (e.g. see figs. 8 to 11). Plain or openwork wooden banisters ran across these porches. The jali was retained as a transom over communicating doors (e.g see fig. 12) but also appeared above entrances and other exterior doors as well (e.g. see fig. 13 right). Openwork motifs could be evocative of flowering vegetation, whimsical combinations of curvilinear or vaguely biomorphic shapes or they could be purely geometric (e.g. see fig. 14). Houses were painted in two or more colours, usually a darker colour for the main body of the structure, and a lighter one (often white) for the jalis, bargeboards and other fretwork. But the bicolour scheme could be reversed without losing the chromatic emphasis on the fretwork. Of course openwork's use as decoration belied its practical application for moderating

shade and light while permitting the flow of air. In fact the only gingerbread house features that were purely decorative were the Orientalist wooden pinnacles marking the ends of roof ridges and the tops of pavilions (e.g. see figs. 8 and 13 left). Even the decorative wrought iron crests running along the roof ridges served to secure and protect the joinery at each apex (e.g. see figs. 13).

In 1895, another massive fire destroyed Port-of-Spain threatening to wipe important phases of the country's architectural history from the minds of subsequent generations. The Scottish architect George Brown was commissioned by the colonial government to rebuild many of the residential and business units destroyed in the fire (Crain 81). Alongside his major renovations and innovations in ironwork on Frederick Street especially

fig. 9. Openwork pedimented porte cochère, front porch and bargeboards above bay windows, George Brown House, Queens Park Savannah, Port-of-Spain, Trinidad. Photograph by author.

fig. 10. Caribbean townhouses may stand on posts as seen in the neglected "Sea Villa" house (left) (some gingerbread houses were given proper names by owners); or sit on hollow plinths aerated by wooden openwork, metallic or "fancy brick" ventilation panels as seen here on the "Rose Ville" house (right), Woodbrook, Port-of-Spain, Trinidad. Photographs by author.

fig. 11. Demerara windows with openwork window boxes, Friendship Hall, Chase Village, Trinidad. Photograph by author.

(Lewis 192-197), Brown enthusiastically set about studying and codifying the aesthetic of the Trinidad fretwork house as a unique typology. Centuries of cultural accretions scrolling through the fibres of the Amerindian ajoupa had culminated in the functionally shrewd, exuberantly adorned gingerbread morphology, now to be curated. Brown's own home was a selection from, and improvisation on, key elements of gingerbread vocabulary (e.g. see fig. 9). Lured by gingerbread beauty away from mere detached taxonomies of the form, Brown joined the wily 'extempo' that local carpenters had practiced for years, and, with his mechanical fretsaw, helped proliferate the gingerbread aesthetic throughout the capital (Lewis 201-203). Numberless artisans, architects, carpenters, master masons and builders of America, Africa, Asia and Europe had preceded the Scotsman. Together, these designers with origins in the indigenous Caribbean and South America, Islamic and Roman Catholic Iberia, France, Britain, over a dozen African countries from Congo to Morocco, eastern India from Bihar to Tamil Nadu, and perhaps the city of Goa, and Orientalism-inspiring British Hong Kong had spawned a uniquely Caribbean architecture. The house's elevation from the ground, its gingerbread bargeboards and Demerara windows numbered among its endemic Caribbean solutions and flourishes. The openwork townhouse was ornate and breezy, impressive and inviting, relatively inexpensive to build and economically lit by dappled sunlight, complex in style and modest in size, a master-less masterpiece born of violent collisions and innumerable, subtle exchanges. The gingerbread house was by no means flawless since its lumber construction was hardly insect proof, and its shingled, then later, galvanized metal roof offered little resistance to hurricanes. Indeed, by the second half of the twentieth century, the gingerbread house gave way to buildings made of more hardy, more easily and inexpensively mass-produced materials such as hollow clay brick and concrete. Today, even the most revered gingerbread houses have found themselves imperilled by urban 'developers' . In spite of this most post-gingerbread homes still have termite-susceptible lumber floors and they more widely utilize corrugated metal roofing that can become deadly projectiles in a storm. Renovation is constant in the tropics, regardless of building materials. So the gingerbread house has

not been replaced by superior buildings but rather by more expedient, sometimes more inexpensive ones. Bulldozed or left to rot, many fretwork townhouses of the Eastern Caribbean have sunk increasingly into memory. Cherished for their nostalgic value and historicity by ageing residents and occasionally restored by antiquarians in neighbourhoods such as Woodbrook and Belmont, they hold on for dear life as rarefied classics of Caribbean architecture. Enthusiasts and architectural historians know that despite the fretwork house's few and inevitable imperfections, no Caribbean house design was ever so poised between living function and regional aesthetic. Prescient ones consider that we might revisit this archetype for the wisdom and beauty it imparts to future building traditions.

Epilogue: July 2010

As I recover from bronchitis contracted at a recent conference in a certain Caribbean country, I am considering the role that architecture played in my ailment. As I ran from session to session at the conference, I moved between the balmy Caribbean air and the refrigerated coolness of conference rooms. Often I was sweating as I ran from one session to another only to have the perspiration practically freeze on me as I sat down for another set of presentations. I myself did two presentations under these mercurial temperature conditions, stressing my ear, nose, throat and vocal chords with lungs full of cold air that had just come from the hot air outside. As I sat shivering in the conference rooms, I sometimes distractedly scanned the walls for windows, vents, and the effective use of natural lighting. But everything was lit by fluorescent bulbs, the only vents were ones that belched freezing air, and the windows were shut tight as to not let that expensive Freon-cooled atmosphere escape. "There must be a better way," I thought, already getting a little itch in my throat…and remembering the fretwork houses of old. "Where are the openwork transoms?" I thought. "Or the jalousies that used to let reflected light bounce off the ground outside up into the ceiling inside?" But I was not just reminiscing about the West Indian past. I was also thinking that we in the Caribbean have not yet advanced to the architectural level of our grandparents, to the time-tested architectural wisdom of openwork buildings. I wondered,

fig. 12. Jali over communicating doors in house interior, "Ajoupa," Freeport, Trinidad. Photograph by author.

"Why has no one installed whole-house fans in the ceilings of these conference rooms to channel a constant breeze through open windows? Has no one thought of using these high ceilings to circulate hot air out of the building? And couldn't all this conference equipment be powered quietly by a solar array on the hotel's pitched roof, or at least a wind turbine, perhaps cleverly disguised as one of those picaresque old plantation windmills that Antiguans and Bajans take their wedding pictures in front of today? We have so much sun and breeze in this place! Yet we constantly copy the enclosed house models of cold countries." Certainly as green energy replaces the fossil fuels that pollute the city air of today's Caribbean and render those jalousie windows and jalis healthful once more; as those electric whole-house fans are installed in ceilings so that the ventilating function of openwork is augmented, rendering noisy, polluting, and physiologically shocking air 'conditioning' obsolete; and as sustainable forestry in larger Caribbean countries, and perhaps the manufacture of new building materials, enables a relatively guiltless maintenance of the coolness and tensile qualities of lumber, we may be disposed toward an openwork renaissance. Indeed, sage and aesthetic elements of the gingerbread house could return in original or new forms and transform Caribbean architecture. But such rebirth would not come from a nostalgic gaze on the quaint and 'vernacular' so much as from revisiting a body of architectural solutions democratically developed, ecologically vetted and refined over centuries.

If the meaning of the term 'vernacular' is 'everyday', then why does the fretwork house endeavour to be so stylish and extraordinary while fulfilling its essential functions? If the meaning of 'vernacular' is 'regional variant' (i.e., jargon, lingo, patois) then where is the 'mother tongue' from which the fretwork house is derived, the metropole to which it might refer as matrix? Indeed from all these origins as we have seen, the only singular place where all the fretwork house's components were ever present at the same time, was the Caribbean itself. And from there the style spread elsewhere. This makes the Caribbean gingerbread phenomenon a centre rather than a margin, and makes it as much a disseminator as a receptor of culture. If its sage solutions are so worthy of emulation, is the fretwork house a mere hybrid (for hybrids, like mules, are incapable of reproduction) or a true species, stable, vital and viable, able to engender future building traditions?

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fig. 13. (Left) Openwork bargeboards, pinnacles/finials and wrought iron ridge crests on main roof and pedimented porte cochère; (right) gingerbread Chinese pavilion, on hollow plinth, extending porch, and openwork transoms (jalis) over French doors, Boissiere House, Queens Park West, Port-of-Spain, Trinidad. Photograph by author.

fig. 14. (Left) Foliate medallion in style of Indian stone and wooden openwork, on side of staircase, Friendship Hall, Chase Village, Trinidad; (center and right) Jali designs, Woodbrook, Port-of-Spain, Trinidad. Photographs by author.

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NAN PEACOCKE
From 'Nora's House'

A household of four on an island affixed to the 13th N. parallel.

The beginning of what happened did not have a sharp clean start, like turning a page to the day I stepped back into my parents' house in St Vincent – the day I began to comprehend that my father, Max had mislaid his memory. The beginning is more like a seed than a sentence and the more I grasped at an explanation the deeper I found strangeness and the more I feared it. Where was Max now he was gone? Where was the man, or even the child inside the chest, seedling of the man he became? What does it mean not to remember?

St Vincent and The Grenadines, November 9, 1990

My brother, Trevor and I didn't grow up in Nora's house; we grew up in many. We are a family from a region of migratory families and the bearers of each new generation don't settle in one place but follow work and their hopes to the next island, to South America, Britain and Canada. So they go, their admiring chicks imprinting. Max and Nora moved around the Caribbean in this way, to Guyana, Trinidad, Venezuela, Jamaica.

Their move to St Vincent, Nora's birthplace, in their sixties was meant to be their final, their rooting, and Max designed and built their house with this, and her, in mind. The house with its granite spine and wooden ribs stood on a mountainside, wrapped in the wind, looking southward down the Grenadine Island chain toward Grenada, one hundred miles away, easily one of the loveliest views on the planet, but then, all the Caribbean can look like that. Nora's house did not encase nostalgic memories of childhood. It represented something else, something deliberate, already formed, like they were. It was the material of their accumulated decisions. It was all that was left in their ageable hands, what came after their grand failures and ordinary triumphs. It was a house of threshold silences and bursts of noise when the wind blew in friends, sons, daughters, nieces, nephews and their children. I believe that, like me, when people wandered through the door left open for us, they became animated by the evidence of two unconventional lives and by the spirits they attracted.

Details of its physical construction, such as easy ascent from the ground to upper floor welcomed movement. At the top of the stairwell one emerged beside a purpleheart structure that encased, what without it would have been, emptiness at the summit. This raised wooden platform, waist high, three metres cubed, somewhat like a stage, served as a surface for a disparate collection of items; the 'edifice', as Nora named it, commanded the commerce of the household.

At the kitchen door a worn out old cutlass mounted on glorisidia stumps waited to scrape the mud off one's shoes during the rainy season.

Upstairs, the wind, with a voice like flapping fire, called you to the wide glass windows along the east and south walls. When opened, rather than framing the blue green views in a majestic, cathedral

sort of way, the panorama flung the viewer outward to a curved seascape of green-haired islands below.

Attention to door hooks and window handles restrained the wind's enthusiasm. Vials of little gold nuggets Max panned in the Guianas and volcanic ash from the '79 Soufriere eruption lived here in a brass cup, there in a lignum vitae ashtray. High above the bar with its handy sink and tap perched a pair of oil paintings. Painted seventy years before, these canvases had accompanied Nora and our childhood through the archipelago to adorn all her houses, lest she forget. Home again, they looked back at the very blues and greens of Villa and Fort Duvernette recorded for pigment decades, at the very landscape we gasped at on awaking.

On the edifice, beloved, ageing books, many crudely rebound with strips of cloth and cowgum leaned against rock specimens Max had gathered in his surveying days. Stained writing pads and half a dozen vases filled with anthurium, periwinkle and weed blooms moved around the wooden edifice at whim. A crystal frog held forth its broken front leg for sympathy to anyone using the telephone. A silver tray and cup engraved 'First Prize – Fizz' won at polo in Singapore by Max's brother before he disappeared in the mountains of Japan during the war. A bird-shaped paperweight with the word 'Kansas' painted along the base. All objects abiding on the edifice seemed to have stories, jokes and dreams associated with them.

On Sundays and Boxing Days these items were pushed to one side when Nora entertained. The edifice resplendent in a tablecloth, embroidered figures of rural Jamaica hosted large buffets carried up from the kitchen.

Those lunches flicker at me. Earl Kirby stitches us into his history of the Carib Wars. Nora's sisters, Grant women, renowned for their strong opinions and weak bladders, to and fro between the bathrooms and their declarations. Max, often the barefoot Merlin of a small child's fascination performs extraordinary rituals from his chair with pipe cleaners and monkey faces. Cousin Sean, age four, calls, 'Aunt Nora, Uncle Max bit the dog back!'

Those times, the noises of laughter and quarrelling politics, the smell of pigeon peas in coconut milk, the humming warmth of rum in your ears, you forgot the wind.

During visits home for Christmas my brother and I thought our dad was merely growing more eccentric. This could be exasperating but he had always charmed us with his peculiar viewpoint. As he grew older he became preoccupied with parallel lines, something to do with prime numbers that only one other soul on the island, a retired expatriate mathematics teacher, God bless her, could comprehend. For two decades Max pondered his theory. His methodology for testing the idea involved certain placements of empty margarine containers. From a stash of yellow plastic that Nora hoarded in the kitchen he selected a dozen or so, holding each up to the light as though admiring crystal. Upstairs, he arranged them in a neat diagonal parallel across the floor at precise intervals, occasionally using a ruler. He half-filled them with water. Then he commanded the dogs from their slumber in the shade at the side of the house, 'Drink!'

They obliged, padded in, patiently lapping from each vessel while Max stood by, leaning against the edifice and puffing his pipe, stooping to pat each dog in turn, then standing upright again to gaze through the window southwards at the island of Bequia, first of the Grenadine chain. This performance, as Nora called it, was repeated numerously. I remember one day, on hearing the third such summons, leaning out my bedroom window to see the younger dogs falling over each other to get out of sight before he came outside to fetch them. The older dogs, resigned, loped in yet again and, as though to humour him, took a couple laps from a couple containers and departed.

One stayed behind, a faithful apprentice, lapping from every bowl. Stony was fifteen years old by then, daughter of the founders of the dog dynasty, Rover and Fian and mother of many. She had entered the world stage as the runt of her litter. Max, who claimed to be an atheist who'd read the Bible five times, named her after the stone in the Book of Psalms that had been rejected by the builders only to become the cornerstone of the temple. Stony was by then the matriarch of the clan. She was grey faced, arthritic and tiny next to her zestful progeny but she held the canine sceptre and brooked no nonsense, except from Max. I marvelled as she let Max lift her bodily to her station at the yellow parallel. Sometimes, so much water needed lapping, she'd be there for half an hour and would fall asleep on her little dog feet (Trevor, dubbed her Stony Toes) waking up just in time to catch herself, look kindly at Max, then resume sipping.

Oh, What-A-Love Stony Toes! When time came for us to leave St Vincent and move to Barbados, we found homes for the dogs. Three times we took Stony to her new home, three times she came back. Even when we put her in a chicken coop, old Stony broke out like Hercules Unchained. Finally, the neighbours took her. When we called from Barbados, they reported that the dog slept each night and ate each morning at their house then climbed across the way to ours and lay there dosing in the wind, apparently waiting. She lasted eight weeks.

~

I first wrote, 'Without warning everything changed', but then I thought better of it and scrapped that line. Looking back, come to think of it, yes, the signs were there. I borrowed one of Max's books one day and noticed fraction symbols pencilled throughout. I asked him their purpose. 'I'm so damn old and my memory is so bad now I can't remember where I've reached in a book, so I mark off the proportion I've read on a given day'.

I laughed, 'Oh God, Daddy man, you can't use a bookmark like everyone else?' 'Oh-ho!' quoth he, 'What a clever idea!' and went into his little office to record something in his diary.

I let the bookmark incident pass. In retrospect I wonder, was he trying to communicate something he couldn't speak of directly? On my next Christmas visit he was reading Farley Mowat's West Viking. Two weeks later he and the book were still up and down the house together. No longer was he reading one or two books a day. He said it like a joke. 'I can't remember anything I read anymore, so I just read my favourite book over and over again. Very economical!'

I didn't take it on. He must have seen the signs for years, why didn't we? He read everything. Had he ever heard of Alzheimer's disease? He started locking the windows against the wind, even when it was stifling hot. Remember when he suddenly decided to stop driving a car? Remember when he gave away the sheep, when he stopped going to the beach with us when we came home for holidays? Remember when he stopped accepting invitations. Was he preparing, cutting down on his occupations, knowing that as he entered his diary each morning his sharpened pencil recorded the progress of his eclipse?

Entry in Max's diary: Saturday February 16 1985 76 F/81 F. Wind: Light ENE? (high clouds from due west, low clouds from due east) / Low Cloud 20% / Blue Sky: 60% / Visibility: Loom of Bequia. Ground damp / Electric Meter: 26.1 - 19.6 = 6.5 Units Used

Some people are born stupid
Some people achieve stupidity
& some people have stupidity thrust
Upon them ... Like Max.

09.00 hrs. Nora was making breakfast in the kitchen.

I tried to set the table. I had 2 mats, one for Nora, one for me. I wanted to put them, but couldn't. It is a simple thing. I could not line them up with the edge of the table. I tried. I don't understand this. There is confusion. Why? I look at Nora, only one year younger, but she is strong. I am daily losing my intellectual powers. I built this house about 10 years ago. I studied the land carefully and choose this particular spot because there's a large volcanic rock embedded in the hillside right beneath me. I put the house down on it. The kitchen wall is 10 feet thick in one place. This house is like Peter's church, built on a rock! I am an atheist (I think) but Nora says I'm agnostic. I took great care to bolt the roof on properly. When the hurricane hit it took off the neighbour's roof but not Max's. I was careful in the design of the stairs from the ground floor to the upper level. The standard ratio of tread to step is 1:1. Not acceptable because of Nora's poor eyesight. I built it with 3:1 ratio for greater ease of ascent. She often comments pleasingly on these steps. It makes me very happy.

17.45 hrs. Still the loom of Bequia.

December 05 1990.

It is the third day of rain and with all our wishing that it would stop, it won't. It falls down flat, unmusical. No songs call to our mountainside. No wind lends its sheets to write on, no grand sweeps inspire. The rigid grid slams shut. We are hammered in. The rain began on the first Sunday of Advent. The second day it rained and we called it the day of

continuance, but this third day – what can we call it? 'A blasted pain' Nora says.

The decision is made. Our house will be put up for sale and we three will move to Barbados where I have a job. Nora is not a sentimental woman and not easily intimidated but she's apprehensive about losing her independence. Instead, she thinks about the next issue of her weekly newspaper.

You are on the go, obsessed by an elusive occupation. You pass from room to room not lifting your feet like the man who traversed forests but shuffling like a shopkeeper on a busy morning. I tell you frequently about our plan, hoping it will sink in somewhere. I am preoccupied with plans, with definitions, conditions, incantations, illness. Words are my incantations while away from the terror of my dreams. I find words for what is happening to you, a name, senile dementia of the Alzheimer type.

Your nephew, who lives in England, sends information from the British Alzheimer's Association. Reading it is like looking through a window into a bizarre party of complete strangers – English – who are behaving as we do. Trevor saves a kitten from the flood and brings it home in his shirt. He scrapes mud off his boots on the worn out cutlass you once mounted on stumps at the kitchen door. Dripping, he offers the tiny resurrection to Nora from the palm of his hand. Its fur is hammered into rows of tiny nails. Nora warms milk; we prepare a shoebox bed and a sandbox and place them in the room we still call your office that without you to defend it has been encroached upon by the household's other needs. We expect the babe to be joyous. Instead it disappears. We search between the legs of Max's surveying tripods, in the dusty K and E theodolite box and rummage through yellowed hurricane plotting maps. Amid aeons of graphite dust, pencil wood and eraser rubbings, gold from the Orinoco's tributaries lie with pencil stubs across his desk. Rocks jutting toothy mineral samples support his weary books. Farley Mowat's West Viking, read and re-read is lovingly rebound. In a cupboard, dozens of exercise books, once neatly stacked, disintegrate to the touch. Your theory on the paralleling tendency of prime numbers is among them. Other exercise books outlining football pool strategies and children's stories are rubble, except for an occasional line. 'Once upon a time there lived a One Curl Girl'

We search the house for the kitten to no avail. For two days we replenish the saucers by the undisturbed bed and go away, keeping the door closed from the dogs. Trevor goes into the room to dismantle an old stove for the dump and discovers the kitten's hiding place. It has stretched itself out and fitted itself into a right-angled join in the grill like a big-eyed pencil. Once you would have delighted in this feat, but today your confusion has robbed you of joys. The animal's fear mirrors ours. It fears us as we fear ourselves, using magic to escape us. Trevor names it, Houdini. One morning Nora awakens to find Houdini curled up against her. My brother and I exchange looks. Rather than saying, 'Pussy, I hope you are not going crazy!' and showing her the proper place for a cat, Nora trains her to sleep at the foot of the bed, but lets her stay. You'll notice Houdini one day, when she is confident enough to dart about the house bewitched. This rain makes things worse because we can't go out. Usually we walk further up the hill, and sometimes you call out happily to passers-by, but more frequently the walk fails to relax, when you can't seem to focus on objects and become anxious. Though sometimes you seem terrified of the outside, other times you go off alone and get stuck in macca. Searching for her lost slipper, Nora tells of a day that she hadn't realised you were missing until a youngster from Sion Hill arrived at the door with you in tow. He identified you, but not as her husband. 'Look here. I find you brother walking 'bout. I bring him fuh you!'

The memory brings her smile. She crosses the floor on one slipperd foot and lights the nativity candles she's placed on the window sill. It's one of those days though you're with us in body I can't find you anywhere. The day of loss? What would you call it? The day of absence. That's it. You are absent, but still here, a babbling brook around Nora's heels. In your mind, are we absent?

Why do people pray 'world without end'? I dare not voice this question but I think it. The fools wouldn't pray for everlasting life if they knew this living hell! My blasphemy scares me.

I take your hand and lead you barefoot across the greenheart floor to your chair, the one you used to sit in when explaining your favourite theory on the 500-year weather-bound cycle of civilisation. You don't

want to sit and I resist the urge to knock your feet from under you. But you are tired too, having paced incessantly since breakfast, and I am able to force you down into the chair, supporting your back and applying the weight of my own body to yours, angling you into it. At last you are seated, facing a perspiring window. Nora's missing slipper peeps from under the cushion. As quickly as you comply I feel ashamed of my violent thought, but when you do not comply I become angry, so do you.

Father, father, we don't have to escalate. We've already fought our morning battle over cleaning your teeth. I insist, you resist. A lizard watches our contest from the glass shelf over the washbasin, turning quizzically to its tiny green reflection. The stand-off can take an hour. We are equally determined. My first lesson begins. You have the advantage because a minute is already an eternity. You win. Eventually I learn that you cannot see reason because there is none. We get on better after that, when I get our roles straight and I abandon my quest to order the unmappable.

I read the news. A confused person was found wondering an American city with a note attached to his clothes identifying his condition as senile dementia. His carer could no longer cope. He or she took the person out for a walk and at a certain moment let go the person's hand. Whoever you are, I greet you. Let us together throw some light on the extraordinary events that we have witnessed. If people curse you for running away it's because they have not walked the land of remembering. They cannot remember what it is like to be tortured by an enemy you love, to be deprived of sleep night after night. They cannot remember their eyes on a search for their father's eyes; eyes they knew before they knew their own. Start at the bearded chin. Stop lightly at the lips. Skim across the cheekbone summit, and slip down, down the abyss. They did not call, 'Hello' but heard no echo. Dread, dread. They cannot remember what it's like to have someone at their elbow, at their shoulder, someone who cannot rest or let them rest, who seems never to tire. They cannot remember losing self-control, near demented themselves, screaming at the person. Did they defend themselves against oblivion? Did they battle the slight body of a giant madness? Did they knock to the floor someone who intended no harm but held them in a grip to break their limbs? That when, crying with shame, did they help the

person up? Did he look them in the eye and, for the first time in weeks, utter a sentence, 'Are you my friend?' If they have walked there they will say, 'I forgive you for what you did, for pinning the paper to his shirt, taking the person to the park and letting go his hand' but they cannot remember.

~

Nora blows out the nativity candles, fearing you might hurt yourself or burn down the place. Our household floats in shadow. The Prince of Our Darkness wants us. He comes up with his little hatchet and cuts the moorings cleanly, then sets about drawing us, house all, through the windless rain to his kingdom. We are heavy but unprotesting. We do not yet understand how to use our weight, our rounding darkness to an end.

~

The rain stops and the sun shows. I haven't heard your voice this morning, but your eyes are brighter, not hunted. You see our copy of Wilson Harris' Palace of the Peacocke on the bookcase and cry out triumphant, 'Peacocke, that's me! Born in 1911'.
I am aware that Nora turns her head, open-mouthed, from the editorial she is writing, but you are looking at me and I hold your eyes to mine and say, 'Yea', trying to sound casual.
You repeat, 'Yea!' You are in pursuit. 'You remind me of someone I knew long ago. What's your name?' 'Nan Peacocke', I pronounce. Amazement sweeps over you. 'Peacocke?' you enquire.
'Yes, just like you'.
You grab my hand and pump it 'Congratulations!' We go out in the yard to celebrate. The sky, washed clean, gives all lucidity. An egret glides past us on the lightest of northeast trades, her flight line demarks hillside from sea. She loops then dips below us toward Arnos Vale. You raise your arms by the elbows in imitation and call to her, 'Blow down to the sea and die!'
Your laughter takes brilliance. I rest my ear against your canoe chest and listen to the paddle dip into the Orinoco – pluhew, pluhew, pluhew.

~

May 15, 1991.

Cousin Nicola is here with the car. It takes a while to get you in, but we've calculated for that. We've notified the airline about our special passenger. Certificates prove Houdini's fitness to reside in the country of our destination. Friends will meet our flight; a meal awaits us. Everything is perfectly arranged.

We sit together in the back seat. As we drive off, the dust blows across the disappearing porch. Some mornings we put chairs out there and have coffee.

Nora does not look back.

About the Author:

Nan Peacocke was born in Guyana. She grew up in Trinidad and Venezuela, came of age in Jamaica, St Vincent & The Grenadines and Canada. She lived and worked at the WAND Unit, UWI in Barbados where she edited the publication Woman Speak for many years. She currently lives in Canada. She received the Commonwealth Broadcasting Award 2000 and was co-winner of the the Timothy Findley Prize for short fiction in 2003

VISUAL ESSAYS

Four visual essays present a range of concerns and perspectives on the way Caribbeanness can be imagined drawing on old and new themes and images. Each of the essays addresses the audience through different visual media such as performance, photography and sculpture. While all artists address the body in place they incorporate the human form in varying ways. They each attend in different ways to temporal and spatial anxieties while simultaneously enabling the play of memory in the present. Familiar tropes from the literature and myth of region are reinterpretted in ongoing consideration of the generative power of the past in the present. The ship, the Caribbean as fecund garden or paradise, earthquake, the sacred imagery of vodoun , the carnivalesque and the legacies of inter-racial sexuality are all images which have long literary and visual genealogies in the region. Here they have different iterations from those of the colonial period which continues to cast its shadow on the present. Each artist in his or her own way uses "the concept of mobility" in an attempt to address an issue of temporality and the tensions underlying the notion of time and place. Sometimes overtly and at other times, covertly the artists explore tensions between colonization, decolonization, displacement and emplacement. They speak to the ways in which space and place are given meaning by memory and by human relationships to the environment. (The Eds.)

TIRZO MARTHA

Caribbean for Sale

NO Natives!

Caribbean for Sale : Video Art Projection

Artist Statement:

"The Caribbean has changed of name and function from the colonial plantation to the principal resort of the West. A beautiful so-called paradise enriched with colors, sun, sand and sea, a beautiful place to be conquered and possessed, totally free and protected from the natives and their traditions. The natives who behave well may get a spot in the entertainment of the so-called tourists, the new conquerors. Conquering the sun, sand and sea for a bargain price."

Caribbean for sale presents the contradictions underlying the Western fantasy of the region as an earthy paradise and pleasure garden to be consumed by the Other. Martha uses the symbol of the boat as an image of the decadent or perverted sense of mobility held and propelled by the rhetoric of tourism. His satirical project temporally compresses the denuded subject of slavery and the objectification of the enslaved into a narrative of tourism. He reveals an only incremental shift in Western conceptualization of the Caribbean since slavery. Martha's satirical commentary stresses the visual and environmental commodification of the region where the sale of the natural world to capital is paralleled by the dominating gaze of the clientele of the polluting cruise ship. His critique is visually aligned with the critiques made by a number of scholars and reminds us of Jamaica Kinkaid's stinging polemic in Small Island, Ian Strachan's prose in Paradise and Plantation and Lloyd Best and Polanyi-Levitt's arguments in Theories of the Plantation

Economy. Lloyd Best submits that the historical context of colonialism has produced "Caribbean society as an historical artifact of western Europe" (Best 2). Martha illustrates how these contradictions—inversions of values and belief systems inconsonant with the cultural climate of the Caribbean yet by which the Caribbean situation is largely determined—are the result of this continued status. While this Western model of tourism supposedly promotes 'wealth' and 'progress', it exerts a cultural pressure of Othering and an economic pressure of dependency under the umbrella of globalization. Within historical and current articulations of labor and political economy the muddy terrain and pervasive effects of the total institution of the plantation, and now tourism, arise as an explanatory framework for societal ills. Colonial force has only shifted in its physical application but continues to be expressed through a distinct and traceable ideological narrative. As emphasized in Martha's work, the evolving institutional structure of the plantation survives in the tourist economy - the epitome of globalization and exploitation.

These writers and scholars remind us that while the Western model of tourism supposedly promotes 'wealth' and progress', it exerts the cultural pressure of Othering and creates the economic pressure of dependency under the umbrella of globalization. Within historical and current articulations of labor and political economy the muddy terrain and pervasive effects of the plantation, and now tourism, arise as an explanatory framework for societal ills. Colonial force has only shifted in its physical application but continues to be expressed through a distinct and traceable ideological narrative.

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Based on the "In the Spirit" exhibition catalogue from the essay "Contemporary Questions" by Marielle Barrow. " In the Spirit" was an exhibition of the works of 12 Caribbean artists that was held in June 2011 at the Inter-American Development Bank Staff Gallery, Washington DC.

About the Artist:

Tirzo is the cofounder of Instituto Buena Bista, Curacao Center for Contemporary Art. Tirzo is known for his public interventions and social cultural projects. Besides his various solo exhibitions the artist has also been part of shows such as the 10th Biennial of Havana (2009), "Infinite Island" at the Brooklyn Museum and berg Institute in Amsterdam the Netherlands. Tirzo is the cofounder of Instituto Buena Bista, Curacao Center for Contemporary Art. Tirzo is known for his public interventions and social cultural projects. Besides his various solo exhibitions the artist has also been part of shows such as the 10th Biennial of Havana (2009), "Infinite Island" at the Brooklyn Museum and berg Institute in Amsterdam the Netherlands.

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YAO RAMESAR

Colour, Light & Signification in the mise-en-scène of *Sistagod*.
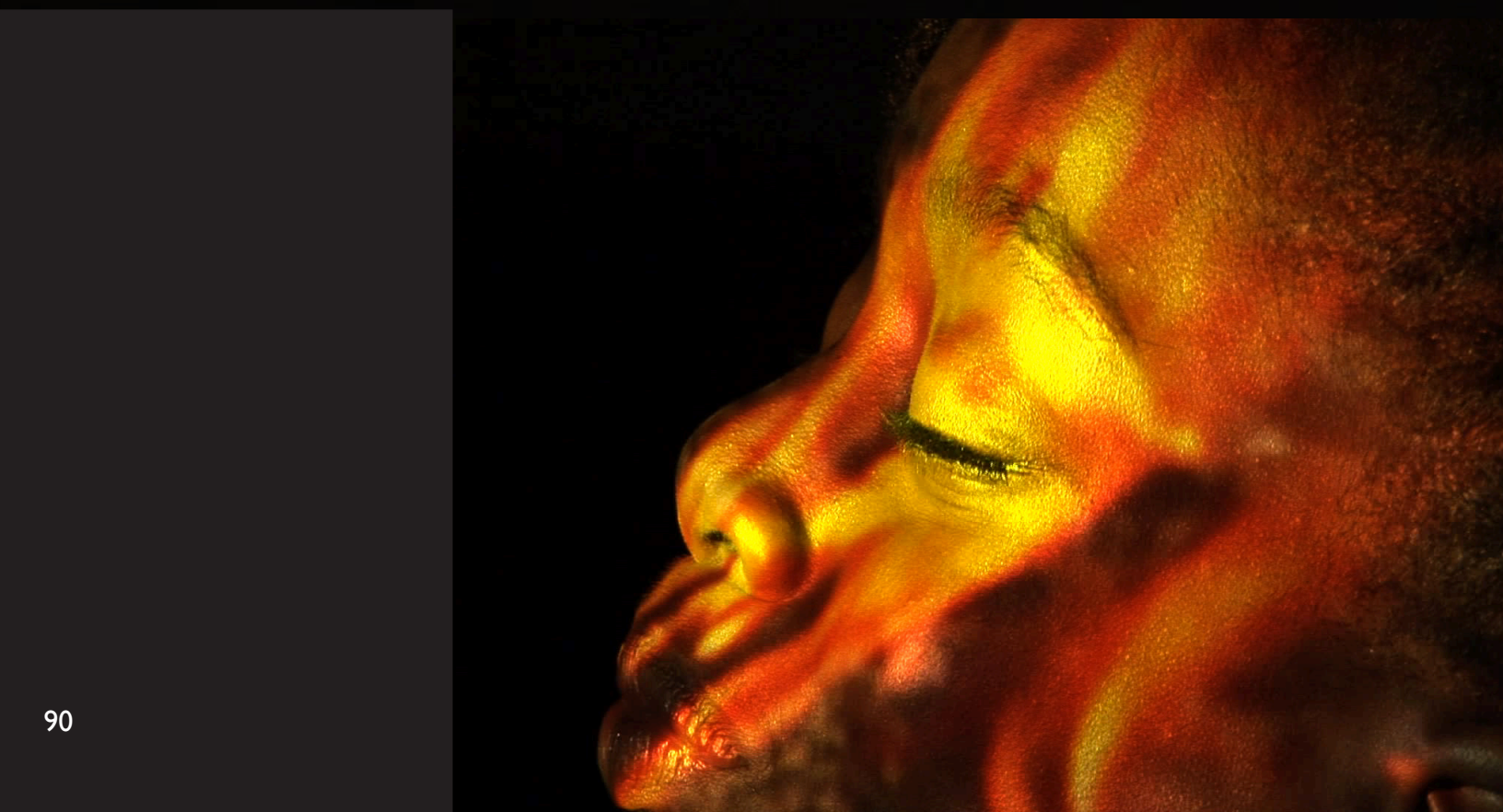
Sistagod is the first feature of a trilogy that I wrote, directed and produced in 2006. It foretells the coming of a black female god in the days running up to the apocalypso. The film articulates my aesthetic *Caribbeing* which is explored in this article.

Sistagod opens with the sound of an Orisha ode to Shango, the Yoruba god of fire, under a shot of the young Mari's face in black silhouette onto which the image of a small fire is projected, superimposed over her eye, slowly spreading to fill her whole face. This first shot expands in space from a concentration of fire in her eye, enjoining the viewer to inhabit her mind. In western Judeo-Christian culture fire is often associated with the devil – the film Sistagod subverts this relationship, upholding the devi (goddess) from whence the corrupted word devil derives, dealing with the elements – with elemental signifiers. Natural forces manifest on screen – a reclamation of fire, water, earth, air --not as pagan pre-Christian alchemy, but as ancient soul force from the root of human mythology. This movement completes a cinematic act of re-orientating and re-rooting the film's audience in its peculiar spiritual arc and frame.

In the opening scene, when Mari is in the window, she manifests baubles of light emanating from her forehead, her third eye in concentric circles – achieved by shooting into the sunlight while moving the camera towards her. This visually foreshadows the (sun) light that emanates from inside her (mouth) during the exorcism scene. When the camera stops finally on a close up of Mari's face in the wooden frame of the window, a teardrop falls from her eye, down the dark brown landscape of her cheek, a small, salty waterfall on screen. Earth and water blend for a few moments, then the screen fades to black.

The opening shot of the film's third scene with Mari's father in uniform, hatless, in front of a mosque – locates the narrative in a contemporary geo-political frame, with the US marine sniper being shot by an Iraqi sniper hidden in the building. Filmed at midday – it replicates the resonance of the highest sun reflecting off the beige structures in the Middle East (actually the St. Joseph mosque in Trinidad). The light has shifted radically from the artificial fluorescent coolness of the light-blue-walled marine barbershop, where he is processed for battle in the preceding scene, a lamb shorn before slaughter.

Our introduction to Mari's father and mother reveals a white man and a black woman profiled against each other, matching in physical size/scale - a representation of opposition and evenness, their variant reflected light fracturing them into literal and political duality. As they hug on the steps of his house, we see their power reversal – she his caregiver, wearing his [military] jacket and stroking the tattoo of an eagle

clutching a rifle on his chest. The following scene presents the juxtaposition of fig trees shrouding the Edenic idyll of the cemetery with the still white tombstones, further dichotomized by half of the graveyard left in a wild state and the other half (where the couple are walking) smooth cut grass – the child Mari, conceived in the burial ground of this inverted Eden.

Intra-frame movement is omnipresent in this scene – the fig leaves are blowing in the foreground in

the cemetery framing Mari's mother and father who are walking together in the background. This movement of the fig leaves is echoed later in the scene with Mari's father's second wife and children through the circular shape of the fig leaf in the cemetery and the spiked fan palm in the later scene representing the contrast between the ideal coupling of Mari's parents and the sharp-edged reality of her father's second wife and lighter-skinned children.

It is of course 'the wretched of the earth' that live on these margins, on the edge of death – next to cemeteries, scrap yards and abandoned factories. Much of the film was shot in a neighbourhood known as Bangladesh, one of the poorest communities in Trinidad at the time of production (2006).

In Sistagod, Mari's mother insists that her daughter dress up in frilly bright-coloured clothes in order to stand out from the unvarnished poverty of her community and also because she is seen as a throwblack – her mother's hopes of pouring some milk in the coffee blackfiring. She compensates by sewing all these nice little froufrou suits of armour to distract from her child's blackness .

Mari's mother is of course battling the same forces of chaos that overtake the cemetery and the abandoned factory next to it – vines cover the factory and rust consumes the cars. Mari's mother tries to fight b(l)ack by concealing her daughter's "undesirable" skin and teaching her to "speak and think in standard English".

In the film's first waterfall scene there is a foreshadowing of Mari mother's death and in Mari's

presence the water performs supernaturally, moving upward. Mari represents this energy that re-directs the forces of natural order – life, death, decay – she reverses the natural order of things in a way that her mother cannot; her mother ultimately jumping off the verdant crown of the waterfall to her death.

The supernatural is also present in the following scene when Mari's mother confronts the second family as they walk to church – The mis-en-scène reflects the dynamics of colour and class – Mari's father has now migrated to a more reliably (sapodilla) brown second family and Mari stands dazed – at that moment of peak

confrontation: the second family is pristine (ordered compositions/symmetricality in space/expensively cut clothing in muted tones complementing their lighter skin colour). Then the breeze starts blowing, disrupting the elements within the frame. The disturbed natural order is exemplified by the fan palm leaf twisting behind the second wife's hat, which itself contorts in the breeze. The wind that blows is also the spirit of the father who represents a problem for both his families – their shadows crossing on the wall. The next scene of Mari's father in the Desert Storm rum shop is the second and final sequence shot in artificial light and this is consistent with the his representation as the military industrial complex. He is in US marine uniform yet smoking a Cohiba, easily recognizable as the premium Cuban cigar. He wears this uniform throughout most of the film, it is his skin, his identity – it represents an armor that makes him whole. Like the others though, he also subverts order(s) by smoking contraband, appearing hatless and drinking in uniform.

His actions parallel what Mari's mother achieves through the use of colonial clothing – he perpetuates the myth that he is in "order", but in reality that he is permanently wounded and decommissioned. His tenuous position is symbolized by an extreme low angle shot of the rotation of the rum shop's ceiling fan (representing US military helicopter blades) appearing dangerously close to decapitating his inebriated figure, towering over the gaze of the camera.

Father Devine (derived from devi) is the next figure that comes into focus. He enters into a space where a broad swathe of natural light is falling. He is backlit by the setting sun. He is shown in silhouette coming through as a shadowy figure moving on the wooden wall of Mari's house – a man of the spirit.

This exorcism scene represents the crux of the theme of naturalism: Mari is possessed. The light coming out of her mouth was created by placing a small gold disk on her

tongue and angling her head so that it catches the morning sunlight coming through the window and is reflected into the camera lense scene, firelight or Father Devine, an "aspiring televangelist", is sweating in the three-piece suit which, (along with his pseudo-American accent) he insists on wearing while walking around the village, The exorcism is very sexual. In fact Devine becomes the chief suspect in Mari's pregnancy. Devine contains the opposition and evenness between the spirituality and the flesh – the sacred and profane. In the scene's last shot, Devine's reflection in Mari's mirror is muddied, his color muted by it's weathered surface. Coming at Sistagod's narrative mid-point, the sequence sets up a denouement of elemental imagery, which climaxes with Mari's child's birth in the gentle wind and light of the rainforest.

About the Author:

Ghana-born Caribbean filmmaker Yao Ramesar was honoured as the Caribbean's first Laureate in Arts and Letters in 2006. That year his award-winning SISTAGOD, became the first Trinidad and Tobago feature film in official selection at a major festival at the Toronto International Film Festival. His work is subject of *The Films of Yao Ramesar* and the book, *Phenomenology's Material Presence Video, Vision and Experience* by Gabrielle Hezekiah (Bristol: Intellect) (2009)

MICHELLE ISAVA

Self Projection
TT, VE/ 15 minutes

Isava through mobility of performance discovers a disjointed self but her humor placates the discomfort of this discovery. Isava's performance aesthetic and process references the schematic and symbolic corporeal representations of Cuban artist Ana Mendieta whose daring work in performance brought the Santeria and imagery into her work with the female body, mobility, environment and displacement. In a contemporary translation of Mendieta's re-connection to elemental forces, Isava performs the instability of a slippery identification with mechanisms of surveillance, the exoticism and sensuality of chocolate on the body and sand as in Mendieta's work as "una extension de la naturaleza" (Ana Mendieta), (an extension of nature). Isava performs a ritual of belonging and identification with the elements, "balancing and covering up", crawling and walking in and out of her sense of self, finding essential being in nakedness and vulnerability. Using the body as vision, she moves through fabrics of identity to devices of photographic capture in an extension and contraction of her possible and perhaps multiple selves. Her methodology is simultaneously an "inward stretch and outward reach" as Rex Nettleford proffers, through which she finds the tragic question elucidated in David Scott's Conscripts of Modernity- that the trajectory of Caribbean self-hood is not best enacted through a romanticized vision of becoming and independence but rather the clairvoyance into an unstable present as a more productive route to becoming. (The Eds.)

Description of action: I stood to the left of the square on the wall where a video would be projected. This video shows exactly what my left eye had recorded while I walked around the neighborhood some days prior to the performance. I was wearing clothes that I identify with my place of birth, Trinidad & Tobago. I had five large containers filled with sand laid on the floor to form a semi circle. There was a pot in the center of heated chocolate sauce. When the video began I took off my clothes and lifted a container to balance it on my head. This was repeated with each container; lifting, placing and balancing each on my head as I transported them from one point on the ground to another. When all the containers had been rearranged I proceeded to empty the sand once again in the shape of **a semi circle.**

I then sat in the center and began covering myself in the chocolate sauce. Then I crawled to one end of the sand shoving it into a large mound in the center and there I began to cover myself with the sand. At this point the video had ended and a sea-green colored light projected on me. I ended by returning to the place I started.

Background: The interaction of these various actions and materials records my experiences and major concerns while in the workshop. In this place so unfamiliar my senses were overwhelmed and so I wanted to capture especially what I saw and felt in a more tangible way than just through my body and its eyes. For this I strapped a mini video recording device to my left eye one day while I went out walking. This helped me discover that I was not so interested in what I saw but in how I saw things. The performance then became a display of my body and the way it sees as a projection of itself. The sense of wonder I experienced for all the visual newness around me reflected and contrasted with my sense of self. The performance was filled with symbols that represent my place of birth that were both intentional and innate. I myself can be a symbol, in terms of my skin color, my ethnic mix, my shape and my rhythm. The clothes I wore were also important to me; a costume to mark my difference, a source of strength and comfort. I wore leather slippers and a knitted cap that are stereotypically made, sold and worn by rastas in Trinidad & Tobago.

I also wore a cargo pants and a curry yellow t-shirt. Stripping myself was to remove myself of the illusory power that was my clothes. The chocolate sauce and sand were also symbols of my Caribbean identity. In truth all those elements mean nothing about me, naked and vulnerable is more appropriate as I performed various acts of balancing and covering up myself to ultimately reveal its futility.

http://pas.bbbjohannesdeimling.de/index.php?/workshops/what-is-important--berlin--2010/

About the Artist:

Michelle Isava is a conceptual artist who straddles different mediums and genres to place the priority on message and experience. She experiments with drawing, painting, installation and video because she believes the message should decide the mode of expression. Her primary interest is the body as an object and what it has the potential to reveal about the subject. Most recently Isavaa has been working on the themes of technology, spatial discomfort and travel.

OLIVIA MC GILCHRIST

My Dear Daddy: Chapter 1

Photographic Essay

As a mode of curating, we decided to maintain the duality of this narrative in its bi-lingual form. (The inaccessibility of another language is as real as the distance of memory and yet another language, another world or level of understanding can be found through mechanisms of access). In the case of another language, online search engines can translate entire passages. For the artist, the camera as much as her environment and the mask she dons, become her objects and ritual of access and of memory. As a balm for loss and in retrieving a sense of self the artist performs a constructed memory, her artistic narrative revealing the contingent nature of memory but also its spatial character, tactility and power. A dialectic of presence and absence of memory is traced through her process of furtive searching for memory and voluntary forgetting. (The Eds.)

My Jamaican father, Francois Mc Gilchrist, died twenty-five years ago. He was forty two, I was six, yet I have always felt strongly connected to his memory. As his image was starting to fade, I was suddenly required to move back to his home land, (also my birth-land) living at 'Wilmar', an empty house which lingers with traces of a Jamaican heritage that I am struggling to make my own.

His image has now taken an unprecedented weight in my life which this body of work tries to rationalize through a series of narrative still images, a group of 'character studies', (appendix to the narrative) and a short video (editing in progress) which were all created at 'Wilmar' over the last six months.

Mon premier souvenir en français date de ma septième année, lorsque ma mère a décidé de retourner auprès de sa famille en France. Alors que jusqu'à cette période là, nous avions vécu d'abord à Kingston, Jamaïque et puis à Londres, Royaume-Uni. C'est ainsi que j'avais toujours associé l'image de mon père de mes six premières années aux cadres jamaïcain et londonnien. Cette image a donc été modelée par les bribes de mes souvenirs, les récits de ma mère et le fruit de mon imagination car j'étais avide de créer une icône paternelle pour combler son absence. Mon père était devenu une figure centrale, bien que le plus souvent voilée, de mon identité d'enfant, d'adolescente puis d'adulte. C'était la recherche de son héritage caribéen absent qui a pesé dans mon choix de partir étudier puis vivre à Londres. Cependant vivre à Londres ne me soulageait pas, alors j'ai commencé à ne

plus y penser, bien que le vide de son absence me pesait toujours.

C'est lorsque j'ai dû revenir subitement en Jamaïque que le choc émotionnel fut violent. J'avais toujours pensé revenir un jour, mais je ne l'avais jamais planifié. Ma surprise fut presque totale en ressentant autour de moi une présence paternelle très pesante, presque asphyxiante. Tout a fonctionné comme s'il était là, juste à côté de moi, me conseillant et m'encourageant dans toutes mes démarches et tous mes projets. Malgré cela je ressens un gouffre de tristesse dû au fait qu'il ne soit pas là d'une façon tangible, tactile et vocale.

Une série d'images s'était imposée. J'ai senti le besoin de créer de petits tableaux de dialogue visuel

de cette image paternelle omniprésente. Je capte sur pellicule l'environnement de ma nouvelle vie: la maison de mon grand-père qui nous revient enfin, vingt-deux ans plus tard. 'Wilmar' (car c'est ainsi qu'elle s'appelle) se transforme entre mes mains. Je note cette métamorphose. Je me prends en photo dans cette maison, comme si j'étais sa contemporaine entre la fin des années 50 et le début des années 60. Ma robe est joyeuse, mon masque est glacial. Ma torpeur mentale se traduit par des poses rigides ou forcées dans un environnement qui devient le mien à travers ce rite photographique. Enfin, je decide de

'danser' avec lui. Créant un espace propice à cette idée singulière, je me lance dans la création d'une video à cet effet. Et cela clôt mon premier chapitre.

Le deuxième chapitre amènera mon nouveau personnage extra muros. 'La blanche' rendra visite à la tombe paternelle, et d'autres lieux familiaux symboliques, à la recherche d'un apaisement dans ce nouveau monde qui fut toujours le sien et pas le mien. Ensuite, 'la blanche' se confrontera aux aspects extérieurs de son nouvel environnement: de 'Down-Town' Kingston à Port-Antonio en Jamaïque. Elle visitera également d'autres îles à la recherche de son héritage caribéen.

About the Artist:

Mc Gilchrist was born in Kingston to a French mother and a Jamaican father in 1981. Educated in France and the U.K., she moved back to Jamaica in 2011 after completing an M.A. in Photography at the London College of Communication (2009-2010).

Through photography and video, Mc Gilchrist portrays fantastical elements within ordinary life, using others to enact the imaginary identities she is pulled between.

Her current practice now incorporates her body, exploring the physical expression of charged moments and the emotions connected with loss, mourning, and trans-location, in the search for her cultural identity.

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REVIEWS

CHRISTIAN CAMPBELL

Born Again: On Marion Bethel's *Guanahani, My Love*

If you drive or walk on the hill on Duke Street in Nassau, Bahamas, you cannot help but acknowledge the conch-pink colonial mansion that is Government House, and then the white statue of Columbus. Columbus is showing off— left hip cocked out, right leg placed forward, left hand akimbo, right hand leaning on what could be either a sword or a cane. His head is tilted to the left so that when you look directly at him, he is not looking at you.

Columbus continues to be a fiercely controversial figure in The Bahamas. Columbus' landfall in the New World was on October 12, 1492 on the island of Guanahani in The Bahamas, which he re-named San Salvador. A group of Bahamians has lobbied to change October 12, traditionally commemorated as "Discovery Day," to National Heroes Day. On the other side, another group continues to advocate for the preservation of Discovery Day citing that we should not re-write history. Some have even suggested that, like the statue of Columbus, Discovery Day is good for tourism.

Bahamian poet Marion Bethel confronts the white statue and journeys far beyond in *Guanahani, My Love,* (1) which won the Casa de Las Americas Prize for literature in 1994. In this first collection of poetry, Bethel engages in what Toni Morrison calls a "literary archaeology" by imaginatively reconstructing the historical, the political and the personal. (2) One of the subtle ways that she does this is through the title. "Guanahani," a geo-political name and historical term, is qualified by "My Love"; those two vital words frame the reconstruction of the historical archive through the personal. "Guanahani" on its own could be the title of a history book but those two words remind us, in their tenderness, that this is poetry. The use of the words "my love" to emotionally transform a political/historical context is also reminiscent of "This is the Dark Time, My Love," an important poem by the great Guyanese poet, Martin Carter. (3)

In the first ten poems in the book, Bethel does the work of recovering (as opposed to "discovering"), examining and translating neglected aspects of Caribbean history. In the unrhymed tercets of "Taino Rebirth" (a more significant poem than the title poem), she writes:

> If you bed on a coral cay
> in a shallow sea feeling
> weight and the wonder
>
> of two hundred million years
> of living sand you are probably
> a Taino or a Bahamian born again. (4)

The presence of Amerindians in the contemporary Bahamas (and many other parts of the Caribbean) remains primarily spectral and symbolic, through limited history and myth, school sports names, half-naked bodies in textbooks. There are no monuments for our Amerindian ancestors. However, Bethel suggests, like Derek Walcott in "The Sea is History," that the landscape serves as alternative historical record and spiritual conduit. "Taino Rebirth" calls us to tend and speak to the land in order to open up ancestral connections and even reincarnation.

"Sons of Adam" and "On Coral Cay" are good examples of poetry as counter-discourse. Bethel addresses Columbus directly in "Sons of Adam":

> "They have no religion," you prayed a holy conquest
> haunted by spirits of birds canoes winds corals
> burning Hatuey like a witch in your savage inquest
> his soul boarded a winged boat resting on his laurels.
>
> "They have no clothes," you sang a lusty Solomon song
> taunting the eleventh commandment, "Thou shall not rape exploit", you possessed 'the other' with a naked tongue fearing your own dreamed fantasy of wild man and ape. (5)

Bethel deconstructs the 'master narrative' of Columbus' log, citing and subverting his colonial notions of savagery. The ballad form (regular rhyming quatrains), one of the most popular forms in the Western literary tradition, also generates an interesting tension with the poem's fierce anti-colonial critique. "On a Coral Cay," perhaps Bethel's most-quoted poem, extends the critique to contemporary Bahamian society:

> On a coral cay where we live

> on a tourist plantation, a banking
> estate where the air is conditioned
> and so are hands that do not know
> the fishing line or pineapple soil
> We produce nothing, or hardly and
> we service the world, or nearly
> In our air conditioned service
> We are blessed waiters of grace divine (6)

She historicizes tourism in the contemporary Caribbean by rightly locating it as an extension of the plantation system. (7) "On a Coral Cay" laments the loss of a more intimate relationship with the land through agriculture as a result of the shift to tourism. What takes the poem beyond a simplistic nostalgia is the recognition of The Bahamas' unique socio-economic history— "where sugar never was, no hardly / where cotton never was, not much." Unlike most of the Caribbean, The Bahamas never fully sustained a stable plantation system due to poor soil (limestone) and the difficulty of control and communication in an archipelago. Slavery existed but not in the same ways. (8)

Guanahani, My Love attends to many more critical historical moments in the Caribbean including piracy ("Of Pirates and Junkanoo" and "Boom and Bust"), Loyalist history ("Miss Jane's Hands"), the women's suffrage movement ("Womancycle") and the Grenada Revolution and Invasion ("Remember Grenada"). *Guanahani, My Love* also includes more poems that explore the inner life of a lyric subject but what sustains the whole collection is Bethel's abiding attention to the landscape. Land and sea are source. This strategy is certainly one of many ways that she locates her work in a Caribbean literary tradition. Her exploration and personification of the flora and fauna of the Caribbean are also important features of Caribbean women's writing. In this regard, we should read her alongside major poets like Lorna Goodison and Olive Senior.

Bethel's influences are as diverse and diasporic as Ngugi wa Thiong'o, Alice Walker and Kamau Brathwaite, and she inherits their ferocity, sensuality and historical vision. In fact, it was when Bethel was a fellow at the Caribbean Writers Summer Institute in Miami in the early nineties that Brathwaite told her to write "Guanahani poems." Brathwaite himself has a poem titled "Guanahani" in a recent collection, *Born to Slow Horses.* (9) By titling her collection *Guanahani, My Love*, Bethel makes an intervention into the politics of naming in the Caribbean. She is re-naming, and thus re-creating, her land. Guanahani is not only the original, Lucayan name for San Salvador, it is also an imaginary that is both Eden and abyss, and the site of Encounter. Guanahani, then, becomes a wider metaphor for resistance. Guanahani is

an imaginary in which we can negotiate post-Independence Caribbean identity.

In terms of form, Bethel sparkles in her manipulation of sound. Many of the poems are delightfully percussive and alliterative, and slide effortlessly between Bahamian Creole and Standard English. The poems here, which include a Petrarchan sonnet and other traditional forms, are not as risky as the jazzy poems in her second collection, *Bougainvillea Ringplay*. (10) A few of the shorter poems are also much weaker in both form and content than the rest of the volume, as if they were written in an earlier phase. However, the unevenness of the book does not diminish its larger significance.

First published in 1995 by Cuba's Casa de las Americas in a bilingual edition, *Guanahani, My Love* is now born again with St. Martin's House of Nehesi Press fourteen years later. House of Nehesi, which has also published luminaries like Brathwaite and George Lamming, is a wonderful home for Bethel's work and will allow her to find new audiences in the region and the diaspora. This "Taino rebirth" of *Guanahani, My Love*, the first book of contemporary Bahamian poetry to receive critical acclaim, comes at a time of unprecedented excitement and productivity for Bahamian writers. *Guanahani, My Love* continues to be a necessary book for the large Caribbean, as we all are called to write Guanahani poems.

Notes

1. Marion Bethel, Guanahani, My Love (St. Martin: House of Nehesi, 2009).
2. Toni Morrison, "The Site of Memory," Inventing the Truth: The Art and Craft of Memoir, ed. William Zinser (Boston: Houghton, 1987) 112.
3. See Martin Carter, Poems of Resistance from British Guiana (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1954).
4. Bethel 2.
5. Bethel 4.
6. Bethel 10.
7. Bahamian writer and scholar Ian Strachan does this work in critical discourse in his book Paradise and Plantation: Tourism and Culture in the Anglophone Caribbean (Charlottesville: UVA P, 2003).
8. See Colin A. Hughes, Race and Politics in the Bahamas (Queensland: U of Queensland P, 1981).
9. See Kamau Brathwaite, Born to Slow Horses (Wesleyan: Wesleyan UP, 2005).
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About the Author:

Christian Campbell's first book, Running the Dusk (Peepal Tree Press, 2010), won the 2010 Aldeburgh First Collection Prize (UK) and a Lannan Residency Fellowship (US), was a finalist for the Cave Canem Prize (US), the Forward Prize for the Best First Book (UK) and the inaugural Guyana Prize for Literature Caribbean Award (Caribbean). He teaches at the University of Toronto.

Alex Louis filming from the roof of the Ghetto Biennale Tap Tap, commissioned by John Cussans.
Photo Credit: Piroska É Kiss

DAVID FROHNAPFEL

Rhizomatic Curation: The 2nd Ghetto Biennale in Port-au-Prince.

"How about completely abolishing the model of the biennial, so as to reopen the possibility of perceiving and bringing into focus the small, the overlooked, the locally produced, and the unclassifiable?" (Wullfen 106)

Contemporary art exhibitions today are characterized not by their use of small forms, but rather by a striving for global dimensions. The Ghetto Biennale in Port-au-Prince is no exception, but at the same time it remains capable of making visible the overlooked, the locally produced and usually unclassified. The Haitian artist collective 'Atis Rezistans' collaborated with British photographer and curator Leah Gordon to "reclaim the mechanisms of exhibition practice on their own terms " (Savage 492) and hosted an international event to participate actively in the global art sphere.

The formation of the Ghetto Biennale was a direct response to Nicolas Bourriaud's notion of the homo viator that defines art today as a "journey-form, made of lines drawn both in space and time, materializing trajectories rather than destinations" (Bourriaud). The artist today as seen by Bourriaud, has become the "prototype of the contemporary traveler". This concept was quite offensive for a group of artists (and the majority of the world's population) who are living in a slum. In

Port-au-Prince persons do not have the financial liberty to "wander in geography".

As a result the Biennale emerged in 2009 and connected the Haitian artists from lower classes to an international artistic audience. Attracted by its attempt to decentralize art and its non-elitist charm, I became part of the organizational staff in the second edition in 2011 and assisted Leah Gordon and André Eugène with the curation. Two different models of exhibition framed the 2nd Ghetto Biennale in Port-au-Prince: first the exhibition 'Nouvo Rezistans' in the Institut Français that kicked off the Biennale and secondly the Biennale exhibition itself, which was embedded in the neighborhood near the Gran-Rue. The exhibition 'Nouvo Rezistans' was held in the inner courtyard of the Institut Français and presented 14 emerging artists from the collective who have not been shown before. The well-known representatives of the group, Andé Eugène and Jean-Hérard Celeur stepped back to allow sculptors like Jean Claude Saintilus and Racine Polycarpe to find bigger recognition. The limited space of the courtyard required the decision to reduce the diverse and rich artistic positions of the collective to a minimum. The main goal of this exhibition was to reach a Haitian audience that is not willing to visit the slums around the Grand Rue and to present the group 'Atis Rezistans' through their varied individual, creative positions. While the exhibition 'Nouvo Rezistans' was embedded in a more classical curatorial practice, the Biennale exhibition itself rose above those typical strategies of selecting objects and mediating them through a curatorial gaze. While we as curators remain here embroiled in the legacy of Western art discourses of presenting art, the Biennale exhibition became something less staged and designed that can be labeled as rhizomatic curation. The exhibition near the Gran-Rue presented contemporary art directly and indirectly as an oscillation between different artistic poles and genres, which is perhaps best described by Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's metaphorical concept of the rhizome. The rhizome is a horizontal network of roots. Any point in this system can be connected freely to any other point. The rhizome is thereby a non-centered, non-hierarchical and non-significant system that is solely defined by a circulation of states. There are no clear dualities but diversity and multiplicities. The Biennale exhibition was equally open, non-centered and allowed a free circulation

The yard and temporary exhibition space in front of Andre Eugene's atelier. The huge statue is of Papa Gede, a Vodou spirit, and was built by Andre Eugene and Louko.
Photo Credit: Melitza Jean

Institute Francais Exhibition, artworks by Papa Da, photo by David Frohnapfel

of signs. The initial idea for the exhibition was to integrate the international art works in the environment of the neighborhood and to open up and display the multiplicity of Haitian artists' ateliers in this area. Therefore, visitors were given a map and invited to wander through the neighborhood to see all participating artists. A conceptual installation like Allison Rowe's project 'Aid for USA and Canada', could be found in the exhibition site in the neighborhood as well as a ceremonial vèvè for the Vodou deity Ezili done coincidently by houngan and artist Papa Da on the day of the exhibition. The socio-critical, plastic sculptures by Gétho Jean Baptiste stood parallel to handicrafts by local welders and carvers, who have their studios in the same area and produce for tourist markets in Santo Domingo. In this complex and rhizomatic structure, the lines between ethnographic artifacts, contemporary art objects and tourist-art are blurred. They all exist side by side without an educational authority that needs to present on plinths, what is worthy to be seen and what is not. By promoting relations the Biennale exhibition maintained that diversity is getting opaque and thereby refusing the incorporation into hierarchical systems of knowing.

The strongest artworks embedded in the Ghetto Biennale exhibition were in my opinion the ones, where foreign and Haitian artists collaborated on equal terms, for example Canadian mixed-media pop artist Karen Miranda Augustine, who collaborated with Haitian drapo vodou maker Mary Ketty Paul. Karen and Ketty were sewing several paket congo to honor female members of the community in the project 'The Three Erzulies'. Less effective were those where the artists defined their artistic practices as a beneficial 'gift' to people from a socially deprived area. Perhaps the simplest and most beautiful work presented in the Biennale was done by Lithuanian artist Jūratė Jarulytė, who collaborated with local Rosé Marie Paul on her project 'Palé avem, kalbėk su manimi'/'talk to me'. Rosé Marie and Jūratė spent several days together and tried to find a means of nonverbal communication. Rosé Maria is not able to speak English or Lithuanian and Jūratė cannot speak Creole. On the day of the opening both met again, went to the market and decided to cook a meal together: "I really think this led to a deeper communication. There is something amazing about those (language) patterns in human minds. I think people felt that too when they ate our food that was a

result of our communication" (Personal communication with Jūratė Jarulytė, January, 17th 2012). This ephemeral project could not be exhibited, although people were invited to share the meal on the day of the opening and the artwork can only be found in the interaction and communication between Jūratė and Rosé Marie.

The notion of an anti-hierarchical ideal cannot be entirely fulfilled as bringing the first and second world together interrupts longstanding dialectics of power. To defuse this tension Leah Gordon is planning for the next edition to strengthen the intra-Caribbean and Latin American connections and also to offer international artists from lower classes the possibility to participate in the project. This ambitious concept requires a lot of funding and will not be easily achieved. The idea was already indirectly visualized by the joint photo-project by Piroska Kiss and Romel Jean Pierre. In a narrow corridor photos from a Haitian and a Hungarian ghetto were juxtaposed and gazed at one another. Perhaps in a future edition of the Biennial, this confrontation can evolve from a two-dimensional, documentary level to a real encounter. It could be an exciting project to bring Sinti and Roma-artists from a Hungarian ghetto or a Brazilian Favela project like 'Projeto Morrinho. Uma pequena revolução' to Port-au-Prince.

As Hou Hanrou argues, Biennales should not be simple 'zones of contact' but instead "zones of confrontation, negotiation and exchange with the alien" (Vogel 112). The focus of the Ghetto Biennale is on asymmetrical structures of power, which are often forgotten or overlooked in the elitist global art circuit. This asymmetry becomes highly visible in the direct interaction between "first world" and "third world" artist and the tension that springs from this encounter. The Ghetto Biennale cannot simply be reduced to two models of exhibition but is foremost a process and an experience that needs to be reflected and challenged continuously by all participating artists, international and Haitian. The Ghetto Biennale in Port-au-Prince is a provocative and direct model that can easily be judged and criticized for its alleged closeness to 'slum tourism'. I see it mainly as an open, flexible and reflexive experiment, which establishes a trans-cultural dialogue between "first" and "third world" artists. The Ghetto Biennale in Port-au-Prince is narrowing the still existing gap between periphery and centre and is challenging boundaries: boundaries between curated and curating cultures, between contemporary art objects and ethnographic artifacts and also between homo viator and artists, who are still bound to their home countries. The founders of this rhizomatic experiment, Leah Gordon and André Èugène, do not assume they have all of the answers. However, they are asking salient and provocative questions about race and class in a globalized art world: "what happened when first world art rubs against third world art? Does it bleed?" (Call for Submissions Ghetto Biennale 2009) - Yes, it does. But only in a true confrontation and an earnest negotiation with the foreign can the locally produced, the unclassifiable and the overlooked, become visible again.

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About the Author:

David Frohnapfel is a PhD candidate at Freie Universität Berlin and a fellow of the Max-Planck-Research Group 'Objects in the Contact Zone - The Cross-Cultural Lives of Things' in Florence. In his dissertation project he is comparing the autonomous Ghetto-museums and off-spaces of Haitian artists Jean Claude Saintilus and Papa Da with 'Euroamerican' strategies of presenting their art works in museum exhibitions. His main research is about Contemporary 'Caribbean' art and the fracture zones between art and religion in the Caribbean space.

Artwork from the 2nd Haiti Ghetto Biennial

Site based work by the Fugus Collective. Their works registered and interupted local cracks in buildings still remaining after the earthquake.
Photo Credit: Melizta Jean

Site based work by the Fugus Collective. Their works registered and interupted local cracks in buildings still remaining after the earthquake.
Photo Credit: Melizta Jean

Local child playing with one of two works by the Fungus Collective from Bermuda. Their works registered and interupted local cracks in buildings still remaining after the earthquake.
Photo Credit: Fungus Collective

Fungus Collective from Bermuda.
Photo Credit: Fungus Collective

A collective neighbourhood participatory crochet project by Erin Durban and Shannon Randall finally exhibited draped over the iconic statue 'Negre Marron', (The Run-away Slave), which was in the park in front of the National Palace and is now in the middle of one of the most populated tent cities in Haiti.
Photo Credit: Erin Durban

Vodou flags by local Haitian artists from Bel Air,
Ketty Paul and Yves Telemaque
Photo Credit: Melitza Jean

A wall of works by Ti Moun Rezistans, the local childrens' art group.
Photo Credit: John Cussans

Charlotte Hammond's paper dresses based on French colonial designs, exhibited next to Celeur
Jean Herard's atelier.
Photo Credit: Charlotte Hammond

A performance by Schallum Pierre and students from En Artes, Port au Prince.
Photo Credit: Schallum Pierre

Children taking part in the Grand Rue Grand Prix race with toys cars fashioned from discarded plastic soft drink bottles. The cars were made and race was organised by Trinidadian artists Kwynn Johnson and Paul Klein. The race was held in Rue Bois

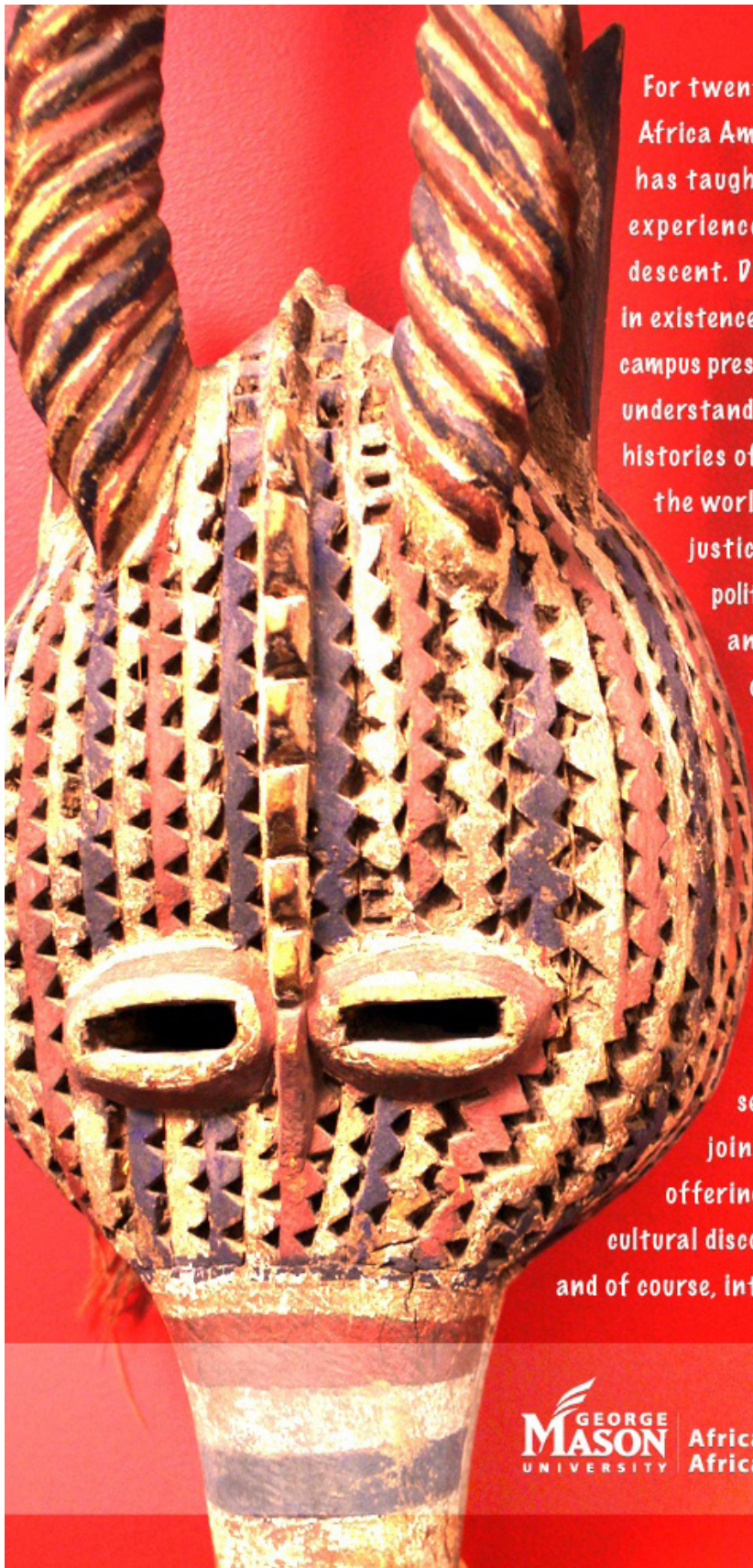The images of cracks in skulls by Clare Cameron.
Photo Credit: Clare Cameron

The images of cracks in skulls by Clare Cameron.
Photo Credit: Clare Cameron

Melizta Jean
The yard and temporary exhibition space in front
of Andre Eugene's atelier

WHAT'S OCCUPYING
YOU?

KI SA KI
OKIPE OU?

C'EST QUOI QUI
T'OCCUPES?

DA QUE TU ESTAS
OCUPADO?

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